Phoenix, AZ (October 24, 2011) - Honors College student Daniel A. Tapanes was named the top Honors student in the country at a ceremony at the annual meeting of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). Tapanes attended the conference in Phoenix, Arizona, along with a dozen of his Honors College colleagues, as well as a handful of faculty and administrators who joined him in celebrating the award. The Student of the Year Award is competitive - NCHC has approximately 850 member institutions from throughout the United States and overseas.

Tapanes is a junior majoring in Biological Sciences and minoring in Chemistry and Humanities. He has a sterling academic record and is an active researcher in lab and in the field. The Honors College student is also a MARC*USTAR fellow, a Multicultural Programs and Services (MPAS) Scholar, and a Quantifying Biology in the Classroom (QBIC) Scholar. He is also involved in numerous extra-curricular activities and community service projects.

Most recently, Tapanes has distinguished himself by his work this past summer in the Peruvian Amazon where the Honors College has a service-research study abroad program. He arrived in the jungle with the intention of doing a research project on parasites in food fish among the indigenous Yagua community, but Tapanes soon saw the need for a medical clinic in the area. The closest clinic was many hours away by boat. Tapanes quickly brought together government authorities, a Peruvian architect, as well as medical personnel from the city of Iquitos, the nearest city with modern medical facilities, to begin building a clinic for the Yagua. The project continues to move forward with the help of American and Peruvian volunteers.

“The truly amazing thing about Daniel is that he is the complete package, a Renaissance man for the twenty-first century, a student whose achievements set the bar for all the others,” says Honors College Dean Lesley A. Northup.
“... he is one of those folks you will read about in news and feature articles in years to come.”

Tapanes will be returning to the Amazon next summer to continue his work.

Tapanes also shared briefly about how the Honors College affected his life.

For more information, please contact:

Juan Carlos Espinosa  
Associate Dean & Fellow  
Florida International University  
The Honors College  
Tel: (305)-348-4100  
E-mail: espinosj@fiu.edu