Kelly Schutt noted that numerous people have helped him be successful at Boise State and as a Marshall Scholar, and wishes to thank the following people:

• Elton Graugnard, my principal investigator and mentor. I was lucky to get into research early in my sophomore year, but it wouldn’t have happened without Elton. Before getting into research, I was used to working on short projects that could show results in days or weeks. Research is very different, because it can feel like you’re failing for weeks or months at a time. Some great scientists have even worked on problems for decades and never figured them out. In truth, each little failure is telling you something about nature, if you only know how to interpret the results. Elton gave me a way to apply classroom knowledge to solve research problems, and he gave me an open door to a career in research.

• Greg Martinez, Sarah Ritter and Helen Barnes of Boise State’s McNair Scholars program. I’ve been to McNair conferences at Berkeley and University of Maryland, and they have created a program at Boise State that rivals the best ones in the country. If not for them, grad school wouldn’t even be on my radar. There’s still a lot of work to do, because more than half of our freshmen are first-generation students. Statistically, a first-generation student at the top of their class has a lower chance of getting a degree than a student from a wealthy family at the bottom of their class.

• Emily Jones. Emily proves why it’s so important to have a national scholarship coordinator. There’s simply no way I could have done this without her. The many hours of editing and preparation were more than an exercise in communication, they were a crash course in diplomacy. I had a lot of rough edges to smooth out. There was no way my initial application would have been accepted without Emily’s help.

• Andrew Finstuen and the Honors College. It’s easy to get into a STEM bubble. Studying takes a lot of time, and you end up sacrificing a lot of social events. When you’re working in a lab, a lot of the time you’re working alone. You can feel kind of isolated. It can be easy to forget that even if research goes better than you could imagine, it’s still only a small piece of the puzzle. Friday Forums, amazing guest speakers and community events in the Honors College have given me a much broader perspective on life. That’s a gift that has no price tag, and it will be with me for life.
• Research sponsors, including Micron Technology, the National Science Foundation, Boise State's Student Research Initiative, the McNair Scholars Program, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Elton Graugnard and Rick Ubic.

• Amy Moll and Bill Knowlton. Amy and Bill helped build our materials science program, and I can’t wait to see where it goes under their leadership. I’m glad I was able to take a class Amy taught. I’ll never forget when she showed us “The Story of Stuff.” Someone asked her what we’re going to do with all the electronics waste and she replied, “I don’t know! It’s your job to figure that out.”

• It would take pages to list everyone, so I just want to give a quick shout out to all the awesome faculty and students across campus. My experience has been that our professors really, genuinely care about their students and their success. Many of our programs are demanding, but if you show up to class every day, go to office hours when you’re confused, and reach out, you’ll surprise yourself with what you can accomplish. I wouldn’t have made it this close to graduation without all the awesome students in the materials science program, either. Trying to figure out topics like thermodynamics by yourself is very difficult, and having a community to bounce ideas off of, to study with, and to have fun with is absolutely essential.

• All of the awesome people in Boise who have made this one of the best places to live (not just my opinion — Forbes keeps ranking us in the top 10 cities to live in). I grew up in Rockford, Illinois. It’s incredible what a change of pace it was to move here. People hold the door for people they don’t know, there’s a strong sense of community, there’s so much good here every day that you can actually feel it. I don’t know why Boise has this great sense of community. Maybe it’s the wide open spaces, the short commutes, the beautiful outdoors or the geographic isolation. Whatever it is, we have something that’s been forgotten in the hustle and competition of so many big cities. When friends visit me from out of state, they’re amazed by how easy it is to be happy in Boise. I hope we never forget how lucky we are to live here, and I hope we can spread a little bit of Boise culture beyond Idaho.

• Finally, I’d like to thank my parents for their unconditional love. They never pressured me to choose a particular path in life. They always encouraged me to discover my own passions. They mean the world to me.