



Laura Byrnes-Blanco

Laura Byrnes-Blanco Awarded NSF Fellowship

TAMPA, Fla. (April 1, 2014) Laura Byrnes-Blanco, a senior in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, has been awarded a prestigious NSF Graduate Research Fellowship. NSF received over 14,000 applications for the 2014 Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) competition, and made 2,000 fellowship award offers. The NSF GRFP provides funding in the amount of \$32,000 per year and full tuition and fees for three years over a five year period. Additionally, fellows are eligible for international research, professional development opportunities, and TeraGrid Supercomputer access.

The purpose of the NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) is to ensure the vitality of the scientific and technological workforce in the United States and to reinforce its diversity. The program recognizes and supports outstanding graduate students in the relevant science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines who are pursuing research-based masters and doctoral degrees.

Last year, Laura received a summer undergraduate fellowship to conduct research at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Gaithersburg, MD. In the College of Engineering, she has participated in research with professors Nathan Gallant, Rasim Guldiken, and Autar Kaw in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Laura has served as the Professional Development and Image Chairs for Tau Beta Pi, the Engineering Honor Society.

[NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Program](#)

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The University of South Florida is a high-impact, global research university dedicated to student success. USF is a Top 50 research university among both public and private institutions nationwide in total research expenditures, according to the National Science Foundation. Serving nearly 48,000 students, the USF System has an annual budget of \$1.5 billion and an annual economic impact of \$4.4 billion. USF is a member of the American Athletic Conference.

The College of Engineering at the University of South Florida is ranked at #72 among public institutions by U.S. News & World Report's 2015 engineering graduate school rankings. The college serves 4,600 students offering ABET-accredited undergraduate degrees in seven programs, as well as eleven master's and nine doctoral degrees. The College is actively engaged in local and global research activities with foci on sustainability, biomedical

engineering, computing technology and transportation and for the fiscal year 2013-14 had \$30.5 million in research expenditures. There are 124 tenured / tenure track faculty and 80 instructors and research faculty.

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