Eleven outstanding students honored

Eleven outstanding students were selected spring semester outstanding students at Metropolitan State. The honored students are Maho Aikawa, College of Health, Community and Professional Studies (CHCPS) graduate; Rachelle Erickson, School of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice (SLC) graduate; Lesa Kennedy, College of Individualized Studies; Amanda Larson, College of Management (CM), Master of Public and Nonprofit Administration; Noah Pardo, School of Nursing (SN) undergraduate; Kirk Smith, School of Urban Education; Tyler Smith, SLC undergraduate; Nicholas Theiss, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) undergraduate; Matthew Uveges, CM undergraduate; Susan Vaughan-Smerz, SN graduate; and Glade Woolstenhulme, CHCPS undergraduate.

Aikawa, Minneapolis, is a Japanese native whose Metropolitan State master's thesis in psychology examined the well-being of immigrants and refugees, focusing on the social support they sought. Aikawa regularly participated in a community garden co-sponsored by Metropolitan State and was an active volunteer with the East African Women's Center of Minnesota. A member of three professional psychology organizations, Aikawa graduated from Tsuda University in Tokyo with a degree in international and cultural studies. Her plans include pursuing a doctoral degree in public health and, eventually, studying the health and well-being of minorities.

Erickson, Stillwater, legally "emancipated" from her unstable mother as an 11th grader. And while she endured challenges, Erickson not only survived on her own but thrived. She won several scholarships while attending the University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD), where she earned a psychology degree and graduated magna cum laude. The Vietnamese-American is a full-time corrections officer at Minnesota Correctional Facility-Oak Park Heights, a part-time officer at the Ramsey County Jail, and a reserves...
officer for the Stillwater Police Department. While attending UMD and Metropolitan State, Erickson was active in community service. She plans on completing an accelerated law enforcement certificate program at Metropolitan State and then serving as a Minnesota licensed peace officer.

Kennedy, Spring Valley, Wisc., formulated one of the university’s longest-ever self-designed majors—“the art and science of educating the adult learner.” Metropolitan State professor Maythee Kantar called Kennedy one of her best students in 35 years of teaching. Kennedy is project coordinator in technologies for Ameriprise Financial, Minneapolis, for which she has worked since 1993. Active in the community, she volunteers for the Metropolitan State-facilitated Teen Reading Group, and was once selected Toastmasters Area Governor of the Year for the Twin Cities Metro Division. The married stepmother of two intends on obtaining a master’s degree, perhaps in technical communication.

At age 31, Larson, Elk River, has already left a major imprint on the Elk River area. Her day job is development and community relations coordinator for World Without Genocide, a small humanitarian and human-rights advocacy organization headquartered at William Mitchell College of Law, Saint Paul. In her spare time, she has served on the Elk River Parks and Recreation Commission, the Sherburne County Parks Board, several family service boards and spearheaded efforts to establish the Elk River Youth Expo and after-school programs. These days, she is a board member of the Downtown Saint Paul YMCA and the Three Rivers Community Foundation, which issues grants to organizations within the Elk River School District. Larson will become president of the Elk River Rotary on July 1. She received the Paul Harris Fellow award, the highest honor bestowed on a Rotarian. Larson graduated magna cum laude from Saint Cloud State University in 2003 with degrees in recreation and administration and physical education/sport science.

Pardo, Andover, is a staff registered nurse in Hennepin County Medical Centers’ (HCMC) newborn intensive care unit. He is a preceptor to many HCMC employees and an instructor in the Minneapolis hospital’s neonatal provider program. Pardo is also a part-time floor nurse in Saint Paul-based Children’s Hospital’s newborn intensive care unit. A Minnesota Nurses Association member, he graduated from Anoka Ramsey Community College with an associate of science in nursing in 2004. The married father of two plans to earn a master’s degree in nursing. Eventually, Pardo hopes to serve as a neonatal nurse practitioner.

