



UNIVERSITY *of*
ROCHESTER

Student Alumni Ambassadors

2023-2024



Office of Alumni Relations and Constituent Engagement
Bloch Alumni and Advancement Center
300 East River Road
Rochester, NY 14627



Student Alumni Ambassadors

The Student Alumni Ambassadors (SAAs) are a select group of undergraduate students managed by the Office of Alumni Relations and Constituent Engagement to serve as liaisons within the University’s alumni community. **SAAs are passionate about all things Rochester — eager to engage with the alumni community and promote school spirit and our Rochester Traditions across campus.**

Recruited each spring semester, the SAAs are easy to recognize, with their signature “R” cardigans and silver name tags. Members are selected because of their involvement and leadership roles on campus, their strong desire to connect and engage with the alumni community, and their love and pride for the University of Rochester.

Purpose:

- ❖ Provide a bridge between current undergraduates and alumni.
- ❖ Provide student presence and perspective at alumni, parent, donor, and prospective family events, visits, and meetings, as well as in Advancement and University publications and communications.
- ❖ Understand the impact and importance of staying connected and giving back to one’s alma mater, and share this knowledge with fellow classmates.
- ❖ Create a pipeline for future alumni leaders and donors.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- ❖ Assist with on-campus, local, and regional alumni events, including Meliora Weekend.
- ❖ Welcome alumni and prospective incoming families to campus and provide the student experience during meetings, events, visits, and private campus tours.
- ❖ Spread awareness to other undergraduate students about the alumni community and the programs and services offered by the Office of Alumni Relations and Constituent Engagement.
- ❖ Help direct the future of student-alumni programs by providing feedback and insights into current student interests, needs, and priorities.
- ❖ Build and strengthen connections between students and alumni.

Member Benefits:

The SAA program focuses on providing students with opportunities to acquire and sharpen leadership and communication skills while building their personal and professional networks with not only alumni but also other student leaders on campus.

- ❖ Developing networking skills through formal training and in-person and virtual opportunities
- ❖ Unique access to alumni, parents, and friends of the University
- ❖ Invitations to exclusive programs and events
- ❖ Potential opportunities to travel on behalf of the University
- ❖ Opportunity to attend an annual professional conference designed specifically for students in ambassador-like programs

Interested in connecting with a Student Alumni Ambassador?

Please contact Karen Osborn, Associate Director of Student Engagement at karen.osborn@rochester.edu.

Fatimah Al Dulaimiee '24

(Fah-teh-mah Al Do-lay-me)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Rochester, NY (Born in Babylon, Iraq)

Majors: Studio Arts; Molecular Genetics

Cluster: Psychology



Campus Involvement:

- Emergency Department Research Associate
- Minority Association of Pre-medical Students (Co-Programming Chair)
- RocHub (Volunteer and Shift Lead)
- Memorial Art Gallery Creative Workshop Intern

Achievements:

- Study Abroad in Stockholm Sweden
- Multimodal Writing Colloquium Contest Honorable Mention Winner

Career Interest:

- Medicine – reconstructive plastic surgeon

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I am most proud of our student body. They are the embodiment of being outspoken, respectful, and honest, and in turn have formed an environment where you can feel comfortable expressing yourself and your concerns. It is an incredible way to maintain campus spirit while continuously offering ways for improvement to the University as a whole!

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

Dandelion Day is my favorite Rochester Tradition! Though sometimes the weather might not cooperate with us, it's still the most fun you can have right before reading period and finals begin. Plus, I'll take as much poutine as I can get!

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

As a pre-med student, I am heavily involved in the Minority Association of Pre-medical Students (MAPS), an organization aimed at providing resources for historically underrepresented students in medicine. I hope that I can come back and be a source of insight into life during med school, the matching process, and life as a resident!

John Alex '25

(Jon Aa-lex)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Mount Vernon, NY (Born in India)

Major: Microbiology

Minor: Psychology

Cluster: Science and Culture

Campus Involvement:

- GlobeMed
- RocLab
- Intramural Volleyball
- First-Year Fellow

Achievements:

- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- Genetic counseling
- Biotech researcher

What made you select Rochester as your university?

Rochester has a BS/MS program in microbiology which is a unique opportunity to accelerate my education.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I'm proud of our diversity because it allows me to become friends with people from around the world with different backgrounds.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

Meliora Weekend is my favorite because it is fun to enjoy with friends and meet alumni who may come on campus.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have become more educated about different cultures and more independent from living on my own.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

I would describe it as eye-opening and life-changing because of how much I have changed since I started studying here.



Andrés Arocho González '24

(Aahn-dréhs Ah-roh-cho Gone-tsah-less)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Santurce, Puerto Rico

Major: Political Science

Minor: Latin American Studies

Clusters: Global Climate Change; American Sign Language

Campus Involvement:

- Student Organization for Caribbean Awareness
- Spanish and Latino Students' Association
- Student Editor for the Office of Minority Affairs Chronicle
- Information Technology Consultant at Simon Business School
- Event Team Assistant at Wilson Commons Student Activities

Achievements:

- Dean's List
- Intern with the Office of Senator Samra G. Brouk

Career Interests:

- Policymaker
- Lawyer

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I was drawn by the flexibility of the curriculum, our academic programs, and the potential growth opportunities found when interacting with others in our diverse student body. Also, I wanted to be somewhere where the weather was different from home, and Rochester is as opposite as it gets.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

Since I got to Rochester, I have become more interested in academia, especially in the fields of political science and Latin American and Caribbean studies. Also, through involvement in student advocacy and student organizations, I have been able to grow as a leader, a student, and as a person.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

After I graduate, I will stay connected with Rochester through social media and as an alumnus of student organizations and programs like Student Organization of Caribbean Awareness (SOCA), Spanish and Latino Students' Association (SALSA), and Douglass Leadership House.



Elijah Bader-Gregory '26

(Ee-ly-juh Bay-der Greh-goh-ree)

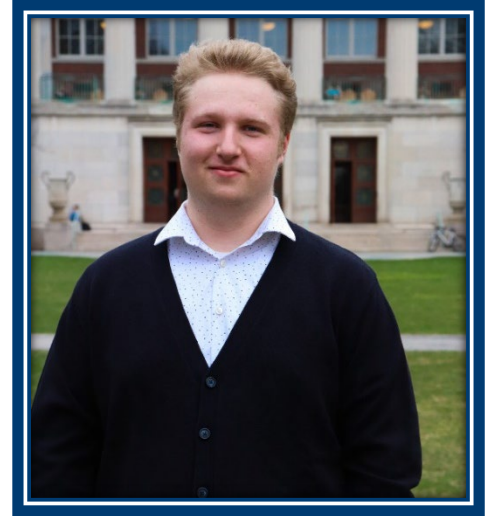
Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Buffalo, NY

Majors: Economics; Political Science

Minors: Business; Philosophy

Cluster: Science and Reasoning



Campus Involvement:

- Students' Association Government (Vice President)
- 2026 Class Council
- Meridian Society (Tour Guide)
- EcoReps
- Medallion Program Society

Achievements:

- Simon Scholars Case Competition Winner

Career Interests:

- Consulting/strategic planning
- Politics/policy

Family members who attended Rochester:

- Eli Sokol '33
- Robert Sokol '63, '66M (MD)

What made you select Rochester as your university?

The community! The culture here is so welcoming and collaborative. It's the perfect place with rigorous and prestigious programs, but with a collaborative, not cutthroat, culture.

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

How much there is to do. I saw statistics about how many organizations there are, and the share of students involved in extracurriculars—there is so much variety. Between student leadership, clubs, events, and more, there isn't a day where I am not doing something unique and interesting to me.

What is your favorite piece of Rochester history?

Some of the connections we have to companies and historical figures in the area like Kodak, Xerox, Bausch and Lomb, and people like Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony.

Germania Balbuena Marte '25

(Ger-may-nih-a Bahl-bue-nah Mahr-te)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Santiago De Los Caballeros, Dominican Republic

Major: Biomedical Engineering

Minor: Spanish

Cluster: French

Campus Involvement:

- Work in the Information Technology Center
- Student organization of Caribbean Awareness
- East Pen Pal

Career Interests:

- Neuroengineering
- Pediatric surgeon



What made you select Rochester as your university?

What made me select Rochester was its biomedical engineering (BME) program. I like how there's a chance to explore different concentrations of BME and that demonstrated to me how open the curriculum was to explore other areas.

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

There's this Puerto Rican bakery that bakes my favorite type of bread from the Dominican Republic. I didn't expect to find such a big Caribbean community that would have stores with items I used to have in my hometown.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

It has been an enriching experience. I have learned more about other cultures, and every semester I learn more ways to step out of my comfort zone.

