

# Elon student receives NSF Graduate Research Fellowship

**Kathleen Hupfeld '16 will receive a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation to continue her studies at the graduate level.**

*By Xernay Aniwar*



Kathleen Hupfeld '16

Elon University senior Kathleen Hupfeld has been selected to receive a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship (GRFP), providing three years of financial support for her graduate studies in cognitive neuroscience at the University of Michigan. Hupfeld is among 2,000 NSF fellows at 488 schools chosen from among 17,000 applicants for the program.

Hupfeld is an exercise science major with a neuroscience minor from Columbia, MD. She has conducted research on motor control (how the brain controls our abilities to move) and motor

learning (how the brain learns new movements) with her mentor, Caroline Ketcham, associate professor and chair of exercise science. Using a non-invasive brain stimulation technique, Hupfeld and Ketcham studied the impact of the stimulation on motor skills, language and cognitive abilities.

“This NSF Graduate Fellowship Award is a testament to Kathleen’s scholarly work and future in motor neuroscience,” Ketcham said. “Her research has led to four publications and several more presentations, and is cutting-edge and extraordinary for an undergraduate student. Kathleen is a student who has found and made the most of every opportunity Elon has to offer. Mentoring a student who finds passion and humility in the process of science and from impacting and being impacted by others is truly rewarding. It has been an honor to work with her and I look forward to having her as a colleague for years to come.”

Hupfeld is a Kenan Scholar, Lumen Scholar and an Elon Honors Fellow. She has received the Elon University Powell Scholar award and a Trey Halker Memorial Scholarship. She is a four-time recipient of the GEBA Scholarship Foundation Academic Scholarship and has received the Credit Union Foundation of Maryland and DC scholarship for three years.

Hupfeld serves as Vice President of Phi Eta Sigma and is a current member of Psi Chi, Kappa Omicron Nu, and Phi Kappa Phi national honor societies; she will be inducted as a 2016 member of Elon’s

chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

During her career at Elon, she has studied abroad for a semester at Curtin University in Perth, Australia, and has also studied in India and Ghana.

Hupfeld currently works as a medical scribe in the neurology department of Burlington's Kernodle Clinic. She additionally volunteers her time with the Special Olympics of Alamance County as a swim coach and is a member of Elon Buddies. In the past, she has volunteered with the North Carolina Therapeutic Riding Center and the Open Door Clinic of Alamance County. These experiences have inspired her interest in how motor control processes differ in the brains of those with disabilities.

Hupfeld intends to earn her doctorate and become a professor, conducting research and teaching young scientists. She is the daughter of Christopher and Dorothy Hupfeld of Columbia, MD.

In addition to Hupfeld's award, three other Elon alumni received Honorable Mentions in the NSF competition, including Alex Bruch, currently at Yale University; Kate Rasmussen, currently at the University of Iowa; and Rachael Jones, currently at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Since 1952, NSF has provided fellowships to individuals selected early in their careers based on their demonstrated potential for significant achievements in science and engineering. GRFP is critical to NSF's overall strategy of developing the globally engaged workforce necessary to ensure the nation's leadership in advancing science and engineering research and innovation.

GRFP provides three years of financial support within a five-year fellowship period (\$34,000 annual stipend and \$12,000 cost-of-education allowance to the graduate institution). Fellows have opportunities for international research collaborations through the Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide initiative and professional career development with federal internships provided through the Graduate Research Internship Program. GRFP also supports NSF's Career-Life Balance initiative.

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