



Nidhi Nair '23 Named UConn's First Schwarzman Scholar

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University of Connecticut undergraduate Nidhi Nair '23 (CLAS) has been named the first Schwarzman Scholar in the history of the institution.

The vision of the [Schwarzman Scholars](#) is to bring together students from around the world to explore and understand the economic, political, and cultural factors that have contributed to China's increasing importance as a global power, and train them to forge effective links between China and the rest of the world. The program was established in 2016.

Nair is just one of 151 Schwarzman scholars who will study at the Tsinghua University in Beijing in 2022-23 in pursuit of a one-year master's degree. Nearly 3,000 students applied to the program. The scholars come from 36 countries and 121 universities from around the world.

Nair, an Honors student majoring in economics and mathematics-statistics, grew up in India and now resides in Farmington. She is passionate about boosting socioeconomic mobility through the lens of public economics and educational disparities.

"I want to congratulate Nidhi on being named UConn's first Schwarzman Scholar," says UConn President Radenka Maric. "Her dedication and passion for her work in studying economic mobility is to be greatly admired. I also want to thank and recognize all the faculty members who have supported Nidhi in reaching this milestone."

Scholars chosen for this highly selective program have demonstrated exemplary leadership qualities and the potential to understand and bridge cultural and political differences. The scholars attend lectures, workshops, and discussion groups; are mentored and advised by leaders across sectors; and travel to develop a better understanding of China.

"I am looking forward to meeting some of the best leaders from all across the world and am excited to meet people my age who are motivated to be change-makers," says Nair. "All the Schwarzman scholars live together in a cohort, and everything is done together so you build strong bonds with everyone in the program."

"What fascinates me about this program is that it will give me the chance to study economic mobility in both the U.S. and China, as both countries have comparable levels of inequity and immobility. Economic immobility is causing a great deal of resentment and anger that is fueling

populism. There is a lot of room for improving economic policy that is more localized to states and communities that is likely to produce positive returns.”

Nair is the president of the UConn Economics Society and the founder of the Invisible Hand Speaker Series. She has been named a United Nations Millennium Fellow, a Werth Innovator, and a UConn Co-Op Legacy Fellow for her research and advocacy efforts in financial literacy.

“Any time one of our students becomes ‘the first’ to receive a prestigious award like this, it speaks volumes about their talent, ambition, and commitment, and Nidhi is no exception,” says Vin Moscardelli, Director of UConn’s Office of National Scholarships and Fellowships. “Nidhi earned this award based on the remarkable record of research and engagement she has built during her time here at UConn. She also put as much thought and care into her application as any student with whom I’ve ever worked.”

Nair has advocated for economic inclusion at the [United Nations COP26 conference](#) in Scotland, and is a member of the 2022 Leadership Legacy Cohort.

She has engaged in three research projects at UConn focused on economic history; equity in athletics; and purpose and well-being. Nair has also interned at several research and advocacy organizations like the Brookings Institute, the Cato Institute, and the UC Berkeley Labor Center.

She credits much of her success at UConn to professor of sociology Bradley Wright and professor of economics Richard Langlois, who is her honors advisor.

“My work as a research assistant in Dr. Wright’s lab on purpose and well-being helped me explore my interest in academic research,” says Nair. “Dr. Langlois has also been a source of support and has provided invaluable advice on carving out a strong career in economics that advances my interests in socioeconomic mobility and microeconomic analysis.”

Nair plans to pursue a doctorate in economics in the future and would like to work for the federal government as an economic advisor and conduct policy research.