Adrija Bhattacharjee '24

(Ud-rih-jah Buh-taa-chaar-jee)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: New Orleans, LA

Majors: Political Science; Bioethics

Cluster: Science and Sustainability

Campus Involvement:

- Greene Center Alumni Volunteer Program Assistant
- Students' Association Government
- Asian American Alliance

Achievements:

- Phi Beta Kappa O'Brien Book Award recipient
- Forte Women's Leadership Award recipient
- Eli & Mildred Sokoi Prize Award recipient
- Award for Campus Contributions recipient

Career Interests:

- Civil rights/medical malpractice lawyer
- Politician
- Adjunct professor



What made you select Rochester as your university?

I wanted to be somewhere where I could experience all four seasons, be involved in numerous extracurricular activities, and grow within a diverse student body.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

The student community at Rochester is so vocal and supportive of everyone; I truly don't think I would have found this at another university. It makes me proud to learn alongside people who I can call both my friends and inspirations.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I am much more confident and passionate about my career as well as my personal goals, and I have become more invested in the well-being of the campus and greater Rochester community.

Earl Lawrence Bumagat '26

(Er-l Boo-mah-gah-t)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA

Major: Digital Media Studies

Minors: Business and Studio Art

Campus Involvement:

- 2026 Class Council
- Filipino American Students Association
- Student Affairs: Diversity Equity Inclusion Committee, Legislative Advisor
- Orientation Leader

Achievements:

- Dean's List
- Medallion Program
- Award for First-Year Leadership

Career Interests:

- Digital marketing
- Graphic design
- UX/UI design

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

It's very different from the weather in Los Angeles, but I love the snow (especially with our tunnel system), and I love the people here! Rochester has the perfect campus size to form close interactions and relationships with the student body, professors, and the off-campus community. The people I've met have already created a HUGE impact in my life.

What made you select Rochester as your University?

One of the coolest things that the school provides is the open curriculum, which easily distinguishes Rochester from other institutions. As I was undecided during my first semester, I got to explore courses from various fields that I was interested in without feeling behind.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

Rochester has one of the best school spirits I've seen compared to other small schools. Prior to coming here, I would have never expected there to be a class council, in charge of promoting school spirit for the class. And when I heard that, I knew I had to apply and run for it! Rochester is also big on its school traditions, having specific days and weekends where we could take a break.



Giovanni (Gio) Correa-Quñones '24

(Gee-oh-vah-nee Cor-rea Qui-no-nes)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Coamo, Puerto Rico

Majors: Business: Entrepreneurship; Dance

Cluster: Intro to Calculus and Contemporary Math

Campus Involvement:

- 2024 Class Council (President)
- Language Center Program Assistant
- Meridian Society (Tour Guide)
- Ma 'Frisah Dance Team
- Spanish and Latino Students Expressing Rhythm on Stage

Career Interests:

- E-Commerce marketing manager
- Market research
- Marketing specialist



What has surprised you the most about the University of Rochester?

Eagerness to understand. The respect and admiration I have for the staff and faculty to have a sense of appreciation for students is something that I cherish very much.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

The open curriculum. Knowing that I can extend my possibilities of education in such a prestigious school is something that makes me proud. Also, the vast number of organizations around campus. There are so many ways to be involved and still have a chance to make an impact on the Rochester community.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

Winterfest Weekend. When I came to Rochester, it was the first time I saw snow, and knowing that there can be events happening all year on campus fills me with joy and happiness.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

Back home, I was only used to knowing about my culture and nothing else. After coming here, as soon as I arrived, I learned about the history and traditions of other countries which made me realize how important is to acknowledge and respect other peoples' cultures.

Angie Cortez '24

(An-jee Cor-tez)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Bronx, NY

Majors: Political Science; Comparative Literature

Cluster: Math and Statistics



Campus Involvement:

- Karp Library Fellow
- Resident Advisor
- Student Worker at the Office of Undergraduate Research
- Pre-Law Society
- Studio X
- XR Researcher

Achievements:

- Community Innovation Certificate
- Freshest First-Year Fellow
- RA of The Year

Career Interest:

- Lawyer

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

It really is so easy to get involved with research on campus, even as early as your first semester here! When I was a First-Year Fellow, I helped students find experiences with labs and professors to grow as researchers in a field they're interested in. Now, I work with Studio X investigating philosophical literacy and legal connections to virtual reality.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

Definitely the community! Everywhere I go on campus, there will always be wonderful people who will make your day or lend you a helping hand when you need it. I even made a friend in the line at Starbucks!

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have learned to be more optimistic about situations. I used to expect the worst so that I would not be disappointed if I experienced failure. Now, having been in many classroom settings with wonderful peers, I realize that failing, asking the "obvious" questions, and not knowing the answer can be brilliant.

Winifred (Wini) Dorlean '24

(Win-i-fred D-or-l-ee-n)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Austin, TX

Major: Chemistry

Minor: Epidemiology

Cluster: African and African American Studies



Campus Involvement:

- Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program Writing Fellows
- Teaching Assistant (Chemistry Department)
- Undergraduate Research (Chemistry: Kennedy Lab)
- Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students
- 1st Gen Society
- Green Space Special Interest Housing
- Undergraduate Chemical Society

Achievements:

- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- Medicinal chemistry/medicine (geriatrics, EM, OB/GYN or ENT)/pharmacology
- Chemistry professoriate

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

That Rochester created Webwork; it's an online homework platform that the math department uses, and it's used at many institutions across the United States!

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

As a freshman, I was a bit quiet, but I have grown out of a shell of timidness into a world where my voice is my biggest asset, especially as a Black woman.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

As the Vice President of the 1st Gen Society, cultivating an environment where first-generation students feel heard and represented is crucial to their life and career trajectory after college. This organization is a bit new, but we are working to set up an alumni network to keep our first-generation and current first-gen students in contact with each other. This ensures that alumni are in contact with their alma mater in some form, and through this, first-gen students will have more resources to access outside of Rochester! After graduating from Rochester, I hope to join that network to mentor other first-gen students who may not know how to navigate undergrad alone.

Rufaro Gamariel '25

(Ruh-far-ro Ga-ma-ri-uhl)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Major: Biomedical Engineering (Cell and Tissue Engineering)

Minor: Biology

Campus Involvement:

- Pan-African Students Association
- Ma'Frisah
- National Society of Black Engineers
- Biomedical Engineers Society
- Language Consultant
- Technical Assistant
- Canary Handler at the URMC
- Orientation Leader

Achievements:

- First-Year Representative Pan-African Students Association
- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- Regenerative medicine
- Cell & tissue engineering
- Medical practitioner

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have become more grounded in what I believe in and stand for.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

You make your experience whatever you want it to be. I have made mine fun, intentional, and meaningful.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

I think it will mostly be through the official social media accounts. However, I will keep in touch with any current Zimbabwean/UWC scholars and other students through the Alumni Relations program.



Elizabeth Garijo-Garde '23, '24 (Take 5)

(Eh-lee-sah-bet Ga-ri-ho Gar-de)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Darien, CT

Majors: Music; Public Health

Cluster: Music Cognition

Take 5: Religion and Social Change



Campus Involvement:

- Meridian Society (Tour Guide)
- Symphony Orchestra
- Chamber Orchestra
- Writing Fellow
- Gamma Phi Beta Sorority
- Panhellenic Executive Council
- ResLife

Achievements:

- Suzanne J. O'Brien Book Award
- Dean's List
- Phi Beta Kappa

Career Interests:

- Nonprofit work surrounding health and/or educational equity
- Music education

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I chose the University of Rochester because of the open curriculum and emphasis on music. During my college search, I knew that I didn't want to solely focus on music, so the Eastman connection was a big draw. I then fell in love with the campus and all the other opportunities!

What aspects of the University are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

I'm really proud of the University's commitment to helping the city of Rochester. I've always valued community engagement, so the fact that the University is invested in meaningful change in the city is something I love.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

My favorite tradition is Meliora Weekend. I love how everyone who attends is so passionate about Rochester!

Victoria Hirst '24

(Vic-taw-ree-uh Hurst)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Haddonfield, NJ

Major: Molecular Genetics

Minor: Classical Civilization

Cluster: Classics and Public Health

Campus Involvement:

- Gamma Phi Beta
- Research Assistant (Telias Lab)
- Newman Boys & Girls Club volunteer
- Workshop Leader
- Teaching Assistant



Career Interest:

- Ophthalmologist

What made you select Rochester as your university?

As an aspiring ophthalmologist, the classes that the optics department offered drew me in. However, the freedom to mix humanities and biological sciences truly is what I fell in love with.

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

I have been the most surprised about how eager the teachers are to help me understand the material. From office hours to after class, they are more than willing to answer all my questions.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

I'm most proud of the environment we have on campus. Every person I have met at Rochester has been kind and welcoming.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have changed very much. I was quite a shy girl when I began my journey at Rochester. Now, I have gained the confidence to be more outspoken due to the experiences I gained my freshman year.

