Outstanding Student Award 2012
Hannah Meredith

The Engineering School honors a student or students who exhibit service before self, integrity and excellence, with an outstanding student award each year. The last two years the award was shared between six students because it was impossible for the committee to choose just one of the six for a top award. In fact, the School has not given the award to just one student since 2004.

This year, however, among the 10 highly qualified students who were nominated, one person stood out far beyond the others.

Hannah Meredith’s nomination was supported by several faculty members in her home department of biomedical engineering and in the STS Department. She was also highly recommended by faculty involved in the Center for Undergraduate Excellence, the Science and Technology Policy Internship Program and the Rodman’s Scholar Program.

All of these recommendations tell a story about a woman who excelled academically and in research and provided transformative service to the Engineering School and its future students. She is, as one faculty member said, truly the citizen-scholar envisioned by our founder.

Here is a little of what she has accomplished over the last four years:

• She was awarded an Astronaut Scholarship, presented to her personally by former Apollo astronaut Edgar Mitchell.
• She received a Harrison award to work toward a field diagnostic test for amoebic dysentery.
• As a science and technology policy intern, she was placed at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars where she worked on original research to assess the adequacy of the Environmental Protection Agency’s guidelines for microbial risk assessment for application to novel synthetic biology products.
• She received an Arts Award, which is an award modeled on the Harrison Undergraduate Research Award but intended to support artistic or creative endeavors. Her proposal was titled “Molecular Gastronomy – More Than Just a Mouthful,” in which she explored the emerging field of culinary chemistry.
• She worked with the Department of Energy at Oak Ridge during a summer internship where she developed tools that will permit the development of a new generation of genetically modified organisms.
• She was the co-founder of The Spectra – an engineering and science undergraduate research journal at U.Va. and she currently serves as Editor-in-Chief.
• While doing all of this she also served as vice president of the Biomedical Engineering Society and held a GPA of 3.8 while majoring in biomedical engineering.
This young woman is uniformly described as motivated, enthusiastic, confident, collegial, talented and creative. For her academic achievements, her leadership, curiosity and brilliance, I am pleased to award Hannah Meredith the 2012 Outstanding Student of the Year award.