Ralph Lauren Corp. and New Times Group 2017 Scholarships Awarded

GABRIELLA MANDUCA, TAMAR BENSHALOM, ERIKA RENSTROM, AND ALEKSANDRA STEPNIK SELECTED TO SPLIT SCHOLARSHIPS TOTALLING $17,000 AND ORIANA DELGADO PICKED TO RECEIVE NEW TIMES GROUP SCHOLARSHIP FOR $2,800

We are pleased to announce that the Selection Committee has chosen Gabriella Mandula, Tamar Benshalom, Erika Renstrom, and Aleksandra (Ola) Stepnik as co-recipients of academic year 2017’s Ralph Lauren Scholarships and Oriana Delgado as the beneficiary of the 2017 New Times Group ITM Scholarship.

The committee was composed of David Uricoli, Vice President of Global Human Rights Compliance at Ralph Lauren Corporation; Robin Solow, Senior Director of Global Talent Management at Ralph Lauren Corporation; Meghan Campbell, Coordinator of Global Talent Management, Human Resources at Ralph Lauren Corp.; Paul Magel, President of Business Applications and Technology Outsourcing Division at Computer Generated Solutions and ITM Advisory Board member; Claudia Huerta, International Business Consultant and L’Oreal and ITM alumna; and Analeesa Ciampi, Trade Compliance Specialist, Louis Vuitton Americas and ITM alumna.

The recipients were selected from a strong pool of candidates with commendable volunteering credentials as well as future aspirations in international trade and marketing. They stood out in terms of their passion, drive, commitment, humility, and excellent communication skills.

**Gabriella** was initially drawn to ITM when she saw the Museum at FIT’s exhibition, Faking It: Originals, Copies, and Counterfeits, because it drove home issues concerning authenticity and copyright protection against knock-offs and counterfeits in the international creative industries.

In addition to being a Presidential Scholar, Gabriella is currently studying in Florence, Italy as a recipient of the Jerome L Greene Foundation Scholarship to pursue her Italian Studies and English minors. She was a Peer Writing Consultant at FIT’s Writing Studio, researched “Checking In: Monitoring Tutor Assumptions throughout their Writing Center Experience and Beyond” and presented it at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, and was Professor’s Assistant at FIT and New York University.

As a lifetime swimmer, Gabriella volunteered at the Special Olympics nonprofit organization, working in undermanned, underfunded, and overcrowded conditions with young kids and adults having developmental and physical disabilities.

Influenced by her Italian background, research, and ITM education, Gabriella aims to pursue a career in intellectual property fashion law and relate her work to organizations like the International Chamber of Commerce’s Counterfeiting Intelligence Bureau, the World Trade Organization’s Intellectual Property Council, and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime.

**Tamar** relished her role in creating the Production Assistant position at Alexander Wang after working as the brand’s Development Assistant. She interned at The Row and Mancy Coon in New York, was Assistant to the Designer at Le 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.

**Erika** is a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) intern at Nudie Jeans, where she is educating department store sales associates on the company's CSR initiatives as well as creating CSR discussion strategies with its Sales Director. Prior to that, she was a Sales Intern at WWDMagic, Market Researcher at Solidar Fondservice in Sweden, and Vattenfall AB also in Sweden.

She is currently Treasurer of Half the Sky at FIT, where she manages the financial account of a women's empowerment club that aims to raise awareness on gender inequalities. Erika is also a member of the Corporate Social Responsibility Club, is involved in Liberty Humane Society, and helps people deal with their personal challenges through 7 Cups of Tea. In the past, she was a member of the National Retail Federation Students Association and helped to fundraise for leukemia research at Cornhole for a Cause.

In addition to English, Erika is proficient in Swedish, Norwegian, and German and converses in French and Chinese.

Consistently interested in immersing herself in ethical initiatives, Erika strives to work for companies, like Eileen Fisher or Patagonia, which are already committed to strategic CSR, initially as an export/import agent with the view to gaining practical experience in sourcing and production as her experience expands.

**Ola** is 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.
Citing her father as her role model, Oriana believes that goals are achievable through hard work and volunteering can lead to professional expertise. In doing so, she learned the intricacies of the fashion industry's sourcing, production, trade processes from fabric to culturally rich produced merchandise displayed in stores. As an immigrant witnessing her family's transition to the American economic system and social practices, she is valuing her experiences and education even more.

Oriana is currently Assistant of Product Development at Funky Soul, initiating market research and analyzing findings on customer and market opportunities, working with sponsors and investors, contributing to marketing plans, pricing, and competitive analysis, sourcing and executing pre-production development by closely working with overseas suppliers, and collaborating with designers and buyers on the development of their seasonal collections from concept to finished product.

She volunteered at a local primary school in Venezuela when professors went on strike, winning the respect of fifth graders when she supported them in gaining the education they deserved. Oriana also helped nurses take care of patients at a hospital in North Carolina. Expressing her passion for animals, Oriana consistently returns to assist with caring for rescued animals at Proamar in Nueva Esparta. Demonstrating her flair for style, she also lent support to Rosa Clara Bridal's fashion show during New York City Bridal Week.

In his enthusiastic recommendation of Oriana, Dr. Praveen Chaudhry highlighted her intelligence, perception, awareness, motivation, organization, responsibility, and high academic standing in his classes. She is multi-lingual with fluency in Spanish, English, and French.

Looking ahead, Oriana plans to focus on international trade law in her current employer, then help to lead it to emerge from a product recognized in Latin American into a global fashion brand.

We hope that you will all join us in congratulating Gabriella, Tamar, Erika, and Ola as ITM's new Ralph Lauren Corp. ITM scholars and Oriana as next year's New Times Group scholar.