

### **Joseph Davis Thompson, Wins 2013-2014 Outstanding EXL Student Award**

The Outstanding EXL Student Award is given annually to a student who holds a distinguished record of service in the EXL Scholars Program. Political science major Joseph Davis Thompson first encountered the Experiential Learning Program as a freshman when he enrolled in Dr. Judith Iriarte-Gross's Contemporary Issues in Physical Science course. Though physical science had little to do with his academic or career path, he enjoyed and excelled in the hands-on work that the class required. Not only did Thompson learn about important environmental issues but was also an active participant in spreading water security and availability awareness on campus. Iriarte-Gross wrote of Thompson's work in her class, stating, "He is a serious and confident student with a strong potential for continued academic success. ... He is proactive and provides thoughtful comments about global issues such as climate change, energy sustainability and water resources. It was his leadership on the global water project in our class and his solid convictions that MTSU students can make a difference for the global community that led him to start the United Nations Student Alliance of MTSU during his first year at MTSU." Since taking this first EXL course, Thompson continued to enroll in other experiential learning courses, including those specific to his major such as Moot Court, Mock Trial, and Senior Seminar. To Thompson, however, the most influential EXL course was an internship he had with Senator Bill Ketron at the Tennessee State Senate. In addition to gaining valuable experience, this internship led to his position as a substitute press-secretary for the majority caucus. In reflection of the 28 credit hours spent in the EXL Program, Thompson states, "The Experiential Learning Program of MTSU has truly impacted and enhanced my education. It has given me the opportunity to give back to MTSU and rounded out my college experience."