

President's Report – December 2018/ January 2019

Honors and Awards to Members of the University Community

1. University of Utah Health pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical engineering Distinguished Professor Jindřich Henry Kopeček, who pioneered research in the design of polymer-drug conjugates and hydrogel biomaterials, was one of 148 academic inventors named as a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors for 2018. Kopeček, who has been with the U for more than 30 years, formulated and implemented a comprehensive approach to the design of nanosized water-soluble polymer-drug conjugates and provided tools to manipulate the tissue and subcellular localization of therapeutics. This work initiated worldwide research and applications of polymeric drug carriers for the design of new therapeutics to treat cancer and musculoskeletal diseases. He designed, synthesized and characterized hydrogels for clinical applications, contributing to fundamental studies of biocompatibility of synthetic polymers. In addition to working in the U's pharmaceuticals & pharmaceutical chemistry department, Kopeček is a Distinguished Professor of biomedical engineering. He is also co-director of the Center of Controlled Chemical Delivery at the U. Election to NAI Fellow status is the highest professional distinction given to academic inventors who have demonstrated a spirit of "innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development and the welfare of society," according to NAI.
2. University of Utah student-athletes had a banner fall semester in the classroom, setting a school record with a 3.295 cumulative grade point average. It marked the 25th-consecutive semester that the Utes (552 student-athletes spread among 20 teams) topped the 3.0 mark and follows a school-record NCAA Graduation Success Rate of 95 percent. Seven teams (gymnastics, men's skiing, women's skiing, indoor and outdoor track and field, cross-country and women's tennis) had GPAs greater than 3.5. Overall, 18 squads posted combined marks above 3.0. In addition, 78 student-athletes earned a 4.0 in the classroom, with 42 percent making the Dean's List (3.5 or greater).
3. Cameron Owen of Boise, Idaho, a senior majoring in chemistry and physics and minoring in mathematics, has received the prestigious Churchill Scholarship to study at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. He is one of only 15 students nationally to receive the award this year and is the fourth consecutive Churchill Scholar from the U. Owen, a recipient of a 2018 Barry Goldwater Scholarship, came out of high school with an interest in chemistry. He joined the lab of Peter Armentrout, Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, after hearing about Armentrout's research in his honors science cohort. While at the U, Owen has published his research and traveled twice to the Netherlands as part of the National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates program.
4. Utah freshman Nordic skier Noel Keeffe has been strong at the FIS Nordic Junior World Ski Championships, reaching the semifinals of the sprint classic race on Sunday while finishing 58th in the 10-km freestyle on Tuesday. Keeffe finished 12th overall in the classic sprint. He finished ahead of any skiers from Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Japan, Ukraine and Canada among other countries.

