



The Wind Her Beneath Wings

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— Jillian Hall '13

BY KRISTIN KLOBERDANZ

When Jillian Hall '13 arrived at University of the Pacific as a freshman in 2009, the Merced, California, native was a highly accomplished student eager to excel in speech-language pathology. She was one of only 17 students that year to be selected from a pool of more than 450 applicants to join the Powell Scholars Program. But even Hall, a savvy academic with great aspirations, says she could not have imagined then how this scholarship would allow her to take flight over the next few years.

“I suddenly had a lot of opportunities to experience,” says Hall.

Today she is studying abroad in France, adding fluent French to the conversational Spanish she acquired during a language immersion program in Guatemala last summer. She worked with children at the Scottish Rite Language Center in Stockton and launched an on-campus Progressive Christian Alliance group. She was the online chair for Pacific Relay For Life and was the finance coordinator for the Residence Hall Association last year. She attends cultural events off campus and mentors Honors freshmen as a peer advisor. In her spare time, she is researching and writing a novel, a prequel to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, as part of her senior project. A double major in speech-language pathology and French, she has managed to hold two on-campus jobs and maintain a 3.89 GPA.

1: At their annual retreat, Powell Scholars Director Cynthia Wagner Weick helps new scholars establish their personal goals for the program.

2: As part of her speech-language pathology program, Jillian Hall '13 worked with children at the Scottish Rite Language Center in Stockton.

3: During a Spanish-language immersion program in Guatemala last summer, Hall volunteered to teach sign language at a local school.

4: Hall and local schoolchildren generate energy kicking the sOcket at the Powell Scholars Emerging Leader Award event honoring the device's inventors.

THE 9 DIMENSIONS OF POWELL SCHOLARS

1. Initiate a group, movement or organization on or off campus
2. Demonstrate leadership in an area of interest
3. Demonstrate an original scholarly or artistic contribution
4. Demonstrate an in-depth connection to the Stockton community
5. Apply for a prestigious national fellowship or scholarship
6. Cultivate cultural experience (concerts/art exhibits/lectures)
7. Gain international exposure and multicultural competence
8. Gain hands-on experience in one's field
9. Demonstrate academic excellence (be among the top students academically in one's respective field)

Hall would be a standout on any campus. But as a Powell Scholar, she is part of an extraordinary group of students who channel their wide-ranging talents and diversity of interests into community leadership. These extremely well-rounded, highly intelligent young

men and women have been rewarded not only for their academic achievement, but also their resourcefulness and creativity in working with others. There are 42 Powell Scholars in the program for the 2011–12 academic year, and their impact on campus can be witnessed everywhere from organized blood drives, to musical productions, to lectures by visiting scholars and artists.

The program was established in 2007 with an estate gift bequeathed to the University by Pacific Regent Jeannette Powell and her late husband, former Regent Robert C. Powell. The Powells wanted to provide assistance to highly capable students who might not otherwise realize their educational goals.

“The idea was to support a program that would foster both academic and leadership skills in highly talented students across all majors,” says Cynthia Wagner Weick, director of the Powell Scholars Program. The program is structured to provide a breadth of experiences, including international and research opportunities and creative endeavors.

“We address leadership in all its complexity. It’s not always about position, but about being out ahead, pushing the boundaries of a field,” says Weick. “We tailor the program to the students’ own interests and abilities.”

Each year since 2009, only about 15 exceptional high school students join the program. They represent a range of remarkable leadership experiences and typically have an average high school GPA of 3.9 and average combined SAT scores of 1400. For fall 2011, a record number of 596 applicants from across the United States sought to become Powell Scholars.

The Powell Scholarship made it possible for Hall to attend Pacific, her dream school. It also has opened her eyes to the many educational and career opportunities that are available to dedicated students.

The award includes a \$15,000 renewable annual scholarship, as well as up to \$5,000 for research and creative activity, and up to \$2,500 toward study abroad. Scholars have studied art in rural communities in China, attended the Innovation Institute in South Africa, and studied sports management and globalization in England. Last summer, Brianna Juhrend ’13 studied watershed protection and sustainable development in the United States, Russia and Mongolia at the highly competitive Tahoe-Baikal Institute Summer Exchange Experience.

“This program is very much devoted to making sure that we have the resources to fulfill our goals,” says Hall. “We’re always pointed in the right direction.”

During the five-week language immersion program in Guatemala last summer, Hall also picked up

Guatemalan sign language and volunteered with a local nonprofit teaching children and young adults. She also spearheaded an effort to help one of the nonprofit schools create a library for the students.

“She was an outstanding student of Spanish and a wonderful ambassador for Pacific,” says Professor Katie Golsan, the founder and director of Pacific’s Guatemalan Summer Spanish Immersion Program.

As the first class to attend the full four years as Powell Scholars, Hall and her peers have helped Professor Weick shape the multifaceted curriculum.