Selected student commencement speaker, Smith, Maplewood, has spent more than 30 years in the U.S. Army; about 25 were as a reservist. He views his military missions and teaching in challenging urban settings similarly; he says both are environments in which failure is unacceptable. Smith, an equal opportunity advisor and senior military police instructor for the reserves, suffered a traumatic brain injury during a combat tour and received a Bronze Star. He had the rare opportunity to serve with his daughter during the Iraq War, even serving as her supervisor for a time. Smith’s 30-plus-year work career included stints as a plumber, police officer, accountant and restaurant manager. At age 18, he ran—unsuccessfully—for the San Antonio, Texas City Council. Active in community service, Smith coached girls’ softball in North Saint Paul. He has held several titles with Saint Mark’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, North Saint Paul, and is especially active volunteering with church youth. Future plans for the married father of six include teaching urban youth.

Smith, New Hope, can’t wait to make a difference. At age 16, the home-schooled Smith enrolled at Normandale Community College and a year later was elected Student Senate president at the school, from which he graduated in 2009 with an associate of arts degree. Smith was later selected president of the Minnesota State College Student Association, which is comprised of more than 100,000 students from 46 Minnesota colleges. Smith—who graduated with a BA degree in criminal justice—is a loss-prevention specialist for Macy’s Department Store, Minneapolis. He was recently honored as a Macy’s detective of the year. Smith, a member of the U.S. Army National Guard, plans to attend law school and, eventually, become active in politics.

Theiss, North Saint Paul, has opportunistically made lemonade out of life’s lemons. He originally envisioned a blue-collar career as a pipe fitter but then was stricken with Keinbock Disease, a condition which prevented him from using his right hand. Forced into a career U-turn, Theiss enrolled at Metropolitan State and benefited from a mentoring program that helped him transition into professional communications. (He and his Guiding Empowering Mentoring Success (GEMS) mentor were named the program’s mentee and mentor of the year.) As a Metropolitan State student senator, Theiss logged more than 1,100 hours advocating for new university facilities. Among other things, he also led a successful branding campaign for the senate, developed an information campaign that helps students better understand how student fees are spent, and significantly improved the budgeting process for 35-plus student organizations. He also served as a temporary public relations officer for the Minnesota State University Student Association and volunteered for the Minnesota History Center and Minnesota Historical Society. As the father of two—who plans to pursue a communications position—considers his radical career transformation now, he is grateful. Keinbock Disease, he says, “turned out to be kind of a gift.”

Uveges, Ramsey, is manager of technical services for Bloomington-based Toro Company’s commercial division, supervising eight employees. The business administration major twice received Toro’s Circle of Excellence award for outstanding company contributions. Uveges has been active in the company’s community service activities, serving as United Way campaign communications coordinator for Toro’s commercial division and organizing the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves Toys for Tots donation drive. A 25-year Marine Corps veteran, 21 of which were spent in the reserves, Uveges is a chief warrant officer supervising motor-vehicle maintenance for his Reserves battalion. Uveges graduated from Hennepin Technical College in 1994 with an associate in applied science degree. Future plans for the married father of two include pursuing an M.B.A.
Outstanding Students continued

For Vaughan-Smerz, Wayzata, serving others fuels and sustains her. The Master of Science in Nursing graduate served as a hospice volunteer for the past six years. Ironically, she recently performed that role for her hero, her father, Dan Vaughan, who died March 10. Vaughan-Smerz, has volunteered in two countries—Colombia and Russia—assisting with child adoptions. She has held a variety of jobs over the years, including operating her own two-way radio communications firm and serving as a substitute elementary teacher, freelance book editor and office manager. Vaughan-Smerz has a BA in Spanish from the University of California-Berkeley. The married mother of two plans to obtain her registered nursing license and perhaps serve as an oncology nurse. Vaughan-Smerz also anticipates pursuing a Doctorate of Nursing Practice.

Woolstenhulme, Minneapolis, was never more depressed than in December 2005; a gay man, he was HIV-positive, addicted to alcohol and drugs and homeless. His turnaround began in 2006, when he completed treatment at a GLBT-oriented facility. The social work major hasn't looked back; he managed a sober house in Minneapolis (which closed) and then opened the Portland Sober House, a GLBT-oriented addiction-treatment facility. “It literally gives their life back,” he says. “And by me helping them, it's given me my life back.” At Metropolitan State, he completed two internships and was active with the university's Social Work Student Association, lobbying at the state capitol, organizing coat and food drives and serving as the group's public relations officer. Outside Metropolitan State, Woolstenhulme was a whirlwind of activity, participating in a 300-mile bike ride to raise money for HIV/AIDS organizations; volunteering for the Aliveness Project, a community center for people living with HIV/AIDS; serving as a National Gay and Lesbian Task Force volunteer to create awareness about GLBT equality; and teaching English to Guatemalan students. Woolstenhulme is also a passionate member of All God's Children Metropolitan Community Church, Minneapolis, where he volunteers on the facilities team and participates in an initiative offering neighborhood residents community meals. He hopes his future will include opening another HIV-affirming or supportive sober house in Minneapolis.

