Four National Merit Scholars Choose UC’s School of Dynamic Systems

By: Desiré Bennett

CEAS is proud to welcome National Merit Scholars Philip Fedor, Hugh Parent, Julie Simmons and Joshua Tee into its Mechanical Engineering program.

The National Merit Scholarship competition recognizes high school students who show outstanding academic promise. More than 1.5 million students take the Preliminary SAT and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) each year to qualify as a National Merit Scholar. In this highly competitive process, less than one out of every 100 students that apply become a National Merit Scholar. This extraordinary group of students includes valedictorians, perfect SAT scores, and 4.0+ GPAs.

Four National Merit Scholars are entering the discipline of Mechanical Engineering in the School of Dynamic systems this year with each receiving a UC Cincinnatus Excellence Scholarship which includes full tuition, room, and a one-time $1,500 stipend to be used towards a computer purchase, study abroad experience, or research experience. This scholarship is offered to finalists in the National Merit and National Achievement Scholarship Programs who have demonstrated the ability to excel in their academic endeavors.

Entering CEAS this fall is freshman and National Merit Scholars Philip Fedor, who will join the School of Dynamic Systems as a Mechanical Engineering student.

National Merit Scholar and incoming Mechanical Engineering freshman Hugh Parent attended St. Ignatius High School in Cleveland, OH. Hugh, who once earned a perfect score on the National Latin Exam, says that UC was a clear choice for him. “I chose the University of Cincinnati because the co-op program really set UC apart from other engineering programs I considered,” he said.

Hugh says he chose to study the field of mechanical engineering because he really enjoys math and because “the program seemed like a good fit for me.” Outside of the classroom, Hugh loves watching and playing sports. He participated in several while he was in high school including junior varsity lacrosse, intramural basketball, and rugby.

Hugh also volunteered his time to a handful of organizations including the St. Joseph of Arimathea Pallbearer Ministry and the St. Benedict Joseph Labre Homeless Ministry.

Hugh is hopeful about his academic career at CEAS and wants to pursue a master’s degree in the future.
National Merit Scholar and incoming Mechanical Engineering freshman **Julie Simmons** attended St. Joseph Academy in Cleveland, Ohio. Julie says she chose the University of Cincinnati “because of its strong engineering program and especially because of its engineering co-ops.” She says, “I love being able to apply what I learn out in the field, so well-organized and meaningful co-op work was a must-have for me.”

According to Julie, her interest in both science and math, coupled with her love of seeing how things work, is what led her to study mechanical engineering. “I especially love piecing things together from scratch,” she said. “Making a bunch of tiny parts into a system capable of movement and significance gives me a huge amount of satisfaction and even delight.”

During the summer of her junior year in high school, Julie landed an internship at NASA Glenn Research Center where she conducted research on atomic oxygen erosion in Low Earth Orbit (LEO). “I was thrilled to find out that my job was to help physicist Bruce Banks with his research and to help gather data for a paper, of which I became a co-author.”

Julie, who describes herself as inquisitive, eclectic, and meticulous, has big plans for her future. “My dream is to work either at NASA, working on designing equipment, vehicles, and robotic space probes or at Walt Disney Imagineering designing rides – especially Audioanimatronics figures and ride vehicles,” she said. “I’ve been absolutely fascinated with both of these jobs since I was four or five years old. Perhaps someday I’ll end up doing both.”

Julie’s favorite thing to do in her spare time is write poetry and short fiction and she says she would love to write a novel and see it published someday.

Also entering CEAS this fall is National Merit Scholar and incoming Mechanical Engineering freshman, **Joshua Tee**, who attended Westerville South High School in Westerville, Ohio.

It is the “excellent co-op program” that led Joshua to choose the University of Cincinnati and what led him to study mechanical engineering. “It is an interesting field and there are opportunities for co-op and employment as well.”
During high school, Joshua’s favorite subjects were calculus and history. When he was away from the classroom, Joshua enjoyed swimming – he broke two school records in swimming relays and earned a swimming letter.

Joshua, who describes himself as intelligent, reserved, and dedicated, hopes to land a job and travel outside of the United States after graduation.

Philip, Hugh, Julie, and Joshua are just four of the National Merit Scholars entering the engineering program at UC. Each is sure to continue the tradition of CEAS excellence this year and beyond!