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Florida Gulf Coast University Student Named Finalist for the 2002 Florida College Student of the Year Award

Gainesville, Fla. (04-02)—Charity Elizabeth Hamilton, a junior in Clinical Lab Science with a 3.65 GPA at Florida Gulf Coast University, is one of seven finalists statewide for the 2002 Florida College Student of the Year Award.

Hamilton and 19 other students from universities and colleges across Florida will share \$55,000 in scholarships and prizes and will be honored on Friday, April 12, at an awards ceremony and press conference at the Capital Building in Tallahassee.

Hamilton was selected from 144 applicants in the annual scholarship program sponsored by *Florida Leader* magazine, SunTrust Education Loans, and Office Depot. The Florida College Student of the Year Award celebrates 15 years of recognizing outstanding Florida college students for their campus leadership, academic excellence, financial self-reliance, and campus and community service.

Hamilton has helped the fledgling school, which opened in 1997, through founding FGCU's Pre-Medical Student Association (FPSO), serving as a founding member of the FGCU Drum Line, and helping other clubs as the director of clubs and organization for Student Government Association. Hamilton represents

the school as an Ambassador in FGCU's CREST Program and as a Resident Advisor and Conference Orientation Leader. She is also part of the Golden Key International Honour Society. "This school is so small and so young, you can do so many things," Hamilton says.

In spite of doing all that while preparing for medical school, she's consistent in "maintaining high academic standards," says Dr. Clifford M. Renk, her advisor and director of the honors program. "How she has the time to do that, I don't know." And she does it cheerfully. She has a "great personality; always bubbly."

"We have many fine students here at FGCU, but Charity stands out," says Dr. William C. Merwin, president. "This is evident in the fact that she was named FGCU's Student of the Year last year—a prestigious honor reserved for those with only the highest academic, service, and leadership qualities. She deserves to be listed among Florida's finest."

"My number one goal and intention is to help those who can't help themselves," says Hamilton, who, if she isn't accepted into medical school, will apply to "serve in the Peace Corps for one year and then decide what to do." She's got a win-win attitude all the way around.

About Oxendine Publishing, Inc.

In its 19th year, Oxendine Publishing produces three magazines, including *Florida Leader*, and sponsors the 13th annual "Best of Florida Schools" awards. Oxendine also publishes *Student Leader* and sponsors the 15th annual "Florida College Student of the Year Award" and the 5th annual "What Florida Students Think" survey. For more information and expanded coverage visit www.floridaleader.com.

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