University of Minnesota Sigma Xi Chapter Honors Metropolitan State psychology Students

Two Metropolitan State psychology students, Stephen Doody and Elliot Weiner, received Chapter Awards at the University of Minnesota (U of M) Sigma Xi's Chapter 117th Annual Meeting and 118th Annual Initiation on Sunday, May 5, at the U of M Campus Club.

Doody, who just received his BA in psychology from Metropolitan State, was one of two recipients of the Sigma Xi Chapter's Undergraduate Research Award. Each Sigma Xi Undergraduate Research Award carries a $500 cash award, Sigma Xi membership and paid initiation fee and first year membership dues. This award is given to undergraduate students who have demonstrated proficiency in independent research in science. Undergraduate students nominated for this award must also be nominated for membership in Sigma Xi. August Hoffman, professor, wrote Doody's award nomination letter, and Susan Rydell, professor, nominated Doody for membership in the U of M Sigma Xi Chapter. Doody was awarded associate membership.

Weiner, who just received his MA in psychology from Metropolitan State, was one of five recipients of the Charles and Dorothy Andrew Bird Award, the Chapter's highest award. Each Charles and Dorothy Andrew Bird Award carries a $1000 cash award, Sigma Xi membership, and the Chapter pays the initiation fee and the first year membership dues. Dorothy A. Bird taught psychology at Chatham College and in the U of M Department of Independent Study, and was co-author of the Minnesota Clerical Test. She and her husband, Charles Bird, a distinguished psychology professor at the U of M, were co-authors of the book Learning More by Effective Study, and both were members of Sigma Xi. The award is made possible through a generous bequest by the Birds to the U of M Foundation on behalf of the Chapter. The awards may be given to either undergraduate or graduate students for outstanding research, and students nominated for this award must also be nominated for membership in Sigma Xi. Kerry Kleyman, assistant professor, wrote Weiner's award nomination letter, and Susan Rydell, professor, nominated Weiner for Sigma Xi membership. Weiner was awarded associate membership.

Sigma Xi is an international, multidisciplinary research society whose programs and activities promote the health of the scientific enterprise and honor scientific achievement. There are nearly 60,000 Sigma Xi members in more than 100 countries around the world. Sigma Xi chapters, more than 500 in all, can be found at colleges and universities, industrial research centers and government laboratories.

The U of M Sigma Xi Chapter, established in 1896, is made up of over 300 members who range from undergraduate students beginning their scientific careers to professional scientists living throughout the state. The main objective of the 117 year old organization is to encourage and reward scientific research in our local research community. Rydell is the chapter's immediate past-president, and she has also served as chapter secretary and Awards Committee chair.
The 48th annual Minnesota Undergraduate Psychology Conference (MUPC) was April 20 at the University of St. Thomas. Metropolitan State students presented a total of 15 research projects at the conference. The Psychology Department would like to recognize and congratulate the students involved in these projects:

Nicole Skender, “Feeling the angst: The presence of irritability in coin vs. banknote transactions”

Celena Monn, “Judging a book by its cover: Perceptions of social manners in self vs. others”

Kathryn Herzog, “Selfish or selfless? The motivations behind giving to panhandlers”

Justina Steele, “Holler for a dollar: The effects of reciprocity and happiness on server tips”

Heather Nguyen, “Annie get your gun: The influence of priming effects of gain and loss on attitudes towards gun legislation”

Joseph Hurley, “If I ever stop loving violence, I want you to shoot me: Framing effects of warfare coverage on the perception of aggression and violence”

Laurel Hiller, “The cues that guide us: Exploring the differences of verbal and nonverbal communication on task performance”

Melissa L. Pratt, “If it’s healthy I don’t want it: The effects of ‘healthiness’ in children’s perception of taste”

Max Bergstrom, “Stand up kids! - The effects of body posture on the confidence, mood, and attentive abilities of preschool aged children”

John Mehlhaff, Stephen Doody, Shawn Veldey and Chelsie Nelson, “Overcoming the electronic era: Improving student communication and interpersonal relationships through community gardening”

Jacob Luoma, “The influences of context and deindividuation on bullying”

Joseph Hurley, “Bachelor’s degree prestige: What school’s alumni are seen as the most competent?”

