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## **Seminole Community College Student Named Runner-Up for the 2004 Florida College Student of the Year Award**

Gainesville, Fla (04-04)—Leslie Brown, a sophomore in exceptional student education at Seminole Community College with a 3.46 GPA, is first runner-up for the 2004 Florida College Student of the Year Award.

Brown and 19 other students from colleges and universities across Florida shared \$65,000 in scholarships and prizes at the award ceremony and press conference on Friday, April 16. The ceremony was at the Capitol Building in Tallahassee.

Brown 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.

As a member of SCC's Leadership Challenge Team, Brown has been able to reach people through her powerful speeches and presentations. "Leslie has at all times exhibited superior skill and ability in dealing with

leadership situations, which one would normally expect to be beyond the capabilities of a 22-year-old college student," says Randy Pawlowski, director of student life at SCC.

Shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Brown became a Ground Zero volunteer for three days. "The days that I spent at Ground Zero developed my ability to see things from a different perspective," she says. At this point in her life, she decided to pursue a career as a paramedic. But, in March 2002, Brown became deaf from chemotherapy, and in September 2003, she was diagnosed with terminal cancer, preventing her from realizing her dream. Brown decided not to let cancer defeat her, instead using her fluency in American Sign Language and skills in lip-reading to mentor students at SCC and to tutor and mentor deaf students at local elementary and high schools. In addition, to ameliorate deaf people's desire to experience music, Brown developed a way to teach piano through a system of vibrations and colors. Her volunteering with deaf children made Brown realize that she wanted to teach. "I knew that if I couldn't change lives as a paramedic, I could change lives as a teacher," she says.

"She has a way of challenging people to do things they didn't think they were capable of," says SCC President E. Ann McGee. "I think her never-give-up attitude enables her to inspire others."

This summer, check [www.floridaleader.com/soty](http://www.floridaleader.com/soty) for scheduling and stations for the broadcast of the Florida College Student of the Year program.