START Launches New Career Development Program: Announces Inaugural Winners of New Scholarship

College Park, MD, January 3, 2008 – START announces the first winners of the undergraduate scholarship and dissertation awards for the START Career Development Program. The program was recently launched with a grant from the Department of Homeland Security in order to provide high-achieving students interested in homeland security with professional development opportunities as well as with funding for their education. Upon graduation, both scholarship and dissertation award recipients will work for at least one year in the homeland security arena.

START has selected two students from its Terrorism Studies Minor Program to receive undergraduate scholarships, as profiled below. Matthew Rhodes and Gabriel Band have been awarded $15,000 towards tuition, room, board, and fees for one academic year. Additionally, they will benefit from support for travel and registration for one professional conference, meetings with officials working in homeland security, mentoring by a homeland security professional, and active involvement in a research project related to improving understanding of the human causes and consequences of terrorism.

START also awarded a dissertation award to Shira Fishman, who will receive the same benefits as the undergraduate scholars. Additionally, she will be granted $30,000 towards tuition, fees, and a stipend for one academic year and will have opportunities to present her original research to leading terrorism scholars.

Scholarship and dissertation award winners were selected through a competitive process, involving written applications and personal interviews. Applicants were evaluate based on their academic achievements, their knowledge of homeland security issues and research, and their level of commitment to a career related to the advancement of homeland security.
The Career Development Program is a three-year START initiative. The number of undergraduate and dissertation awards will be increased next year, with four undergraduates and four doctoral students to participate each academic year. By the program’s completion in 2010, START will have provided this opportunity to a total of ten undergraduate and nine doctoral students.

START, the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, is a U.S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence based at the University of Maryland. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods, and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics, and social and psychological impacts of terrorism.

Profiles of the 2008 Award Recipients

Gabriel Band - Undergraduate Scholarship Winner

“Terrorist recruitment and indoctrination has begun to target younger generations through more advanced methods, and in order to combat their tactics effectively, new techniques must be developed and acquired; I hope that this program will open my eyes to all the opportunities to do so, and teach me the most effective ways to prevent threats to our homeland’s security.”  — Gabriel Band

Gabriel Band was born and grew up in California. He moved with his family to Potomac, Maryland, after living in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for a brief period. He currently attends The University of Maryland, College Park, where he is pursuing a major in Neurobiology and Physiology and a minor in Terrorism Studies, in addition to studying Arabic. He hopes to work on counter-terrorism in the future. Gabriel is also a classical pianist, and an active member of the University Student Judiciary and his fraternity.

Matthew Rhodes – Undergraduate Scholarship Winner

“From START’s Career Development Program, I hope to learn about and explore career possibilities in counterterrorism, and more importantly discover where my certain skills and interests can best benefit the defense of the U.S. homeland.” — Matthew Rhodes
Matthew Rhodes was born and raised in Marion, a small rural city located in east-central Kansas. Before transferring to the University of Maryland, he attended Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. He is a Senior at the University of Maryland, working toward a major in Microbiology and a minor in Terrorism Studies through START. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing, hunting, and exploring the outdoors.

**Shira Fishman – Dissertation Award Winner**

> “My interest in the program stems from its ability to bridge the gap between the academic world and the world of the practitioner. I believe that dialogue between these communities is essential in order to make our country a safer place and this program is one small step toward achieving that goal.”
>
> – Shira Fishman

Shira Fishman is from Lexington, MA. She completed her undergraduate degree in psychology with a minor in political science from Barnard College. After taking some time off to work in higher education administration, she came to the University of Maryland to get a PhD in psychology. Her dissertation topic explores the effects of social exclusion on the desire to join terrorist organizations, and START investigator Arie Kruglanski is Shira’s dissertation chair. Shira has been working on START research since the center opened in 2005.