Tochukwu Toby Iyke-Nzeocha '24

(To-chu-ku To-bi Eye-c N-z-ear-o-ch-ah)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Lagos, Nigeria

Major: Biomedical Engineering (Concentration: Cell & Tissue Engineering)

Cluster: Knowledge, Mind, and Nature



Campus Involvement:

- National Society of Black Engineers
- Wilson Commons Student Activities Office Assistant
- Center for Education Abroad Ambassador

Achievements:

- Ronald E. McNair Research Scholar
- L'Oréal USA 2022 Diversity Future Leaders Fellow
- NSBE Striking Impact of Technical Outreach and Community Help Award recipient
- Hajim School of Engineering International Experience Scholar
- Alpha Eta Mu Beta, National Honor Society for Biomedical Engineering

Career Interests:

- Pharmaceutical engineering
- Supply chain, sales, or engineering consulting

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

The resources! There is so much available for underrepresented students to succeed on campus. We have a fellowship office, the Kearns Center, Greene Center, STEM GEM, the Office of Minority Student Affairs, the basic needs hub, and so much more. I have benefitted from these resources, and I would like to let others know about them.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I am proud of how the African students show up for each other! There is a strong and beautiful community that has made Rochester feel like home. Last year, I had the opportunity to serve as the secretary of the Pan-African Students' Association (PASA) where I improved communication between the members and alumni, the Rochester community, and executive board members. PASA organizes a lot of events that make Africans on campus feel at home.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

One way I want to stay connected is through the National Society of Black Engineers chapter at Rochester. I want to encourage Rochester minorities to seek engineering and provide them with resources to succeed. I also want to work on creating a fund for international students or domestic students from international backgrounds (like me) who need emergency educational assistance to eliminate financial barriers.

Brian Jae '25

(Bry-unh Jay)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Los Angeles, CA

Major: Molecular Genetics

Clusters: Psychology and Bioethics

Campus Involvement:

- D'Lion Organization
- Program Assistant at the Language Center
- Research Assistant at URMC
- Minority Association of Premedical Students
- RocHub



Career Interests:

- Medicine

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived? What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

An aspect of Rochester that I am proud of is the “Meliora values” that represent the school. Each letter representing a value is something that I find meaningful. These values are things that I think everyone can reflect on to improve themselves, and it is a unique way to highlight the values that can help people become ever better.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have increased my awareness of different cultures and interests that I have, gained a broader perspective of what I wish to accomplish, and my future goals. Furthermore, I have become more aware of others who can and are willing to help me achieve these goals.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

One way that I will stay connected with Rochester after graduating is through interaction with current professors and actively being a part of the alumni network. Being accessible for current students who were in similar situations as myself could help them in their journey and college experience.

Madeleine (MJ) Johnson '23

(Mah-duh-lihn Jawn-sin)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Charlotte, NC

Major: Data science

Minors: Legal Studies and Business

Campus Involvement:

- Feminist Club
- Women and Minorities in Computing

Career Interests:

- Risk management
- Education reform



What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

One of my recent courses was *Discrete Math*, which is math but for computer science. It was the hardest but also most interesting class that I've taken here. One of the many cool things I learned is that $8+8$ doesn't always equal 16. There are different bases other than 10 that you can count with.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I'm a lot more at peace. Every single part of me has been accepted and embraced at Rochester which I had never experienced before. It's allowed me to focus on doing things I truly want to do with no reservations instead of things I feel like I need to participate in.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

Supported. I had a big adjustment coming back to school after a gap year. Every professor I've built a relationship with has been beyond understanding and helpful. There are so many resources, both personal and academic, at Rochester that helped me make my transition as smooth as possible.

Brianna Jones '25

(Bre-ann-ah J-oh-nz)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Rochester, NY

Major: Political Science

Clusters: Legal Studies

Campus Involvement:

- Alpha Phi Sorority
- Students' Association Government
- Women's Volleyball

Achievements:

- Housing Manager and Director of Formal Recruitment for Alpha Phi
- Resident Assistant

Career Interest:

- Lawyer



What made you select Rochester as your university?

I loved the close-knit community and how everyone is so welcoming and supportive. Even though the culture here is academically rigorous, everyone truly wants the best for each other.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I am most proud of all the different resources Rochester offers. From resources to help students academically, career-wise, and with their mental and physical health, I am happy to know that no matter what challenge I face, Rochester has something to help me.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

My favorite Rochester Traditions are the Candlelight Ceremony during Welcome Week and the painting of the tunnels. Both traditions helped me feel connected to not only my class but the University as a whole.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have gotten to meet new people, some of whom are now my best friends. I came in as a transfer student being scared that everyone already had their friend groups and I would feel left out, but I was welcomed into this community with open arms, and I can truly say that the relationships I have formed at Rochester have helped shape me into the person I am today.

Steven Kang '25

(Stee-vuhn K-ai-ng)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Lexington, MA

Major: Mechanical Engineering

Cluster: Media Studies

Campus Involvement:

- Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Battalion
- Undergraduate Film Council
- American Society of Mechanical Engineering

Achievements:

- Phi Beta Kappa 2022-23 Suzanne J. O'Brien Book Award recipient
- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- Naval aviator
- Professional engineer
- Film maker



What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I am most proud of how the faculty here at Rochester are very in touch with students. The professors really care about helping students learn in the most practical way so we can succeed in the future as we step out into the real world.

What is your favorite piece of Rochester history?

That the research that the Laboratory of Laser Energetics participated in helping scientists and engineers produce a nuclear fusion reaction that had a net energy gain - it produced more energy than it took to start the reaction.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

My favorite Rochester Tradition is the Candlelight Ceremony. It happens on one of the first nights when first-year students get to campus, and they get to meet all their future classmates standing together before the library.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

I would say that I am very glad I chose to attend Rochester and, more importantly, stay here. There have been really tough times, but I have learned from them and come out as a better person. My friends and classmates have really had a profound impact on my academic career, as well as my individual growth as a person. I can confidently say that I have made life-long connections here at Rochester.

Leen Khankan '25

(Lee-n Can-can)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Aleppo, Syria and Milan, Italy

Major: Biology

Clusters: Philosophy; International Relations

Campus Involvement:

- Medallion Leadership Society
- Emergency Department Research Associate
- First-Year Fellow
- Inspiration Project
- Language Center and Learning Center Tutor



Achievements:

- Medallion Leadership Society
- Suzanne J. O'Brien Award

Career Interest:

- Doctor of medicine

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

How easy it is to do what you want. You want to form a new student organization regarding adopted students? Done. You want to host an event for all your residents? Done.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I came here with a “do it all” mentality. I took on way too many things and wanted to take on even more. I recognize now that it is more important to derive enjoyment and learn things from every experience, rather than do everything but learn nothing. Quality over quantity!

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

The people have been wonderful, the professors have been super helpful, and the area is beautiful! Rochester has been more than I expected and I'm eternally grateful for the chance to be here. This is a school that tries its best to help you mature as a person, so long as you put in the effort and ask for help when it is needed.

Madison King '25

(Mah-dih-sin King)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Syracuse, NY

Major: Electrical and Computer Engineering

Cluster: Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

Campus Involvement:

- Ballet Performance Group
- Students' Association Government
- Society of Women Engineers
- Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
- Teaching Assistant for Electrical and Computer Engineering Department



Achievements:

- Graduate Engineering at Rochester Program Member
- Research and Innovation Grant recipient

Career Interests:

- Electrical and computer engineering industry
- Defense industry
- Engineering management

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

I love Meliora Weekend. It allows me to show my parents a glimpse into my life here at Rochester while also showing how connected the Yellowjacket family is. The concerts at Springfest and Yellowjacket Weekends are also a great way to release stress and have fun with friends.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I've grown more confident in who I am as a person and really developed as a leader through my involvement in the Students' Association and Ballet Performance Group. I'm excited to keep growing as I take on new challenges in my years at Rochester!

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

The word I would use to describe my experience so far is discovery. I've discovered a major that I love, joined organizations that feel like home, and made friendships that will hopefully last a lifetime.

