The University’s NHS recipients are chosen from the pool of students who have already received Regents’ Scholarships, awarded to students in the top 10 percent of their high school class with a combined SAT score of 1270 or higher. The Regents’ Scholarship supplies up to $17,000 toward tuition and the National Honor Scholarship covers the rest.

Eleven students made up the first group to receive the scholarship for the 2005–06 academic year, each with the excellent high school academic records that put them in the top echelon of entering college freshmen. And they were student council presidents and yearbook editors and club officers, besides. The National Honor Scholarship was established to help the University attract these high-achieving students.

This year’s recipients are just as impressive as that first group. Connor Goyette was designated an AP Scholar with Honor, which means he received an average score of at least 3.25 (in a range of 1–5) on all advanced placement exams taken, with scores of 3 or higher on four or more of those exams. He comes to the University from Sturbridge, Mass., where he was the geography bee champion at his high school and received the highest score for Tantasqua Regional High School on the annual Worcester Polytechnic Institute math competition.

As a member of the National Honor Society, Goyette participated in a food, clothing, and supplies drive for victims of a June 2011 tornado that devastated Springfield, Mass., and other towns in Massachusetts, including Sturbridge.

An undeclared engineering major, Goyette says he will use his first semester to take classes in the University of Hartford’s College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture to educate himself about the different aspects of engineering so that he can decide which one will be right for him.

Of his decision to come to the University of Hartford, Goyette says he had already made up his mind without the bonus of scholarships.

“I first found out about the University of Hartford at a college fair. I was impressed with how the University was presented at its booth, so I further researched the school and its programs. Everything I learned about the school was great, from the variety of majors and opportunities to its many clubs and extracurricular activities offered. I then went to visit the school, and that is when I truly realized that this is the school for me, I talked to people who previously attended the University, and they had nothing but good things to say.

“Receiving the scholarship was just a bonus. I had already fallen in love with the school, so receiving this scholarship was just icing on the cake.”

Kathryn Mitchell is from Easton, Md. She graduated as the valedictorian of her class from St. Michael’s Middle/High School in the neighboring town of St. Michaels.

Mitchell has been playing the piano for almost nine years. “I accompanied my high school’s musical productions in the orchestra and worked as a paid accompanist last summer for a local theater. I also often volunteered to play at Talbot Hospice House, a local charity that provides inexpensive medical care to the terminally ill,” says Mitchell, who brought a keyboard to campus with her to stay in practice.

As early as her junior year of high school, Mitchell says she decided to major in some area of business, and that positive reviews of the University’s business program encouraged her to apply to and enter the University of Hartford’s Barney School of Business. Mitchell is considering a major in marketing.

“I initially applied to the University of Hartford after hearing good things about the business school from a representative at a college fair; additionally, the location appealed to me—it is in a suburban area and has a beautiful campus but is close to several major cities.

“While I was very happy with the University and was considering it as a top choice before being offered the scholarship, I must say in all honesty that the scholarship was the largest factor in my decision. Other schools had offered some scholarship money, but the University of Hartford was the most generous,” says Mitchell.

Rukshan Vathupola, originally from Kandy, Sri Lanka, went to high school at Northwest High School in Germantown, Md. An AP Scholar with Distinction, he passed nine advanced placement examinations in various subjects, including world history, calculus, statistics, English literature, and physics. His award means that he had an average score of 3.5 on the advanced placement exams and scores of 3 or higher on five or more exams.

Vathupola is interested in languages. For his senior project in high school, he studied slang and how it influences the change in language over time. He says he has dabbled in Hebrew, Dutch, Japanese, Portuguese, Latin, and French. Vathupola also played electric bass in a heavy metal band called Levithan Rising with some of his friends.

Now planning to become an architecture major in the University’s College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture, Vathupola says that he considered other careers as well.

“Before I wanted to be an architect, I wanted to be an artist, a professional musician, a writer, a biologist, and a paleontologist, in that order. Ultimately I chose to become an architect because I love to draw.”

Mitchell’s decision to come to the University was influenced by the programs offered and the scholarships available to him.

“I applied to a lot of schools in New England, some in Maryland, and the rest were in California. I applied to the University of Hartford because they had a good program in architecture, I first got seriously interested in the University after I received a letter saying I would get scholarships to go here that would eliminate the cost of tuition. Eventually, after the acceptance letters from the other schools came back, I looked them over with my parents and realized that the University of Hartford was the best choice because it had the architectural engineering technology program and because of the scholarships they offered me.”

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