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Rebecca Lindquist '11 recognized as Goldwater Scholarship Honorable Mention

Summary: The annual award is given to outstanding sophomores and juniors pursuing research-oriented careers in math, engineering, and natural sciences.

(April 8, 2010)-University of Minnesota, Morris junior Rebecca Joy Lindquist, Plymouth, was named a 2010 Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship Honorable Mention. The annual national award is given to outstanding sophomores and juniors pursuing research-oriented careers in math, engineering, and natural sciences. After graduating from Morris, Lindquist, a chemistry and anthropology major, plans to pursue a doctorate in environmental chemistry.

Attracted to solving problems

Morris's green initiatives attracted Lindquist to campus. From her first chemistry course at Morris, she knew she it would be her major. "I like chemistry because I like problem solving—in both the problem set/homework setting and the applications to the world," says Lindquist. "Chemistry has caused a lot of environmental problems, but it has the potential to change this. That is the goal of green chemistry."

Lindquist added an anthropology major in her first year, too. "In order to solve the problems in the world, we need to understand the human factor," she says. "We have environmental problems because of what people do, what our culture is, and what our society values. Anthropology tries to understand peoples' motives. It also looks at how we influence others. If we are going to solve our environmental problems, we have to see how our actions affect other people. Anthropology is interesting because it attempts to understand other people. We need to see the human value in everyone in our global community. Anthropology sees the value in diversity within and between cultures."

Undergraduate research

Starting with a 2008 Directed Study, Lindquist has been involved in research throughout her Morris career. She continued the Directed Study research through an Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program grant in 2009 working with Nancy Carpenter, professor of chemistry, comparing seven varieties of oilseeds as possible sources for biodiesel.

As part of the Introduction to Research course, she worked with Jim Togeas, professor of chemistry, on theoretical research looking for electronegativity effects in hydrogen bonding in acetic acid dimers.

This semester, she's conducting a Morris Academic Partnership with Joe Alia, assistant professor of mathematics, another theoretical research project using a Valency Interaction Formula (VIF) method and the Gaussian computer program to investigate concerted reactions.

Summer 2010, Lindquist will participate in a National Science Foundation—Research Experiences for Undergraduates program at the University of Iowa in chemistry. The program researches applications of nanotechnology to environmental and health issues.

Lindquist recently attended the American Chemical Society meeting in San Francisco. "The theme of the conference

was sustainability,” she shares. “It was good to learn about ways chemistry is trying to integrate sustainability. And it convinced me that there is much more that we need to do, both technically and in our mindset.”

Working for solutions

Serving as a chemistry tutor for two years has inspired Lindquist to consider a higher education career. “If I do teach at the university level it will be because I see this as a way to provide other people with the tools they need to have a positive impact on the world,” she states. “And through my research and teaching I would have a positive impact on the world. Whatever I do, I will work for solutions to stop environmental degradation.”

“The Goldwater is awarded to students whose potential for success is a given,” says Nancy Carpenter, professor of chemistry. “Rebecca Lindquist is, without a doubt, one of these students. She is a remarkably well-rounded individual. Her great thirst for learning within the realm of anthropology and chemistry puts her in a unique position to provide solutions to environmental problems from both the cultural and the chemical perspective.”

Congress established the Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program in 1986 to honor Senator Barry Goldwater, who served his country for 56 years as a soldier and statesman, including 30 years of service in the United States Senate.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.