Ko Ko '25

(Koh Koh)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Utica, NY (Originally from Myanmar and Thailand)

Major: Business (Marketing)

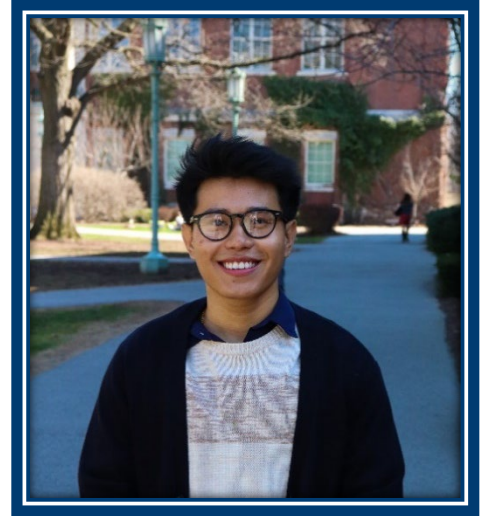
Cluster: Writing

Campus Involvement:

- Hall council

Career Interests:

- Director of marketing
- Entrepreneurship



What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

I am surprised by the rich culture, art, and music that the city of Rochester provides. From music and museums to readings and productions, there's so much to experience.

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

The abundant clubs and organizations that every student can take advantage of at the University. Even if the organization does not exist, you can create your own club with your friends. Students are bound to find the club, interest group, team, ensemble, kindred spirits, or common purpose that makes their time outside of classes meaningful.

What is your favorite piece of Rochester history?

Meliora is our work ethic, and it is the school motto. The idea for the motto is credited to Asahel Kendrick, professor of Greek at the University in the 19th century. Legend has it that it likely originated in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, book 7, lines 20-21: "video meliora, proboque..." which means, "I see better things..."

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

After graduating, I will be coming to Meliora Weekend to reunite with my friends and former classmates. Reconnecting with the Rochester community will be a good chance for me to revive my Meliora spirit. This is one way I will be staying connected with Rochester.

Alyssa Koh '24

(Ah-lih-suh Koh)

Pronouns: she/they/he

Hometown: Guilderland, NY

Majors: Computational Linguistics; English (Language, Media, and Communications)

Minors: Music Cognition; American Sign Language

Campus Involvement:

- Vocal Point A Cappella
- Campus Times
- Orientation Leader
- Linguistics + Brain and Cognitive Sciences Department Workshop Leader and Teaching Assistant
- Graphics Communications Assistant for Wilson Commons Student Affairs



Career Interests:

- Computational linguistics
- Translational studies
- Journalism

Family members who attended Rochester:

- George Koh '88

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

I love to tell my friends from home about how many different interests my classmates have that I get to hear about. Every student here has an inherent passion and drive that is impossible to ignore.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

I love the Student Activities Fair during Yellowjacket Weekend - it always brings such a vibrancy to campus that I think is unmatched!

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I've grown to accept and appreciate the mistakes that I've made, and I do a better job now of picking myself up and moving forward.

Mansi Kothari '24

(Maan-see Kot-haa-ree)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown:

Majors: Biomedical Engineering; Pre-Med

Cluster: Bioethics

Campus Involvement:

- Rochester Bhangra
- Chi Omega
- Research Assistant

Achievements:

- Research and Innovation Grant
- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- Medicine and dentistry



What made you select Rochester as your university?

I selected Rochester as my university because of its open curriculum. As an engineering and pre-med student, I have flexibility in the classes I take, which allows me to focus on just my interests, passions, and career.

What has surprised you the most about the University of Rochester?

Everybody on campus is super friendly and supportive. When I was coming to college, I thought everyone would be on their own, but it was the complete opposite. People are always there to help in all aspects of our college life, which is amazing.

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

The coolest thing I have learned is Bhangra. I was never a dancer, but when I came to campus, I decided to join the Bhangra team. Since joining the team, I have actually learned how to dance and was able to perform for Rochester events, which is really cool.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

My experience has been remarkable. I have been able to meet so many new people, make great memories, explore, try new things outside my comfort zone, and find my real interests. In this year, I was able to grow academically and personally, which was absolutely rewarding.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

After I graduate from Rochester, I hope to provide mentorship to biomedical engineering and pre-med students. I know how hard it can get because there are so many requirements, opportunities, and experiences in these fields. I believe that talking to alumni would be a helpful resource.

Smit Kothari '25

(Sm-it Ko-thar-ree)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Plainview, NY

Majors: Computational Biology; Bioethics

Campus Involvement:

- GlobeMed
- Friends of Strong at URMV volunteer

Achievements:

- Research & Innovation Grant recipient

Career Interests:

- Medicine/healthcare



What made you select Rochester as your university?

I chose to attend Rochester because of the flexible academic curriculum and ample opportunities for experiential learning. I've always advocated for applying what I learn, and this university does a great job embodying that throughout our four years. From day one, I was encouraged to explore my interests and take classes that directly applied to my intended career, essentially setting me up for success from very early on!

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

What surprised me most about Rochester was how we, as undergraduate students, have access to the medical center and network of hospitals affiliated with the University. The several opportunities such as classes at the medical school, research alongside distinguished principal investigators, and work within hospital settings not only had me surprised but also excited, as I could truly apply what I have and will learn over the course of these four years.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

My favorite Rochester tradition is Meliora Weekend where students, parents, and alumni all come together for an activity-filled weekend every fall semester. The wonderful weather, the new semester, and the busy campus collectively bring me such excitement and happiness at the culmination of this event!

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

My Rochester experience so far has been an uphill battle, but I've learned to enjoy the process knowing that it will be worth it in the long run. Over these past two years, classes have become challenging, my workload has increased, and finding time for myself has become difficult. However, it is these experiences that have taught me time management, sacrifice, and discipline, and remind me to cherish every moment throughout this wonderful journey.

Catherine Lee '25

(Ka-tha-rin Lee)

Pronouns: she/they/he

Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA

Majors: Bioethics; Anthropology

Clusters: Anthropology; Philosophy; Biology

Campus Involvement:

- Asian American Alliance
- Sigma Psi Zeta
- Minority Association of Pre-Med Students
- Pride Network
- Research Assistant (Social Cognitive & Psychology Lab)
- Teaching Assistant

Achievements:

- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- Pediatrician
- Ophthalmologist

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I heard about the collaborative and diverse community, and I knew I really wanted to be a part of it.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

The people here are unique and really open. It's comforting to know the people here are like that.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

I really like how people paint the tunnels. It's cool to walk through and look at how it changes every couple of days.



Sarah Lee '24

(Sair-uh Lee)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: West Caldwell, NJ

Majors: Data Science; Business

Minor: Music

Campus Involvement:

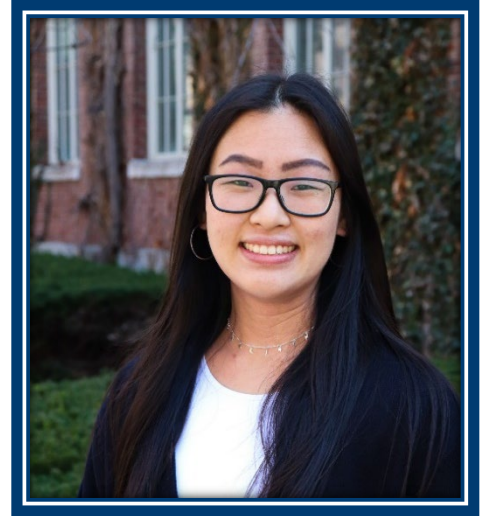
- Women and Minorities in Computing
- Undergraduate Data Science Council
- Club Field Hockey
- Research Assistant at URM

Achievements:

- Dean's List

Career Interest:

- Data/business analytics



What made you select Rochester as your university?

Like many others, I found the open curriculum to be a safety net since I wasn't certain on what I wanted to study when I first arrived on campus. This policy made me feel safe in trying new classes, and that it would be ok if I didn't end up liking those new areas – there was still time/space in my schedule to change my mind.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

My experience at Rochester has been a journey in finding a supportive community. After a few changes in friend groups, I finally found a group of people who wish the best for me. After considering different research labs, I have found the most patient and supportive principal investigators. After trying a few different clubs, I have found supportive mentors and teammates. I genuinely believe there is something for everyone that comes to Rochester – you will find your fit and community!

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

I would like to join The Meliora Collective as a mentor after I graduate since this mentorship program was an extremely positive and beneficial experience for me. I hope to give back to Rochester students through this platform, and it would also be a way for me to see Rochester continue to grow even after I graduate.

