Outstanding Student Award: Given to a current student of the school (typically a graduating 4th year) who has demonstrated outstanding academic performance, leadership and service.

Good evening. My name is George Cahen, associate dean for undergraduate programs at the Engineering School. It is great to see all of you. I know that you are all delighted to be here today to celebrate the spring semester of your final year as an undergraduate student. I know it has been an amazing time in your life, full of challenges and successes.

Tonight, as part of this yearly celebration, we have an opportunity to applaud a student or sometimes more than one student who has demonstrated outstanding academic performance, leadership and service.

This year out of the many stellar nominations we received we were once again unable to pick just one student for this award. Today we will acknowledge two students as the outstanding students of the year. This award will be listed in the awards section of the May 2015 U.Va. Final Exercises Program.

I’ll share a few highlights on the first award winner:
• She is a Jefferson Scholar, a Rodman Scholar and a member of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society.
• She is a Dean’s Ambassador to visiting VIPs.
• She has a passion for research, a sharp intellect and compassion for others.
• She was selected to speak at TEDx, Charlottesville.
• Her research efforts have produced three manuscripts that are currently in peer review.
• She volunteers as a “Junior TA” through the Teaching Fellowship Program.
• She is an active participant in Engineering Students Without Borders and will graduate this spring with a major in biomedical engineering and an engineering business minor.
• She presented not one but two papers at a national meeting of the Biomedical Engineering Society. One of those was in a special session on tissue engineering with graduate students and post docs.
• She led a multidisciplinary student team to a first-place win in the Engineering Schools Entrepreneurship Competition – the product was a system to improve the likelihood of hospital workers engaging in hand-washing.
• She serves as a tutor through the Diversity Center.
• Her research as an undergraduate student included work with the U.Va. School of Nursing to develop a novel fluorescent dye for injury visualization.
• She resides on the Lawn.
• She is a member of the Raven Society and received a Harrison Award for her research on tissue graft viability.
• She is intelligent and capable and very friendly. Some say she has never met a stranger.
• Others refer to her as a “rock star.”

Please join me in applauding your fellow student Yiqi Cao.

Our second winner for the Outstanding Student of the Year is equally impressive.
• He is a talented and focused student, with an impressive academic record and a passion for solving problems.
• He is a Jefferson Scholar and a Rodman Scholar.
• He served as Virginia Mock Trial Treasurer.
• He is Vice President of INCOSE – Int’l Council on Systems Engineering
• He is the U.Va. Solar Car Team Treasurer
• He lives on the Lawn
• He volunteers as a soccer coach through Madison House
• He is the Engineering School representative on the University Diversity Initiatives Committee
• He is a National Merit Scholar
• He is a member of Collegiate 100 Society
• He is a member of the Raven Society
• He is Vice President of the International Council on Systems Engineering at U.Va.
• He is Pledge Class Treasurer/Secretary of Phi Delta Theta
• He is a Deloitte Next Gen Leader
• He is a member of University Guide Service
• He has been the voice of reason as a national-level spokesperson for University of Virginia students in his role as President of U.Va. Student Council in several extremely challenging situations this year.
• His academic abilities, communication and interpersonal skills, leadership abilities and leading-edge technical background make him a perfect choice for this award.

Please join me in applauding Jalen Ross.