Five Laureates have been selected in the 27th year of Tau Beta Pi’s annual program to recognize gifted engineering students who have excelled in non-technical areas. Award categories include arts, athletics, diverse achievements, and service. The Laureates join 60 other outstanding Tau Bates who have been cited since the program began in 1982. They will be honored during ceremonies on October 25, 2008, at the 103rd annual Convention in Sacramento, CA, where they will each receive a $2,500 check and a commemorative plaque.

The Laureate Program was inaugurated to further Tau Beta Pi’s second basic purpose as stated in the preamble to the Constitution: “to foster a spirit of liberal culture in engineering colleges.” A committee of District Directors considered 15 nominees from ten chapters.

Mitchell P. Braegelmann

MITCH BRAEGELMANN, North Dakota Beta ’08, is a 2008 Tau Beta Pi Laureate for his diverse achievements. He is a chemical engineering graduate of the University of North Dakota and is working on his master's there.

Captain of his college football team, he accumulated many sporting awards, including being named to ESPN The Magazine’s All-American team. More than this, he has provided much service to his university community, as well as the wider Grand Forks community.

Mitch has volunteered for the past four winters with Holiday Magic for Marcus, using donated money to buy Christmas presents for children with serious illnesses. When a nearby town was hit by a tornado last spring, he went with other students to help in the cleanup operation.

On the academic front, Mitch was inducted into TBP the first semester he was eligible and has maintained his grades ever since. He has been an active chapter member, especially in math tutoring sessions where Tau Bates are available to help students with calculus and other math problems. He made the academic first team twice, an achievement for an engineering major, was sophomore chemical engineer of the year, along with freshman and junior finalist for that award. Mitch’s special topics include experimental design, polymer science, and materials and corrosion. He has also been active in AIChE.

Back to football, he has started three seasons on the offensive line for his college—two years at center and one at guard. Other awards have included 2006-07 UND offensive lineman of the year.

Austin D. Cooley

AUSTIN COOLEY, Florida Alpha ‘08, is a 2008 Tau Beta Pi Laureate for his diverse achievements. He is a computer engineering graduate of the University of Florida.

Austin is noted for volunteering his time and effort on every occasion as part of his passion for the arts and commitment to community service. Music is a large part of his life, especially playing the piano and the drums.

He received an outstanding soloist award for performing a piano concerto with his high school’s symphony orchestra. He was elected drumline captain and captain of the marching band.

Austin volunteered for Studio Percussion, a non-profit created to help people express themselves through music. He has developed a piano studio there and is now its teacher.

Soon after his initiation into TBP, the coordinator of one of his chapter’s major programs, the K-12 math and science Olympiad—SECM, had to step down. With no prior experience, Austin stepped into the breech. His hard work and commitment led to an expansion of SECME, increasing the numbers of local high-school students taking part from five percent to 15 percent. His cumulative G.P.A. of 3.96 was complemented when fellow Tau Bates recognized his commitment and leadership by voting him the chapter’s most outstanding officer for the Spring 2007 semester.

He is also active in his campus Green Team, with environmental concern that took him to Germany this summer to study the latest renewable energy technology.
**Melanie R. Vedvei**

**MELANIE VEDVEI, South Dakota Alpha ’08, is a 2008 Tau Beta Pi Laureate for her achievements in athletics.** She is an industrial engineering graduate of South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

Melanie started on her high-school basketball team as an eighth grader. She joined the squad at SDSMT and was recently voted the 2008 LeRoy Walker champion of character award, considered one of the most prestigious accolades in the NAIA. It honors a student athlete who excels in sports, integrity, and academics. Melanie has been an NAIA Basketball All-American for the past three years, an NAIA Academic All-American 2007 and 2008, and Dakota Athletic Conference basketball MVP for the past two years. She holds most school records for women’s basketball and is all-time career steals leader in the NAIA. All this was despite collapsing with a season-ending knee injury during a game in January.

Melanie began coaching basketball, volleyball, and track in high school and continued coaching while in college. This has included coaching a YMCA girl’s team and serving at numerous youth camps. She led a youth basketball camp at her school for three summers.

**On the academic front, she achieved a G.P.A. of 3.94 and made the dean’s list for seven out of seven semesters. Melanie was a key contributor to many projects and was named to the school’s leadership hall of fame in 2008.** She was named TBP Leroy Record Scholar No. 324 and served as chapter Vice President. She also works at her family’s cattle ranch.

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**James G. Moxness II**

**JAMES MOXNESS II, Arizona Alpha ’08, is a 2008 Tau Beta Pi Laureate for his achievements in the arts.** He graduated with honors from the University of Arizona with a B.S. in chemical engineering and a B.A. in art history.

Outside the classroom, James has worked extensively at the University of Arizona Museum of Art. He worked on the collections committee, helping to bring about purchases of works ranging from Rembrandt and Durer to emerging American artists. He also interned there, researching antiquities in the collection, managing records, and helping with curatorial and exhibition work.

His experience was furthered by a summer as a student assistant at an archaeological excavation in Italy, dealing with Roman and Etruscan artifacts.

James has volunteered with Arizona Opera, preparing program booklets and serving as an usher. He also set up a Japanese archery club at his university and took part in a statewide Japan festival.

Service as his TBI chapter’s President was supplemented by work as a rotational free tutor. TBI Leroy Record Scholar No. 284, he made the dean’s list with distinction for five semesters and twice took the award for highest academic distinction in his college of engineering.

A member of Omega Chi Epsilon and Phi Beta Kappa, James also interned at the ExxonMobil Corporation, working in various areas from finance to pipeline corrosion.

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**Eli Krahenbuhl**

**ELI KRAHENBUHL, Wyoming Alpha ’09, is a 2008 Tau Beta Pi Laureate for his achievements in athletics.** He is a mechanical engineering undergraduate at the University of Wyoming.

He competes in the non-traditional collegiate sport of downhill mountain biking, which is a test of skills—like downhill skiing on a narrow dirt path with lots of obstacles. He has been recognized by all the governing bodies of the sport and been ranked 11th out of 132 professional riders in the U.S. Eli has taken part in both national and international events, placing third in the Division I downhill competition.

He has a G.P.A. of 4.0 and is praised at his school for taking on what may be the toughest curriculum at the University of Wyoming and excelling in a world where top athletes routinely neglect the academic side and study much easier curricula. Eli has found time to be a math and science tutor, as well as to be recognized on the president’s and dean’s lists.

He has been an active chapter member and a TBI leader for the Math Counts program. Eli is leading his school’s mountain biking team for the current season as well as competing on the professional circuit. He wants to work after college as a designer in the cycling industry, using engineering skills to help his sport and bring innovations to the marketplace.

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