

2013 TRIO SSS (Starting Point) Student Excels at MCTC

Etonam (Fanny) Okaikue-Woodi, a TRIO SSS (Starting Point) student at Minneapolis Community and Technical College (MCTC), was selected for the **2013 All-Minnesota Academic Team**. Members receive special recognition including medallions, certificates and often time stipends and scholarships. Nominations are based on outstanding academic performance and service to the college and community.



Okaikue-Woodi is an exceptional student who has achieved many accomplishments at MCTC. She has been on the Dean's List since 2010 with a 3.9 GPA. She is an active member of the Starting Point Program, Phi Theta Kappa, and North Star STEM Alliance. Okaikue-Woodi serves as the Vice President of Leadership for Phi Theta Kappa and as a peer mentor for the Starting Point Program. She was the recipient of the 2013 Mark Welter World Citizen Awards which includes a \$500

scholarship and is given annually to Minnesota State Colleges and Universities students who embody an understanding of the interconnected nature of the world, its nations and people. She also received a \$5,000 Minnesota High Tech Association Foundation STEM Scholarship in 2012.

In summer 2012, Okaikue-Woodi was chosen from more than 80 applicants to work with a team of researchers to study the sediment makeup of Long Pond in Hudson, Wisconsin at the St. Croix Watershed Research Station. She had the opportunity to present this environmental research at two conferences: 2013 Emerging Researchers National Conference in STEM in Washington, D.C. and 11th Annual Student Research Conference in Tempe, Arizona. She won 2nd place for her poster presentation in Tempe, Arizona.

Okaikue-Woodi and her family moved to the United States in 2009 from Togolese Republic in West Africa. She started her studies at MCTC in 2010 and joined the TRIO Starting Point Program in summer 2011. She will be graduating in May with her Associate's Degree in Math and transfer to the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities for Environmental Engineering. She was profoundly affected by her country's ongoing challenges with pollution and lack of access to clean water. "We are all connected to our planet, and we are also responsible for it, and that responsibility includes educating and helping others," she said. She plans to continue her research in environmental science and help provide sustainable resources to her community and around the world.