Biology major Angela Rosc named 2008 NIU Student Lincoln Laureate

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by Tom Parisi

One of these days, Angela Rosc wants to thank the pediatrician who took care of her when she was a child. She also wants the doctor to know just how big an impact he made on her life.

At age 5, Rosc says, she was diagnosed with a heart condition requiring repeated doctor visits and medical tests. She remembers being scared, but her doctor was able to calm Rosc and even make her smile with his silly sense of humor and monkey on his stethoscope.

"My pediatrician was so friendly and really went the extra mile to bond with me and make me comfortable," Rosc says. "I decided I wanted to be just like him."

From that time forward, Rosc has had her sights set on becoming a doctor – and she’s well on her way. The 22-year-old Freeport native is majoring in biological sciences at NIU, has maintained a nearly perfect grade-point average and serves as president of the Volunteer Student Health Advisory Council. She will graduate with honors in December and plans to enter medical school next fall.

For her achievements, both in and out of the classroom, Rosc has been named the NIU Student Lincoln Laureate, an honor reserved for the university’s top senior.

On an annual basis, each of the state’s four-year public universities selects one Student Lincoln Laureate, recognizing excellence in both curricular and extracurricular activities. Rosc traveled to Springfield recently for the Lincoln Laureate ceremony in the House of Representatives of the Old State Capitol.

"Angela is a very dedicated and articulate member of the NIU student community," says Director of NIU Health Services Russell Dolce, who nominated Rosc for the Lincoln Laureate and accompanied her to Springfield. "In addition to being a stellar scholar, she is a natural leader."

In her elected leadership role with the Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC), Rosc has worked closely with Dolce on a number of issues. The group meets weekly and advises Health Services on programs, services, budgeting, patient satisfaction, the student medical insurance plan and selection of physicians and other key personnel.

"Angela is very proactive in promoting SHAC to students and has been largely responsible for the successful recruiting of new members this past year," Dolce says. "I wish she were looking for a job here at Health Services. She’s a pleasure to work with."

Rosc says she is proud of the work SHAC has done, particularly in the way of surveying students to determine their needs.

"It’s very important to me that students’ voices are heard," Rosc says. "We have a significant job to do. Through SHAC, Health Services gets a real idea of what students would like to see done."

Rosc is a graduate of Freeport High School. She attended the University of Arizona for two years before transferring to NIU to be closer to home. "Because I wanted to pursue medicine, I thought biology was the best track for me," she says. "I love the biology department. Everyone is so helpful."

The feeling is mutual. Earlier this year, Rosc won the Alumni Scholarship, presented annually to an outstanding undergraduate student in the Department of Biological Sciences.

"Angela is extremely bright and motivated, always wanting to know more," says Biological Sciences Professor Bethia King. "She has excellent oral and written communication skills. She is good, not just at remembering lots of information,
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Between SHAC and academic responsibilities, Rosc also has consistently demonstrated her concern for others through volunteer activities. She has been involved in numerous service organizations and regularly donates her time to charitable events.

If helping others seems to be a way of life for Rosc, it's also in her genes. Her grandfather completed medical and dental school and worked as dentist; her uncle is an emergency room physician in Freeport. Both have provided input on her career path.

But Rosc says her parents, Anton and Martha Rosc, have been the biggest help. "No matter what I'm going through," she says, "my parents are always there to support me."

In winning NIU's Student Lincoln Laureate award, Rosc was competing against top NIU seniors in a wide variety of disciplines. Other nominees for the award included first finalist Mohsin Chowdhury (electrical engineering/chemistry) of Naperville; Jennifer Dougherty (broadcast journalism/pre-medicine professional studies) of Schaumburg; Robyn Essendrop (nursing) of Hampshire; Irene Johnson (family social services) of Schaumburg; and Stephanie Krause (political science) of DeKalb.