Brittany Richert, “Attitudes toward physical vs. mental illness”

Michelle Dunn, “Stop in the name of law: investigation of gender and car attributes of making a complete stop at a stop sign”

Michelle Chartier, “When you’re smiling, does the whole world smile with you? Gender and racial differences in emotional contagion”

The department and the students would also like to thank the faculty supervisors. Most projects were supervised by Kerry Kleyman, assistant professor, psychology. August Hoffman, professor, psychology, and Mark Stasson, professor, psychology, also supervised projects.

**Working with Military Families offered in the summer**

HSFS 301, Working with Military Families (2 credits), full summer session, Tuesdays, 1–4 p.m. on 5/14, 5/21, 6/4, 6/18, 6/25, 7/9, 7/23 and 8/6. (Midway); This course focuses on the challenges and adaptations families go through as a result of having a family member in military service. Students learn the problems and needs of these families and how human services professionals can be of service.

Course work involves in-class activities and reading, along with regular journal entries in response to prompts in the text and a case study analysis presentation at the conclusion of the class.

**15th Annual President’s Student Leadership awards announced**

The President’s Student Leadership Awards Dinner took place on Friday April 26, and the following individuals and groups were recognized for their outstanding contributions to student life at Metropolitan State. Congratulations to this year’s winners:

Phylicia Moua, Female Leadership Award

Sabrina “Saby” Labor, Advisor of the Year

Alexander Kempe and Adil Najmuddin, Male Leader of the Year (tie)

Christopher Nguyen, Perseverence Award

Metropolitan State Veterans Network, Organization of the Year

Asian New Year (Asian Student Organization), Program of the Year
Donations still accepted for food and clothing drive

Join the Student Parent Center and Pan Asian Student Services to support our students by donating gently used children's and maternity clothing, diapers, wipes and/or nonperishable food. Drop off donations in bins located on the first and second floors of Founders Hall and the Library until Wednesday, May 15.

On Thursday, May 16, 4:30–6 p.m., celebrate the success of the drive at the Lao Family Community Building, 320 University Ave. W., Saint Paul, for cultural performances and Hmong food sampling. For more information, contact Student Parent Services at 651-793-1564, or Peou Pin-Mene at 651-793-1542 or peou.pinmene@metrostate.edu.

Register by May 15 for GMAT prep course, June 1–2

The University Activities Board presents a Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) preparatory course for Metropolitan State students, alumni, staff, faculty and community members. The course takes place Saturday and Sunday, June 1–2, from 9 a.m. –6:30 p.m. on the Saint Paul Campus, Library and Learning Center, Room 306. The cost of this course is:

- $100 for Metropolitan State students and alumni
- $335 for staff and faculty
- $395 for community members

Cost includes study material, course booklet, official GMAT guide, practice tests, online tools and online support. Class size is limited, so interested individuals are encouraged to register as soon as possible. To register for this course, RSVP to the University Activities Board by May 15 at student.activites@metrostate.edu.

“Grow Local” opportunity for East Side residents, May 18

Metropolitan State community members living on the East Side who would like to grow their own food but need help getting started are invited to become East Side Food and Wellness Hub members. Members receive free seeds and plants, and access to gardening workshops, community events, opportunities to learn about food and more. Plants will be distributed on Saturday, May 18 from 9:30 a.m. –12:30 p.m. at Gordon Parks High School, 1212 W. University Avenue in Saint Paul.

Interested individuals can register for membership in person at the May 18 event or online at http://www.gardeningmatters.org/civicrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=10. Scholarships are available for free membership.

The East Side Food and Wellness Hub is a project of the East Side Prosperity Campaign (ESPC) and part of the Gardening Matters Local Food Resource Hub Network. The mission of the ESPC is to foster collaboration across cultures and communities to achieve lasting change for an equitable East Side. For more information, go to http://eastsidepc.org.