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# News Release

Contact:  
**Sue Bernard**  
Development and  
College Relations Office  
33 Edgemont Drive  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
Phone: (207) 768-2808  
Fax: (207) 760-1101  
sbernard@nmcc.edu

## NMCC students named to All Maine Academic Team

**Aroostook County** - Two Northern Maine Community College students are among 14 students from across the state named to the 2013 All-Maine Academic Team for two-year colleges. Karl Kornchuk of Presque Isle and Valerie White of Washburn were honored at a ceremony hosted by the Maine Community College System Board of Trustees on March 27 in Augusta.

In addition to being recognized on a statewide level, Kornchuk and White each received a \$500 scholarship in honor of their accomplishment.

Kornchuk is a student in NMCC's wind power technology program. He is a member of the campus chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for students at two-year colleges, and has a 4.0 grade point average. He is a life-long learner who opted to go back to school after retiring from the military. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in oceanography from the U.S. Naval Academy and holds a master's degree in aeronautical science from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. He served in the military for more than 20 years as a pilot as well as a pilot instructor.

"I anticipate attending NMCC for several more semesters—there are just too many exciting courses offering opportunities to acquire practical skills I'll need in the next phase of my life as an active working member of my community or quite possibly as a member of this or one of the other local academic institutions," said Kornchuk.

In addition to the teaching he did in the military, Kornchuk taught mathematics and science at Presque Isle High School during a break from the military in the 1990s. He's putting those teaching skills and his educational background to good use at NMCC, volunteering several hours a week in the college's Academic Success Center as a peer tutor. He helps fellow students with math, electrical math, basic electronics, digital systems, hydraulics and wind power technology.

"After hearing his academic and work-experience background, I was excited at the prospect of having Karl do some tutoring for us. Within the first few weeks of school, it was obvious that he is a teacher at heart as he not only led his homework group discussions, but also involved the other students in his group. Before long I added him to our list of tutors – and I was absolutely thrilled that Karl agreed to work for us on a voluntary basis. He has been a wonderful tutor for us ever since," said Laura McPherson, coordinator of the ASC.

Kornchuk's enthusiasm for learning benefits his fellow classmates as well, according to instructor Charles Kelley. "He genuinely enjoys being back in school. His classmates benefit greatly by his maturity and leadership, and often use his work as a check of their own understanding of the course material," noted Kelley.

Kornchuk is also a member of the Disabled American Veterans and the Aroostook Amateur Radio League.

Like Kornchuk, White is a non-traditional student who returned to school to train for a new career. She worked previously in the medical technology field, but after returning to the region for family reasons, she found that there were no positions in the health care field for which she was qualified. She took advantage of this opportunity to make a change. White is now a senior in NMCC's accounting information systems program, with plans to pursue her bachelor's degree in accounting after graduation.

"I have met and conquered many challenges in this adventure, and I am confident I will be successful in the business world," said White. "My long-term goal is to open my own tax/financial advisor business."

That confidence is recognized by her instructors. "Valerie is an outgoing and confident student. She contributes to class discussions often and appears to command the respect of her peers. She is a student who takes her education very seriously," said Nancy Cowett, NMCC accounting instructor.

White is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and currently serves as the vice president of leadership for the chapter, which she credits as helping her grow as a person and giving her many opportunities to demonstrate leadership, fellowship and service. White is also a member of the NMCC Student Senate.

"Valerie exemplifies characteristics of the type of student one would wish all of our students to aspire to be like. She is active on campus, she participates in campus community events, and flourishes in giving back to the community in which she resides," said PTK advisor Lori Googins. "Valerie is always willing to give of her time, energy, and talents when needed."

The All-Maine Academic Team is part of the national Phi Theta Kappa program. Students are nominated and selected for the team by their college based on outstanding academic achievement, leadership, and service. The All-Maine Academic Team program is co-sponsored by Bangor Daily News, Creative Awards of Scarborough, Phi Theta Kappa, and the Maine Community College System.

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*Northern Maine Community College students Valerie White and Karl Kornchuk (center, with medals) were recognized at a ceremony in Augusta recently for being named to the All-Maine Academic Team. Congratulating them at the event were (from left) Lori Googins, NMCC instructor and Phi Theta Kappa advisor; Kris Doody, chair of the Maine Community College System Board of Trustees; and NMCC President Timothy Crowley.*