Presidential Scholars with Family Ties Choose CEAS

By: Desiré Bennett

As it prepares to host the largest class in its history, CEAS welcomes Presidential awardees Kaitlin Burnam and Dillon Staub into its computer and mechanical engineering programs.

This fall, the University of Cincinnati College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS) is welcoming its largest freshmen class in history. Among these bright and talented are students who show extraordinary academic promise.

Out the nine incoming Presidential Scholarship freshmen across the university, two of these awardees are CEAS students receiving full, four-year $92,000 Cincinnatus scholarships to pay for tuition, room and board, books and fees.

Presidential Scholarship awardee and incoming ACCEND student and Computer Engineering freshman Kaitlin Burnam attended Ursuline Academy in Blue Ash, Ohio. Kaitlin says she chose the University of Cincinnati for several reasons. “I was impressed when I learned about the research that had taken place at UC, and the co-op program seems like it will be incredibly beneficial,” she explains. “And knowing that I would have the opportunity to participate in the ACCEND program was also highly influential in my final decision as well.”

In addition to enjoying the opportunities that UC offers, Kaitlin is continuing a family tradition as a Bearcat. “This is the only university any of my family members have attended – my mom, aunt, and uncle all graduated from UC,” she said. “I think this tradition is something that makes us closer as a family because we can all identify with and take pride in our UC spirit.”

Kaitlin’s mom Krista Dooley, a class of 1996 CEAS chemical engineering graduate who is now a process controls engineer for Honeywell, is enthusiastic about Kaitlin’s academic future. “I am very excited to see my daughter follow in my footsteps – I feel that UC prepared me well for my future,” said Dooley. “Not only did I receive an excellent education, but I also gained invaluable experience in engineering through the co-op program and I find great comfort in knowing she is taking the right steps to prepare for a successful future.”

Cincinnatus scholarship recipient Kaitlin Burnam.
Kaitlin says that although she has known about UC since she was in preschool, it is her mother’s example that ultimately led her down this path. “I knew she wanted me to go to UC, and she always wanted me to be an engineer, but neither of those things really influenced me to go to UC,” she said. “It is seeing the successful person she is today that gives me confidence in the quality of a CEAS education, which helped me decide that UC was the right place for me.”

She says she chose to study computer engineering because she is fascinated by computers and all modern technology. “My goal is to work with others who specialize in psychology to develop tools that improve the lives of those challenged by autism spectrum disorders or have other special needs,” she said. “I have always loved working with computers, and I wanted to study something that would allow me to help people and really enjoy my work at the same time.”

Kaitlin played ice hockey throughout high school and was a member of her high school’s competitive Academic Team and chemistry clubs. She was also a member of the Spanish Honor Society, the Interfaith Club, Art Club, and Hands Across the Campus.

She describes herself as ambitious, nerdy and unique and has high aspirations for her future. “My biggest dream for my life after college is to work with technology that will give families with members with special needs fulfilling lives with less strain on each person,” she said. “Since technology is developing rapidly and devices like tablets and smartphones have practically become household staples, I think we should take advantage of the accessibility of these tools and use them as learning aides and I would like to develop those or something completely new and better. I hope to be involved long-term in work of any kind that helps society make progress for the greater good.”

Presidential Scholarship awardee and incoming Mechanical Engineering freshman Dillon Staub attended Saint Henry District High School in Erlanger, KY, where he was valedictorian of his graduating class.

Dillon says he chose the University of Cincinnati for the strength of its engineering department and the structure of the co-op program. “Also, I love the feel of the campus and the incredible variety of opportunities that UC offers to students.”

Dillon also comes from a long line of Bearcats: his mother, Lisa Staub (MA in communication sciences and disorders, ‘93); aunt Lynne Dillon Bartley (fashion design, ‘87); uncle, David Dillon (accounting, ‘89); uncle, Steve Dillon (’95, economics); uncle, Michael Dillon...
(2001, finance and marketing); uncle, Ken Bartley (’87, industrial management); and aunt, Vicky Staub Pille (master’s in radiation therapy) and great uncle, Ralph.

Dillon, who would like to one day run his own engineering firm, says he enjoyed science and mathematics classes such as physics, chemistry, and calculus during high school and says he chose to study the field of mechanical engineering because “I have always been interested in how things work, and I have always wanted to create and work with new technologies.”

Dillon says he loves to play sports and he participated in many during high school including Varsity Soccer and Varsity Swimming. Dillon also participated in several extracurricular activities including Philanthropic Club, National Honor Society, Spanish Honor Society, Spanish Club, Academic Team, Math Team, and the Junior World Affairs Council as a member of the Academic WorldQuest Team.

Dillon, who describes himself as determined, dedicated, and insightful, believes that it is a tremendous honor for him to be a recipient of the Presidential Scholarship. “I believe it demonstrates all of my efforts and hard work throughout high school and I am privileged to have the opportunity to pursue my career and my dreams,” he said. “I can’t wait to be a Bearcat this fall!”

Kaitlin and Dillon are just two examples of how CEAS is engineering through superior students – not only this fall, but for years to come!