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Melinda Kernik receives Sullivan Scholarship

Summary: When Melinda Kernik graduates from the University of Minnesota, Morris she'll have the tools to explore a number of career options. Meanwhile, she'll embark on an adventure that may help her to determine her life's work. Kernik is a 2009 recipient of the Katherine E. Sullivan Scholarship.

(April 8, 2009)-When Melinda Kernik graduates from the University of Minnesota, Morris she'll have the tools to explore a number of career options. Meanwhile, she'll embark on an adventure that may help her to determine her life's work.

Kernik, White Bear Lake, is a 2009 recipient of the Katherine E. Sullivan Scholarship.

The Katherine E. Sullivan Scholarship provides an opportunity for seniors who attend any campus of the University of Minnesota to enrich their academic experience with a fifth year of undergraduate study in another country. The scholarship is intended to support credit-bearing and usually classroom-based study abroad that immerses the student in the host university, research institute, as well as in the host culture for a full academic year. Most costs will be covered.

Kernik expects to attend the University of Otago in New Zealand to study primarily geography (humans and the environment). She'll also study Maori culture—the indigenous people of New Zealand—as well as environmental history and geology.

“During my time at the University of Minnesota, Morris, I have focused on history and geology, but the more I study of each, the more difficult I find it to think about one without the other,” said Kernik.

Her interest in attending the University of Otago “was bolstered by the emphasis their history department places on environmental history,” said Kernik. Through coursework at Morris and as background for her project as a Morris Academic Partner, Kernik “achieved basic grounding in the history of the U.S. federal policy toward indigenous peoples of North America. I am interested in studying the effect geographical and demographic differences between the United States and New Zealand have on attitudes toward the rights of the Maori. I am similarly excited about the possibility of learning about Maori culture and the language.”

Morris' distinctive location in a rural setting allows its students to naturally gravitate toward engagement and varied topics of study both on and off the campus. A project that Kernik presented during the campus's annual Undergraduate Research Symposium pertained to the topic of Indian School service employees. Kernik's honors defense is based on the history and philosophy of “geology” in the 18th century, when “geology really wasn't its own field,” explained Kernik, with a smile.

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.