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Tennessee Tech University graduate student Brackins chosen for National Water Center Innovators Program Summer Institute

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[COOKEVILLE, Tennessee, March 20, 2018] Civil and environmental engineering student John Brackins, from Franklin, Tennessee, is dedicated to his field of study. This is evidenced by his pursuit of concurrent master's and doctoral degrees on the topic of hurricane storm surges. That determination to advance his studies in water resources has resulted in an invitation to participate in the National Water Center Innovators Program Summer Institute at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Water Center at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa from June 10 through July 28.

"This is a unique opportunity to work with people from a broad range of fields," said Brackins. "I am honored to have been chosen."

The Institute boasts national leaders in hydrology, modeling, and decision support, as well as other graduate students from across the nation and around the globe.

"John began his work four years ago as an undergraduate," said Alfred Kalyanapu, Brackins' advisor, and an associate professor in civil and environmental engineering at Tech. "His focus is on creating a model that will predict the results of combined storm surge and rainfall-driven flooding from hurricanes. John is hopeful that this research may overlap with the projects he is able to work on at the Summer Institute."

"We will be living on the UA campus for seven weeks," Brackins said. "In the first couple of weeks, we will learn about the National Water Center, then we will pick from a number of the center's themes for our summer research. The last five weeks will be spent working on those specific projects."

All of the projects are designed to contribute to the National Water Center's goals of enhancing water-related products and decision-support services across the country. This year's project themes are hyper-resolution modeling; groundwater flow modeling with an emphasis on groundwater-surface water interactions; and the computational aspects of hydrologic modeling. All of the projects will be led by experts in these fields from universities across the country. Even the process to become a theme leader was competitive, according to Brackins.

"I'm excited to get to learn from such highly-qualified leaders, and from other next-generation researchers," said Brackins, who is also a graduate research assistant in the Center for the Management, Utilization and Protection of Water Resources at Tennessee Tech.

Tennessee Tech University also has three centers in the College of Engineering: the Center for Energy Systems Research, the Center for Manufacturing Research and the Cybersecurity Education, Research and Outreach Center, for which it received a $4 million National Science Foundation grant in 2015.

The College of Engineering at Tennessee Tech offers ABET-accredited undergraduate programs in engineering technology, chemical engineering, civil engineering, electrical and computer engineering, mechanical engineering, and computer science. In addition, it offers bachelor degrees in basic science and engineering (BSE) jointly with East Tennessee State University. At the graduate level, Tech offers both master's degrees and a doctorate in engineering. Founded in 1915, Tech offers more than 40 bachelor and 20 graduate programs to almost 11,000 students on its 252-acre central campus in Cookeville, Tennessee. For more information, visit www.tntech.edu/engineering. For more information about the National Water Center's Summer Institute, visit www.cuahsi.org/education/summerinstitute.

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