ITM is proud to announce that the Selection Committee has chosen Aleksandra (Ola) Stepnik, Tamar Benshalom, and Yihyun (Kara) Kim as co-recipients of the 2016-2017 PVH Inc. scholarships. They were so impressive that PVH intends to augment the scholarship funds allocated by FIT’s board of trustees to ensure that each of them receives $5,000.

The Selection Committee included Guy Vickers, President of The PVH Foundation and Senior Vice President of Global Community Relations at PVH Corp.; Amy Anderson, University Program Manager, Talent Acquisition of PVH Corp.; Joanne L. Krakowski, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Mat and ITM alumna; Estefania Garcia-Correa, PVH scholar 2014 and Account Executive for Latin America Business Development, Vilebrequin; and John Garcia, PVH (formerly Warnaco Inc. Group) scholar in 2009 and currently in transition from Project Manager at NBC Universal to Marketing Specialist at BBC Latin America in Florida.

The applicants were so impressive, indicating their passion for International Trade and Marketing as well as philanthropy, that the Committee wished it could award scholarships to all of them.

Ola highly impressed the committee with her calm and professional manner, humility and self-awareness, sharp political conviction, and commitment to volunteering as President of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Club, which aims to educate students on the value of CSR by networking with fashion industry professionals. She is also actively planning for the College’s Fashion Revolution Day Committee events to highlight the effects of the Rana Plana catastrophe as well as current labor issues and solutions. Ola is involved with Bushwick Cooperative, a member-owned grocery store that works to increase access to affordable, healthy, and responsibly-produced food.

Prof. Guillermo Jimenez gave his highest recommendation of Ola for her praiseworthy dedication to work while genuinely demonstrating excellent interpersonal skills, infusing her passion for the corporate good, and personally broking the merger of the CSR and the Sustainable Design Clubs.

Prior to joining ITM, Ola completed her Bachelor of Science Degree in Interdisciplinary Economic-Managerial Studies at the University of Warsaw in Poland where she completed her theses in “Priming Phenomena and Its Value for Marketing in Fashion Market” and “Economical and Ethical Aspects of Garment Sweatshops in Bangladesh”. She is currently a Marketing and Sourcing Intern at Le Souk Co. in New York and was Administrative Assistant at Phoenocean Ltd. In Poland.

Going forward, given her deep entrenchment in ethical fashion, Ola aspires to pursue a successful career in social responsibility and transparency in the supply chain, connecting it to PVH’s own values. Taking advantage of ITM’s mentoring program, she has met PVH’s Senior Vice President of Supply Chain and Sourcing at Calvin Klein, gaining valuable insight on preparing for her future career. She would also like to augment her language skills in Polish and Spanish with Chinese and French.

In her selection as this year's scholarship recipient, the committee recognized Tamar primarily for her vivid depiction of the challenges she faced as Production Assistant at Alexander Wang while applying her knowledge of ITM to resolve these issues. She relished the opportunity to create this position after performing as the brand’s Development Assistant and thrived in its fast paced environment. Tamar has interned at The Row and Mancy Coon in New York, was Assistant to the Designer at Lee Petra Grebenau, and Head Salesperson and Assistant Buyer in Tamarindi, both in Israel. Prior to transferring to Production Management before joining ITM, Tamar started her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree
major in Fashion Design at Shenkar College of Design and Engineering and completed two years of military service in the Israel Defense Force.

Tamar volunteered to assist Israeli students in navigating academic registration, housing issues, health resources, and more as part of a peer-to-peer network at Israelis in New York Council. She also contributed to the preparations for Tanya Taylor’s runway show as well as Tel-Aviv's Fashion Week in 2012, helped design costumes for the Haifa Theater children’s program, and employed her equestrian skills in a therapeutic horse-riding program aimed at rehabilitating kids and teens with physical and behavioral challenges.

Ultimately, Tamar envisions leveraging all aspects of her academic and professional experiences with her design talent, global business acumen, and management skills to foster an environment of innovation, creativity, and freedom to serve as a role model for her team. Prof. Lawrence Delson confirmed in his recommendation of Tamar her keen ability to apply work experiences to class situations while enriching her knowledge with new lessons.

In selecting Kara, the committee expressed admiration for her immersion into helping Korean farmers grow organic fruits and harvest crops through sustainable methods while working with SK Engineering & Construction Co., Ltd. where she managed contractual documents of project teams and dealt with bonds as well as foreign exchange. While assisting buyers and contractors at an international level there, she was exposed to international trade and contractual policies that drew her to the discipline.

When she returned to school to pursue her ITM degree, Kara became particularly interested in logistics and international trade compliance involving social responsibility and environmental sustainability, intending to prepare for a customs broker license in South Korea and develop her career in these areas. She is also minoring in International Politics to broaden her knowledge of politics, history, conflicts, cultures, and human rights.

Kara was also a Sales and PR Intern at Greg Mills Ltd. in New York, Kazakhstan Proposal Team Intern at Daelim, and Fashion Design Intern at Nobland International Inc., both in South Korea.

In his strong recommendation of Kara, Prof. Guillermo Jimenez cited her attentiveness, well-researched writing assignments, excellent exam results, and deep commitment to community volunteer work as reasons for standing out as a scholarly student and admirable humanitarian. In relating these qualities to her professional philosophy, she indicated being especially inspired by PVH’s leadership in compliance, expressing a desire to challenge herself in this field, especially in light of PVH-owned brands, Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger, being so well loved in South Korea and being particularly moved by PVH's support of Save the Children.

In addition to her volunteering activities mentioned above, as a member of Good Neighbors, Kara translated letters from sponsored children in Africa to their Korean sponsors. She also participated in church activities by delivering coal briquettes to warm homes of low-income households in South Korea. In the US, she distributed bread from Panera to families in need as well as delivered leftovers to the local church associated with the food bank. Kara also helped her host mother paint murals for low-income youth and reveled in the recipients’ excitement.

We hope that you will all join us in congratulating Ola, Tamar, and Kara as the new PVH Corp. ITM scholars!