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**Brady Alsaker to study development and culture in India**

*Summary: Brady Alsaker will participate in the Minnesota Studies in International Development program in India beginning this fall. Alsaker received a NSEP scholarship.*

(June 13, 2007)-Brady Alsaker, a University of Minnesota, Morris senior from Benson, is the recipient of a National Security Education Program (NSEP) David L. Boren Undergraduate Scholarship. Alsaker will participate in the Minnesota Studies in International Development (MSID) program in India, a program that is based on the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus and focuses on both theoretical and practical development issues.

"It is truly an honor to be receiving this prestigious scholarship - an honor that I share with the incredible people who helped me apply for it!" said Alsaker. Alsaker is majoring in both psychology and in a major he created, an Area of Concentration in International Development and Relations, along with a double minor in management and statistics. He is the son of Margo McNellis and Bruce Alsaker.

"NSEP was established because the U.S. government recognized that we need a workforce that is both culturally competent and familiar with foreign languages," shared Alsaker. "NSEP places a high priority on applicants who will be studying foreign languages at the national security level and covers many of the expenses students acquire from studying abroad in countries high on the "priority list." More importantly, NSEP produces a cadre of culturally sensitive professionals who care about international issues and are devoted to working in government agencies that are responsible for providing security to the citizens of the United States.

"When people think about national security most often hit TV shows like 'Alias' or '24' come to mind," said Alsaker. "Although clandestine activities are important to national security, this type of work is not the be all and end all. Development efforts in other countries such as solving poverty and health issues like HIV/AIDS, for example, are also important to national security. It is important to help stop the spread of infectious diseases and boost other economies because these issues can indirectly or directly affect U.S. citizens and our own economy.

"Not only will I be learning the different theories behind development," said Alsaker, "I will also have a chance to intern with an NGO (non-government organization) that actually implements development programs. I'm not completely sure what I would like my internship to consist of, but I have narrowed it down to working with mental health issues, community organizing or small business development. An ideal internship would consist of a variety of things to keep me interested and motivated."

In addition, Alsaker will study Hindi - India's official language. "Although English is used in both Indian business and government, Indians seem to take great pride in their mother tongue and use it often - beginning to learn this language next year will help me integrate into the Indian way of life. I hope to continue studying this language long after my study abroad program has ended."

Alsaker will travel to Washington, D.C. in June for a ceremony to recognize this year's Boren Scholars and for an

orientation program to the NSEP program. He will be in India from September 2007 through May 2008.

This trip will not be Alsaker's first travel abroad or even his first trip to India. In December 2006, he joined 21 other students during UMM's first study abroad course offering to India sponsored by UMM's Office of Continuing Education and Regional Programs. In addition, said Alsaker, "Besides the many opportunities for both short and long-term study abroad, many of the courses at UMM integrate cross-cultural study. I think that I have gained a good grasp of the world through studying how different theories and research apply to different cultures."

In addition, said Alsaker "having some kind of global or cultural experience not only looks good on a resume, but forces us to think about our own lives and what we value. For example, when I got back from India I significantly reduced the amount of water I use because I was awe-struck by how many people desperately need it in some parts of India."

"I would like to thank Tom McRoberts (UMM director of the Center for International Programs) and Chris Butler (UMM English faculty) for bringing the NSEP scholarship to my attention, and for their sincere and helpful comments throughout the entire application process," added Alsaker. "I would also like to thank Leslie Meek (UMM psychology faculty) and Pareena Lawrence (UMM management/economics faculty) for their letters of recommendation and for being the wonderful teachers/advisers that they are."

"Fostering critical thinking is paramount in a UMM education, not only in the classroom but outside as well," said Alsaker. "My education at UMM has given me a solid foundation of knowledge, skills and independence - all of which I will capitalize on while I am studying abroad. I am definitely ready for a lifetime of learning, thanks to UMM."

To follow Alsaker's experience, visit his blog at [Brady's Adventures](#).

Photo: Alsaker (sunglasses) with school class in India

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