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Chancellor's Citations for Extraordinary Campus Leadership and Service (2014)

Laura Burgin

Jacob Clark

Grant Davis

Erica Gaines

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Recipients

Laura Burgin, Jacob Clark, Grant Davis, Erica Gaines, Melissa Lee, Cole Liles, Mariah Moore, Drew Nash, Mary Beth Overton, Christian Powers, Brianna Rader, George Shields, Forbes Smallwood, and Claudio Tombazzi



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2014 Chancellor's Citations for Extraordinary Campus Leadership and Service

Laura Burgin

Laura Burgin is creative, service-oriented, and focused on bettering her university and her community. These qualities have made her a standout at UT. The senior from Brentwood, Tennessee, has been a positive force in Global Leadership Scholars, Student Alumni Associates, and the Provost's Advisory Council. As president of the Impact student philanthropy group, she guided the team through a beneficial restructuring. She has put in countless hours for the Student Government Association, serving as campus life committee chair and senator for the College of Business Administration among other responsibilities. Twice when Burgin has spoken at campus fundraising events, attendees have said she was one of the best speakers they have ever heard. Her volunteer efforts are also apparent in the community. Burgin has taught area students with SOAR Youth Ministries and helped build Habitat for Humanity houses in Knoxville and Nashville.



Jacob Clark

Jacob Clark is known for his ability to motivate and encourage others. "He is especially skilled at mobilizing his student peers to express themselves effectively concerning matters that are of special interest to their age group," a professor said. A senior in the College Scholars Program from Clarksville, Tennessee, Clark co-founded SEAT—Sexual Empowerment and Awareness at Tennessee—the organization that has produced the campus Sex Week program for the past two years. The Division of Student Life has honored Clark with the Pioneer of the Year award and the Charles Higdon Leadership Scholar Award. "His inventive leadership and activities for the benefit of the university and its students have initiated major positive changes that will not soon be forgotten," said a nominator. Clark was vice president of the Central Programming Council his junior year. He has also served as a Student Government Association senator and chair of the Student Government Ambassadors.

Grant Davis

Grant Davis got into campus politics for all the right reasons. He is described as a living example of how grassroots enthusiasm can get the job done and as someone who is always at the forefront to solve a problem. Davis, from Shelbyville, Tennessee, is a biosystems engineering major in the Chancellor's Honors Program. As Student Government Association student services director, he has worked to tackle the issues that matter the most to students and handled the oversight of eight SGA committees. He is a member of the Mortar Board honor society, Tau Beta Pi engineering honor society, and the Gamma Sigma Delta agricultural honors society. He has also served as an Alternative Break trip leader, a welcome leader, and an Honors ambassador. "He exemplifies the grassroots enthusiasm that the university needs to continue to grow to be able to positively influence legislative outcomes," said one nominator.



The Chancellor's Citations for Extraordinary Campus Leadership and Service recognize graduating students who are extraordinary campus leaders for their significant service to others.

2014 Honors

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Previous Winners

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Erica Gaines

Erica Gaines is known as a proactive problem solver who is quick to address concerns and encourage participation. A senior in public relations from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Gaines has served simultaneously as president of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority and president of the National Pan-Hellenic Council. She is a Leadership Knoxville Scholar, a member of VolCorps, and co-coordinator of the Women's Coordinating Council's Take Back the Night event. In the words of one nominator, Gaines "can be counted on to persevere through hardships, to consider a situation from a variety of approaches and strive to better the lives of those around her."

Melissa Lee

Melissa Lee is described as a true maverick in advancing undergraduate research at UT. A Haslam Scholar and College Scholar studying integrative neuroscience, she was awarded a prestigious Goldwater Scholarship last year. Lee founded UT's Undergraduate Research Association and has been instrumental in enhancing the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium.



She co-founded the Neuroscience Club, which hosted the first Brain Awareness Week last year. She served as editor in chief for Pursuit: The Journal of Undergraduate Research and published a biweekly opinion column for the *Daily Beacon*. She is also the creator of "Swipes for the Homeless," an effort to translate unused student Dining Dollars into food for Knoxville's homeless population.



Cole Liles

Cole Liles is a leader's leader. From 2011 to 2013, he helped incoming freshmen transition smoothly into college life as a resident assistant for the Chancellor's Honors Living and Learning Community in Morrill Hall. "He excelled at mentoring and transforming the experiences for his residents but also balanced this call to action with coaching concerned parents," his nominator wrote. As an orientation leader, the senior psychology major from Franklin, Tennessee, mentored both incoming students and his orientation leader peers, many of whom still seek his guidance. His service as a Leadership Knoxville Scholar included creating a weeklong summer program curriculum for rising high school juniors to teach them about servant leadership, social change, cultural awareness, and entrepreneurship. The experience teaches high school students more about the Knoxville community and ways they can serve. Liles is an intern in his church's music program and also mentors a group of high school musicians training to be church leaders.

Mariah Moore

Mariah Moore is a natural leader who believes deeply in serving others. A nominator described Moore, a senior in child and family studies from Memphis, as helpful, kind, considerate, and tactful, adding "She helps to defuse tense moments and potential conflicts through humor." Moore chairs the Black Cultural Programming Committee, where she has helped produce campus events focusing on awareness of African-American achievements. She has also served on the Department of Child and Family Studies Council on Family Relations. A member of Alpha Phi Omega, Moore has also served on the Multicultural Student Life Student Advisory Board, led Alternative Break trips, and taught servant leadership and social justice to freshmen.



