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For Immediate Release

Macaulay Honors College Graduates are Among Thirty Recipients of the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans

(April 14, 2015, New York, NY) Two students, Amal Elbakhar '11 Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College and Evgeniya Kim '10 Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College are the proud recipients of the 2015 Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans. Elbakhar and Kim are among thirty recipients selected for their potential to make significant contributions to U.S. society, culture, or their academic fields, and were selected from a pool of 1,200 applicants.

“Winning the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans is a great achievement for Amal and Evgeniya and we are very proud of both students,” said Ann Kirschner, Dean of Macaulay Honors College. “We are especially proud that our college was able to provide a learning environment where two high-achieving students could demonstrate

The Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans program helps children of immigrants and immigrants who are pursuing graduate school in the U.S. In addition to receiving up to \$90,000 in funding for the graduate program of their choice, each new Fellow will join the prestigious community of recipients from past years, which includes Surgeon General of the U.S. Vivek Murthy, leading Ebola researcher Pardis Sabeti, Oscar health insurance co-founder Kevin Nazemi and more than 500 other New American leaders.

Amal Elbakhar has had one foot rooted in Arab immigrant culture and the other in the classroom of social justice since her family immigrated to New York City from Morocco when she was nine years old. Overcoming cultural barriers, Elbakhar was the first in her family to graduate from both high school and college. Soon she will be the first to obtain a graduate degree.

As a student at Macaulay Honors College Elbakhar dedicated her free time to the Emergency Department at Bellevue Hospital, challenging her family’s understanding of how she should prioritize her time. She also worked at the Center for Reproductive Rights, an organization whose views were incongruous with those of her own conservative upbringing. Unafraid of the differences,

Elbakhar studied the similarities in her religious beliefs and emerging consciousness of gender equality through her academic schoolwork. She wrote an award-winning honors thesis on Iran's healthcare laws for women, and a second thesis on the current legal status of reproductive rights in the United States.

Upon graduating from college, Elbakhar was awarded the Coro Fellowship in Public Affairs, an experiential leadership training program that prepares individuals for effective and ethical leadership in the public affairs arena.

As a student and campus leader at Harvard Law School, Elbakhar continues to focus on women's issues. As a future lawyer-advocate, she hopes to represent individuals facing adversities while promoting the principles of civil rights that underlie our social infrastructure.

Evgeniya Kim's heritage lies in four generations of border crossings. Born in what is now North Korea, Kim's ancestors moved to Russia's Far East in search of a better life. Falling victim to Stalin's repression, they were exiled to Central Asia and settled in Uzbekistan, where they faced marginalization. In 2002, Kim, who was 14 at the time, fled with her family from Uzbekistan to the United States, where they fell victim to a visa scam and were forced to spend eight months in a family shelter in Leesport, Pennsylvania before receiving asylum.

Kim was determined to succeed academically and convinced a principal of a school an hour and a half away from her home to admit her into their gifted program. Socially, she felt her Korean face and Russian culture questioned by her classmates, but on the tennis court, she saw the pressures of her life dissipate. She had represented Uzbekistan as a member of the national junior tennis team, and was able to use those skills in the United States to earn money for her family.

Aware of her unique background, Kim was always interested in the interplay of culture, politics, and social change. As a student at Macaulay Honors College, she pursued international relations and interned at the Open Society Foundations, helping to address the very human rights issues that her family faced in Uzbekistan. She supplemented her studies with real world experiences by volunteering abroad and traveling to more than 30 countries around the world.

Seeing that behind most social issues lie tangible business problems, Kim joined the Soros Economic Development Fund, where she analyzed the social impact of the fund's investments on 21.4 million people across 20 countries. Kim is currently pursuing her MBA at the Yale School of Management.

About Macaulay Honors College

Macaulay Honors College at The City University of New York offers exceptional students a uniquely personalized education with access to the vast resources of the nation's largest urban university and the largest city, New York City. Selected for

their top high school records and leadership potential, Macaulay students receive a full tuition scholarship, a laptop and technology support, and an Opportunities Fund to pursue global learning and service opportunities. Macaulay students enroll in one of eight CUNY senior colleges: Baruch, Brooklyn, City, Hunter, John Jay, Lehman, and Queens Colleges and the College of Staten Island. For more information, see macaulay.cuny.edu.

About the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans

Each year, the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans recognizes thirty new Fellows. PD Soros fellowship recipients from the past 17 years have gone on to start companies, compose celebrated works of music, serve as lawyers in the White House, teach political science and help develop new medicines.

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