



*From the Office of the American Secretary*

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To Rhodes Scholarship Institutional Representatives, and Members of NAFA:

**RENEWED ENCOURAGEMENT TO DO SECOND BAs AT OXFORD**

Longer-serving advisors will recall the days when most U.S. Rhodes Scholars did second BA degrees, i.e., an Oxford BA degree after obviously having completed an American bachelor's degree. Before 1985 or so, most Americans did BAs at Oxford. Since then, with the multiplicity of new and "practical" one-year masters' degrees, and with the continued popularity of the classic two-year MPhils, and greater numbers of Americans doing DPhils, the numbers doing BAs have greatly declined. At the same time, sentiment in Rhodes House had evolved to do little to reverse that trend.

But we are now urging more Scholars-elect again to consider the BA. It remains in my opinion, and that of the new Warden, perhaps the best degree offered by Oxford. More important, the experience of recent/current American Scholars doing BAs is simply the best of any Scholars—and the Warden and Registrar are willing to do the greater work involved in seeking Scholar placements into BAs. As reminders, those electing BAs need be prepared to apply for them almost immediately after election, and may not show a college preference. And they will need to be prepared to submit an application for some graduate degree as well given the difficulty of BA admissions.

I will be addressing this in my letter and counsel to Scholars-elect, with glowing testimonials from those doing BAs, but I wanted you to be aware now that we will provide even greater encouragement to those interested in BAs.

Of course, as always, the particular degree preferred by applicants is not material to selection as a Rhodes Scholar. That is, selectors will not care, all other considerations being the same, whether an applicant hopes to do a BA, a master's degree or a doctorate.

In brief, and I will explain this in more detail to the Scholarship winners, the uniqueness of Oxford is principally in the tutorial teaching method, which is primarily available to those reading for the BA degree. Moreover, these courses are broad, and allow the genuine intellectual exploration of critical topics that is simply not possible in the one-year MScs. Students taking the second BA also have the freedom to travel and read in ways, again, not possible for those doing one-year masters' degrees.

Also, as new policy of The Rhodes Trust, we will for the first time formally indicate that we will fund second BAs that for undergraduates would take four years. That is, in addition to funding the majority of Oxford BAs—those that for undergraduates take three years (two with Senior Status by virtue of already having a BA or BS, such as in PPE, History, English, Law, etc.)—we will fund BAs that can be done in three years with Senior Status, i.e., those that take four years for undergraduates, e.g., Classics, Modern Languages, Oriental Studies and others.

Finally, another reminder: Oxford BAs become MAs seven years after beginning the BA course, so any of those concerned (unnecessarily by the way) about not having a symbol of a "higher" degree need not worry.

Thank you for all you do to support the Rhodes Scholarships, and best wishes to you and your students.



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