“The program evolves on the basis of what the students want it to become,” says Weick. “I just provide the framework within which they operate.”

As freshmen, they attend a Powell Scholars seminar with Professor Weick and other mentors who help them establish their goals for the upcoming years. Each scholar is encouraged to fulfill nine dimensions that are designed to cultivate academic excellence, leadership and creativity (see inset). At an annual retreat, they discuss the program’s mission statement and how the nine dimensions can be adapted to their individual needs and initiatives.

The Powell Scholars’ motto is to be “elite without being elitist.” This is exemplified in these students’ efforts to improve their surroundings by becoming ingrained in the fabric of the community. Scholars have served as vice president of the Associated Students (ASuop), captain of Pacific’s crew team and president of the Theta Chi social fraternity.

“Powell Scholars are thoughtful and engaged,” says math professor Chris Goff. “They definitely want to have a meaningful experience at Pacific and are willing to work to make that happen.” He says his department has been greatly enhanced by a math club launched by two Powell Scholars, Alicia Still ’13 and Mike Abram ’11.

In addition to pushing themselves to personal excellence within their own fields, the Scholars strive to make the campus and community more stimulating through their various initiatives. Last spring, Hall and fellow Powell Scholar Elizabeth Youngberg ’12 spearheaded an Emerging Leader Award to recognize young people who have leveraged their talents to make a difference in the world. Four Harvard women who invented an energy-producing soccer ball (the internationally praised sOcket) were selected to receive

the inaugural award and were invited to campus for a public lecture. The Powell Scholars were the only student group to host an inaugural event for President Pamela A. Eibeck in 2009, dedicating in her honor a commissioned photomural of Muir Woods now on display in Holt-Atherton Library.

“I really enjoy working with the other Scholars,” says Youngberg. “I’ve been able to connect with students I normally wouldn’t have connected with. I’ve felt a very strong bond with this group of people who share the same work ethic and same ideas about how to be a good student and leader.”

The founders hope this camaraderie and intellectual networking will endure into the Scholars’ future. To support their collaborative activity, the University has provided for a dedicated meeting space in Callison Hall.

“Thanks to Jeannette Powell, we were able to remodel the building as the Scholars’ own study and creative space,” Dr. Weick says. “It’s an intellectual home that will allow them to interact in ways they haven’t before and let their collective imagination soar.”

As more of these students are awarded prestigious fellowships and grants and publish or present their work in scholarly and artistic forums, the spotlight will increasingly shine on Pacific. And the lives of these young men and women will forever be altered.

“The Powell Program has pushed me to explore new avenues that, before entering Pacific, I never saw myself achieving,” Hall says. “Studying abroad was a dream I thought was impractical for my major. The Powell Program inspired me to challenge that notion and work hard, pushing against what I thought was set for me and, in fact, earning the opportunity to spend a semester in France.”

Whether she applies for a Rhodes scholarship in the future or continues on to graduate school for speech-language pathology, there is no doubt that Hall and her fellow Powell Scholars will continue to push the envelope, enlightening themselves and others along the way.

Where Are They Now?

Since its inception in 2009, the Powell Scholars Program has sought to support distinguished students’ pursuit of leadership in a wide variety of disciplines. Below is an update on recent Powell Scholar graduates who continue to garner national recognition in their extraordinary academic pursuits.

Mike Abram '11 (Math/Music) is attending graduate school for mathematics at University of Southern California.



Carolyn Stark '11 (Biology) is attending graduate school at University of Colorado, Boulder.

Benjamin Alldritt '10 (Mechanical Engineering) earned a Fulbright Award for research in Finland, and has since been named chief operating officer at Kumera Oy in Helsinki.



Laura Stewart '10 (Biology) is pursuing a doctor of dental surgery at Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry.

Catherine Cloud '09 (International Studies) is development coordinator at the Center for a New American Security and is earning a master’s degree at Georgetown University.



Joe Styers '11 (International Studies) earned a Fulbright Award to teach in South Korea.

Seema Ghatnekar '10 (Biology) is attending law school at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.



Rosana Abeyta Torres '11 (Sport Sciences) is attending graduate school in sport sciences at the University of Southern California.

Grant Hollis '09 (Civil Engineering) was a Rhodes Scholar finalist in 2009 and is attending graduate school at the California Institute of Technology.



Amanda Tsoi '11 (Biology) is pursuing a doctor of dental surgery at Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry.

Jarrett Heskett '10 (Education) earned a master’s degree in education and is teaching at an Aspire school in Stockton.



Seth Urban '09 (Biochemistry) is in medical school at the University of Southern California.

Kelly Johnson '10 (Speech-Language Pathology) is pursuing a graduate degree in speech-language pathology at Pacific.



Anastasya Uskova '11 (Graphic Arts) is pursuing her JD at Pacific McGeorge School of Law, where she won the prestigious Kennedy Scholarship.