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Recommended Citation
Communications and Marketing, "Dongting Cai Receives 2023 Undergraduate SEED Award" (2023). Campus News Archive. 3503.
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Dongting Cai receives 2023 Undergraduate SEED Award

(November 17, 2023)-University of Minnesota Morris student Dongting Cai ’24, Anqing, Anhui, China, has received a 2023 Undergraduate Scholarly Excellence in Equity and Diversity (SEED) Award.

The SEED Awards honor underrepresented undergraduate, graduate, and professional students for their outstanding work in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion while at the University of Minnesota and in the community.

The Office for Equity and Diversity at the University of Minnesota has announced that Cai was among 14 undergraduate students who received the Sue W. Hancock SEEDs of Change Awards at the annual University of Minnesota Equity and Diversity Breakfast on Wednesday, Nov. 15. These awards are given to undergraduate students who are committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through their academic achievement, community outreach and engagement, and leadership. The award is named in honor of Sue W. Hancock, whose 27-year career of service at the U of M inspired her colleagues and students. Recipients are full-time juniors or seniors pursuing active community engagement while maintaining a minimum 3.0 cumulative G.P.A.

Cai is double majoring in communication, media & rhetoric, and computer science and minor in data science & statistics. His equity and diversity involvement on campus extends from academic pursuits to community outreach and campus engagement.

“My passion for DEI stems from a deeply personal place. As someone from a different cultural background, being a first-generation college student, and all of the on- and off-campus experience taught me the profound impact of understanding and support. I've seen firsthand how inclusive spaces can change lives and how the lack thereof can impede growth. I heard
someone I orientated with say that what I was doing made him feel welcomed and confident, which led him to become more successful in the first semester. And that's my target—I hope my DEI work fosters an environment where everyone, irrespective of their background or identity, feels seen, heard, and empowered.”

SEED Award recipients receive an honorarium for their achievements ranging from $3,000 to $5,000.