

Distinguished Achievement Awards

Undergraduate Students of the Year 2016

The criteria against which nominations for the Undergraduate of the Year are judged state that:

“The nominee should have made an exceptional contribution to the life of the University, contributed significantly to the development of the curriculum or enhanced other students’ experience at University through activities such as peer support, student societies, or work with central services such as Recruitment and Admissions. Alternatively he or she should have coupled excellent academic achievement with either major external activity (top level sport or music) or have overcome major difficulties.”

Kevin Boyle, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, FMHS

Kevin Boyle has just completed his Nursing degree. As well as being an excellent student, Kevin has made an outstanding contribution to student life in his School.

He has been a student representative for all of his 3 years, liaising with staff and students to bring about significant improvements to a number of core units on the Nursing programme.

This past year Kevin has chaired the staff- student liaison committee and he has also been a member of the School Board.

He won Peer-assisted study sessions (or PASS) leader of the year, represented the School on a national PASS leader training programme and has been an online student ambassador to welcome incoming students.

He helped design and implement the student placement project (a project helping with student orientation to their first clinical placement).

In addition, Kevin has been a founder member of the student action intergenerational project (outreach for older people) and has also been part of the *heart start* project which taught over seven hundred children CPR.

Kevin has dedicated his award to the memory of his mum, Síobhan, who very sadly passed away five years ago. It was the care that she received from the nurses that encouraged him to undertake his nurse training.

Gulwali Passarlay, School of Social Sciences, FHUMS

Gulwali Passarlay has just completed his Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences degree.

Gulwali has an outstanding record of serving others and acting as an ambassador for both his School and the University, achievements which are all the more remarkable given the immense hardship he had to overcome to reach the UK and enter higher education.

Gulwali was born in Afghanistan and was sent out of the country by his family to avoid the Taliban. He endured an incredibly hard journey, with his life often in danger, and arrived in England aged 13. Eventually he was placed in foster care in Bolton and joined this University's Access Programme – a programme which seeks out and supports talented students who are under-represented in higher education.

He began studying here in 2013 and since then has been a spectacularly successful ambassador, not just by the way in which he embodies this institution's approach social responsibility and widening participation but through his work with a wide variety of voluntary and non-governmental organisations particularly in relation to refugees, asylum seekers and care-leavers.

Gulwali has written a highly acclaimed book about his experiences in which he raises awareness of the difficulties encountered by those displaced from their homes through conflict.

He hopes to have a successful career in politics where he can, in his words, “bring peace, justice, freedom security, unity, democracy and stability in war torn countries, and hopefully become President of Afghanistan”.

Zachary Wilde, Faculty of Life Science

Zachary Wilde has just finished his BSc in Biochemistry with Professional/Industrial Experience.

Zachary has made a sustained contribution to the life of the Faculty of Life Sciences through his involvement with PASS (Peer-assisted study sessions), as a student ambassador and as a student representative throughout his course.

His motivation and commitment to everything he does is exceptional, whether it be instigating and organising a revision PASS session attended by over a third of the first year cohort or offering help and support to outgoing placement students.

Zac is described as being highly enthusiastic and positive and a real pleasure to interact with. His Faculty had no hesitation in recommending him as its Undergraduate Student of the Year.

Robert Gilbert, School of Materials Science, FEPS

Robert Gilbert, who has just completed his Masters of Engineering in Materials Science and Engineering, is described as having been an exceptional final year materials engineer.

Robert is recognised by his peers and teachers as being a natural leader, and bridge-builder, with a drive to contribute to society. He has acted as a highly acclaimed Senate Chair for the University's Students' Union and has been instrumental in ensuring the successful implementation of the Y2 PASS scheme in the School.

He is respected by his peers for his thoughtful, calm demeanour and his ability to build consensus. He is a trusted liaison between staff and students and has worked with academics to refine the content of the course structure. Academically he has excelled and has been offered a placement on the prestigious Rolls-Royce graduate training scheme.

Robert embodies the University's values by balancing substantial societal contribution with outstanding academic achievement.