

April 11, 2019

SMU Student Wins Prestigious NSF Graduate Research Fellowship



DALLAS (SMU)—A Southern Methodist University (SMU) graduate is one of the recipients of the National Science Foundation's [Graduate Research Fellowship Program](#).

[Ophelie Herve](#), who is a first-year master's student in Mechanical Engineering, will receive a three-year stipend of \$34,000 to do research of her choosing and \$12,000 to pay for her tuition and fees.

She was one of 2,050 students nationwide who was chosen to be a fellow this year. Past fellows include many Nobel Prize winners, Google founder Sergey Brin and the former U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu.

Born in France and raised in Austin, Herve said she plans to use the money to research how to create a prosthetic leg for amputees that it is controlled by their voluntary muscle contractions, so that the leg moves with the same precision as a natural human leg.

"This research has the potential to have a broader impact by improving rehabilitative efforts in the medical field, enhancing injury prevention, and optimizing performance in the athletic industry," she said.

Herve and her research are featured in an SMU video at <https://youtu.be/qEPqvmV9ysE>.

Herve said receiving an NSF fellow position has been a tremendous honor. "It is amazing to see that the door has been opened wide to pursue my passion," she added.

Herve will graduate from SMU in 2019 with a master's degree in mechanical engineering with a concentration in dynamics and controls. After that, she said she plans to continue her education under Dario Villarreal, the director of the NeuroMechatronics Lab at SMU, to pursue a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering with a biomechatronics specialization.

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SMU is the nationally ranked global research university in the dynamic city of Dallas. SMU's alumni, faculty and nearly 12,000 students in seven degree-granting schools demonstrate an entrepreneurial spirit as they lead change in their professions, communities and the world.
