



Editorial

Journal of Structural Geology Student Author of the Year Award 2010



The “Student Author of the Year Award” is made for an outstanding paper in which an undergraduate or graduate student played a key role in the research and publication. The recipient of this award for 2009 is:

**Thomas M. Mitchell** for his contribution, co-authored with Daniel R. Faulkner:

The nature and origin of off-fault damage surrounding strike-slip fault zones with a wide range of displacements: A field study from the Atacama fault system, northern Chile. *Journal of Structural Geology*, Volume 31 (2009), pages 802–816.

The Editors have selected this paper out of many student submissions in 2008–2009. The basis of this paper is an analysis of quantitative field and microstructural data concerning the macro- and micro-fracture populations surrounding 6 strike-slip fault zones within the excellently exposed Atacama fault system, northern Chile. The faults display variable displacements and include one ‘crustal-scale’ structure with a displacement of >5 km. The data are used to carefully evaluate and test models regarding the origin of the fracture populations, and the authors conclude that the data are consistent with several previously published models, and that it is difficult to differentiate between them based on field data alone.

This paper was recognized as outstanding because it tackles a difficult topic in a systematic and highly objective way, presenting an invaluable field dataset on damage zones, something that is surprisingly scarce in the literature. The scientific context is set up very clearly and, refreshingly, the authors present a very cautious interpretation of the results. In our view, this is a important piece of research that will be highly cited in the literature. It displays a real scientific maturity that differentiates it from the many other excellent JSG papers generated through PhD research.

Congratulations to **Thomas M. Mitchell** and indirectly to his PhD supervisor and co-author, Daniel Faulkner. The *Journal of Structural Geology* is pleased to have the opportunity to publish this work.

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