Joanne Li '24

(Joh-ann Lee)

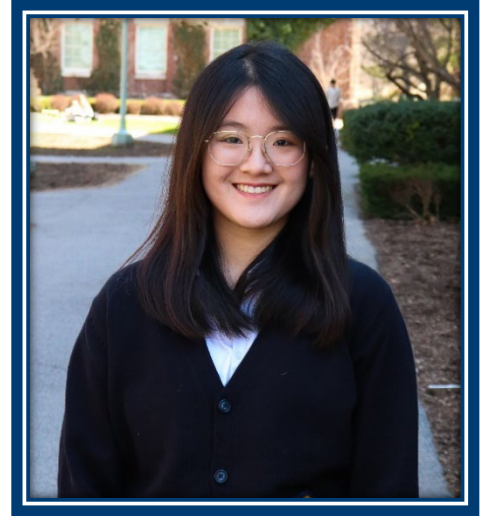
Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Dalian, China

Major: Brain and Cognitive Sciences

Minors: Computer Science; Business

Cluster: International Cinema



Campus Involvement:

- Student Affairs International Students' Affairs Committee
- Chinese Students and Scholars' Association
- Illusion & Magic Performance Society
- URMC Carney Lab
- Rochester Human-Computer Interaction Lab

Achievements:

- Dean's List
- Rochester Undergraduate Research Fair poster presenter

Career Interests:

- Researcher in the fields of neuroscience/brain and cognitive science
- Development of super cool AI products

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

I'm most proud of the accessible and diverse opportunities that Rochester offers. We always get to challenge ourselves and discover our true passion by trying out different things. I even got to learn magic!

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I've become much more open to trying new things. I would never have guessed how much I love discussing philosophical questions if I hadn't taken my film cluster class. I have found the process of discovering new interests to be incredibly more enjoyable than I thought.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

I'd say my Rochester experience has been "magical"! It's like discovering magic tricks - I never would have guessed how much a "simple" college life could bring to my life. I've had the courage to step out of my comfort zone so many times to explore new things. At the same time, I always know that I can come back to the supportive community and professors for some much-needed comfort.

Jennasea Licata '25

(Jen-a-sea Lik-ata)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Fruita, CO

Majors: Molecular Genetics; Health, Behavior and Society

Minor: Italian

Cluster: Medical Anthropology



Campus Involvement:

- 2025 Class Council
- Leadership Ambassador
- Research Assistant (Lueck Labs)
- Alpha Phi Fraternity
- Teaching Assistant
- UR Foot Trek Leader

Achievements:

- Research project in gene therapies to treat cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy
- Award for First Year Leadership

Career Interests:

- Genetic engineering
- Specialized medicine
- Biotechnology

What is your favorite piece of Rochester history?

As an aspiring scientist, one of the coolest things I learned about the University of Rochester is that Arthur Kornberg, the man who discovered DNA polymerase, and made many major contributions to the field of molecular biology, is an alumnus. I pass his Nobel Prize in Medicine and Physiology every time I work at the medical center, and it reminds me that everything in science is disprovable and evolving. His work has been so inspiring to me and is one of the reasons I am still pursuing my love of molecular genetics!

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I came to the University of Rochester with an open mind and desire to expand my way of thinking, and I have not been disappointed. Rochester has given me the courage to pursue my paths and interests, no matter how out of reach they may seem. It has shaped me into a student leader, social advocate, critical thinker, and change maker that can overcome and excel at everything that I may face.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

After I graduate, I will of course be attending every Meliora Weekend and the plethora of alumni events the University puts on across the country. I also look forward to providing mentorship to Rochester students, as I will be able to give them valuable insight and advice on how to navigate college life! It is my hope to inspire them, just as the University of Rochester has inspired me.

Jason Lin '25

(Jay-sun Lin)

Pronouns: he/him

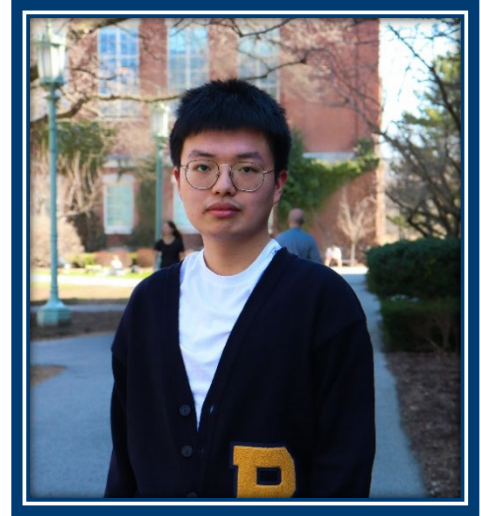
Hometown: Brooklyn, NY

Major: Biomedical Engineering

Minor: Social Psychology

Campus Involvement:

- Students' Association Government (Secretary of Alumni Relations and Advancement)
- URMC Technical Laboratory Aide
- Journal of Undergraduate Research
- University of Rochester Red Cross
- Biomedical Engineering Society
- Chemistry Workshop Leader



Achievements:

- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- Physician
- Biomedical engineer

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

The diversity amongst the students at Rochester makes for the perfect opportunity to meet someone new and learn about their culture and background. Everyone here is always willing to help and engage on campus through clubs, research, internships, or all the above.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

Since being on campus, I have grown to discover and pursue my passions and interests. There is so much selection in clubs, courses, and advice which allows any person to find their niche here. I have also grown to be more open, passionate, and more open to exploring beyond my comfort zone.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

My Rochester experience has been enjoyable. Yes, there are times when challenges arise but there is always help available. I have also met some great people here and joined organizations with friendly and inspiring people.

Henry Litsky '23, '24 (e5)

(Hen-ree Lit-ski)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: East Fishkill, NY

Majors: Political Science; English: Language, Media, and Communication

Minor: Legal Studies

Cluster: Earth and the Environment

Campus Involvement:

- Campus Times
- Meridian Society (Tour Guide)
- Photography Club

Achievements:

- Third Place in Photography in the 2020 Better Newspaper College Contest hosted by the New York Press Association

Career Interests:

- Journalism
- Law and public policy work specifically focused on transportation, housing, crime, and/or city development

Family members who attended Rochester:

- Charles Fleischman '59
- Marla Litsky '24

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

Learning about the history of America's prison system in one course while going into the courthouse weekly and witnessing the system firsthand in another taught by the administrative judge was an incredible experience.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

I love to tell my friends from home about the open curriculum and the community engaged learning courses I have at my disposal. Without laundry list core requirements, I have been able to pursue my passions and take courses which brought me into the Rochester court system, city government, and urban farms firsthand.



Marla Litsky '24, '25 (e5)

(Mar-luh Lit-ski)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: East Fishkill, NY

Majors: Data Science; Political Science

Cluster: Studio Art

Campus Involvement:

- Hillel Jewish Learning Fellowship
- Research Assistant
- Meridian Society (Tour Guide)
- Women & Minorities in Computing

Achievements:

- Intern for the Gauging Improvement in Defense Efforts and Outcomes in New York Research Project
- Research intern at Measures for Justice

Career Interests:

- Research
- Data science

Family members who attended Rochester:

- Charles Fleischman '59
- Henry Litsky '23

What made you select Rochester as your university?

Going into college, I had no idea what I wanted to pursue. I was stuck between physics, mathematics, statistics, and computer science. Rochester's curriculum would allow me to explore all of them, leaving room for me to even discover something new!

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

I didn't expect everyone I met to be such nerds. As a proud, self-identifying nerd, I was absolutely delighted and felt right at home to realize that everyone else here is one too.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

Since coming to campus, I've been able to explore my passions and figure out where I belong. I now can spend hours talking about the research I want to conduct and why it's important. Now I feel like I have a real place in the world.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

This campus is like a second home to me. The connections I have made with my professors, bosses, and friends will stick with me for the rest of my life. There are constantly new things being discovered and researched here that I also don't want to leave behind.



Daniela Matute '25

(Dah-nee-el-a Ma-too-the)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Caracas, Venezuela

Major: Chemical Engineering; Pre-med Track

Cluster: Psychology



Campus Involvement:

- Undergraduate Student Researcher for Public Health Sciences Department at URM
- Community Outreach and Engagement at Wilmot Cancer Institute URM
- Statistics teaching assistant
- Medallion Leadership Program

Achievements:

- Dean's List
- Academic Achievement Award (by Office of Minority Student Affairs)

Career Interests:

- Medical school, become a physician
- Chemical engineering in medical field

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

One of the aspects I am most proud of is how diverse and welcoming our student body is. I did not expect I would find such a community in Rochester. I have been able to meet so many different people with different backgrounds. I think this quality brings a lot of depth and uniqueness to the University.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

As an international student, coming to college in the United States was filled with unknowns. I have learned and grown so much since my first day on campus. I have been able to find a connection between my passions in chemical engineering and medicine. I have been given so many opportunities to develop my leadership skills and take on new challenges.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

I believe I will stay connected through the Student Alumni Ambassadors program. However, I also would like to give back to Rochester by being part of programs like the WRTG 273 class where students get in contact with alumni and get experience in informational interviews, as well as resume and cover letter reviews.

