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University of Miami Student Named Finalist for the 2004 Florida College Student of the Year Award

Gainesville, Fla (04-04)—Minal Ahson, a junior in microbiology and religious studies with a 3.37 GPA at the University of Miami, is one of seven finalists statewide for the 2004 Florida College Student of the Year Award.

Ahson and 19 other students from colleges and universities across Florida will share \$65,000 in scholarships and prizes and will be honored Friday, April 16 at an awards ceremony and press conference at the Capitol Building in Tallahassee.

Ahson was selected from 78 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 17 years of recognizing outstanding Florida college students for their campus leadership, academic excellence, and financial self-reliance.

Although Ahson is involved in more than a dozen campus activities, it isn't for her own academic advancement. "My parents taught me about values and what our family stands for. My faith also—we've been taught that what we do is to serve our fellow man. It's to serve other people. It's not about our accomplishments," she says.

Ahson is president of the Council of International Student Organizations, a group that represents 2,000 UM students. As a sophomore, Ahson was inducted into the Iron Arrow Honor Society, the highest honor attained at the school. Also, out of 20 candidates, she was elected student body vice president. “She’s very humble, which is striking, very modest,” says Christina Florez, COISO advisor. “I see her in something big in 10 years—ambassador, working for UNESCO. This woman will not be able to sit still just being a doctor. She needs to do more. She needs to make a difference.”

Last summer, Ahson went to Tengeru, Tanzania to tour clinics and study health care issues. She taught English and math at secondary schools there and for children at an orphanage. Her interests are in medicine and public health policy.

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 21st 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 the other finalists.