Class of 2020

Graduation & Recognition Program
May 8, 2020
Outstanding Senior Award

In recognition of the most outstanding graduating senior as defined by the statement, “the graduate who, in 5 years, we would be most proud to call our graduate.” The student is expected to have high character, outstanding achievement in academics and activities and the promise of continuing these exemplary qualities as an alumnus.

Emalee Benkufsky, from Maple Grove, MN, is the Spring 2020 recipient of the MSE Outstanding Senior Award.

Emalee graduates this semester with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Materials Engineering with specializations in Metals and Ceramics and a minor in Computer Science. Emalee is being honored for outstanding academic achievement in the classroom as she is graduating with the distinction of Summa Cum Laude. In addition to Emalee’s scholastic achievement, her consummate work outside of the classroom speaks to her irreproachable character.

Emalee has been involved in a vast array of activities while at Iowa State that have added a breadth to her education. Emalee served as a peer mentor for the Engineering Student Services Learning Community during the Fall 2017, Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 semesters, was a tutor for the Academic Success Center during the Spring 2018 semester and has served as a teaching assistant for the course Structural Characterization of Materials from Fall 2018 until now. Emalee is graduating from the Honors Program and recently finished her Honors project in which she was instrumental in creating content for the new Materials Engineering course Numeric, Symbolic, and Graphical Methods for Materials Engineering.

In addition to many outside of the classroom activities, Emalee has also added depth to her education through research and on the job experiences. She participated in the first-year honors mentor program where she assisted a graduate student doing research in the Chemistry Department. Emalee also had a Research and Development internship at Pentair in Minneapolis, MN during the summer of 2019. While at her internship she did characterization using TGA/SEM and performed experiments to support various ongoing projects.

Emalee has exhibited outstanding character during her four years in the MSE family and we know this will continue beyond graduation and into the next chapter of her life. Emalee will be starting a position as an Associate Materials Process Engineer at Northrop Grumman in Plymouth, MN, at the end of May where she will be working with a team of materials engineers within the weapons systems division of NGC.
Student Leadership & Service Award

In recognition of accomplishments as a leader in both the classroom and extracurricular activities, and for outstanding service to the MSE Department.

Jacob Wheaton, from Robins, Iowa, is the Spring 2020 recipient of the MSE Student Leadership & Service Award.

Jacob graduates this semester Magna Cum Laude, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Materials Engineering (specializations: ceramics & metals) and a second major in French. He is being honored for his accomplishments as a leader in both the classroom and extracurricular activities, but especially for his outstanding service to the MSE Department.

Jacob served in several important leadership roles in his Iowa State career - perhaps most influential for MSE through his role as a learning community peer mentor for the past two years, and as president of Gaffer’s Guild. He co-led our Mat E 101 learning community seminar course, helping to answer the first-year students’ main question “What have I gotten myself into here in MSE?!”. He also planned social and academic activities to help our new students feel welcome and to start to understand what it means to be a Mat E student. Jacob also showed excellence in leadership as president of Gaffer’s Guild during this time of transition in the organization – moving from the old glass-blowing studio, to the absence of a studio with the demolition to make space for the new innovation center, and now as the team prepares the future studio to be a feature of the impressive Student Innovation Center as it opens this summer.

Jacob assisted MSE with countless events to offer his student perspective – he was always someone we could count on when we needed students to meet with external constituents or prospective students. We are happy to honor Jacob with this award to thank him for his outstanding efforts on our behalf.

After graduation, Jacob will be staying in Ames and pursuing a PhD in Materials Science & Engineering, mentored by Dr. Steve Martin.
Bachelor of Science degrees in Materials Engineering

Caiden Abel
Cullen Anderson
John Beck
Emalee Benkufsky
Daniel Bonifas
Colin Dunlop
Dawson Fox
Haley French
Zachary Fuessley
Callie Gifford
Christopher Gillis
Emily Gratz
Connor Hammons
Nicholas Haxel
John Henjum
Anthony Jacobsen
Atte Kadoma
Harrison Kersey
Jennifer Kincaid
Jack Mammenga
Jonah Paider
Ray Peterson
Shannon Robins
Melany Safraniec
Dana Smith
Alexandria Springer
Derek Thilges
Jose Vasquez
Jacob Wheaton
Luke Wylde
The MSE department is honored to celebrate this special day with you!

Please keep in touch so we can continue to celebrate your personal and professional achievements.

Stay connected as alumni:

Join MSE GOLD - Graduates of the Last Decade
www.mse.iastate.edu/mse-gold/

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