

Tau Beta Pi Announces 2026 Laureates

Four Laureates have been selected to recognize gifted engineering students who have excelled in areas beyond their technical majors. Award categories include arts, athletics, diverse achievements, and service. Laureates will receive a \$2,500 cash award, commemorative plaque, and join other outstanding Tau Bates cited since the program began in 1982, bringing the total to 135. The 2026 Laureates are **Karthik Boregowda**, FL A '23, **Tova E. Fink**, NY B '26, **Sadie S. Meyer**, NY B '26, **Hu "Oliver" Zhao**, AL A '21.



Karthik Boregowda has been selected as a **2026 TBPi Laureate** for achievements in service. He's currently pursuing a Ph.D. in environmental engineering sciences at the University of Florida, where he previously

earned an M.E. and graduate certificate. He's developed the ZipTree educational search tool to identify resilient trees by ZIP code. The interactive resource is for engineers, agriculturists, environmental professionals, wildfire experts, and restoration practitioners, covering 40,000+ ZIP codes and 600 tree species. Karthik's academic research has focused on PFAS and helping agencies and communities navigate operational continuity challenges during PFAS contamination. Additionally, his passion for integrating engineering with community service, energy equity, and environmental stewardship shines through his volunteer work as an energy coach at the Community Weatherization Coalition, where he was recently elected to the Advisory Board. Karthik's transformative work has lifted rent burdens for low-income families, prevented homelessness, conserved resources, and fostered a more sustainable community. Karthik's impact has strengthened Tau Beta Pi's presence on campus, particularly after the pandemic, while providing invaluable service to the FL Alpha Chapter. His leadership has elevated member engagement and earned him the honor of University of Florida's 2025 Presidential Service Award. He was cited in his nomination for showing the initiative and drive that demonstrates how engineers can foster civic responsibility and contribute meaningfully to a liberal culture that values empathy, social awareness, and action.



Tova Fink's achievements in the arts have led to being named a **2026 TBPi Laureate**. She recently graduated from Syracuse University with a biomedical engineering degree and studied abroad for a year at the University

of New South Wales (UNSW). Tova began playing the flute in middle school and continued through high school as part of the concert and marching bands. Alongside musical involvement, she was committed to athletics, competing in soccer, lacrosse, and basketball. Service was also a defining component of her development, leading Heroes for Children initiatives as a teen board chair. Tova has played the flute for the Pride of the Orange Marching Band, Sour Citrus Society Pep Band, and Syracuse University Concert Band. Through rehearsals, event performances, and concerts, she has created spaces where students of diverse academic backgrounds collaborate toward a shared artistic goal. In addition, Tova has sought leadership roles that cultivate an inclusive and supportive campus culture. She's served as NY Beta Chapter vice president and Tau Beta Sigma (honorary band sorority) recognitions chair. As a university physics coach, Tova collaborates with TAs to lead weekly laboratory sections of approximately 25 students. While studying abroad, she participated in the UNSW Wind Symphony and on the university's lacrosse team. These experiences broadened Tova's understanding of how engineering education, artistic expression, and athletics remain deeply interconnected across cultures. In support of her nomination, a professor said, "What I find most compelling about Tova is her authenticity. She leads without seeking recognition, contributes without hesitation, and approaches every opportunity with humility and purpose."

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For her achievements in service, **Sadie Meyer** has been selected a **2026 TBP Laureate**. With a B.S. in biomedical engineering, B.A. in mathematics, and a chemistry minor at Syracuse University, she plans to pursue an M.D. after a gap year internship. Motivated by her mother's experience with in vitro fertilization, she aspires to help other families achieve successful outcomes through a career as an OBGYN/reproductive endocrinologist, combining patient care with clinical engineering research to advance assisted reproductive technologies and expand access to women's healthcare. Sadie's undergraduate research includes developing a shape-memory polymer biomaterial scaffold that can eradicate biofilm maturation on its surface, leading interdisciplinary biomaterials research across two laboratories, and working alongside global researchers for a summer in Japan. She's served as NY Beta Chapter president and vice president. During this time, Sadie has guided the chapter through a period of transition, strengthening the organization while fostering a culture of engagement and service. She's overseen five initiation cycles and expanded membership to 100+ members, the largest cohort in NY Beta's history, and also recruited two new faculty advisors to ensure continued stability. Additionally, with service as the Multicultural/Interfaith Cabinet Chair of Syracuse Hillel for two years, Sadie established interfaith connections and dialogue on campus through her involvement on the Student Assembly of Interfaith Leaders. A nationally recognized researcher (Goldwater Scholar), Sadie was championed for being a passionate team player, exhibiting a commitment to service, and making an impact through her scientific communication skills and expertise.



Oliver Zhao has been named a **2026 TBP Laureate** for diverse achievements. He's a Ph.D. student in civil & environmental engineering at Texas A&M University with civil B.Eng. degrees from Beijing University (BUCEA) and Auburn University, and an M.S. from UCLA. Music had an early influence on his development in liberal culture through years of violin study. By the time he entered engineering, he had already been shaped by music, travel, endurance, and observation. At BUCEA, he performed in the Symphony Orchestra as principal violinist and won first prize in the poetry recitation competition. Since arriving in the U.S. to continue his engineering education, Oliver has focused on writing, including becoming a columnist for *The Bent* and the Aggie Voice of Texas A&M. Through these publications, he's detailed his own vulnerabilities and invited engineers to think about resilience not only as a technical concept, but a human one. Oliver's leadership is notable because it was exercised after a traumatic brain injury in 2023 and a lengthy recovery. Within a year of returning to public life, he was elected TX Delta Chapter president and served concurrently as secretary and social chair during a period of chapter rebuilding. His nomination by the TX Delta Chapter, proudly recognized Oliver "not simply for the breadth of his accomplishments but for a sustained pattern of contribution across artistic practice, writing, civic engagement, and student leadership. In each of these areas he has strengthened communities and institutions through creativity and public purpose." Oliver is currently researching urban resilience, which includes analyzing large datasets. Through this work, his "ability to connect people to purpose and translate vision to action" continues to elevate those around him.