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2021-22 Directed Energy Graduate Scholars Announced

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., Sept. 2- The Directed Energy Professional Society's (DEPS) Board of Scientific & Engineering Advisors (BSEA) as well as its Executive Director, Mark Neice, proudly announced today the DEPS graduate scholarship awardees for the 2021-2022 academic year.

Twenty students from the total field of applicants were awarded \$5,000 - \$10,000 scholarships to continue studying in directed energy (DE) technology areas. Candidates for the award must be full-time graduate students who are currently studying high energy lasers (HEL), high power microwave (HPM) systems and technologies, ultra-short pulse lasers (USPL) or counter DE weapon (CDEW) technologies.

Jessica Pena, University of Central Florida (UCF), was selected for the prestigious Dr. Samuel Blankenship Directed Energy Scholar Award, for her research on ultra-short pulse laser propagation of filaments through various atmospheric conditions. This award is a \$10,000 award granted annually to the individual with the overall outstanding scholarship application.

Matthias Banet, University of Rochester, was selected for the newly named Dr. Jack Slater Award, for his research on image reconstruction and wavefront sensing in deep turbulence, a key thrust benefitting high energy laser beam control. Another \$10,000 award, this award is granted annually to the highest scoring student focusing their research efforts on HEL.

Other 2021-22 scholars include: Derek Burrell of the University of Arizona (HEL); Travis Crawford of Purdue University (HPM); Brandin Davis of University of Connecticut (UConn) (USPL); Cameron Harjes of the University of New Mexico (UNM) (HPM); John Hunt of the University of Minnesota (HEL); Bailey Meehan of Clemson University (HEL); Michael Nickerson of the University of California, Santa Barbara (HEL); Isabella Pagano of the University of Texas at Austin (USPL); Matt Paliwoda of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (HPM); Jacob Pierce of UCLA (USPL); Kevin Reilly of UNM (HEL); Zhanna Rodnova of UConn (HEL); Christopher Swenson of the University of Michigan (HPM); Owen Thome of UCF (USPL); Nicholas Vail of UCF (HEL); Stefan Waczynski of the University of Maryland College Park (USPL); Ryan Yamaguchi of the Naval Postgraduate School (HEL); and Josh Young of Baylor University (HEL).

Since 2011, DEPS has provided nearly \$1.2 million in scholarships. The funds for these awards are provided by grants from the Joint Directed Energy Transition Office and the Office of Naval Research.

“This was an extremely competitive year for DEPS awards. Three females and seventeen males representing sixteen different universities were ultimately awarded. Awardee research spans from improving sources of DE, including the components or materials required to build them, to the improved propagation of the energy beam to engage a target with as much of the original energy as possible with as much effectiveness as possible. We are honored to be supporting each of these promising students and look forward to the contributions they will make in the future,” said Dr. Diana Loree, DEPS Board of Directors Liaison to the BSEA.

The Directed Energy Professional Society fosters research, development, and transition of directed energy technologies, including high energy laser and high-power microwave technologies, for national defense and civilian applications through professional communication and education. For more information, visit www.deps.org.

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