Vincent (Vince) Millette '23, '24 (Take 5)

(Vin-sint Mil-lette)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Brooklyn, NY and Trinidad & Tobago

Major: Business Marketing

Minor: Spanish

Cluster: Calculus and Statistics

Campus Involvement:

- 1st Gen Society
- Society of Caribbean Awareness
- Medallion Program
- Lambda Sigma Upsilon Latino Fraternity, DeiConsentes Chapter

Career Interests:

- Management consulting
- Investment banking

Family members who attended Rochester:

- Victoria Millette '24

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I chose Rochester because of the open curriculum and the diverse environment. After taking classes I wasn't interested in for years throughout high school, I made a pact with myself to control my style of learning.

What has surprised you the most about the University of Rochester?

The collaborative environment here at Rochester surprised me the most because I was expecting students to be very competitive with each other like I've heard at other institutions.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I've learned that everyone's journey is different, and I stopped comparing myself to other people and instead figured out what worked best for me. The acronym FAIL means "the first attempt in learning," and I redefined my struggles here.



Sybilla Moore '24

(Sih-bih-lah Moor)

Pronouns: she/they

Hometown: Wallingford, PA

Major: Health Policy

Minors: Biology (Neuroscience); Environmental Humanities

Campus Involvement:

- Students' Association Government
- 2024 Class Council
- Resident Advisor
- Teaching Assistant in Public Health

Achievements:

- Urban Fellows
- Forte Women's Leadership Award recipient

Career Interests:

- Law and public policy
- Consulting (strategy)
- Event programming and engagement
- Environmental LGBTQ+ issues
- Community engagement



What made you select Rochester as your university?

I chose Rochester because it is competitive yet still founded in passion, genuine curiosity, and wanting to see everyone succeed. Rochester is an environment where people will wholeheartedly talk and listen in earnest about each other's passions and work without feeling the need to compete for importance. That's beautiful.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

Rochester at its best can be an incredibly supportive and connected community of students. I've seen posts that spread like wildfire fundraising for everything to supporting someone through a tough family time to supporting someone getting through their last semester despite financial hardship.

What is your favorite piece of history about the University of Rochester?

I love the story behind the founding of the Douglass Leadership House. I recently watched a video of someone explaining all the work that went into getting the house and it was really a testament to student determination, resilience, and an amazing reclaiming of a space.

Manuel (Manny) Morones '26

(MaAh-nuel Mo-ro-nes)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Chicago, IL

Major: Bioethics

Minor: Korean

Campus Involvement:

- Spanish and Latino Students Expressing Rhythm on Stage
- Spanish and Latino Students' Association

Career Interests:

- Perfumist
- Beauty advisor
- Cosmetic industry



What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

The campus is very diverse, and I have met so many people from all over the world, and Rochester really tries to be inclusive for the different people of color on campus. I was happy to find a second home here and that there's other Latino/Hispanic people here that actively try to make it known we are here, and we are proud!

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

Rochester makes it easy to access resources if you need any sort of help. The campus is beautiful and feels like a museum, and I am proud of the open curriculum, the staff, and teachers, and of course everyone's favorite aspect, the Starbucks.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have changed so much! I was able to learn and find the secrets around campus to know what route to take or what book to read for a specific class that I have in mind. I've been exposed to the community, and now I'm more social than ever.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

If I were to describe my Rochester experience, I would say that it's been so fun and really good! I did struggle at first, but I feel like everyone does because the transition from high school to college is always difficult. Rochester has made it easy to access resources that I never knew I would use and has made my experience so much better.

Bailey Nicholoff '25

(Bay-lee Ni-kl-off)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Chicago, IL

Major: Biomedical Engineering (Biosignals and Systems)

Minor: Creative Writing

Campus Involvement:

- Varsity Softball
- Building Manager at Goergen Athletic Center
- Biomedical Engineering Society
- Society of Women Engineers
- STEM Initiative

Achievements:

- 1st Team All-Liberty League

Career Interests:

- Neurosurgical tool research and development
- Biomaterials developer

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I chose Rochester due to its extensive and in-depth biomedical engineering program. It is an amazing top ten program that doesn't force students into gen-eds and allows for freshmen to take classes in the subjects they are interested in immediately to capitalize on their education within each respective subject. Also, most professors here do research and having those resources and research opportunities available was extremely appealing.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I am most proud of how the students here are not afraid to take initiative and stand up for what they believe in. It's awesome that people here know what they want and have such a strong drive for what is right. I have never met a large group of people so dedicated to their causes and so willing to share with others their thoughts and experiences.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have become more of an extrovert here. I used to be very closed off and keep to myself due to the distance I usually had between me and my friends. But everyone here has been so welcoming and friendly, that I in turn have also become more social and willing to meet others.



Katie O’Leary ’24, ’25 (Take 5)

(Key-tee Oh-lih-ree)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: West Hartford, CT and Guangzhou Province, China

Major: Biology

Minors: Chinese; Psychology

Campus Involvement:

- Adopted Student Alliance
- Chamber Orchestra
- Research Assistant
- Writing Fellow
- D’Lion Organization
- Gamma Phi Beta
- Teaching Assistant

Achievements:

- Rising Leader Class
- Dean’s List

Career Interests:

- Anesthesiologist
- Surgeon
- MD/PhD in immunology
- Physician scientist



What made you select Rochester as your university?

I loved the prospect of an open curriculum, which I am taking advantage of since I came in undecided freshman year. I also loved all the additional opportunities offered such as the Take Five program and lessons at Eastman.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I feel that I have absolutely become more open-minded after meeting so many different people from different backgrounds, as well as a better listener when talking to people. I have also become more confident in myself and who I want to become.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

Stressful, but rewarding and fun. I have met so many lovely people who have supported me since I stepped on to campus. Although classes can be challenging, it is so rewarding to learn something new and be able to apply it to many situations.

How do you think you’ll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

Definitely! I love the community here and would love to help future students who were once in my shoes develop professionally and personally.

Neziah Osayi '24

(Nuh-zi-uh Oh-psi-eee)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Washington, D.C.

Major: Business; Accounting Track

Cluster: Creative Writing

Campus Involvement:

- Founder of the “That’s Clearly Wealth” Instagram Page
- Student Program Assistant at the Ain Center of Entrepreneurship and Innovation
- Resident Advisor

Achievements:

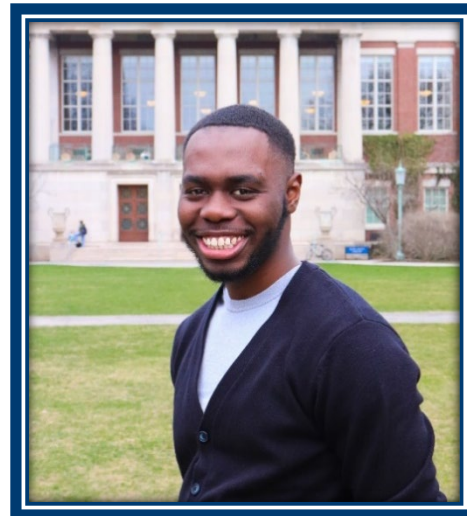
- 2023 Gweenie Student Leader Award recipient
- Winner of Izone’s Make It Happen Grant
- Featured in the Campus Times for Financial Literacy Advocacy
- Secretary of the Prince George’s County Financial Literacy Education Program Committee
- Residential Advisor of the Year 2023 Award recipient
- Partnered with EVERFI to produce social media content for 2023 Financial Literacy Month

Career Interests:

- Currently building a financial education production company with the mission of working with nonprofits and universities to produce content that inspires young adults to increase their financial aptitude
- Participate in a fellowship in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark to investigate why their financial literacy rates are higher than that of the United States
- Private Equity, Asset Management, and Forensic Accounting

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I became aware of Rochester when I started going through the Posse Foundation application process. I originally thought Rochester was near New York, so that drove my initial decision. Once the geographical confusion was cleared up, Rochester just kind of called to me. I had chosen to apply early decision to a school I had never stepped foot on. I just had this sense that this was going to be the place that'll support me in figuring out the kind of man I want to become. So far, after being here for three years, I take great pleasure in saying that this place has checked those criteria exceedingly well!



Daniel Pyskaty '25

(Dan-yuhl Pih-skay-tee)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Lockport, NY

Majors: Brain and Cognitive Science; Linguistics

Cluster: German



Campus Involvement:

- Students' Association Government (President)
- Student Affairs Chair of Academic Affairs Committee
- Program Assistant at the Language Center
- Linguistics Undergraduate Council
- The Meliora Collective Mentorship Program

Achievements:

- 2023 Rob Rouzer Award for Excellence in Student Government Leadership

Career Interests:

- Academic research
- Speech pathology

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

In the most cliché of terms, I would say that I am most proud of how the student body forms such supportive and uplifting communities. We genuinely care so much about each other and the success of our fellow classmates, which is not something that you always see. No matter who you are there is always a group or organization where you fit in and are welcomed.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have become more organized and knowledgeable on how to balance the different tasks, classes, and organizations I am involved in, helping me have more of an idea of what I want to do and what I want to study. I have also generally “matured” more and figured out who I am as a person, allowing me to be more confident in myself.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

I see myself becoming an active alumnus post-graduation. I totally see myself becoming a resource for current undergraduates in a program such as The Meliora Collective and coming back to campus to see what's going on during community weekends. I also see myself staying connected with professors that I met and worked with during my time at the University.

