

WOU students honored for outstanding achievement

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MONMOUTH – Western Oregon University students **Avery Cotton** and **Amanda Miles** and **Nicole Perry** have been named recipient of the Delmer Dewey Award and co-recipients of the Julia McCulloch Smith Award, respectfully.

Cotton, of West Slope, Ore. will receive Bachelor of Science degrees in chemistry and mathematics, and a minor in physics and has a grade point average of 3.64. He will continue on to a Master's of Arts in Teaching program at WOU beginning January 2008, where he plans to earn certification to teach in physics, chemistry and mathematics.

Cotton will be working on a global climate change project during his graduate studies where he will develop curriculum to be used in workshops for teachers to teach global climate change and help them work it into their own curriculum to meet state and national requirements.

The highlight of Cotton's seven years at WOU was his work with the Microgravity Flight Team. He teamed up with some WOU and Oregon State University students to create a two-phase project called "Physics Feasibility Test of a Zero Critically Rotating Fluidized Bed Space Reactor." In December 2004 they learned that their project had been accepted into NASA's Microgravity University among 50 teams out of more than 300 who applied.

The team got to fly on NASA's "weightless wonder" where one feels weightlessness for about 20 or 30 seconds at the NASA headquarters in Houston, Texas. "It was an amazing experience, there's no comparing anything else to it," he said. The team also taught day-long science classes at schools all over the Valley.

Cotton participated in 20 consecutive terms of social dance, helping teach the class, and started a social dance club on campus. He was also a tutor with the Learning Center, helping students with physics, chemistry, mathematics and general science.

Miles, of Hillsboro, has a 3.99 GPA and will be graduating this year with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and a minor in Spanish. She is president of the Western Oregon University Psychology Student Association, active in the Honors Program, and sports editor for the Western Oregon Journal for the third year in a row.

She is a member of Psi Chi, the national psychology honor society, and Phi Kappa Phi, the national honor society. Miles has also received numerous honors and awards such as first place in Best Writing and Best Columnist from the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association and winner of the WOU Binney Scholarship for 2006-07.

Eric Cooley, psychology professor, said: "In terms of her scholarship, not only does she have an

excellent GPA, but she has gone way beyond this in her involvement in research through the Psychology Division. Amanda has been an exceptional student both in and out of the classroom. I have been here at WOU for over 30 years and I cannot remember a student who has accomplished more in her time at the university.”

Miles is grateful to be a recipient of the Julia McCulloch Smith award. “You spend your college years putting together a body of work and to have it recognized is very flattering. I’m definitely honored, especially when seeing what past winners of this award have accomplished.”

She plans to attend graduate school in the near future to study clinical psychology or sports psychology.

Perry, of Monmouth, will graduate this year with Bachelor of Arts degrees in English literature and humanities, with a minor in psychology. Active in the Honors Program, she has a GPA of 3.70. Perry has been involved with the Journal for four years, currently serving as managing editor of the newspaper.

“She is one of the most outstanding students I’ve known during my seven years at WOU,” said Susan Wickstrom, adviser for the Journal. “In the Journal’s newsroom, Nicole’s peers respect her and enjoy working with her. She has an innate ability to guide others to reach their full potential.”

Involvement in her English literature coursework has also been an important part of Perry’s undergraduate career. She was named the Outstanding Student in Literature for 2006 and received fourth place in the 2006 Meyer Prize in Literature. Perry also worked as a tutor in the Writing Center and credits the director, Katherine Schmidt, Ph.D., with steering her toward a new career path in teaching.

She is honored to be a recipient of the Julia McCulloch Smith award. “It’s like a capstone to my undergraduate career. I’ve had the perfect college experience here. I’ve taken a lot of classes and worked really hard, and this is a great way to end it.”

Beginning this fall, Perry will begin studying for her master’s in English at Oregon State University and will teach a beginning composition course there.

The Delmer Dewey Award is given to an outstanding graduating male each year. The award is named after former Dean of Men, Delmer Dewey, who had died in 1953. The year following his death, at the Annual Folks’ Festival, the Dad’s Club suggested an award be named in his honor. In the beginning, the recipient was given a \$15 award, but that has since been discontinued.

The Julia McCulloch Smith Award began in 1931 through a \$500 gift from John E. Smith. The donation was to be used as a loan fund for female students of Oregon Normal School, now known as WOU. It was given in honor of Smith’s wife, Julia McCulloch Smith, who had died in 1930 and been a graduate of the school. McCulloch Smith received a degree in scientific didactics in 1895 and taught in the elementary school of Yaquina, Jefferson and Salem. Each year \$25 was given to the recipient, gathered from interest off the original donation, but was later discontinued. Recipients of both awards are decided through a committee of WOU faculty members.

Finalists for the Delmer Dewey Award are David Hoffman of Salem and Shane VanMatre of Redmond. Finalists for the Julia McCulloch Smith Award are Erica DeBellis of Aumsville; Nana Hanson of Tema Accra, Guana; Emily Holmes of Salem; Laura Soules of Prineville; Brenda Vaandering of Forest Grove and Anna Valverde of Woodburn.

All three students will speak at the commencement ceremony on Saturday, June 16 and will be recognized in the commencement program.

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