

Fulbright Scholars Strong

By Elizabeth Kellner Suneby '80

Brown's rank as a top Fulbright producer reflects the University's commitment to preparing students to serve society, the nation and the world.

As a 2025-26 Fulbright Scholar, Tiffney Aina '25 conducted research at Paris-Saclay University to advance machine learning for diagnosing neurological conditions. She was well prepared to take on this challenge. As an undergraduate, Aina had gained experience in computational research at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, held a data science internship at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and written an undergraduate thesis on computational biophysical modeling of neural dynamics in Parkinson's disease. This tapestry of experiences prepared and inspired her to pursue the Fulbright grant.

"Brown shaped not just how I think but why I think the way I do," explains Aina. "Brown taught me how to bridge disciplines, challenge assumptions, and pursue ideas that don't always fit into categories."

Increasing Knowledge and Partnerships Globally

Brown ranks among the top producers of Fulbright scholars in the country, finishing first

five times over the past decade, most recently in 2025, and placing in the top three in other years. Since 1946, the U.S. State Department has awarded Fulbright grants for research and teaching in countries around the world.

The University's focus on supporting students in their pursuit of Fulbright scholarships reflects Brown's dedication to helping students connect their college experience with the impact they want to make in the world.

Brown's frequent top spot in the Fulbright rankings also highlights the success of policies and programs the College has implemented over the past decade to ensure undergraduates have access to engaged learning opportunities. From financial support to expanded hands-on learning, research and teaching opportunities, and strengthened advising, the University empowers students to engage with the world beyond Brown.

"Brown's Fulbright recipients join a global community committed to fostering relationships across borders and advancing

"There's so much confidence that you gain in an environment like Brown. I always felt empowered to pursue my own projects and passions."

— Marielle Buxbaum '24, 2024-25 Fulbright winner (Ecuador)

international cooperation," says Joel Simundich, the Anne Crosby Emery Associate Dean of the College for Fellowships. "Whether researching antimicrobial resistance in India, teaching English in South Korea, or studying housing cooperatives in Germany, their work helps build toward a brighter, more just world."

with support from Brown to pursue field research and data collection for her honors thesis on participatory budgeting.

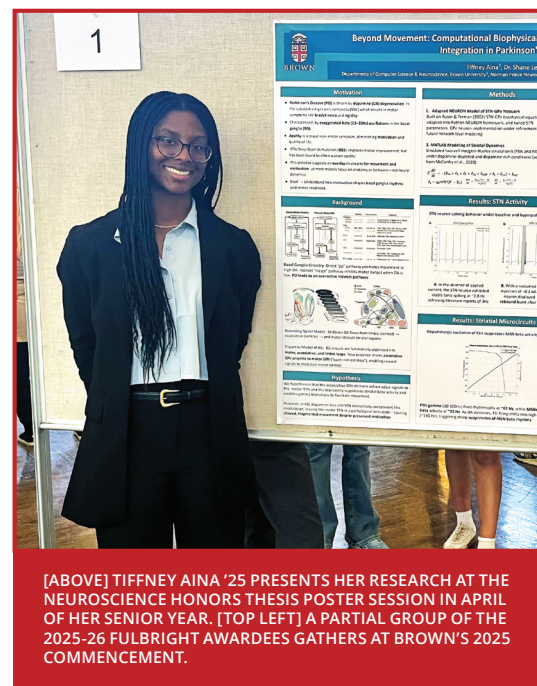
Fulbright teaching scholar Marielle Buxbaum '24, a theater arts and performance studies and literary arts concentrator, partnered with a municipal theater company in Ecuador to develop theater-based projects that empower vulnerable communities of young people. From curriculum development to language proficiency, every facet of Buxbaum's experience in Ecuador was shaped by her Brown education.

For other students, a Fulbright grant enables them to pursue an interest they discovered later at Brown. It wasn't until the final semester of senior year that computer science concentrator Michael Abela '22 took a climate solutions course that "rocked his world," guiding his career path. After working as a technology liaison for nonprofits, Abela received a Fulbright to apply his computer skills to support environmental research at the University of Stockholm. Thanks to a year-long Swedish language class he took during his freshman year, Abela is proficient in conversational Swedish.

"The Fulbright is a great way for me to generate research experience in a field that is new to me but draws on my background and builds on my momentum since graduation," Abela explained upon receiving the grant.

Empowered by the freedom of the Open Curriculum, Brown students gain confidence to undertake unique projects beyond graduation.

"Each year, Brown's recognition as a top-producing Fulbright institution reflects our phenomenal students, who forge unique postgraduate paths through teaching, rigorous scholarly inquiry, and service," says Simundich. "It is their careful self-examination and generosity of spirit that prepare them for the Fulbright."



[ABOVE] TIFFNEY AINA '25 PRESENTS HER RESEARCH AT THE NEUROSCIENCE HONORS THESIS POSTER SESSION IN APRIL OF HER SENIOR YEAR. [TOP LEFT] A PARTIAL GROUP OF THE 2025-26 FULBRIGHT AWARDEES GATHERS AT BROWN'S 2025 COMMENCEMENT.

Furthering Academic and Career Interests

Brown's Fulbright scholars' passions are as diverse as the student body. Many design their experiences to deepen the interests they explored at Brown.

Michelle Alas Molina '25, who concentrated in international and public affairs as well as Latin American and Caribbean studies, investigated participatory democracy and democratic resilience in Brazil as a research scholar. Molina visited Brazil twice as an undergraduate—first as a U.S. Department of Education Foreign Language and Area Studies fellow, and second

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