



Meet Jonathan Guggenmos: 2024 Kuhlman Undergraduate Scholarship Winner

Jonathan Guggenmos, 2024 Ruth M. Kuhlman Undergraduate Scholarship winner, recently applied his award funds to participate in a six-week study abroad program in Rome hosted through the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). During his time in Rome, Guggenmos focused on Greco-Roman mythology, exploring its influence on architecture and the Italian Baroque period. The opportunity to experience these subjects in their historical context was a long-awaited dream.

"The program allowed me to gain an intimate understanding of the monuments and artifacts that I have spent such a long time looking at in books and on screens," Guggenmos said.

This on-site academic experience not only deepened his understanding of classical antiquity but also reinforced his future aspirations. After completing his undergraduate degree, Guggenmos plans to pursue graduate studies with the goal of becoming a classical archaeologist.

"The intimate, firsthand experience of the relevant material that I received while abroad along with the academic connections fostered better enables me to gain admission into the master's programs that I am currently looking at," Guggenmos said.

Guggenmos is exploring graduate programs at institutions such as the University of Arizona–Tucson, University of Colorado–Boulder, University of Michigan–Ann Arbor, and the Kapodistrian University of Athens.



Jonathan Guggenmos (left)

"This abroad experience furnishes me with the necessary experiences and connections to excel in my future study of classical archaeology—wherever that may be," he said.

Guggenmos has now studied in both Rome and Athens during his time at UW-Madison.

"I have seen both cities with my own eyes: breathed their history, and I cannot help but feel mildly emotional," he said. "I left my high school six years ago thinking my life was going to be working twelve-hour shifts on a factory line: week-in and week-out. I truly mean that; I had no plans to go to college after high school."

Guggenmos said that he had no idea how to navigate the college application process. His parents hadn't attended college, and while his older sister had, she lived out of state and the two weren't in close contact.

"With that preface, it's bizarre to be where I am now—in a good way, of course," Guggenmos said. "The dichotomy of my life stories—that of the factory worker of middle Wisconsin and that of the globe-trotting classicist—was made a reality in part via the funds offered to me through the department's Ruth M. Kuhlman scholarship. I am indebted, and I am thankful."

Currently, Guggenmos is studying at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens for its 2025 Summer Session; a program that has provided extensive exposure to Greece, ancient and modern, for generations of students of Classics and related fields. It has a strong academic component with participants researching and presenting topics on site and offers unique opportunities to interact with eminent archaeologists in the field. Roughly half of the session is spent in travel throughout Greece, and is designed to present a comprehensive view of Greece's rich history and archaeology.

Enrollment in this program is very competitive; it is only open to the most advanced undergraduate students of Classics and limited to just twenty participants. Summer Session participation can open the doors to professional connections, mentoring, fieldwork opportunities, and scholarly support for years to come.

"At this point, it goes without saying how significantly these types of funds can affect a student," Guggenmos said. "So, to those who are considering funding awards like the Ruth M. Kuhlman scholarship, know this: your generosity is impactful and equips tomorrow's professionals with today's imperative experiences and connections."