“MEET THE TALENT”: EXCELLENCE SCHOLARS SHOW OFF THEIR VARIED TALENTS
The ETH Zurich Foundation held its annual “Meet the Talent” event at the Hönggerberg campus on 27 April 2016. Following the address by Rector Sarah M. Springman, Excellence Scholars offered insights into their Master’s programmes and captivated the audience with their musical talents. The event closed with a reception, where some 180 donors and 90 ESOP scholars had the opportunity to become personally acquainted. ESOP is a great success story. Thanks to generous support from you, our donors, ETH Zurich was able to award a record of 53 scholarships this year, bringing the total to 336 outstanding Master’s degree students, who have received a scholarship since 2007. The results are impressive: in the past year, three Excellence Scholars were awarded the ETH Medal for outstanding Master’s theses, and two Scholars for their exceptional doctoral theses. Scholarship recipient Helene Wolleb received the Willi Studer Prize, which is awarded annually to the top student in each Master’s programme at ETH Zurich, and Scholarship recipient Marianna Serebryakova was chosen by the ESRI Development Center as the “Outstanding Student of the Year”. It is your support that makes these successes possible, so we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your commitment.
Elena Oleynikova Excellence Scholarship 2013
Elena completed her Master of Science in Robotics, Systems & Control. As a doctoral student, she is currently investigating how visual sensors can be used to prevent collisions involving flying drones.

“Leaving a well-paid industry career behind to begin a Master’s degree at ETH Zurich was a difficult decision, but the ESOP scholarship made it easier. Thanks to the scholarship, I can focus on my research without having to work on the side. Without a doubt, the scholarship helped me decide in favour of ETH — and I’m very glad I did.”

Elena Oleynikova, USA, Robotics, Systems & Control (D-MAVT)
currently a doctoral student in the Autonomous Systems Lab at ETH Zurich

Michel Frei Excellence Scholarship 2009
Michel began his career with vocational training as a structural draughtsman before going on to study architecture at ETH Zurich and Harvard Graduate School of Design. Today, Michel works as an architect in the renowned architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron.

“Thanks to the Excellence Scholarship, I was able to focus solely on my architectural studies. In addition, through a research project, the scholarship enabled me to delve deeper into urban development and thus acquire the fundamentals from which I still benefit as an architect today.”

Michel Frei, Switzerland, Architecture (D-ARCH)
currently Senior Architect at Herzog & de Meuron Architects, Basel

Mirjam Baumgartner Excellence Scholarship 2015
Mirjam is currently working on her Master’s degree in food science and is a fervent and active supporter of the International Association of Students in Agricultural and Related Sciences (IAAS) — a global network that promotes the future of world food and nutrition security.

“I want to do and create as many things as possible that have a positive impact on people and our environment. Thanks to the scholarship, I have more time to pursue my activities in the IAAS, which motivates me to continue being actively engaged.”

Mirjam Baumgartner, Switzerland, Food Science (D-HEST)

Martin Michel Excellence Scholarship 2012
After completing his Master’s degree at ETH Zurich in 2014, Martin moved to the UK. He is currently working on his doctorate at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge and recently published two articles in Molecular Cell and the EMBO Journal.

“The ESOP scholarship enabled me to complete my Master’s degree in world-class research groups at ETH. This helped me to refine my research interests, which inspired me to get a doctorate. Furthermore, I am convinced that the ESOP scholarship opened many doors for me in my academic career, and I am very grateful for that.”

Martin Michel, Switzerland, Structural Biology & Biophysics (D-BIOL)
currently a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge, UK
**INTERVIEW WITH RECTOR SARAH M. SPRINGMAN**

What do you personally think makes the ESOP scholarship so unique?

The scholarship recipients are a highly diverse group – they come from all fields of study at ETH and hail from all over the world. As they have to develop an individual research proposal for their application, we see many creative, dynamic and talented individuals apply.

Which careers do these talented young students begin after their Master’s programmes?

An above-average number of them pursue an academic career: 57% obtain a doctoral degree, with 36% of those doing so at ETH Zurich. It is striking that most ESOP scholars are not only talented in many areas but also actively involved in social issues. This puts them in a great position to launch a successful career.

You have been the Rector of ETH Zurich since January 2015, and are thus the official patron of the ESOP programme. What are your main tasks here?

I am responsible for the programme’s strategic focus and I keep in close contact with the programme donors. In addition, I have the honour of attending the “Meet the Talent” event. I am already looking forward to the interesting discussions that will take place there next year!

How important are donations for the ESOP programme?

The programme relies on support from companies, foundations and private patrons, so their donations are crucial. I can’t thank our donors enough for their generous and ever-growing support! It’s a great news story!

What advice would you like to give the ESOP scholars?

ETH Zurich is a great university, offering many opportunities that you should seize and make the most of. My advice not only for ESOP scholars, but for all of our students!

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**In which departments are the 2016 ESOPs going to study?**

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<th>Department</th>
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<td>Architecture</td>
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<td>Civil, Environmental &amp; Geomatic Engineering</td>
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<td>Chemistry &amp; Applied Biosciences</td>
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<td>Health Sciences &amp; Technology</td>
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<td>Computer Science</td>
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<td>Information Technology &amp; Electrical Engineer</td>
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<td>Management, Technology &amp; Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanical &amp; Process Engineering</td>
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<td>Environmental Systems Science</td>
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Talking with students, as we did for instance during last year’s excursion, is highly enriching for us. One of our primary aims with the ESOP programme is to foster talented young researchers and thus to counter the shortage of skilled specialists, particularly in the construction industry. By doing so, we invest in everyone’s future.

Anton Affentranger, CEO Implenia

EXZELLENZ ZIRKEL: A JOURNEY INTO SPACE

The ETH Zurich Foundation held its third Exzellenz Zirkel gathering on 19 January 2016 – this time focusing on outer space. In recognition of their ties to ETH Zurich, donors who have made contributions to the ESOP programme for five consecutive years are admitted to the Exzellenz Zirkel. The approximately 40 invited guests had the unique opportunity to talk with the Excellence Scholars and researchers in person.

As an ETH alumna, it is a great pleasure for me to help talented young students immerse themselves in the world of science, discover new things and become passionate about research, just as I could.

Dr Laura Keller, ETH alumna and member of the Exzellenz Zirkel

EXCHANGING IDEAS WITH PARTNER COMPANIES

In September 2015, around 30 ESOP scholars joined a one-day excursion to Implenia, the leading construction company in Switzerland. Following a personal welcome by CEO Anton Affentranger, the students learned about the company’s history, corporate culture and career opportunities, and visited “The Metropolitans” – an impressive residential project comprising two 19-storey high-rises in the north of Zurich. The scholars also took another excursion in autumn, this time to Sensirion, a successful ETH spin-off. Moritz Lechner, Co-Founder and Co-CEO, told the students all about the high-tech sensor company, which employs some 600 staff worldwide, and answered their many questions.

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR PARTNERS

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