Electrical engineering major David Zoltowski advances as finalist for prestigious Rhodes Scholarship

David Zoltowski, an electrical engineering major and captain of Michigan State University men’s swim team, is a finalist for the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship.

Zoltowski will interview for the scholarship in Indianapolis on Nov. 22.

The Rhodes Trust, the oldest of the major international competitive award foundations, provides 32 of the most outstanding undergraduates in the United States an opportunity to study at the University of Oxford in England.

MSU has produced 16 Rhodes Scholars, the last one in 1997.

Zoltowski plans to pursue a doctorate in engineering science at Oxford.

“I am extremely excited to have the opportunity to interview for the Rhodes Scholarship,” Zoltowski said. “The prospect of me attending Oxford next year has suddenly become much more real, and I am looking forward to doing all that I can over the next few weeks to ensure that I make the most of this opportunity.”

A fraternal triplet, Zoltowski is inspired to advance knowledge of the brain in order to better understand his brother’s autism, which he explains in this August 2014 video of his Spartan story: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goSPXFdpLUk

Zoltowski is also one of two MSU candidates for the Churchill Scholarship. Established in 1959, the Winston Churchill Foundation’s Scholarship Program offers 14 American students of exceptional ability and outstanding achievement the opportunity to pursue graduate degrees in engineering, mathematics, or the sciences in Churchill College at the
University of Cambridge, England.

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“We in the College of Engineering are very proud of David for his accomplishment as a finalist for the Rhodes Scholarship, and also the Churchill Scholarship,” said Leo Kempel, dean of the MSU College of Engineering. "David's interest in better understanding the human brain is an exceptional example of how our college is transforming lives by merging a solid engineering foundation with the technology innovations that will change our future. I congratulate David, and the extraordinary community of faculty, staff and students who have helped this talented student come closer to realizing both his dreams and his potential.”

As a research assistant, Zoltowski studies functional brain networks by applying advanced signal processing tools to their study. He said Andrew Mason, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering, was influential in getting his research interests started. He has also worked closely with Selin Aviyente, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering.

He is a member of the MSU Honors College, is a Big Ten Distinguished Scholar and was named Academic All-Big Ten. He was one of two Goldwater Scholars last year at MSU and has also earned the MSU Honors College National Scholarship, Walter R. Yates Memorial Scholarship and Arthur J. Harris Memorial Scholarship. Among his other activities, he is a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council, Tau Beta Pi, Eta Kappa Nu and an Honors Times Two mentor.

Zoltowski is from West Lafayette, Ind., and is a 2011 graduate of West Lafayette High School.

He plans to graduate from MSU in May 2015.

Related Website: David Zoltowski - My Spartan Story
Rhodes Scholarship
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