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St. Leo University Student Named Finalist for 2002 Florida College Student of the Year

Gainesville, Fla. (4-02) – Teri Lynn Smith, a graduate student pursuing her MBA at St. Leo University with a 3.84 GPA, is one of only seven finalists statewide for the 2002 Florida College Student of the Year Award. Smith and 19 other students from universities and colleges across Florida will share \$55,000 in scholarships and prizes and will be honored Friday, April 12 at an awards ceremony and press conference at the Capitol Building in Tallahassee.

Smith and six other finalists were selected from 144 applicants in the annual scholarship program sponsored by *Florida Leader* magazine, SunTrust, and Office Depot. The Florida College Student of the Year Award celebrates its 15th year of recognizing outstanding Florida college students for their campus leadership, academic excellence, and financial self-reliance.

As president of St. Leo's Student Government Union, Smith has raised the bar an SG can accomplish. "She's built communication effectively within the executive board," says Edward W. Dadez, vice president for student affairs. "She has taken communication to a whole other level."

Under Smith's leadership, SGU worked on improving the cafeteria and having a set lunch schedule. "The issues may seem small, but for us, they're really large," Smith says. "We're trying to meet the needs of the

students.” After 9/11, Smith spearheaded a vote to send \$7,000 to New York to aid those in need.

As SGU president, Smith serves as a member of the University Senate, the Informational Technological Advancement Committee, and the Cafeteria Improvement Committee. She also is an ambassador for the office of the president.

Smith is one of eight St. Leo students who served as “Student Chaplains.” “The Chaplains relate the spiritual aspects from a student perspective,” Smith says. “We try to have a Student Chaplain on each floor in case students need someone to talk to or need a friend.”

Through her three years of service to “Samaritans,” St. Leo’s community service group, Smith has worked with Best Buddies and America Reads. She was named “Outstanding Executive Team Leader” last spring and also earned awards for outstanding volunteer service for the past three years. “She gets very, very enthusiastic about projects and is willing to go out and beat on doors and get people up,” says Dr. Douglas Astolfi, vice president of academic affairs.

On top of her duties as SGU president and a “Student Chaplain,” Smith is active in the Air Force ROTC detachment offered through the University of South Florida and works at Payless ShoeSource. “Teri is first rate,” says Arthur F. Kirk, Jr., St. Leo’s president. “She’s well-rounded, has great integrity, and strives for excellence. She measures up with the best anywhere.”

Students at 86 colleges and nearly 550 high schools throughout Florida read *Florida Leader*, founding sponsor of the “Florida College Student of the Year Award.” Now in its 19th year, Oxendine Publishing also produces the national leadership magazine *Student Leader*. See www.floridaleader.com/soty for more details on the annual scholarship program and this year’s winners.

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