Damian Otsile Rantshabeng '24

(Dah-mee-ahn Ot-see-le Rant-sha-beng)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Mmadinare, Botswana

Major: Mechanical Engineering

Cluster: Spanish

Campus Involvement:

- College Center for Advising Services Peer Advisor
- Ma'Frisah
- 2024 Class Council
- Language Center

Achievements:

- Guest Speaker (International Student Success Class)
- Peer Advising Representative (2026 Experience Session)
- Yale Young Global and African Scholars Ambassador

Career Interests:

- Mechanical engineer
- Working with children
- Actuarial studies



What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

MATLAB Coding! The class has given me the opportunity to work on codes focused on addressing real-life problems. It's a challenging class, but very rewarding. I feel like I am doing something meaningful.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of/regularly tell your non-Rochester friends about?

I am proud of the broad range of resources the University has to offer. Resources such as financial, mental health, emotional, and academic support.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

A constant theme of my time so far at Rochester has been growth. I've grown to love change and be comfortable with being uncomfortable. This has really contributed to my self-awareness.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

My Rochester experience so far has been one full of opportunities for self-redesignation and self-reinvention, personally and professionally.

Mahnoor Raza '24

(Maah-nuur Ruh-zah)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Islamabad, Pakistan

Majors: English Literature; Political Science

Cluster: Mathematical Modeling



Campus Involvement:

- Writing Fellows
- Editor-in-Chief, LOGOS Art and Literature Journal
- Campus Times

Achievements:

- Study Abroad: Bristol, UK
- First author for chapter in The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization publication
- Papers in the Journal of Undergraduate Research

Career Interests:

- Climate policy and governmental relations
- Publishing and editing
- Marketing and communications
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion-focused human relations work

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

The writing fellows! I take a lot of pride in the Writing Center, and I think it has the potential to be a radical, empowering space. The Writing, Speaking, and Argument program can help students rediscover and redefine what it means to be a reader and writer, and it's helped me embrace the messiness of the writing process. It gives writers the opportunity to challenge ideas about respectability and the norms of the academy, push the boundaries of what it means to "write well," be vulnerable, and experiment with their potential as a communicator. I carry the skills I've learned in the Writing Center wherever I go, and I'm very proud of all the incredible work being done in that little tunnel under Rush Rhees.

What is your favorite piece of Rochester history?

I was talking to an alum who wrote for LOGOS during his time here (shout-out to Dan Kimmel '77) and learned that the room I had in Fairchild my sophomore year (the one with glow-in-the-dark stars on the ceiling) used to be his then-girlfriend's! I also love learning about LOGOS lore and drama between LOGOS and the Campus Times. Flipping through old editions of both publications is always wild.

Michelle Rojas '25

(Mih-shel Ro-has)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Arlington, VA

Major: Business and Marketing

Clusters: Math; Intro to Classical Music

Campus Involvement:

- Music Interest Floor
- Marketing & Communications Specialist at the Greene Center
- Undergraduate Film Council

Achievements:

- Dean's List
- Panelist at Edu-Future's Youth Advocacy Summit

Career Interests:

- Marketing
- Film
- Entrepreneurship
- Graduate studies in business and psychology



What made you select Rochester as your university?

In addition to receiving the Posse scholarship, the open curriculum, and the wide variety of majors/minors/clusters really influenced my decision in selecting Rochester. I am also grateful that the Eastman School of Music is nearby, so I can take classes there.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

Meliora Weekend is my favorite tradition. I love how everyone is in the Meliora spirit of not only improving yourself as a person but also improving your community. I enjoy meeting Rochester alumni and learning from their experiences.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I developed a greater sense of my identity. I became more confident in my academic abilities and found more interests (e.g., piano, art, design, business)!

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

My experience has been an “upward trend.” I am amazed by the amount of opportunities Rochester provides students to help them achieve their goals (e.g., Kearns Center, Greene Center). I also appreciate how Rochester sponsors events and provides shuttles that facilitate students’ journey exploring the city.

Natan Sahilu '24

(Nay-tin Suh-hill-ooo)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: San Jose, CA

Major: International Relations

Minors: Business; Philosophy

Cluster: Sustainability

Campus Involvement:

- Resident Advisor
- Research Assistant for Political Science department
- Jackson Court Service Desk employee

Achievements:

- Dean's List
- Study Abroad Fall 2023: Paris, France

Career Interests:

- Diplomacy/foreign service officer
- Supply chain management

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I remember doing Early Decision because Rochester had three things I thought I would really like: a medium student body, located in New York, and had a large international student population. But it was a silly interview with admissions, one where I spent 75% of it geeking out about our favorite TV show, that hit home for me.

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

How unbelievably down-to-earth and approachable my professors have been! One of my fears was that professors would be mini-gods, only to be talked to with trepidation. My experience has shown me that they are the opposite: humans who teach with passion.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

Following graduation, I'd like to help students with one of the things I was most uncertain about in college: my career path. Therefore, I'd like to help advise students about career opportunities and explain my own choices.



Sanghamitra Subba '24

(Suhng-huh-mi-trah Soob-ba)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Kathmandu, Nepal

Majors: Economics; Political Science

Cluster: Media, Culture, and Communication



Campus Involvement:

- Barbara J. Burger iZone Consulting Fellow
- Mentor, University of Rochester Investment Banking Program

Achievements:

- Study Abroad Spring 2023: Paris, France
- Previously: Vice President, Forte Campus; Executive Director, Meliora Finance and Investment Group; Features Editor, Campus Times
- Humanities Research Innovation Grant

Career Interests:

- Investment banking
- Environmental and social governance

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

The coolest thing I have learned since arriving at Rochester was about superconductors. As a social science major, it is rare that I venture out into the world of physics. But when I was a news editor at the Campus Times, I had the opportunity to interview Professor Ranga Dias after he was named as one of the most influential people in Time Magazine's 2021 TIME100 Next list. His team was at the forefront of advancing research on superconductors, bringing them one step closer to real-world application.

What is your favorite piece of Rochester history?

My favorite piece of Rochester history is The Cloister Window. It was the first College for Women newspaper published in the 1920s that sought to establish the presence of female students on campus.

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

I think this quote from Sesame Street describes it perfectly: "Elmo loves to learn, learn about it all. The things that are big and the things that are small!"

Celina Shoda '25

(Seh-lee-nuh Show-da)

Pronouns: she/her

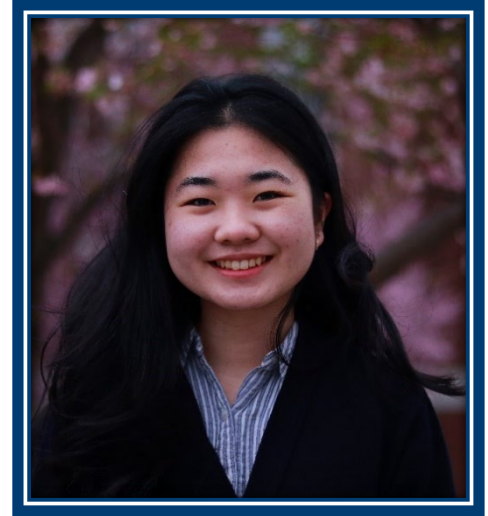
Hometown: Honolulu, HI

Major: Neuroscience

Minor: Japanese

Campus Involvement:

- Partners in Reading
- The Meliora Collective
- Hawaiian Interest Club
- Medical Emergency Response Team
- Resident Assistant
- ROC Health Hub



Career Interest:

- Physician

What made you select Rochester as your university?

The flexibility to essentially study anything I wanted with the open curriculum was important to me because I wanted to pursue majors in biochemistry and Japanese, which many colleges did not offer. I also wanted to move somewhere where it snowed because I hadn't seen snow until coming to college!

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

The number of resources available to students, such as clubs and organizations, is something I appreciate about this school. It is easy to get involved in almost anything of your interest or explore something new. Not to mention, I was genuinely shocked at how cold it can get in Rochester!

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

College helped me become more independent, given that I was responsible, and changed how I learn. My professor said that college is a time where we learn how to learn, and I agree with that because I am still figuring out the best method of studying and understanding new material.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

As a mentee in The Meliora Collective paired with a mentor, an alumna of Rochester, I found this mentorship program to be insightful as I receive tips, guidance, and support from my mentor. I would like to do the same for a future mentee as an alumna myself.

