
For Immediate Release
Tuesday, 27 March 2018
Washington D.C., United States

British Council celebrates UK Alumni in the United States

On Monday, 26 March 2018, the British Council announced the recipients of the Study UK Alumni Awards 2018 at an award ceremony hosted at the British Embassy Ambassador's Residence in Washington D.C. In total, three UK alumni were recognised for their outstanding achievements as business professionals, entrepreneurs and community leaders, and for their important contribution to strengthening collaborative ties between the UK and US.

The prestigious international award celebrates UK higher education and the achievements of UK alumni all over the world. Now in its fourth year, the award received thousands of applications from international UK alumni in a record 123 countries, representing more than 140 UK higher education institutions across the UK. Following in-depth interviews with a judging panel, recipients were selected for the three award categories: Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurial, and Social Impact.

The Professional Achievement Award, which recognises alumni who have distinguished themselves through exemplary leadership in their professional field, was presented to Srilakshmi Raj, a graduate of University of Cambridge and the University of Oxford. Srilakshmi is a human geneticist at Cornell University, where she is currently researching how genetic variation acts in different environmental contexts to predispose to complex disease, particularly heart disease and diabetes. She said, "Going to school in the UK was the best decision I made in my life. Attending both Oxford and Cambridge transformed the vision I had for my career, ignited the passion I have for public health, and introduced me to life long friends and mentors. The experience is one that I will treasure for the rest of my life."

The Social Impact Award, which acknowledges alumni who have made an exceptional contribution to creating positive social change, was presented to Dr. Jonas Nguh, a graduate of University of Dundee. Jonas is Professor of the Graduate Nursing Program at Walden University and a global health practitioner specializing in maternal new-born and child health. Upon accepting his award, Jonas shared "I would like to thank the British Council USA for this honor, and special thanks to the University of Dundee for shaping me to become an agent of positive social change. I remain grateful for the experience and education I received from the University of Dundee and my time in the UK will remain one of the highlights in my educational career. It broadened my worldview and made me realize that no matter where we are from, we are more alike than we are different. I am grateful to be a little beacon of light to someone else in this world."

The Entrepreneurial Award, which highlights alumni who have played a leading role in business innovation, was presented to Alireza Tahmasebzadeh, a graduate of Imperial College London. Alireza is the co-founder of BLOCKS Wearables Inc., a technology start-up developing wearable technology solutions. Upon winning, Alireza shared "The prestigious award ceremony organised by British Council USA was yet another great reminder of the world-class UK higher education. I would like to thank President Alice Gast, Imperial Entrepreneurs, Imperial Startup Incubator, and Imperial Innovations for making Imperial College London the startup hub that it is today."

Michael Tatham, Deputy Head of Mission to the USA, said: "The UK has a world class Higher Education sector and is the top destination for US students to study abroad. These awards highlight the achievements of those who have studied in the UK and demonstrate how their studies have had a positive impact in the UK, US and internationally. My warmest congratulations to the finalists."

Leigh Gibson, Director USA at the British Council, said: “The special relationship between the US and the UK is built on trust, a shared history and mutual understanding, nurtured by the hundreds of thousands of people who have chosen to broaden their horizons by traveling abroad to study and gain a rich understanding of another culture, a thought-provoking academic experience and warm lifelong relationships. We are thrilled to celebrate this great programme of transatlantic exchange and send the 2017 - 2018 winners and finalists our congratulations.”

For more information, please contact:

Justine Gamez
Head of Strategic Communications and Marketing
Justine.gamez@britishcouncil.org

Notes to Editors

About the Study UK Alumni Awards

The Alumni Awards were developed by the British Council and UK universities, and were launched by the British Council in September 2014. They are open to alumni currently residing in any country outside the UK, who have studied in the UK, at an officially recognised provider of UK university degree level study for a minimum of a term or semester, or who have been awarded a full UK degree level qualification (or higher), by a UK university, within the last 15 years.

Award winners and finalists are leaders in their fields who have used their experience of studying at a UK university to make a positive contribution to their communities, professions and countries. The Alumni Awards celebrate and showcase the impact and value of a UK higher education and raises the profile and reputation of UK alumni, their former universities, and the whole of UK education.

Awards are presented in three categories:

Professional Achievement Award

Recognises alumni who have distinguished themselves through exemplary leadership and achievements in their professional industry, and who can demonstrate the scale of their achievements and how they have made a strong and positive difference to their profession and society.

Entrepreneurial Award

Successful applicants in this category will be active in initiating, or contributing to, innovative new business opportunities with strong growth prospects.

Social Impact Award

The Social Impact Award acknowledges alumni who have made an exceptional contribution and commitment to creating positive social change and improving the lives of others

Study UK Alumni Award winners will be announced in India, date for the ceremony in April but we can announce the winners digitally end March 2018. India is the last of 12 high-profile national level Alumni Awards this year. These will be followed by a digital campaign announcing the 63 Regional Alumni Award finalists and 21 winners in April. The 21 winners will be profiled on our Study UK social media platforms and website, and we'll be working with all posts to amplify the reach of the campaign. Regional Awards will be followed by the campaign to announce the Global Award winners in May.

For full details about the Study UK Alumni Awards please refer to:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/education-uk-awards>

For a list of 2016-17 Study UK Alumni Award recipients, please refer to:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education-uk-awards/winners/2017>

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

We work with over 100 countries across the world in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year we reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body.

For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through <http://twitter.com/britishcouncil> and <http://blog.britishcouncil.org/>.

Full-resolution photos are available on request.