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USU College of Engineering

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April 1, 2016 – A Utah State University Aggie from the College of Engineering has been selected to receive the prestigious National Science Foundation Fellowship Award that will help cover the costs of graduate studies. A second engineering alumnus also received the award.

Nathan Stacey, a senior in mechanical and aerospace engineering and alumnus Sean Bedingfield (’15) was awarded the NSF Fellowship along with 2,000 other students across the country. The opportunity will open new doors for the future engineers as they continue their education. Stacey plans to attend graduate school at Stanford this fall. Bedingfield is currently at Vanderbilt.

“I plan to attend Stanford this fall to pursue a M.S. and later a PhD in aeronautics and astronautics,” said Stacey. “I want to do research in distributed space systems, in which a group of spacecraft work together to complete a mission.”

Stacey says the NSF fellowship will give him more flexibility in choosing a major professor and in choosing a thesis. In most cases, professors are careful to choose graduate students because they fund the students who work under them. The fellowship funding will allow Stacey to work with the professor of his choice – a major hurdle for other students at this same stage.

“I'm really grateful for all of the opportunities that I've had at USU that made me a strong candidate for the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program,” he said. “I am especially grateful for Dr. Laurie McNeill, Dr. Kohei Fujimoto and Kristina Glaittli for mentoring and advising me. Having good faculty mentors has made all the difference in my undergraduate experience.”

Stacey has served as president of USU's chapter of Engineers Without Borders, and in 2015 led a team of Aggies to Mexico to build bio-sand water filters for the community of La Salitrera. The Honors student also completed an internship with the Bureau of Reclamation.

NSF received more than 17,000 applications for the 2016 fellowship competition and made 2,000 fellowship award offers. Biological engineering alumnus Kyle Isaacson ('15) received honorable mention.

According to NSF, the purpose of the fellowship program is to help ensure the vitality and diversity of the scientific and engineering workforce of the United States.

The program recognizes and supports outstanding graduate students who are pursuing research-based master's and doctoral degrees in science and engineering. The program provides three years of support for the graduate education of individuals who have demonstrated their potential for significant achievements in science and engineering.

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