

One Brooklyn college student wins Jeannette K. Watson fellowship

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Sophomore Maisha Kamal was the only Brooklyn College student to win the Watson Fellowship this year. PHOTO/ Maisha Kamal

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Macaulay Honors sophomore Maisha Kamal—a writer, reader, and art lover—was the only Brooklyn College student awarded the 2017 Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship. She is one of the fifteen students from schools around NYC to receive the opportunity.

“I didn’t think I was going to get it,” Kamal said. “In fact, I had applied to many other internships just in case I didn’t get this one. I don’t think you ever expect to get something, until you get it. And then you realize, ‘Ok, maybe I did deserve that.’”

According to its [website](#), “The Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship is a three year program that provides funded summer internships and unprecedented opportunities to promising undergraduate students from 12 New York City partner colleges.”

“It’s an amazing experience to grow and learn from other people,” Kamal said. “It’s also stability for the next three years.”

The entire application process, from writing essays to attending an interview, takes about six months; Kamal still encourages students to apply.

“It was like applying to college all over again,” Kamal laughed. “But in the end, it’s so worth it.”

As part of this fellowship, Kamal will be provided with three years of paid internships, career mentoring, seminars, and cultural events among many other benefits.

Just recently, Kamal was matched with an internship at Open Society Foundations—a non-profit organization which aims to “build vibrant and tolerant societies whose governments are accountable and open to the participation of all people,” according to its [website](#).

Kamal plans to become a lawyer, because she has a “huge interest in law and how the legal system affects the world,” she said. She is also interested in becoming an author.

“I started off writing as something I just did in class,” Kamal said. “But it became a really great way to express myself—to kind of experiment with different worlds and situations I would never be in. “

Kamal spends her free time taking pictures for a photography club called Humans of Macaulay. She is also the Vice President of IT and Communications in student government, and is currently in the midst of reading *The Anatomy of Ghosts*, a novel by Andrew Taylor.

What does she hope to gain from this fellowship?

“I want to learn how to be a better professional. A lot of it is building careers for yourself and learning important skills,” Kamal said. “But I just hope to grow and change as a person over the next three years.”