

Meet the 2016 SRI Conference Scholarship Winners!

In memory of Laurie McClain, the emeriti of First Affirmative Financial Network are proud to present the 2016 scholarship winners. We hope you will take advantage of the opportunity to meet them in-person at the conference.



Rafael de la Puente is a Senior at Tufts University, majoring in Economics and Environmental Studies. He states, "The SRI Conference represents an exceptional chance for me to continue down this road and network with industry professionals who share my same passion for working towards a more socially and environmentally prosperous economy." Rafael serves as the student representative on the Tufts Sustainable Investment Fund Advisory Committee; he has interned at an SRI advisory firm and with Green Century Investment Management.



Rebecca Ganster is an MBA candidate at Yale University School of Management. She earned her BA at Knox College (Illinois) in Integrated International Studies and Spanish. She writes, "I am interested in SRI/ESG investing to reduce barriers for social entrepreneurs to grow their companies, bring back lessons and connections, and obtain critical experience to complement my Yale education." Following a one-year Fulbright Fellowship in Vietnam, Rebecca worked in the international development sector for six years, focusing on removing barriers to women's entrepreneurship in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Afsana Jahan is completing her MBA in social impact management at Brandeis University; she earned her BBA from North South University in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She writes, "I am interested in SRI because I want to create positive change in the world. I grew up in Bangladesh and I have seen poverty closely. Now I have been studying social entrepreneurship and impact management so that I can gain experience in the field and ultimately create opportunity for the poor people of the world to help them break through inter-generational poverty." She has worked as a financial analyst in bank and non-bank financial institutions.



Debi-Michelle Jantzen earned her BA in Political Science at Princeton this year. She writes: "Philanthropy alone is not enough to combat global poverty and markets can make a meaningful impact in tackling some of the most pressing issues today while also garnering great returns. I am really excited about SRI/ESG investing and would love to learn more and believe the SRI Conference would be a great opportunity." Debi-Michelle learned practical aspects of investing from two summers' work in research and marketing at hedge funds.



Julian Lustig-Gonzalez is completing his MBA at the University of Massachusetts, where he previously earned his BA in Cultural Anthropology. He is attending the SRI Conference to link ESG investing to his background in innovative financing, "to expand my SRI knowledge, and to meet and engage with professionals." Julian ran his own solar power installation and education company in rural Colombia, and currently works part-time for an SRI advisory firm and a biotech business development institute.



Anton Malin is a sophomore at Brown University, concentrating in Economics and Public Policy, where he played a part in developing and the first major university endowed and run ESG fund. His intention in attending the SRI Conference is to dive deeper into the question, "what exactly can you do to make sure the world's largest companies are representative of ESG investing's benevolent mission?" Anton has interned at Calvert Investments, performing quantitative analysis to support the firm's advocacy efforts.



Kyle McIntyre earned his BA in Geology-Physics/Mathematics from Brown University this year where he researched the impacts of climate change on coastal minority populations within major U.S. cities. At the SRI Conference, he intends to “contribute questions that may have yet to be fully explored, particularly concerning issues of power, access, and diversity and their intersections with corporate responsibility.” Kyle has worked as an ESG intern with Trillium Asset Management, creating ESG profiles for companies on Trillium’s buy list and reporting on ongoing advocacy pursuits.



Robin Miller earned an MBA and an MS in Environmental Science and Policy at Clark University and a BS in Public Administration from Eastern Michigan University. She says, “I came to SRI and shareholder engagement after being confronted every day with how the people and landscapes I interacted with were at odds with financial and economic systems that did not fully recognize their nuance and value.” Robin is the outgoing operations manager for Proxy Democracy at the Sustainable Endowments Institute; she has taught at an outdoor education school and performed sustainability engagement for Breckinridge Capital Advisors, a fixed income management firm.



Abigail Phillips will complete her BS in Personal Financial Planning at Texas Tech University this December. She was drawn to the SRI Conference because, “As I continue on in my financial planning studies, I have learned more about SRI investments and their positive implications on the world around us. This type of material is not covered in-detail at the university level, even though our program is often ranked highly for financial planning programs alike.” Abigail has worked on the client service side of wealth management firms for four summers.



Tanvi Pradhan earned her MBA from San Francisco State University, a PGDCM (MBA Equivalent) from the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, and a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Pune. She wants to attend the SRI Conference “to hear about the latest developments and best practices in ESG investing, and to learn from experts in the field. It is critical to understand investments from an ESG perspective in order to be a successful and impactful investment professional.” Tanvi performs ESG research and analysis in the SRI Wealth Management Group at RBC Wealth Management; she previously worked as a trader for Barclays Investment Bank in Hong Kong.



Christa Register is an MBA candidate at Duke University; she earned her BS in Finance from UNC Charlotte. She writes, “I want to attend to understand what I can do now as a student, and soon an investment banker, to make sure that I am doing good in my own space. I also want to understand how to advise clients who are interested in social responsibility.” Christa served with the Peace Corps in Togo, where she worked with women’s microfinance groups and entrepreneurs, and with Arabella Advisors, a philanthropic consulting firm. She says, “I was disenchanted with development work, but still believed in the power of the private sector to do good. I would like to build up an SRI practice in my bank.”



Eric Smith is jointly pursuing his MBA and Master of Forestry at Duke University having earned his BS in Finance at the University of Vermont. He says that “attending will allow me to hear from industry leaders who are constantly pushing the boundaries and showing the world that we can do good while doing well.” Eric worked for four years in Costa Rica, first as a Peace Corps volunteer in microfinance and later in ecosystem services with the C.R. government. He worked on the Climate Solutions team at BlackRock to build tools for measuring climate risk and opportunities and ESG strategy integration. In 2017 he’ll be building an impact fund for Duke to be managed by the university’s endowment.

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