

# Thornton Tomasetti Foundation

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For Immediate Release

## Thornton Tomasetti Foundation Announces 2021-22 Scholarship and Fellowship Winners

(New York, N.Y. – January 31, 2022) – The [Thornton Tomasetti Foundation](#) (TTF) has awarded six graduate students — Luke Bastian, Annalena Bellm, Lucas Grafals, Brandon J. Perry, Jeremy Capuder and Gianni Ferrara — with scholarships and research fellowships for the 2021-22 academic year.



From left, Luke Bastian, Annalena Bellm, Lucas Grafals, Brandon J. Perry, Jeremy Capuder and Gianni Ferrara.

### 10<sup>th</sup> Annual National Scholarship

- Bastian, Bellm and Grafals are the recipients of the TTF National Scholarship. Each will receive \$10,000 to pursue graduate studies in building engineering, design or technology.
- Students were nominated by a dean or department chair. Submissions were reviewed by a jury comprising Thornton Tomasetti's Co-CEO Peter DiMaggio, President R. Wayne Stocks, Principals Joel Barron and Theresa Curtis, and Senior Associate Michelle Olender. Winners were chosen based on academic achievements and an interest in the integration of engineering and architecture.
- **Bastian** is pursuing a master's degree in engineering as part of the structural mechanics and design track at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His thesis focuses on creating and using computational tools to explore embodied carbon trade-offs between steel and mass timber elements early in the design process. As an undergraduate at MIT, from which

he received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, Bastian served as president of the university's chapters of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society and the Civil and Environmental Engineering Students' Association.

- **Bellm** graduated in May 2021 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Notre Dame. She is pursuing a master's degree in structural engineering at Stanford University. While an undergrad, Bellm was vice president of the Chi Epsilon Civil Engineering Honors Society and co-led the Society of Women Engineer's Tech Team, which worked on several community-focused projects. Her research interests include innovative and sustainable materials and design methods, resilience and affordable housing.
- **Grafals** earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Columbia University in May 2021, and is working toward a master's in structural engineering with a focus in construction, also from Columbia. He served as an intern with Thornton Tomasetti's Forensics and Renewal practices in the New York office for a total of three years while studying full time. He is interested in resilient design methods and structural restorations in areas prone to natural disasters.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Innovation Fellowship**

- As a recipient of the Student Innovation Fellowship, **Perry** will receive \$5,000 to fund a research project that furthers innovation in structural engineering and applied mechanics. Students were nominated by a dean or department chair, and submissions were reviewed by a jury comprising Thornton Tomasetti Senior Principal Elisabeth Malsch, Senior Associates Nezar Abraham and Alloy Kemp, Associate Juan Londono, Project Engineer Rolando Villena and Project Director Jason Wu.
- Perry is a Ph.D. student in the Colorado State University's Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. He received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Tennessee Technological University and a master's degree, also in civil engineering, from Colorado State University. Perry will use the fellowship to further his research in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)-based structural inspections, with a focus on data analytics and digital twin application for bridges. In 2019, he was presented with the Outstanding Student of the Year Award by the U.S. Department of Transportation for his work on improving bridge inspections with the use of UAVs and machine learning techniques.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Technical Literacy Fellowship**

- **Capuder and Ferrara** are the recipients of the TTF Technical Literacy Fellowship and will each receive \$3,750 to pursue research in building engineering, design or technology. Submissions were reviewed by Thornton Tomasetti's Elisabeth Malsch, Senior Consultant Raymond Daddazio, and James Glanz, a reporter on the investigations desk at *The New York Times*.

Capuder and Ferrara both earned bachelor's degrees in civil engineering and are pursuing master's degrees from Manhattan College. They will use the fellowship to build on their previous work analyzing indeterminate beams and 2D frames using the new Hourani's method. The project involves the creation of a website that shows the reliability of structural members and their behavior within an overall structural system in a way that is faster and more efficient than current programs.

## **Executive Quote**

Richard Tomasetti, chairman, Thornton Tomasetti Foundation

*“The Thornton Tomasetti Foundation is committed to supporting the next generation of forward-thinking engineering professionals. We are pleased to recognize the achievements of these outstanding students and to support their continued academic growth.”*

## **About the Thornton Tomasetti Foundation**

The Thornton Tomasetti Foundation, a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization established in February 2008, is focused on funding fellowships and scholarships for undergraduate students and those planning to pursue graduate studies in building engineering, design or technology. It also provides financial support for individuals and organizations pursuing philanthropic activities related to building engineering, design or technology. Key elements of the program are college scholarships and grants to, and partnerships with, nonprofit organizations.