Isabelle Tang '24

(Iz-uh-bel Tah-ng)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Shanghai, China

Majors: Mathematics; Digital Media Studies

Minor: Psychology

Campus Involvement:

- Vocal Point A Cappella

Achievements:

- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- User interface/user experience designer
- Data analyst



What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

I'm excited that everyone is involved and welcomed on campus, and it's easy for students to reach out for help not only from the faculty but also from fellows.

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived? What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I would say don't be afraid to try. The Rochester community is highly inclusive, and there are so many opportunities to learn more about your career or academic interests and get involved in student organizations.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

Meliora Weekend is my favorite! With so many fun events, I cannot help but imagine the scene that coming back to the campus myself as an alumnus in the future, and I will definitely share the school pride with people and enjoy the festive atmosphere.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

During my first and second years, I was not open to socializing and was nervous to talk to people. However, everyone in this community is willing to listen and support each other, which makes me more confident.

Lorraine (Warona) Tshamekang '26

(Luh-rayn Tshah-me-ka-ng)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Gaborone, Botswana

Major: Engineering Science

Campus Involvement:

- Ma'Frisah
- Teaching Assistant

Career Interests:

- Optics
- Nanotechnology



What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

The weather. I knew that the winter here is brutally cold, but experiencing it has been a whole different story because I am from Southern Africa, which is very hot most of the year. Plus, the weather changes very quickly. I could walk into a lecture with the sun out, and when I leave, it's snowing, raining, or both.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I have become more adaptable. When I first got here, I found it challenging to relate with people who were completely different from me and thought that if we have nothing in common then we cannot be friends or acquainted. However, I am learning that similarities do not build friendships or relationships and that if I am friends with the same “type” of people, then what am I learning and/or gaining from that friendship?

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

I would describe it as self-learning or self-discovery because since I got here, I feel like I am becoming a different person every day because of the different place that I am in and the different people that I interact with here. The only issue is that sometimes I feel like I'm losing myself or that I am becoming someone that I do not recognize anymore. But I am learning to embrace the changes that are happening and trust the process that I'm slowly becoming the best and truest version of myself.

Ashley Updike '24

(Ash-lee Up-dyk)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Lake Forest, IL

Major: Cell and Developmental Biology

Minor: Philosophy

Cluster: Psychology



Campus Involvement:

- Emergency Department Research Associate
- Varsity Swim and Dive
- Varsity Student-Athlete Advisory Committee
- Charles Drew Pre-Health Society
- OBGYN Clinical Lab Undergraduate Researcher

Achievements:

- Schwartz Discover Grant Awardee
- College Sports Communications Academic All-District Honors
- College Swimming & Diving Coaches Association of America Scholar All-American

Career Interests:

- Women's health
- Medicine

What made you select Rochester as your university?

During my college search, the open curriculum and diverse student body really stood out to me. I still remember my first time seeing the campus and knowing that it was the place for me. It seemed like everyone was in a tight-knit community that I really wanted to be a part of.

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

The number of clubs and activities to get involved in on campus really surprised me. I never thought I would be able to be a part of so many organizations that I am so passionate about. This aspect of the University makes it so I am always interested in what I am doing. I am so grateful to be a part of all the activities I am involved in.

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived? What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I love how Rochester is such a big figure in the research field. I always get excited when I am in a class and the professor mentions a study that happened at the University of Rochester. It makes me proud to be a part of the Rochester community and excited for more discoveries in the future. It also makes me feel like I am making a difference in the research that I am a part of at URM.

Gabrielle Wilson 25

(Gab-ree-el Wil-suhn)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Bronx, NY

Major: Brain and Cognitive Science

Clusters: Gender and Women's Studies; Psychology

Campus Involvement:

- D'Lion Organization
- Residence Hall Association
- Student Aide
- Common Market employee

Career Interests:

- Surgeon
- Flight attendant

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

I love learning about the architecture and history behind buildings. When coming to Rochester, I was immediately drawn to our beautiful Rush Rhees Library, and wanted to find out everything I could about its meaning. As a result, I've learned that the owls on the cornice are symbols of wisdom, which I really appreciate, since owls are my favorite animal.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

When I first got here, I was very introverted, but with time I learned more about myself. I enjoyed studying and indulged in hobbies I never thought would pique my interest. In doing so, I've connected with people I see daily and explore different cultures represented here at Rochester. I've learned to try everything and thankfully this mindset has led me to making some lifelong friends and improved my sense of adventure overall!

If you were asked to describe your Rochester experience so far, what would you say?

My time at Rochester so far has been enriching. College is really a time to explore your independence. Your experience is truly what you make of it. With time management and the support of good friends, I've been able to study hard and enjoy all that Rochester has to offer.

What are your favorite Rochester Traditions?

After a long semester of classes, I look forward to exploring the food trucks and meeting up with friends to enjoy the event of the year, Dandelion Day. The air is festive and light!

Kaitlyn Wong '26

(Kayt-lyn Wong)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Needham, MA

Major: Biochemistry

Clusters: Psychology; Philosophy

Campus Involvement:

- Women's Club Volleyball
- Intramural Volleyball
- Campus Times Illustrator

Achievements:

- Dean's List

Career Interests:

- Biochemical researcher
- Medical school



What made you select Rochester as your university?

I was initially drawn to Rochester from its open curriculum, and high involvement in undergraduate research. When I visited the campus in high school, I felt an indescribable feeling of belonging that I didn't find on other campuses. The way that students and professors are all passionate inspires me to work hard and pursue what drives my curiosity.

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

One of my goals for college was to step out of my comfort zone and become more involved in clubs and organizations. Rochester makes it easy not only to find your niche, but also provides accessibility to resources that help with overall personal and academic development, such as the Green Center, Center for Education Abroad, and the Career Center.

What aspects of Rochester are you most proud of?

I am amazed at how driven and passionate the professors are in their teaching field, inspiring me to be excited about their subjects as well. I am also impressed by the hard-working environment, which sets the perfect workspace to encourage me to accomplish my personal goals. It truly is inspiring to see a vast number of students involved with internships, jobs, and research as undergraduate students.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I learned it's okay to take risks! Sometimes it doesn't work out, but sometimes it does. Regardless, you will come out the other side having learned something. You never know unless you try.

Sarah Woodams '24, '25 (Take 5)

(Sair-uh Wood-ums)

Pronouns: she/her

Hometown: Rochester, NY

Majors: Environmental Studies; Studio Art

Minors: Digital Media Studies; Sustainability

Take 5: Gender, Sexuality, and Society



Campus Involvement:

- Sustainability Marketing Coordinator for Facilities Team Green
- Campus Times
- Rochester Photography
- Habitat for Humanity

Achievements:

- Medallion Program
- Take 5 Scholar
- Studying Abroad Summer 2023: Danish Institute in Copenhagen

Career Interests:

- Environmental sustainability
- Marketing/design
- Journalism/writing

Family members who attended Rochester:

- Peter Woodams '48
- Shirley Woodams '48

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I really wanted to be able to combine my interests in the environment and photography and was not loving the whole “gen-ed” requirements at other schools. I understand why they can be valuable, but I have really enjoyed being able to pick exactly what classes I want to take.

What is the coolest thing that you have learned since you arrived?

I've really enjoyed my environmental humanities classes with Professor Leila Nadir. I've learned so much more about our industrial food system and its ties to colonialism and industrialization.

Andrew Zhou '25

(An-droo Zhjoe)

Pronouns: he/him

Hometown: Brooklyn, NY

Major: Applied Mathematics

Minor: Psychology

Cluster: Philosophy

Campus Involvement:

- 2025 Class Council
- Students' Association Government
- Illusion & Magic Performance Society
- Chinese Student Association

Achievements:

- A multi-tasking learning mini-research group

Career Interests:

- Professorship
- Consultant

What made you select Rochester as your university?

I enjoy the smaller student population since it makes me feel that students are closer together, and I get to see familiar faces almost everywhere I go, and I will have at least one friend in each of my classes.

What has surprised you the most about Rochester?

I found out in my freshman year that one of the singers I like, Wang Leehom, was from Rochester and attended the Eastman School of Music. Never expected that since his songs are mainly Mandarin Chinese, and it was a cool and surprising fact.

How have you changed since your first day on campus?

I've become more outgoing. I was initially pretty shy, but now I really enjoy meeting people and have grown to be more comfortable with putting myself out there.

How do you think you'll stay connected with Rochester after you graduate?

I want to become a mentor and become an active member of The Meliora Collective. I also most definitely want to come back for the events and walk around the campus.





Student Alumni Ambassadors

Interested in connecting with a Student Alumni Ambassador?

Please contact Karen Osborn, Associate Director of Student Engagement at
karen.osborn@rochester.edu.

