



Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference

## NEWS RELEASE

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# BRITTON/KELLY RELEASE

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Division II

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## NSIC Announces 2015 Britton and Kelly Award Recipients

Burnsville, Minn. — The Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (NSIC) announced Minot State University's Kowan O'Keefe as the 2015 Dr. William Britton Scholar-Athlete Award winner and Southwest Minnesota State University's Whitney Burmeister as the 2015 Willis R. Kelly Scholar-Athlete Award recipient. The Britton Scholar-Athlete Award for Academic Excellence, in its 31st year, recognizes the NSIC's top male student-athlete and the Kelly Scholar-Athlete Award, in its 30th year, is presented to the NSIC's top female student-athlete.

The Britton Award was created in 1985 in honor of Dr. William Britton, a longtime faculty representative at Bemidji State University. The Kelly Award is named in honor of Willis R. Kelly, an associate professor of physical education at the University of Minnesota-Morris. A member of the NSIC Hall of Fame, Kelly also coordinated the Minnesota-Morris Physical Education Department from 1970-87. She became the first director of women's intercollegiate athletics at Minnesota-Morris in 1976 and was later promoted to athletics director for the whole department. Kelly passed away in 1988.

The member institutions of the NSIC nominate one male and one female student-athlete for the Britton and Kelly Awards. The nominees must meet the following criteria: a grade point average of 3.5 or better (on a 4.0 scale); evidence of academic excellence beyond the minimum grade point average (scholarship prizes and other academic recognition), evidence of participation in the life of the institution, and evidence of participation in at least two-thirds of the varsity events of the individual's primary sport. The award is voted on by the NSIC Faculty Athletic Representatives.

The 32 student-athletes nominated for the NSIC's two most prestigious awards will also be honored as NSIC Male and Female Honor Student-Athletes of the Year at their respective institutions. O'Keefe and Burmeister will be recognized Wednesday, July 15 at the 2015 NSIC Hall of Fame Banquet at the Best Western Premier in Burnsville, Minn. and will each receive a \$2,500 post-graduate scholarship.



### 2015 Dr. William Britton Scholar-Athlete Award for Academic Excellence Kowan O'Keefe - Minot State University - Men's Golf

Kowan O'Keefe, a native of Creston, British Columbia, is a senior double majoring in chemistry and mathematics at Minot State University. The Salmon Arm Secondary School graduate holds a 3.949 GPA while excelling in men's golf for the Beavers. O'Keefe is the first student-athlete from Minot State University to earn the Britton Award.

O'Keefe was named the Outstanding Senior Organic Chemistry Student at Minot State in 2014 and placed in the 100th percentile in the United States on the American Chemical Society Standardized Organic Chemistry Examination in May of 2012. He is an NCAA Division II Athletic Director's Association Academic Achievement Award winner and was featured in the 2013-2014 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges in February of 2014. Under Professor Mikhail Bobylev, Kowan has been investigating the mechanism of the Leuckart reaction and

its application to the selective synthesis of novel benzylformamide fungicides. During this time, he has given 13 presentations at national, state, and local conferences, including three times at the national meetings of the American Chemical Society, and at "Posters on the Hill" in Washington, D.C., where he was one of 60 students selected from across the United States to present their research to members of Congress on Capitol Hill. O'Keefe also was chosen as a Non-Governmental Observer at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru in 2014.

O'Keefe is an NSIC All-Academic Team member and was a recipient of the prestigious Myles Brand All-Academic with Distinction Award this past spring.

On campus O'Keefe is a chemistry tutor and a member of many clubs and organizations, including the Minot State Student Athlete Advisory Committee, the Math Club and the MISU Science Club. In September of 2015, Kowan will be attending the University of Toronto to begin his Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry.

On the course O'Keefe was a team captain for the Beavers and had four top-four finishes and five top-10 finishes in his senior campaign, including a second place finish at the NSIC/US Bank Men's Golf Championships. O'Keefe shot 9-over-par during the four rounds to finish one stroke off the lead and earn NSIC All-Tournament Team honors. He ranks sixth in the NSIC with a 75.1 stroke average with a low round score of 71 on the season and a career low round of 66. O'Keefe is also a two-time Capital One Academic All-American, a three-time All-NSIC performer and was named the NSIC Golfer of the Year for the 2012-13 season.



### 2015 Willis R. Kelly Scholar-Athlete Award for Academic Excellence Whitney Burmeister, Southwest Minnesota State University - Volleyball

Whitney Burmeister, a native of Lakefield, Minn., is a junior majoring in exercise science at Southwest Minnesota State University. The Jackson County Central High School graduate holds a 3.98 grade point average while playing volleyball for the Mustangs. She joins Christy Kubat (2002), Janelle Gibbs (1999), Paige Karno (1996), Katy Pivec (1995), Shauna Wendland (1989) and Rachel Patnoe (2014) in the elite group of Mustangs to earn the Kelly Award.

