Award Winning Students to Shine at CEAS Banquet

By: Desiré Bennett

CEAS will present a number of awards, including the Herman Schneider Medal and the Dean’s Award, during its annual banquet on April 11, 2014.

The College of Engineering and applied Science is proud to announce Elizabeth DeBenedictis as the 2014 Herman Schneider Medal award winner.

DeBenedictis, a mechanical engineering senior, is recognized for her "distinction as an exemplary co-op student -- one who has taken fullest advantage of the unique opportunities of a cooperative education."

Additionally, she is recognized for “following the tradition established by Herman Schneider by developing a professional image of an engineer by gaining a deeper and broader skillset through her co-op rotations.”

DeBenedictis worked on several engineering tasks via her research and development co-op experiences. Her co-op rotation at Ethicon Endo-Surgery, located in Blue Ash, Ohio, involved improving an existing Harmonic device for cutting and sealing tissue. She also designed and conducted experiments, analyzed data, and collaborated with other engineers on various Matlab scripts.

DeBenedictis also traveled to Stuttgart, Germany to complete a seven month co-op rotation at Robert Bosch GmbH, working on various initiatives including solar cells, gyros, transistors, thin silicon films, exhaust sensors, and programming. Additionally, she was also able to add to her multicultural competency by gaining an appreciation of the German language and culture.

DeBenedictis is pleased with all of her co-op experiences and is happy to have gained new skills. “Being able to not only learn a new programming language, but a new programming language through my second language was an incredibly challenging but fulfilling experience.”

In addition to her co-op experiences, DeBenedictis also participates in several extracurricular activities. She serves as the corresponding secretary for Tau Beta Pi, she tutors in the Freshmen Engineering Program, is a member of Pi Tau Sigma, and is a volunteer in the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Middle School Outreach Program.

Elizabeth says she is honored to have won this award – citing the cooperative education program being the largest deciding factor in her decision to attend UC. “When such a large percentage of our time at UC is spent working at cooperative education experiences, the co-op program is not just a supplement to our coursework, but a major contributor to our understanding of engineering,” she said. “I believe cooperative education has helped me develop my technical and
leadership skills in a way a coursework-only program could not, and I am extremely thankful for the opportunities with which it has provided me.”

After graduation, Elizabeth plans to continue her education by working toward a PhD in mechanical engineering, with a research focus in nanomedicine.

**DEAN’S SERVICE AWARD**

The College of Engineering and Applied Science is pleased to announce Michael Biggs and Mason Stout as the 2014 Dean’s Service Award winners.

Senior CEAS students who have exhibited distinctive qualities of leadership and rendered outstanding service to the College are considered for the award.

Chemical engineering student **Michael Biggs** has participated in several endeavors during his undergraduate scholastic career.

He has held a variety of different positions in the American Institute of Chemical Engineers including mentor committee chair and secretary.

Additionally, he started a number of committees including fundraising, social, volunteering, mentoring, publicity, a sister chapter, big events, and professor relations.

These committees allowed Biggs to have several members facilitate the officers with different goals of the organization including: fundraising, planning social events, and running the mentor program.

Biggs has been involved in several fundraising activities, helping to raise nearly $20,000 since his junior year.

During his pre-junior and junior year, Biggs was a peer leader of four different learning communities. During his junior year, he was chosen to help with the Love to Lead, a campaign to recruit new peer leaders. Only eight of the 100 peer leaders were chosen to help out – and Biggs was one of only four peer leaders to speak at two of the campaign’s information sessions.

Biggs says he is happy to have won this award and is thankful for all who have helped him along the way. “It helps validate all of the work I have put in to helping grow UC's chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and the other organizations in which I am involved,” he said. “Without the people around me, I wouldn't have been able to grow and thrive over these past five years – and I hope to continue to be a model for younger students who follow me.”

He has accepted an offer to work as a process engineer with **Michelman**, the company with which he completed his last coop experience, following graduation. “I will be working in their Blue Ash facility on continuous improvement projects around the plant,” he said. “I am excited
to join the team at Michelman and start a new chapter in my life.”

Mechanical engineering and ME-MBA ACCEND student Mason Stout holds an impressive record of service with the College of Engineering and Applied Science.

Stout is currently the President of the CEAS Student Tribunal and served as Vice-President in 2013. He also served as Chairman of the Collegiate Affairs Committee in 2012-13, as the undergraduate student representative on the CEAS Dean’s Search Committee and represented student interest on the Committee on Academic Standards and the College Curriculum Committee.

Stout has been very active with the Engineers Without Borders UC Chapter (EWB-UCIN) – which supports community-driven development programs worldwide by collaborating with local partners to design and implement sustainable engineering projects – using his talents to design a water distribution system to serve a community of 5000 people in rural Tanzania.

Stout, who is honored to be recognized for his contributions to the college, says that he has worked with the goal of improving the student experience for current and future CEAS students. He says he hopes that he has laid the groundwork for other students to follow in making the most of their experience at UC.

Stout has accepted a position with GE Aviation in the Edison Engineering Development Program in Evendale Ohio, where he spent his final coop rotation. “I am happy to remain in the Cincinnati area, and to continue my education at UC through the partnership with GE.”

Please join CEAS in congratulating each of these 2014 award winners!