



**Laidlaw Scholars Undergraduate Leadership and Research Programme**  
**End of Programme Reflection**

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## I. Summer Research

### A. On experience

I think my summer research experience was about what I expected. Honestly, the most attractive factor of the scholarship for me was NOT the global experience component or the money, rather it was the freedom to conduct research on any topic I wanted, with built-in guidance from both the administrators and my research advisor. For this, I am very grateful for such an intensive application process, and I am happy that I spent so much time with so many professors trying to narrow down what it is that I would like to study. I am still deeply passionate about disputed territories, and it feels as if I have found my niche and what I would like to continue studying for my masters and do as a full-time job.

One thing I learned about myself during this summer research is that I need something to keep me tethered. I had decided based on the previous year to take my research summer off and just focus on this. However, I found it hard to motivate myself when I was always inside. I definitely think that if I could have found something like a minimum wage job, something that consumed my time so I wasn't always free and telling myself to put off the research. This is something I learned about myself, and I am honestly very grateful to have learnt.

## II. Leadership Development Sessions

### B. On teams

The Leadership Development Sessions were my avenue to meet my fellow Scholars in a low-intensity setting. While the Laidlaw fellowship attracts mostly humanities or social

science-based research, which I think is EXCELLENT and I am very happy about this opportunity as a social science-based researcher, I also got some insight into how the scholarship works for the few Life Science or Computer Science students we had in the group. I think it was really interesting to learn how they overcame challenges like the shortage of budget for larger scale research, and what kinds of organizations they partnered with (and what their project was about).

I think there were select people I would not have met otherwise from the program, given factors such as different campuses or different fields of research, so it was really interesting to hear what is different when coming from different parts of the school. I met really good friends during these development sessions, which taught me a lot about different cultures and different styles of living that I would not have known otherwise. They are still some of the people I am closest to today as the program comes to a conclusion, and people I see myself maintaining communication with in the future. They are also people I am increasingly inspired by, as I see what kinds of organizations they partnered with, what they achieved during this time, and what kinds of work they are doing to this day.

### III. Leadership-in-Action

#### C. On individual

I think my leadership strengths is how quick I am to do things when asked of me in a professional setting. I had been told by my supervisor that I jumped on things quickly and achieved them quickly. I think that the character trait I worked the hardest to grow during my entire time as a Laidlaw Scholar was my perseverance. Scholars who get rejected need to build perseverance to get back up and apply again, and those who are applying need to build skills in

confidence in talking to professors and sharing their ideas. This program teaches you how to gain more confidence in yourself, professionally and as an individual. Programs and events like the Annual Scholars Conference, the Oxford Character Project, they teach you firsthand how to network and meet others, and also teach you how to present yourself and your work academically.

### Conclusion: Big Picture

As many have said before, this scholarship was life-changing. For me, not only did it reveal SO many new things about myself, small and large, but it also changed the trajectory of my life. For myself, applying for the scholarship showed me how perseverant I am when it comes to something I want; I know I have to keep trying until I get the scholarship, the experience, the internship etc..., and I won't let one setback hold me from achieving my goal. I also learned that I always need an anchor. Something as open-ended as independently conducted research, if not accompanied with a part-time job or with plans made, will just cause me to float endlessly. I also show this during my LiA experience, where I was lost for a few days with no plans, and resorted to staying home (how ridiculous is that?). On the trajectory of my life, I gave up doing a study abroad experience in order to conduct this scholarship, assuming that the global experience would serve as a replacement to study abroad, and I would get paid to do it. I don't have regrets, but certainly it does feel a bit strange to have missed out on such a life-changing experience as so many of my friends come back from their third-year study abroad. To add to this theme on life-changing, I am really glad that I picked the topic that I did, because I find disputed territories so fascinating, and so important to study, that I know I want to keep studying this into my master's, and maybe (hopefully) make a career out of it. I know now that my goal, at

least as it stands, is to represent communities and states that are not sufficiently recognized on the world stage. Having this drive, to represent underrepresented minorities, is how I will continue to act as a global citizen and lead ethically. And I would have not known about this if it hadn't been for Laidlaw.