



News Release

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Top Philosophy Student Chosen for Century Exemplary Student Honor

David Wahl of White Bear Lake, Century College's Outstanding Student in Philosophy, has been named the college's 2011 Exemplary Student. He will speak at the graduation ceremony on Friday, May 13, at 7 p.m. in Aldrich Arena, Maplewood.

Wahl said receiving the honor prompted him to reflect on how close he came to not being a Century College student.

He recalled driving to Century on the first day of class in 2009, feeling very apprehensive. His anxiety deepened after he got out of his car and spilled a large mocha beverage all over the front of him. "I shouldn't be here," he said to himself.

Still, he persisted and went to his first class, which was taught by Prof. Patty Steck. It was a logic class. "Within five minutes, she had me convinced that I was in the right place at the right time," said Wahl. "It

was how she talked about the relationship of logic to philosophy. I put my book bag down and decided to stay.”

Later, classes by professors Steve Odmark, Carl Chung, Paul Roach and Debbie Engelen-Eigles, “cemented everything,” he said. “I owe them everything,” said Wahl. “There is no way I can repay them.”

Wahl said one of his best experiences at Century is serving as a tutor embedded in Steck’s logic class. “The fact that I can move someone from being about to fail to getting an A – that is thrilling to me,” he said. “Century College is all about raising people up to their potential, and that is thrilling. Really, there is no one who can’t be pulled up.”

An early reader who benefitted from his great-grandmother’s love of literature, Wahl said he discovered the Russian novelists in fourth grade and he became hooked on philosophy. “Dostoyevsky was the greatest writer who ever put pen to paper,” said Wahl. “He made me want to be a writer and a philosopher.”

Wahl said he has found classes at Century to be very challenging, and he has worked hard to maintain his straight-A average. He found it especially rewarding to work with his professors on honors projects such as researching how people with autism communicate. He also did projects on American shamanism and German idealism.

Wahl said the most common barrier to gaining a higher education degree is lethargy and lack of motivation. “I would never once expect that a professor would give me an A if I didn’t work for it,” he said. “The way I see it, we are all only here for a short amount of time, why not make the most of it? Why waste a moment? Why waste a single breath? People only see barriers. They don’t see the porous nature of all those barriers.”

A published poet, Wahl has three novels waiting to be finished and another collection of poetry in the works. “All are vying for my attention,” he said.