USU Engineering Education Student Receives NSF Research Fellowship | College of Engineering

04/01/2020

April 1, 2020 — A Utah State University doctoral student will receive one of the nation’s most distinguished student research fellowships valued at approximately $138,000.

Jack Elliott, a PhD student in USU’s Department of Engineering Education, was selected from more than 12,000 applicants for the National Science Foundation’s Graduate Research Fellowship Program. Each year, the program offers about 2,000 awardees a three-year annual stipend of $34,000 and a three-year annual allowance of $12,000 for tuition and fees. Elliott was one of only four awardees selected in the field of Engineering Education.

Elliott is from Pocatello, Idaho, and completed an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering at USU before starting a concurrent program to earn a master’s in mechanical engineering and a PhD in engineering education. Elliott says the funding will cover the costs of his education and allow him to focus on personal research interests. Advised by Assistant Professor Angela Minichiello, Elliott will conduct a unique study about how engineering students interact with their peers to form study networks throughout their college education.

The research will apply a method known as social network analysis to examine the interactions between engineering students, their peers and course resources. Findings from the study will help educators develop and implement more effective strategies for engaging engineering students within large, traditional classrooms.

“I think engineering students’ study networks are an important aspect of their success,” said Elliott. “However, current research does not include how peers and course resources play into network development. And current studies are insufficient in face-to-face contexts. My study will include these aspects. The goal is to share the results with the engineering education community to gain a better view of which study network behaviors are most effective and how to incentivize that behavior.”

Elliott credited several colleagues including Minichiello and Professors Melissa Scheaffer and Thomas Fronk. He also thanked fellow graduate students Darcie Christensen and Mark Kreider.

Writer: Matt Jensen, 435-797-8170, matthew.jensen@usu.edu

Contact: Jack Elliott, jack.elliott@usu.edu