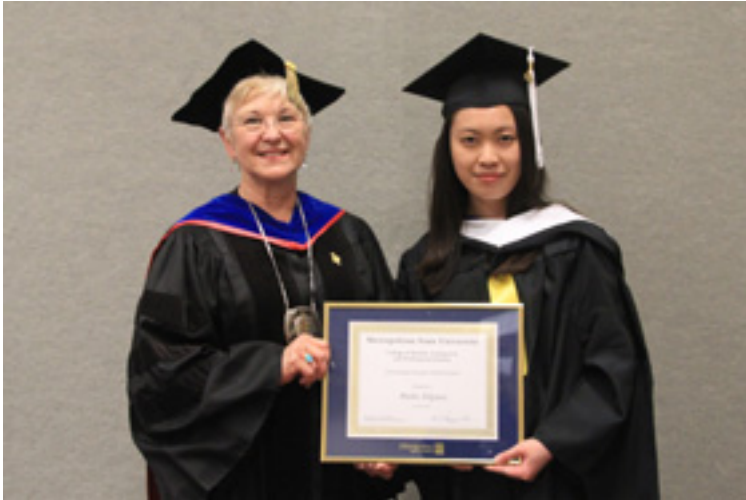


Maho Aikawa selected Metropolitan State University outstanding student

Written by
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Maho Aikawa has been selected spring semester outstanding graduate student in Metropolitan State University's College of Health, Community and Professional Studies.

Aikawa was one of about 1,030 students receiving bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees April 29 at the university's 92nd commencement exercises in Saint Paul.

Aikawa's graduate degree is in psychology. Her master's thesis examined the well-being of immigrants and refugees, focusing on the social support they sought.

"So far, I've found that immigrants who seek social support have higher well being than those who don't," said Aikawa, who lives in Minneapolis. "But what was interesting is that the longer they stay in the United States, the less they seek social support."

Aikawa regularly participated in a community garden jointly operated by Metropolitan State and Inver Hills Community College that supplied vegetables for Saint Paul's East Side residents and others. The 24-year-old Miyakonojo, Japan, native was also active with the East African Women's Center of Minnesota, assisting in the English as a Second Language and early child-care programs.

A member of the Minnesota Psychology Association, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology and the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Aikawa graduated from Tsuda University in Tokyo in 2011. Her degree was in international and cultural studies.

She previously was a college exchange student in Minnesota. During the 2009-2010 academic year, Aikawa attended Minnesota State University-Moorhead.

Her future plans include pursuing a doctoral degree in public health. Ultimately, Aikawa hopes to study the health and well being of minorities.