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ASDSO Announces 2008-2009 Dam Safety Scholarship Winners

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The Association of State Dam Safety Officials is pleased to announce the winners of its 2008-2009 Dam Safety Scholarships for Senior Undergraduates: Garrett Graybill, Oklahoma State University; Brian Carlton, Washington State University; Rachel Ernst, Southern Illinois University; and Joe Tom, Mississippi State University. This is the seventeenth year of the ASDSO Scholarship Program, which annually awards up to \$10,000 to outstanding undergraduates who plan careers in dam engineering and safety fields.

The ASDSO Scholarship Committee selected this year's recipients from a field of forty-five well-qualified applicants representing universities across the United States. Each will receive \$2,500 for educational expenses, a one-year ASDSO membership, and a trip to Dam Safety 2008, ASDSO's national conference, to be held September 7-11 in Indian Wells, California.

Garrett Graybill majors in Civil Engineering at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, where he tutors fellow students in Strength of Materials and Statics. Garrett interned with the Oklahoma Dam Safety Program from 2004-2007, assisting in determining the hazard classification of dams, installation of stream gauging systems, performing conduit inspections and surveying. Of the experience, Garrett noted that while his coursework provided the academic training necessary for dam engineering, "There is no substitute for the mentorship of a seasoned dam safety engineer. My experience with the Oklahoma Dam Safety Program allowed me to view the relevance of my coursework in real-world practice."

Brian Carlton has a double major in Civil Engineering and History at Washington State University, Pullman. Brian's interest in dams stemmed from a freshman-year report on the Three Gorges Dam project, which convinced him that, "Safety...should be the number one concern of dam builders and operators." Brian's work experience includes an internship with KCM/Tetra Tech, where he assisted a senior engineer in identifying and cataloging culverts in the field, surveyed a streambed and helped review projects.

His other activities include playing trumpet, Scout work, active participation in the ASCE student chapter, Catholic Newman Center and WSU Student Advisory Council.

Rachel Ernst is a Civil Engineering major at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, where she has participated in the ASCE Student Chapter, the SIUE Steel Bridge Team, intramural sports and a mentoring program for freshmen. As a co-op student for the USACE-St. Louis District Geotechnical Branch, Instrumentation and Dam Section, Rachel collects, computes and graphs geotechnical data for performance analysis of dams, investigates historical data and assists in preparation of formal reports. Of this hands-on experience, she says, "I enjoy this work deeply and take much pride in it. I am thankful for the opportunity to be involved in such an important aspect of engineering that is often overlooked." Rachel plans to obtain a Master's degree in Civil Engineering, concentrating on foundation, geotechnical and structural courses.

Joe Tom, Jr. is a Civil Engineering major at Mississippi State University, Starkville, where he is involved in developing computer software for assessing the spread of sediment from catastrophic hydraulic influx from a dam or levee breach and for evaluating the potential success of dam and levee breach closure measures undertaken while fluid and sediment are actively flowing through the breach. Joe also performs lab and field tests, data collection and documentation at the USACE Engineering Research and Development Center Geotechnical and Structures Laboratory, where he has assisted with research involving the use of polymers to prevent soil erosion and moisture penetration. Joe

participates in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life, the MSU Men's Club Soccer Team, the MSU Quiz Bowl, the ASCE Student Chapter and a Conversation Partner program for foreign students.

ASDSO Scholarship Chairman John Moyle (New Jersey Dam Safety Bureau Manager) noted that the selection committee was particularly impressed by the recipients' work experiences and volunteerism. "All four of this year's recipients promise to be future leaders in their chosen profession. Their hands-on experiences indicate a real understanding of the work involved in keeping dams safe, and all have contributed their time and talents to worthy causes at their universities and in their communities. We highly value this outlook, and we're very proud to recognize Rachel, Joe, Brian and Garrett."

Applications for ASDSO's 2009-2010 Dam Safety Scholarships will be available in October 2008, at www.damsafety.org, with an application deadline of March 2009.

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The Association of State Dam Safety Officials (www.damsafety.org) is a national, non-profit organization founded in 1984 and dedicated to improving dam safety through research, education and communication.