

To the UConn Community:

I am writing to share joyous news and a milestone for our university. UConn senior Wanjiku (Wawa) Gatheru '20 (CAHNR) has been [named a 2020 Rhodes Scholar](#). She is the first UConn student ever to earn this distinction and is one of only 32 students in the nation who will receive this fellowship in 2020.

The academic achievement of our students is one of the greatest points of pride we have at UConn. Our students have earned some of the most prestigious scholarships in the nation, including the Truman, Udall and Goldwater Scholarships. And we recognize and celebrate all of them.

But in our long history, no UConn student had ever been awarded a [Rhodes Scholarship](#), which is the “oldest and most celebrated international fellowship awards in the world.” That is until now.

Wawa, who is from Pomfret, Conn., is a rare talent who in her three years at UConn has built a legacy that will endure long after she has graduated. A winner of several nationally competitive awards, including the Truman and Udall Scholarships, she has demonstrated not only a superior intellect, but a depth of character and an unbridled energy that compel her to take action. In addition to being academically gifted, she has played a leading role on critical issues, including environmental sustainability, the inclusiveness of our environment, and food insecurity on our campuses and in our state.

In all of her endeavors, Wawa has demonstrated the versatility to move seamlessly back and forth between the worlds of activism and the inside world of policy- and rule-making. When tasked with identifying a single student at the University of Connecticut who could work with students, faculty, staff, administrators, and outside groups to organize a semester-long, multi-campus conversation on the topic of how youth can “effectively act to change the world,” the Metanoia 2019 Steering Committee selected Wawa. She is a bridge builder, which is among the greatest qualities a leader can have.

Please join me in congratulating Wawa and in wishing her all the best during her time studying at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. We are incredibly happy for her and so proud that she is a Husky!

Sincerely,

Tom

Thomas C. Katsouleas
President
University of Connecticut