



## **The First Cohort of ARF WIDE Scholars Land Permanent Positions in Research and Insights at GFK, Levi Strauss & Co., and Ipsos**

*100% of senior WIDE Scholars have graduated from college, with 72% obtaining full-time positions in marketing, advertising and research and insights positions*

*ARF WIDE launches initiative to raise \$300,000 by July 15 to fund next cohort of scholars*

**New York, NY (July 7, 2022)** – The Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) today announced that 100% of seniors in the first cohort of the ARF Workforce Initiative for Diversity and Excellence (WIDE) scholar program have graduated from their respective colleges, with 72% of the seniors obtaining full-time positions in marketing, advertising and research and insights. Furthermore, three WIDE scholars received full-time positions directly resulting from their summer internships offered through the program: The Ohio State University’s Rachel Boakye at Levi Strauss & Co. and Limo Rustom at GFK, and John Jay College’s Sean Wong at Ipsos.

After earning a degree in marketing from The Ohio State University, Rachel Boakye accepted a full-time position as a specialist on the Marketplace Insights team at Levi Strauss & Co., helping provide a fresh perspective as the brand engages with younger demographics. While completing her degree, Rachel interned remotely for 12 weeks over the summer at Levi Strauss & Co. as a marketplace insights intern where she found her passion for market research.

“Of all the places that I’ve interned, I was given the most autonomy and responsibility at Levi’s, which made me feel more respected and made for a really great experience,” said Boakye. “In addition to this internship opportunity, a key part of the WIDE program for me was the seminars held throughout the year that really demystified marketing and helped me gain an understanding of what marketing could look like outside of what I learned in undergrad. In fact, two days before I had my final interview with Levi’s, I attended ARF’s SHOPPERxSCIENCE event – and was able to reference a lot of things that were said in that program in my interview.”

Limo Rustom spent the summer before his senior year studying marketing at Ohio State University as a consumer insights and marketing effectiveness intern at GFK. Shortly before he graduated, GFK selected Rustom for an open position because of the skills and willingness to learn he showcased during his internship.

“Working at GFK as an intern was an eye opening experience for me,” said Rustom. “I learned more about market research as well as about myself – what I’m good at, what I need to work on, and if market research actually interested me. Going into the internship I didn’t know much about market research or the industry at large, but the WIDE program and the employees at GFK changed that. Because of this experience, I was able to go into my last year seeing a path for myself in this industry. I’m really glad to jumpstart my career at GFK and look forward to seeing where the future takes me.”



As a first step into the business side of data analytics, Sean Wong interned on the Ipsos creative excellence team while studying at John Jay College, CUNY. In that role, he analyzed ads to uncover macro learnings on what makes advertising effective. Now that he has his degree in Applied Mathematics, he will be starting his career as a research analyst within the Generation Ipsos Analyst Development Program, where he will rotate across a variety of functions within the organization.

“WIDE really opened up doors for me because I had just switched majors about six months before I joined the program and was having trouble finding jobs in this field,” said Wong. “When the WIDE program opened up, it allowed me to apply to companies like Ipsos for an internship, opening up another method of schooling for me and allowing me to learn how to apply practices I learned into a real world setting.”

In addition to the permanent post-graduate positions accepted by Boakye, Ruston and Wong, other graduating scholars also received full-time positions in marketing and research at Amazon, Duncan Shannon, E&J Gallo Winery, Google, OutSystems and Procter & Gamble, and other non-research positions at Accenture, Goldman Sachs and UTA.

To further quantify the effectiveness of the program, ARF surveyed all the WIDE scholars and found that they benefited from the program in several different ways. Specifically, 74% reported that ARF WIDE was helpful in building awareness of career paths in research and analytics and another 70% found the program helpful in preparing to search for an entry level job in marketing and advertising. Overall, 100% of the scholars would recommend ARF Wide to their peers.

“It is quite wonderful to see our first cohort of WIDE scholars graduate from their respective universities and start their careers following their internship experiences,” said Scott McDonald, president and CEO at the ARF. “Our goal from the inception of this program has been to not only create opportunities for students looking to work in the field of market research, but enrich our industry with deeply needed diverse, representative perspectives. With this first graduating class, it feels like we are well on our way to realizing this more inclusive future.”

Launched in 2020, ARF WIDE was established to improve the quality and diversity of the future workforce of the advertising, media and research/analytics industries. The program awards scholarships to underrepresented student populations who can benefit from access and exposure to the fields of market research and data-analytics. ARF WIDE Scholars also include students who are transfers by way of community college, first-generation undergraduates, or students who have had their families' health and economic security harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ARF WIDE is made possible by the financial contributions of its corporate and individual donors, including AT&T, Dotdash Meredith, GFK, Ipsos, Levi Strauss & Co, the Nielsen Foundation,



Paramount, Verizon, and more. From now until July 15, ARF WIDE has an initiative to raise \$300,000 to fund the next cohort of scholars and further expand the program.

For more information or to donate, visit: <https://thearf.org/about-the-arf/arf-wide/>

### **About The ARF**

Founded more than 80 years ago, the ARF is dedicated to creating, curating, and sharing objective, industry-level advertising research to enable members to make a true impact on their advertising and build marketing leadership within their organizations. It has more than 400 members from leading brand advertisers, agencies, research firms and media-tech companies. For more information, visit [www.thearf.org](http://www.thearf.org).