



FOR RELEASE  
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## **Tau Beta Pi Announces 2015 Laureates**

Tau Beta Pi, the engineering honor society, has named five Laureates in the Association's annual program to recognize gifted engineering students who have excelled in areas beyond their technical majors.

The 2015 Tau Beta Pi Laureates are Ashley A. Armstrong, a recent graduate from the University of Notre Dame, cited for her achievements in athletics; Michael E. Holloway, a senior at the University of Tennessee, cited for his achievements in the arts; Pedro P. Vallejo Ramirez, a senior at the University of Rochester, cited for his service contributions; Megan M. Waytashek, a recent graduate from the South Dakota State University, cited for her achievements in athletics; and David M. Zoltowski, a recent graduate from Michigan State University, cited for his diverse achievements. This brings the total to 98 remarkable Tau Bates that have been named Laureates since 1982.

The Laureate Program exists to further Tau Beta Pi's second fundamental purpose as stated in the Association's Constitution: ". . . to foster a spirit of liberal culture in engineering colleges." The primary concern of the Society is to recognize students of superior scholarship and exemplary character and to honor eminent practicing engineers. The Society also encourages excellence in engineering education and in the ethical practice of engineering.

The Laureates will be honored with other 2015 national award winners on October 29, at the 110th annual Convention in Providence, RI. Tau Beta Pi President J.P. Blackford, will present each with a \$2,500 cash award and a commemorative plaque. Their biographies follow:

(more)

ASHLEY A. ARMSTRONG, *Indiana Gamma '15*, graduated with a B.S. degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Notre Dame and will pursue a graduate degree focused on biomechanics.

Ashley is a two-year captain of the varsity golf team. She began her collegiate career winning the individual Women's Golf Big East Conference Championship and being named Freshman of the Year in the Big East Conference. In 2012, she qualified and competed in the U.S. Women's Open Golf tournament.

Her participation and experiences in competitive collegiate sports have helped her to develop leadership and time management skills, the importance of short-term and long-term goals, and the ability to build relationships with team members. Ashley is also active in several local community service projects and started her own charity program, "Birdies for Charity."

On campus, she served as treasurer of the Indiana Gamma Chapter of Tau Beta Pi where she is responsible for all social and official club events, the chapter's allocation spreadsheet, and records of chapter expenses. In addition, she volunteers in the chapter's tutoring services and is a member of the chapter's Award committee. As a two-time Capital One Academic All-America honoree, she has displayed a true commitment to excellence in academics and athletics.

MICHAEL E. HOLLOWAY, *Tennessee Alpha '16*, is majoring in aerospace engineering at the University of Tennessee and is scheduled to graduate next May.

His contributions to liberal culture include being a member of a regionally famous bluegrass band, an award-winning set designer and thespian, service work through Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) and his local church, and his commitment to his collegiate chapter of Tau Beta Pi.

Michael sings and plays several instruments as a member of the Mountain Cove Bluegrass band. The group has produced three CDs and has performed at an event for Coca-Cola, at Dollywood, and at the Chattanooga music festival. In high school, he helped build the school's theatre program, became head of set design and the construction team, and won the Tennessee Theatre Association's award for technical design.

Since 2006, he has volunteered at the concession stand for the Mountain Opry, where he also teaches and performs. Michael organizes and participates in service trips through his church. He also mentors underclassmen in choosing their engineering major. A recommendation letter cited him as an exceptional servant, "the type of person whose very character is that of a servant and results in you feeling valued just through being engaged by him."

PEDRO P. VALLEJO RAMIREZ, *New York Kappa '16*, is pursuing a degree in optics at the University of Rochester.

Pedro has contributed his services to global outreach, his university's campus, the community, and science advocacy. He is trilingual, a past president of the local chapter of the Optical Society of America, and is a co-founder of the Ovitz Corporation.

With his fellow student co-founders, he has developed a portable vision diagnostic that can measure the human eye prescription. His goal with this device is to bring affordable eye care to third world countries.

In 2014, he received a grant to participate in the Story of Light Festival in India, an art-meets-science event that seeks to explore the intersection of science, culture, and philosophy through art and design. For 27 days, Pedro worked as an intern and volunteer in the planning, organization, and execution of the festival activities.

In addition, he has attended two scientific conferences to explore the challenges that exist in encouraging minorities to engage in STEM fields. This has fueled his passion for promoting a relationship between academia and industry to show the need for more scientists and engineers in our global society.

He has been a strong contributor to the New York Kappa Chapter's service activities and he consistently takes his good ideas and shares them with a dedication and passion to help others.

MEGAN M. WAYTASHEK, *South Dakota Beta '15*, graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering from South Dakota State University with minors in biomedical engineering and mathematics. She will pursue a master's at the University of Minnesota.

Megan was ranked among the top 100 high school basketball players coming out of high school. She lived up to this designation earning All-District, All-Conference, and All-American honors in both athletics and academics while competing as a Division I student-athlete.

She has persevered through a serious knee injury to rank 13<sup>th</sup> in all-time scoring in school history and she holds many other conference and school records. She served as captain of the basketball team and during her playing career the team participated in four NCAA National Tournaments.

Megan has displayed strong leadership skills and served the South Dakota Beta Chapter as recording secretary. Off the court, she is active in service activities such as engineering tutoring, mentoring women in engineering, as an elementary school teacher's aide, and as a youth basketball coach and camp counselor.

A recommendation letter stated that Megan "has lived and shared her passion for engineering and athletics... her ability to share her engineering research experience with others is making a difference in our college and our profession."

DAVID M. ZOLTOWSKI, *Michigan Alpha '15*, is an electrical engineering graduate of Michigan State University (MSU). He will study this fall at the University of Cambridge (UK) as a Churchill Scholar in pursuit of a master of philosophy in information engineering.

His diverse achievements include four letter winning years competing on the swim and diving team, extensive undergraduate research, volunteering in the community, and playing the piano.

David served as two-time captain of the MSU varsity swim team and was a second team Academic All-American in 2015. He was recently awarded the President's Award, the most prestigious academic award in the MSU Athletic Department, to go along with his Goldwater Scholarship. At the time of his nomination, he had a 4.0 GPA.

Despite dedicating 20 hours a week to swim practice, he finds time to organize outreach programs and volunteer with Relay for Life and the Salvation Army. He has also participated in three years of research at MSU and the University of Minnesota focusing on dynamic human brain functional connectivity networks. Part of his motivation for studying the brain is to help improve the lives of those affected by degenerative disorders.

His career goals also include becoming a professor in academia. In these pursuits, David has proven to be a well-rounded individual with the talent to become an engineering leader.

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**Tau Beta Pi is the Engineering Honor Society, founded at Lehigh University in 1885. It has collegiate chapters at 244 engineering colleges in the United States and active alumnus chapters in 41 cities. It has initiated more than 564, 000 members in its 130-year history and is the world's largest engineering society. (See [www.tbp.org](http://www.tbp.org))**