**SmithGroup Awards First Annual Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Scholarships**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

[DAVE WHITMAN](mailto:dave.whitman@smithgroup.com)

313.442.8226

August 23, 2018 – Earlier this year, the SmithGroup Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scholarship Program was established to support and mentor students from historically underrepresented demographics in architecture, interior design, planning, landscape architecture and engineering.  The program’s mission is to provide these students with the opportunity to attain their professional goals while advancing the architecture/engineering/construction (AEC) industry and improving the built environment.

The scholarship winners were selected last week from a pool of candidates who spent their summers as interns in SmithGroup offices around the United States. Each winner will receive a one-time award of $6,000 to offset their tuition costs. The scholarship recipients:

**Jonathan Choi** is pursuing a master’s degree in landscape architecture from the University of Arizona. He expects to graduate in December 2018. Jonathan worked in the Phoenix office this summer.

**Lorena De Almeida** is a senior at Calvin College. She will earn a Bachelor of Science in engineering, with a civil and environmental concentration.  She will graduate in May 2019. Lorena spent her summer at Smith Group’s Madison office.

**Qudus Lawal** is a senior at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He intends to graduate in December 2018 with a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering. Qudus interned in the Chicago office.

**Stephanie Onwenu** is a senior at Michigan State University.  She will earn her bachelor’s degree in landscape architecture in December 2018 and then complete a Master of Arts in environmental design in May 2019. Stephanie spent her summer in the firm’s Ann Arbor office.

**Everritt Phillips** is a senior at the University of Michigan. He will earn his Bachelor of Science in architecture in May 2019. Everritt served as an intern in SmithGroup’s Detroit office.

Scholarship candidates were evaluated on their resume, work performance and personal narratives describing their educational pursuits, career aspirations and personal interests.

This scholarship program is part of a broader firm strategy to create a framework that addresses the holistic impact that [equity, diversity and inclusion](https://www.smithgroup.com/equity-diversity-and-inclusion) have in creating an engaged workplace culture, prioritizing talent development and retention and, ultimately, elevating design excellence. This effort is being led by [Rosa Sheng, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C](https://www.smithgroup.com/people/rosa-sheng), the firm’s director of equity, diversity and inclusion. “Equity is one of the core values of our firm, so the establishment of this scholarship program visibly demonstrates our desire to minimize barriers to maximize the potential for success,” says Sheng. ”Providing scholarships to these highly talented individuals is a sign of our commitment to design a better future by directly addressing the industrywide challenges of attracting the best and most diverse talent.”

**SmithGroup** ([www.smithgroup.com](http://www.smithgroup.com)) is one of the world’s preeminent integrated design firms. Working across a network of 12 offices in the U.S. and China, a team of 1,300 experts is committed to excellence in strategy, design, and delivery. The scale of the firm’s thinking and organization produces partnerships with forward-looking clients that maximize opportunities, minimize risk and solve their most complex problems. SmithGroup creates exceptional design solutions for healthcare, science and technology organizations, higher education and cultural institutions, urban environments, diverse workplaces, mixed-use and waterfront developments, and parks and open spaces.