Drew Nash

Drew Nash dedicates his time and energy for good without ever seeking the spotlight for himself. A senior from White House, Tennessee, he took over as student director of UT's 2013 Relay for Life at midyear and guided the large event without a hitch. This year he is assistant director of Relay for Life so someone else can have the experience of serving as director. This is not an unusual act. Nash's nominators described him as understated and humble. Nash has been an SGA senator, president of the Chancellor's Honors Council, and a resident

assistant for Morrill Hall. He serves on the Student Conduct Disciplinary Board and the Office of Information and Technology Advisory Board. In 2012 he helped build a Habitat for Humanity house, and he has tutored elementary school students in math.

Mary Beth Overton

Mary Beth Overton wants to leave the university in better shape than when she arrived. And she will. When a campus fundraising goal for building a Habit for Humanity house fell short, Overton singlehandedly created a new event that exceeded the goal. Greek Beat, a sorority dance competition, is now an annual event. Overton set high standards as Panhellenic Council president, and her leadership provided a strong voice for the Greek community. She contributed to many improvements in the past two years. She served as an SGA senator and stayed involved for all four years. Last fall, her fellow students elected her Homecoming queen. Overton has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity, the Haiti Outreach project, and East Tennessee Children's Hospital.



Christian Powers

Christian Powers is a busy guy. He excelled through the rigorous five-year architecture program and worked to make a difference through a variety of SGA positions. He still found time to lead the Compassion Project this year to better connect students to campus ministries. This year, Powers chaired the Student Senate and directed the Campus Life Committee. He also served as president of the Dean of Architecture's Student Advisory Committee and a member of the Provost's Student Advisory Council and the Top 25 Student Advisory Board. People often used the words integrity and character in describing him. "He has a passion for helping those down on their luck or just lending an ear to someone if they need to talk," a nominator said. Powers is a member of Mortar Board honor society, the American Institute of Architecture Students, Beta Upsilon Chi fraternity, and Tau Sigma Delta honor society. He has volunteered with Freedom by Design, the Leadership Institute, Rainbow Acres Ministries, and Lost Sheep Ministries.

Brianna Rader

Brianna Rader is a Haslam Scholar and a senior studying medical humanities in the College Scholars program. She is, in the words of a nominator, "a person who moves people, who alters their way of thinking, who inspires everyone around her to do better, to be better." A Knoxville native, Rader is co-founder of Sexual Empowerment and Awareness in Tennessee, a student organization that aims to broaden awareness of sexual health. She studied abroad in India, where she completed a short documentary film highlighting sexuality as a major health care and human rights issue, which subsequently led her to create SEAT. One professor described her as "a champion of human welfare, academically and socially, on our campus." Rader was chosen as an alternate for the prestigious Marshall Scholarship, a nationally competitive scholarship. She founded Arts and Alzheimer's, which brings several Alzheimer's organizations together with the Knoxville Museum of Art to provide cultural programming for Alzheimer's patients. Rader also created a partnership between the Haslam Scholars and Project GRAD to provide tutoring, ACT prep, and essay editing services for area high school students. She has volunteered with Clinic Vols, the Knox County Youth Health Board, and Redeeming Hope Ministries.



George Shields

George Shields's life is about serving his country and his community. Throughout his law school career, he has served in the US Air Force Reserve and dedicated most of his service breaks to reserve duty. He has contributed 222 hours to the College of Law's Pro Bono program. He also has served as a student attorney with the Legal Aid of East Tennessee and the Federal Defender Services of Eastern Tennessee. The Maryville, Tennessee, native, who was in the Air Force from 2007 to 2011, helped start and organize UT's National Day of Remembrance and Roll Call, an annual Veterans Day event where volunteers on campus publicly read the names of all service members killed in action since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. "George's former military service and

continuing reserve duty exemplify his contributions to our country," his nominator wrote. "His local service is significant in demonstrating George's devotion to our university and ensuring that it is a leading institution for active military and veterans." Shields, who graduates in May, was the first student member of the Chancellor's Task Force on Student Veterans. He's also been the sole graduate student member of the Student Government Association Government Affairs Committee for the past three years. He is a research editor and executive board member of the Tennessee Law Review and on the Moot Court Board.

Forbes Smallwood

Forbes Smallwood is an exceptional ambassador who makes quite a first impression. A college dean said, "Even after a brief introduction, you will find yourself feeling better about the future of our nation." Smallwood has represented UT to alumni, trustees, and state and national dignitaries. A senior from Brentwood, Tennessee, he has been president and alumni liaison for Student Alumni Associates. He represents the study body on the Alumni Board of Directors and Chancellor's Associates, and played a key role in the search for a new vice chancellor for student life. "If we are turning the leadership of the world over to young men and women of the quality represented by Forbes, we will be in good hands," reads his nomination.



Claudio Tombazzi

Through his work with Ignite, Claudio Tombazzi has helped to spark the flame of service and inspire new students to get involved on campus. "His commitment to first-year students is truly inspiring and is something that genuinely comes from a desire to help others to be the best versions of themselves," one nominator stated. Tombazzi, of Germantown, Tennessee, is a senior in biochemistry and cellular and molecular biology in the Chancellor's Honors Program. He was co-director of Ignite his junior year and a team leader in prior years. This year, he was vice president of alumni relations for Impact, the campus philanthropic group. As a junior, he was asked to chair the Senior Gift campaign, which yielded donations from more than 350 new donors. A Leadership Knoxville scholar, Tombazzi is a member of the Student Alumni Associates and UNITE as well as the National Society of College Scholars, Golden Key international honor society, and Sigma Alpha Lambda honors fraternity.