



Media Release

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Cook defends M.S. Thesis from collaborative Sasol-McNeese Graduate Fellowship

LAKE CHARLES, LA – McNeese State University Chemistry Graduate Student Brian Cook has successfully completed his Sasol North America Fellowship and will defend his Master's Thesis work April 17, 2007. As the first ever Sasol-McNeese Graduate Fellow, Brian worked with Sasol's Research and Development (R&D) scientists at the Westlake facility to complete his work based on Sasol's Hydro-treatment Catalyst Study.

Brian summed up his tenure as a Sasol Fellow by saying, "I feel fortunate that I've had the chance to work in a state-of-the-art R&D facility and see the industrial side of chemistry." Due to the success of this pilot program, Sasol has decided to continue the Fellowship program through 2009.

This inaugural Sasol-McNeese Graduate Fellowship has allowed Brian to work directly with R&D chemists to engage in industrial research and gain unprecedented field experience. Brian worked with Sasol Research Associate, Dr. Barry Winder, to complete his Master's Thesis work. Dr. Winder said, "This has been a win-win situation. The fellowship provides us the opportunity to interact with McNeese, and gain hands-on assistance with an important project." Dr. Mark Delaney of the McNeese Chemistry Department is Brian's Major Professor and Dr. Ron Darbeau, Head of the Chemistry Department, is also a member of Brian's Thesis Committee.

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According to Dr. Darbeau, "This Sasol-MSU Fellowship is just one in a long list of mutually advantageous collaborations between our Department and Sasol." We are thrilled that Brian has worked out as well as we

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expected him to...grateful for the valuable experience he gained and elated that Sasol is committed to continue investing manpower and time in this venture." Darbeau also praised Dr. Joseph Sneddon, Professor of Chemistry and Coordinator of the chemistry graduate program, for spearheading the initiation and execution of the Fellowship.

Brian Cook was selected by the MSU faculty, and approved by Sasol, to participate in the first Sasol Fellowship program, which started in November of 2005. Brian currently holds a Bachelor's Degree in Natural Sciences and Mathematics and has been working on his Master of Science degree in Environmental and Chemical Sciences.

Sasol has offered many internships and co-op positions to McNeese undergraduate and graduate students over the years, but the relationship between Sasol and the McNeese chemistry department has grown deeper and more mutually profitable since the relocation of Sasol's R&D facility to Westlake in 2004. Sasol scientists have served as adjunct professors at MSU, teaching a graduate "Industrial Chemistry" course every second fall semester for the past six years. Sasol has also donated valuable research grade equipment to McNeese and even made monetary contributions to the department's seminar and outreach programs. This fall scientists from Sasol and McNeese hope to jointly submit a proposal to the Louisiana Board of Regents to fund a project with significant potential to both Sasol and the state. If funded it will be only the second such grant awarded to McNeese.

Sasol North America Inc. is a leading manufacturer of biodegradable ingredients for soaps, detergents and personal care products worldwide. The company is also recognized as a quality producer of high-purity aluminas, an inert material used as a catalyst, thickening agent, absorbent, and mild abrasive in a variety of everyday products. With approximately 400 local employees, the Calcasieu Parish facility is one of the top ten industrial complexes in Southwest Louisiana.

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