Burmeister is a five-time member of the SMSU Dean's List and was named an SMSU Scholar Athlete in 2013 and 2014. She was a two-time NSIC All-Academic Team member and was a member of the Mustangs Volleyball program that boasted the highest team GPA at the 2014 National Championships. Burmeister is also the recipient of over a dozen scholarships at SMSU.

Burmeister is involved in many clubs and organizations at SMSU. She has been the vice president for the SMSU Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) the past two years and has been a student worker for the SMSU Faculty Association and Inter Faculty Organization the past three years. She is also a member of the Biology Club, serving as their public relations officer the past year. Other clubs include the Environmental Awareness Club and the Exercise Science Club. She also worked closely with the SMSU Relay for Life Team and with the "It's A Slam Dunk, Don't Drive Drunk Campaign", which received the highest amount of pledges of any NSIC school the last three years.

On the court, Burmeister was part of a Mustang club that was NCAA Division II national runner-up in 2014. She was named to both the NCAA Elite 8 and NCAA Central Region All-Tournament teams as the Mustangs finished with a 26-10 overall record and a 15-5 mark in the NSIC. She was also named NSIC Defensive Player of the Week twice in 2014.

Burmeister is a Literacy Tutor through Literacy Volunteers of Southwest Minnesota and volunteers at Campus and Community Connect VISTA, the Swimming with English Language Learners, Christian Band Performances, Adopt-A-Highway, Marshall Food Shelf Collection and SMSU Volleyball camps.

*The NSIC is a 16-team, 17-sport, NCAA Division II Conference with teams located in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.*





## 2015 NSIC Britton/Kelly Awards Release

### 2014-15 NSIC Men's Honor Student-Athlete Award Winners

Vaughn Thada	Augustana College	Senior	Track & Field	Owatonna, Minn.	Owatonna HS
Tony Peterson	Bemidji State University	Senior	Football	Frederic, Wis.	Frederic HS
Zachary Rengel	Concordia University, St Paul	Junior	Baseball	Fergus Falls, Minn.	Kennedy Secondary
Troy Guptil	University of Mary	Senior	Football	Philip, S.D.	Philip HS
Mathew Borowicz	University of Minnesota Crookston	Senior	Football	Stephen, Minn.	Stephen-Argyle HS
Aaron Handorff	University of Minnesota Duluth	Senior	Cross Country	Andover, Minn.	Andover HS
Austin Rieder	Minnesota State University, Mankato	Senior	Football	Eau Claire, Wis.	North HS
Bennen Bierman	Minnesota State University Moorhead	Junior	Football	Forest Lake, Minn.	Forest Lake HS
Kowan O'Keefe	Minot State University	Senior	Men's Golf	Creston, B.C.	Salmon Arm Secondary
Jared Jacobson	Northern State University	Senior	Football	Rapid City, S.D.	St. Thomas More HS
Robert Brockmueller	University of Sioux Falls	Senior	Cross Country	Brandon, S.D.	Brandon Valley HS
Jason Minett	Southwest Minnesota State University	Senior	Baseball	Ruthton, Minn.	Russell-Tyler-Ruthton HS
Mike Jurgella	St. Cloud State University	Senior	Baseball	Plover, Wis.	Pacelli HS
Matt Paulus	Upper Iowa University	Senior	Wrestling	New Hampton, Iowa	New Hampton HS
Brody Rohach	Wayne State College	Senior	Football	Johnston, Iowa	Moorpark HS
Chase Blazier	Winona State University	Senior	Baseball	Harvard Ill.	Harvard HS

