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## Purdue awards first scholarships through federal Homeland Security STEM program

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Seven Purdue graduate students will receive research scholarships through the university's Homeland Security Science, Engineering, Technology and Mathematics Career Development program.

The scholarship winners are David Blunck of Canby, Ore., who is studying mechanical engineering; Karla Ann Combs of Rock Island, Ill., who is studying biological sciences; Laura Hughes of Buford, Ga., who is studying biological sciences; Samuel Liles of Porter, Ind., who is studying technology; Ross Maciejewski of Owensville, Mo., who is studying electrical and computer engineering; Shawn McKay of Mesa, Ariz., who is studying mechanical engineering; and Bryan Sims of Martinsville, Ind., who is studying nuclear engineering.

Program co-administrator Sandra Amass, a Purdue professor of veterinary clinical sciences and interim co-director of the Purdue Homeland Security Institute, said the scholarships will help Purdue grow this academic field and place students in careers that are in demand today.

"We had terrific interest in the new program," Amass said. "With these first seven winners, we have a great group of graduate students with very impressive backgrounds and diverse interests in homeland security and research that will support this expanding field of study."



Recipients of the scholarships from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security are eligible for \$27,600 a year

or a maximum of \$82,800 over three years. The first disbursement is in December for use in the upcoming spring semester.

**Sandra Amass**  
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The students will attend several homeland security functions and submit semester summaries of their work and activities. They will spend their first year after completing the program working in a research laboratory at a facility sanctioned by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"This program will open new career opportunities, exposing me to biological sciences research that has crucial applications in homeland security," said Combs, who hopes to research better detection methods and countermeasures for bioweapons. "Demand continues to grow in this field, and this scholarship will allow me to work with a mentor to explore careers and get me on the path to a great government career."

A special breakfast honoring the scholarship recipients will be from 7:30-8:30 a.m. Thursday (Dec. 6) in the second floor atrium in Gerald D. and Edna E. Mann Hall, 203 Martin Jischke Drive, in West Lafayette.

The scholarship program, led by the Purdue Homeland Security Institute and the Purdue University Regional Visualization and Analytics Center, was launched to encourage undergraduate and graduate students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics to pursue a career working or conducting research in homeland security.

"The diversity of the recipients' degree majors show the breadth of skills in demand in this important interdisciplinary field," said program co-director David Ebert, a professor of electrical and computer engineering and director of Purdue's Regional Visualization and Analytics Center. "We hope that the success of this initial scholarship competition highlights the opportunities in homeland security to students across campus."



**David Ebert**  
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Earlier this fall, Purdue received a \$500,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security to provide the scholarships.

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**Note to Journalists:** Journalists interested in attending the special breakfast honoring the scholarship winners from 7:30-8:30 a.m. Thursday (Dec. 6) at the Burton D. Morgan Center for Entrepreneurship can contact Phillip Fiorini at (765) 496-3133, [pfiorini@purdue.edu](mailto:pfiorini@purdue.edu).

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