

# Minority Students Speak Out On NCSSM

Durham - Angela Chadwick wants to combine a career in medicine and law. But she expresses other interests, too: "Being here has exposed me to biomedical engineering," says the high school senior, who last year conducted independent research in the area.

Angela is one of many black students finding success at the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics in Durham, a school for 11th and 12th grade students with a special interest and potential in science and mathematics. She is the only black student participating in NCSSM's Project XL, in which about 20 students conduct independent study instead of attending regular classes.

Angela, from Kinston, has just been named a finalist for the Morehead Award, UNC-Chapel Hill's most prestigious scholarship.

Exceptional even in a school for talented students, Angela encourages other minority students to apply. "There are no limitations here; you can do whatever you want."

Last week, minority students talked about life at the N.C. School of Science and Mathematics (NCSSM).

Katie Lowry, a Native American from Pembroke, didn't know what to expect from the school, where 400 students from all parts of the state live together on campus. "It's socially different from home but I've adjusted," Katie said.

"I had no clear-cut idea as to what it would be like. I thought it would be more like summer camp, but it's not. It's more like college."

Many NCSSM students feel that the school's most important contribution is in college preparation.

Rodney Bryant, a senior from the coastal town of Swan Quarter, plans to study nuclear or aerospace engineering. "I think college will be easier now since I've had a demanding curriculum." The school "has helped me to be more independent," he says. Rodney has been accepted to N.C. State University and has applied to the University of Maryland and Georgia Tech.

Another senior, Dierdre Allen from Roanoke Rapids, also had definite ideas about college; she intends to major in actuarial science at Howard University. "I had not heard of actuarial science, NCSSM opened a door." Dierdre is manager of the softball team and works on NCSSM's magazine of opinion, the Open Mind. "I'm a Dormitory

## Speaking Out

Assistant," she says. "I felt honored to have been chosen over 100 students."

Dierdre encourages other students to apply. "There's lots of help available," she says. "Come and try it out. You can always say no and stay at home."

Felecia Nicholson is also active in extracurricular activities, playing flute and piano and participating in sports. She is captain of the girls' basketball team. She plans to study medicine. "I want to be a doctor with an OB/Gyn specialty."

Felecia describes the school as "magical." "It's made me know that I can be what I want to be. I can believe in me. This is a sharing school," she says. "We help each other." She encourages others to "believe in yourself, you can be what you want to be, you can do anything."

Sergio Salinas, a Mexican-American student

from Dudley, recommends NCSSM to students who "are interested in people and like a lot of science and math."

It's not quite what he expected. "I thought everyone would wear glasses, be into computers, study all the time and do nothing else," Sergio says. "But I got here and found those perceptions unreal."

He admits that "the school work is very hard. I really had to make some adjustments."

Chantal Wall of Southport, a junior who wants to major in chemical engineering in college, agrees with Sergio that "people here are normal." Chantal appreciates "having a lot of responsibility."

"If you're serious about getting an education, come here," she says.

"The teachers allow us to make changes gradually," says William Ray Kennedy, a junior from

Salisbury. "That helped me to make the academic adjustment. I expected my grades to go down and they did. But I'm still learning more. I'd definitely do it again."

Ray sums up the NCSSM experience with the word "family." You must depend on others as you would your family to get through certain situations, Ray says. "If you have the

opportunity to come, give it a try."

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