

## **TWO OU HONORS STUDENTS NAMED TRUMAN SCHOLARS**

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CONTACT: OU Public Affairs, (405) 325-1701

NORMAN – University of Oklahoma Honors juniors Caleb Gayle and Austin Slaymaker are recipients of the Truman Scholarship, a prestigious award based on a student’s leadership potential, intellectual ability and the likelihood of “making a difference.” This year marks the first time two OU students have won in the same year. OU also claimed a Truman Scholar last year.

Truman Scholarship recipients must be committed to careers in government or the not-for-profit sector. Each scholarship provides \$30,000 for graduate study. Sixty students from 54 U.S. colleges and universities received the award this year.

Gayle, the son of Norman and Diane Gayle of Tulsa, holds a 3.65 grade-point average (on a 4.0 scale) and is pursuing majors in international security studies and political science with minors in economics and Latin America studies.

He has listed Harvard University and Tufts University as his top choices for graduate studies as he pursues a doctorate in comparative political economy of development. Gayle’s career goals include research in the political economy of development at the World Bank Institute and an eventual policy position with the State Department Policy Planning Staff. Gayle’s interest in development stems from his Jamaican heritage.

A community organizer since he was 14, Gayle created a charitable organization in the ninth grade to help north Tulsans at Christmas, and two years later co-founded a political action committee to bring attention to the Greenwood area of Tulsa.

Gayle currently serves as Big 12 coordinator for the University of Oklahoma Student Association and focuses on initiatives that connect students within the Big 12 to their local, state and federal government leaders. He also organizes the Big 12 on the Hill conference that sends delegates from each school to discuss policy with their government representatives.

Gayle worked with the City of Norman to develop its first ever youth council composed of Norman area high school students. As the first freshman to receive a Carl Albert Research Fellowship, he developed two projects: the first examines voting technology and the second looks at ways to engage OU students in civic activities and the political process. The latter evolved into a campus voter registration drive that netted more than 2,300 new voters. In the past, Caleb has worked for the Mayor of Tulsa, the International Trade Office at the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies in Washington DC.

Among his many honors and awards are the Yoshiyama Award for Exemplary Service from the Hitachi Foundation, Outstanding Freshman, the H.O.P.E. Award as the top African-American freshman, and the P.A.C.E. award, given to the top 1 percent of his freshman class. He also is a member of the Leadership Scholars for the College of Arts and Sciences, awarded to the top 1 percent of students in each class, and Pe-et, OU's Top 10 senior honor society. Named to a University of California, Berkeley, Public Policy and International Affairs Law Fellowship, Gayle recently received the Sidley Austin Prelaw Scholarship.

Slaymaker, who holds a 3.86 GPA, is a political science and international studies major with minors in economics and religious studies. He is the son of Robert and Diane Slaymaker of Blanchard and of 2007 alumnus of Blanchard High School, where he was valedictorian.

After graduating from OU, Slaymaker hopes to participate in the Teach for America program and pursue joint degrees in public administration and law, planning to enter the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and Columbia University Law School. His long-range plans are to become a college professor and to serve in the Oklahoma Legislature.

Austin is interested in establishing an adaptive sports program for disabled students in Oklahoma public schools and launching a sports-related NGO (nongovernmental organization) that supplies adaptive sports equipment to developing countries. Co-founding the OU Chapter of the Association of Disabled Students his freshmen year, Slaymaker has served as both vice president and president and is currently the Treasurer. He also is active in the Honors College, Crimson Club, and wheelchair rugby, driving six hours each way between Norman and Austin, Texas, for practice.

Austin has interned for the OU Center for the Creation of Economic Wealth, the U.S. Department of Labor and a U.S. Congressman on Capitol Hill. Slaymaker has been a volunteer for the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence, the Muscular Dystrophy Association and as a crisis counselor for Number Nyne Crisis Line. A considerable time commitment is his position as an undergraduate teaching fellow for a University College course, which he has held for two years. As well as assisting the professor administratively, Slaymaker meets with students outside of class to present to them information about education abroad, internships, student organizations and advising.

A 2007 David L. Boren Commitment to Service Award recipient, Slaymaker also is a Regents' Scholar, a Robert C. Byrd Scholar and a member of the Oklahoma Academic All-State Class of 2007. Among 100 outstanding freshmen named to the President's Leadership Class, he also received the P.A.C.E. Award, given to the top 1 percent of the freshman class, as well as the 2008 Outstanding Freshman, 2009 Outstanding Sophomore and 2010 Outstanding Junior awards. A member of the College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Scholars Program, Slaymaker earned the Robert Dean Bass Memorial Scholarship for superior political science majors who plan a career in government and the Christopher DeJong Award for "efforts to pursue education that rise far above the efforts made by typical students."

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