

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Oakton sophomore, Niles resident Andrew Tieng selected as Lincoln Student Laureate**

Des Plaines, Ill. (Nov. 13, 2017) – For the first time ever, an Oakton Community College was selected to represent Illinois community colleges at the Lincoln Academy of Illinois Student Laureate Convocation when Niles resident Andrew Tieng was presented with a \$1,000 scholarship at the Old State Capitol in Springfield on Saturday, Nov. 11.

“Andrew’s care for his fellow students is truly remarkable,” says Oakton President Joianne Smith of the student body president. “His servant leadership and his commitment to his community positively influence student life at Oakton on a daily basis.”

“I think that being named the student laureate, and as I understand I am the first from Oakton to be nominated and also then win, I think it forced me to understand the obligation I have to the Oakton students and the Oakton community to be the best version of myself that I can be,” Tieng says. “If I am an individual that is paving any sort of pathway for future Oakton students, I think it holds me accountable and also helps me find a strong sense of purpose behind the things that I do.”

The Lincoln Academy’s Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement Awards are presented for excellence in curricular and extracurricular activities to seniors from each of the four-year, degree-granting colleges and universities in Illinois in addition to one community college student. Gov. Bruce Rauner, Lincoln Academy president, and First Lady Diana Rauner welcomed all the students and awarded each with a medal of Lincoln, along with a scholarship honorarium and certificate of merit.

“President Lincoln’s legacy is a reminder of the power of public service and civic engagement,” Rauner said in a press release, noting the student laureates exemplify “the principles and ideals of the greatest Illinoisan through their hard work and dedication to their schools and communities.”

“Andrew values process and data while having a constant focus on the needs of others,” says Oakton Vice President for Student Affairs Karl Brooks. “He is able to balance and find solutions when there are competing priorities.”

After taking classes from 2007-10, Tieng has made the most of his second time around at Oakton, getting involved in extracurricular activities such as serving as vice president of Oakton’s chapter of Phi Theta Kappa, the world’s largest and most prestigious honor society for two-year college students. He also is active in Oakton Visual Organization, a student club. As Student Government Association president, Tieng has worked on making experiences the best they can be for Oakton students. He has represented students on the college’s Strategic Planning, Accountability and Resource Committee (SPARC) and the Master Plan Steering Committee.

“All of this has been incredibly rewarding, because everything has been like a cascade of dominoes, leading from one thing to the next, and I never would have imagined myself here right now,” Tieng adds of his Oakton experiences. “We started a Pop-Tart Club last year; I went on a road trip to observe the Dakota Access Pipeline protests; I wrote a front page article for the school newspaper, countless other things, and now I’m on to leading the Student Government Association with a number of exciting projects going on, collaborating with Oakton Visual Organization, Phi Theta Kappa, Ecology Club, and other organizations and individuals throughout the college. It’s an amazing experience being here.”

A sophomore studying economics and engineering at Oakton, Tieng hopes to continue his studies at either Harvard, University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, UIC or Loyola University Chicago. But he is also interested in visual communications as a result of his involvement with an Oakton club and says, “Who knows what route that might take me down.”

“Andrew has found joy in the exploration of ideas,” Brooks continues. “He has embraced the opportunity to apply what he has learned in the classroom into his leadership work.”

“Over the past year, I’ve realized that Oakton Community College is one of the top in the nation, and we have all these resources available to us that other community colleges don’t have,” Tieng adds. “To realize how nice we have it here, I think, is something I’m incredibly grateful for.”

The Lincoln Academy, unique among the 50 states, was established in 1964 to honor Illinois' most distinguished citizens with the state's highest award, the Order of Lincoln.

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