



April Cook

Toby Peter

UMAC Scholar-Athlete Leadership Award



St. Scholastica's Toby Peter, Martin Luther's April Cook named Recipients of UMAC Scholar-Athlete Leadership Award 4/20/2011 2:35:51 PM

ST. PAUL -- The College of St. Scholastica's Toby Peter and Martin Luther College's April Cook have been named the recipients of the 2011 Upper Midwest Athletic Conference (UMAC) Scholar-Athlete Leadership Award. The award, which is given to one male and one female student-athlete from UMAC member-institutions, recognizes graduating seniors who demonstrate a healthy balance by achieving excellence in academics, leadership, and service, while participating in intercollegiate athletics.

The NCAA Division III athlete is unique among intercollegiate athletes because, at Division III institutions, student-athletes receive no financial aid for athletic participation. Such institutions emphasize the overall quality of the educational experience and the successful completion of the student's academic program; athletic participation is an important part of that educational experience. Division III provides opportunities for student-athletes to be a part of numerous campus activities in addition to athletics, and these finalists have maximized those opportunities. The UMAC Scholar-Athlete Leadership Award is presented to students who embody what it means to be an NCAA Division III athlete. Through this award, the UMAC recognizes the role athletics plays in developing leaders by rewarding

athletes' excellence in the classroom as well as service to the community. The league's faculty athletic representatives nominate and vote on this honor.



UMAC Scholar-Athlete Leadership Award

Peter, who will graduate with a double major in economics and history, has been a standout student-athlete in the sport of soccer at St. Scholastica. On the soccer pitch, Peter has created quite a name for himself, earning UMAC All-Conference awards in each of his four years played to go with player of the year accolades in 2007 and 2009. Off of the pitch, Peter has won numerous awards for his work in the classroom including the CoSIDA/ESPN Academic All-America award in both 2009 and 2010, the same years he was named to the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) Scholar

Team. He has been involved with the honors program at St. Scholastica and will choose from three graduate programs, one of which he has been offered a full tuition fellowship, to attend following his time in Duluth. In addition to his captaining of the Saints' men's soccer team for three years since 2008, Peter has been influential off the field as well. Peter was awarded the key to the city of St. Cloud, Minn. in 2009 for his leadership in establishing a sister city relationship between St. Cloud and Spalt, Germany and has coordinated visits for delegations travelling between the two towns. He has taught first-year students at St. Scholastica in Economy, Society & Human Dignity and Slavery while participating as a global ambassador in the school's international students department, all while maintaining a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.97.

Dr. Marie Miller, who chairs the UMAC's committee of faculty athletics representatives, noted that the voting council was particularly impressed with Peter's academic success while balancing participation not only in soccer, but also in such an array of service projects.

Cook is a softball student-athlete at Martin Luther, where she is majoring in elementary and secondary education. She has consistently maintained a GPA of 3.75 throughout five years of study while providing leadership on the Knights' student senate, student-athlete advisory committee (SAAC) and earning all-conference honors on the field. Cook was selected as one of six students to represent Martin Luther at the Nobel Science Conference sponsored by Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. Outside of her college campus, Cook has volunteered on five service trips to various churches across the country where she taught vacation bible school amongst other activities. In the New Ulm, Minn. community, she has coached basketball for fifth and sixth grade girls and run multiple campus wide blood drives.

"Leadership is not just observed through formal positions on athletic team or on a school committee, but it is in the way an individual holds him or herself," says Cook. "Being a positive influence and a role model of sorts for the students in my classrooms has given me confidence in my leadership abilities as well as a desire to cultivate future leaders, scholars and athletes in my own class some day."

Dr. Miller said that Cook impressed the voting council with her mature approach to leadership. "April's words match her record of leadership throughout the various activities she has been a part of," commented Dr. Miller.

UMAC Commissioner Corey Borchardt noted, "The success of these two student-athletes on the field in the competitive arena is very impressive. However, what truly sets these two individuals apart from the other outstanding candidates is the accomplishments off the field. Toby and April clearly exhibit exceptional leadership qualities in all of their endeavors and have already made significant contributions to their respective areas of study as well as in their communities and respective institutions. These two individuals are excellent representatives of the type of student-athletes the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference is proud to feature.

The Upper Midwest Athletic Conference is comprised of eight full and six associate members located throughout the Midwest. Originally formed in 1972 as the Twin Rivers Conference, the league was renamed in 1983. The UMAC is a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III. The conference provides its member institutions the opportunity to be recognized in the areas of academic excellence and athletic competitiveness. The UMAC awards conference championships in 18 sports.