### 2014-15 NSIC Women's Honor Student-Athlete Award Winners

Meg Thacker	Augustana College	Senior	Soccer	Omaha, Neb.	Westside HS
Rachel Craig	Bemidji State University	Senior	Volleyball	Wadena, Minn.	Wadena-Deer Creek HS
Anika Whiting	Concordia University, St Paul	Senior	Basketball	Ashland, Wis.	Ashland HS
Crystal Hovland	University of Mary	Senior	Track & Field	Rugby, N.D.	Rugby HS
Ashley Martell	University of Minnesota Crookston	Senior	Women's Basketball	Somerset, Wis.	Somerset HS
Amelia Maher	University of Minnesota Duluth	Senior	Track & Field	Sauk Centre, Minn.	Sauk Centre Secondary
Breanna Steele	Minnesota State University, Mankato	Senior	Soccer	Eagan, Minn.	Eagan HS
Molly Montonye	Minnesota State University Moorhead	Junior	Track & Field	Graceville, Minn.	Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley
Melissa Bell	Minot State University	Senior	Softball	Belgrade, Mont.	Belgrade HS
Mariah Nelson	Northern State University	Senior	Track & Field	Mitchell, S.D.	Mitchell Christian HS
Emily Johnson	University of Sioux Falls	Senior	Volleyball	Platte, S.D.	Platte-Geddes HS
Whitney Burmeister	Southwest Minnesota State University	Junior	Volleyball	Lakefield, Minn.	Jackson County Central HS
Carley Jeffrey	St. Cloud State University	Senior	Basketball	Cambridge, Wis.	Cambridge HS
Kaitlyn Emanuel	Upper Iowa University	Senior	Soccer	Byron, Minn.	Byron HS
Ashton Marie Yossi	Wayne State College	Senior	Basketball	Dallas Center, Iowa	Dallas Center-Grimes HS
Jessica Young	Winona State University	Senior	Cross Country	Winona, Minn.	Winona Senior HS

#### Annual Britton Award Recipients

2015 - Kowan O'Keefe, Minot State  
 2014 - William Brockmueller, Sioux Falls  
 2013 - Alex Coulter, Winona State  
 2012 - Cody Lensing, Augustana  
 2011 - Matt Braithwaite, Augustana  
 2010 - Marcus Greatens, Winona State  
 2009 - Kirk Ingram, Concordia-St. Paul  
 2008 - Tyler Fischer, Southwest Minnesota State  
 2007 - Tyler Fischer, Southwest Minnesota State  
 2006 - Dusty Smith, Wayne State  
 2005 - Brett Watson, Wayne State  
 2004 - Baron Blanchard, Northern State  
 2003 - Tucker Willard, Northern State  
 2002 - Steven Brandt, Minnesota Crookston  
 2001 - Mike May, Bemidji State  
 2000 - Adam Vossen, MSU Moorhead  
 1999 - Bart Johnson, MSU Moorhead  
 1998 - Stephen Blackmarr, Minnesota Duluth  
 1997 - Jesse Beckermann, Minnesota Duluth  
 1996 - Lance Luitjens, Northern State  
 1995 - Nate Gruber, Winona State  
 1994 - Jeff Engbrecht, Winona State  
 1993 - Jay Kusler, Northern State  
 1992 - Jeff Welder, MSU Moorhead  
 1991 - Scott Colbeck, Minnesota-Morris  
 1990 - Dwight Hager, Bemidji State  
 1989 - Bruce Saugstad, Southwest State  
 1988 - Tom Aney, Minnesota Duluth  
 1987 - Dale Harper, Bemidji State  
 1986 - Jeff Kretchman, Northern State  
 1985 - James Scott Bestul, Winona State

#### Annual Kelly Award Recipients

2015 - Whitney Burmeister, Southwest Minnesota State  
 2014 - Rachel Patnoe, Southwest Minnesota State  
 2013 - Elizabeth (Ellie) Duffy, Concordia-St. Paul  
 2012 - Kendra Heuttl, Minnesota State  
 2011 - Rebecca Anderson, Minnesota Duluth  
 2010 - Lauren Brown, Winona State  
 2009 - Mary Slinger, Concordia-St. Paul  
 2008 - Kallie Tellefsen, Winona State  
 2007 - Jessica Trautwein, MSU Moorhead  
 2006 - Kathryn Kramer, Winona State  
 2005 - Lindsay Hartmann, MSU Moorhead  
 2004 - Kristin Peterson, Northern State  
 2003 - Karen Darveaux, Winona State  
 2002 - Christy Kubat, Southwest State  
 2001 - Angela Swanson, Minnesota Crookston  
 2000 - Abby Stritesky, Bemidji State  
 1999 - Janelle Gibbs, Southwest State  
 1998 - Betsy Pachal, Minnesota Duluth  
 1997 - Mollie Odell, Northern State  
 1996 - Paige Karno, Southwest State  
 1995 - Katy Pivec, Southwest State  
 1994 - Amy Tenute, MSU Moorhead  
 1993 - Amy Erickson, Minnesota Duluth  
 1992 - Kristin Nelson, Minnesota Duluth  
 1991 - Jayne Dusich, Bemidji State  
 1990 - Mary Kortan, Northern State  
 1989 - Shauna Wendland, Southwest State  
 1988 - Tara Haiskanen, Minnesota Duluth  
 1987 - Teresa Greenwood, MSU Moorhead  
 1986 - Lisa Muehlbauer, Minnesota Duluth

