

I write to bring to your attention the great prizes given by the economics department to junior and senior business and economics majors. On an annual basis, we distribute over \$180,000 in awards to our students, thanks to the generosity of our alumna, Mary E. O'Connor.

Mary, graduated from Queens College in 1950. She was many things: smart (a member of Phi Beta Kappa), hard-working, and accomplished, rising through the ranks at what is now AXA Equitable during her 41-year career at the firm. But above all, she was generous. Mary chose to include Queens College in her estate plan. She often expressed appreciation for the education she received—at no cost to her—and felt an obligation to help others enjoy the same benefits. She passed away in 2016 and left an endowment that provides awards to juniors and seniors majoring in economics or business. Below is a list of awards.

The **Mary O' Connor High Honors Award** is given to each student that completes the Honors Seminar (ECO392W or BUS392W) with an A- or higher. A student's grade in 392W is largely determined by their research project (Honors Thesis) grade. The research typically involves applying econometric techniques to an interesting question. For example, a recent paper addressed how New York State's tuition assistance plan changed income mobility.

The professors teaching the seminar will help you develop your thesis on a topic of your choice (in Economics or Business) with a quantitative focus. This typically involves the application of econometric methods to data suited to your research question. You can see a summary of some of the theses at http://qc-econ-bba.com/econ_senior_theses.html.

The prerequisites for ECO392W are Economics 202, 382 or Bus 384, and two of the following three courses, ECO 201, 215, and 328. Students must have a *B* average or above in their economics courses, and permission of the department (see the bulletin for the Bus392W prerequisites). During the 2019/20 academic year, we gave the \$4,000 award to thirteen students (the amount of this award may vary year to year).

The **Mary O'Connor Faculty Award** is given to students selected by faculty members. The faculty select students whose intellectual contributions are exceptional. This past academic year we gave \$1,000 per student. During the 2019-20 academic year over forty students were selected for this award.

The **Mary O'Connor Internship Award** is given to students to provide financial support for the completion of an internship. \$2,500 was the award amount this past year, and preference is given to students that are working for a non-profit organization or with the Queens College Tech Incubator. We anticipate giving out fourteen or more of these awards in the coming year.

We also grant awards of \$1,000 per semester to students who work with a faculty member as either a teaching or research assistant. Annually around eight students have been receiving this scholarship.

Finally, in recognition of the diverse talents of our students, we grant one \$2,500 award to a student for entrepreneurial work.

In closing, as you plan your fall 2021 and spring 2022 schedules, you should keep in mind these substantial awards. If you are interested in the awards, you should not wait until your senior year to take courses like ECO 202 and 382. Also, you should, schedule and seating permitting, take as many courses as possible with full-time faculty. You will benefit from their experience in teaching and research. Your opportunity to win one of these awards will be further enhanced if you engage with your Professors and the course material. Furthermore, your job market prospects will surely improve if you can show prospective employers your research talents through the presentation of an Honors Thesis.

If you have questions about these opportunities, please send your inquiries to econdept@qc.cuny.edu.