

CANTON, NY, May 10, 2014 **/24-7PressRelease/** -- Three St. Lawrence University chemistry majors who will graduate on May 18 have been accepted and have enrolled in doctoral-degree programs in their field.

All three students are bypassing the traditional first step of earning a master's degree and instead are jumping straight into Ph.D. programs at well-regarded research institutions. Omaru Kabia '14 will attend Indiana University, Katherine Buxton '14 will attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Rachael Kenney '14 will attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"In chemistry, at least, there really is no incentive to earn a master's degree," said Omaru of Staten Island, N.Y., who is a Ronald E. McNair Scholar and received St. Lawrence's Presidential Diversity Scholarship. "There aren't many jobs that require a master's degree that you can't already get with a bachelor's. There isn't a lot of funding for master's degrees either, so going into a Ph.D. program helps keep costs down."

Performing complex scientific research doesn't seem to phase these soon-to-be graduates, all of whom have already begun tapping into their full potential by experiencing St. Lawrence's vibrant learning spaces and working closely with dedicated chemistry faculty.

"At huge schools where research is their main mission, undergraduates may get to clean the lab equipment after the professors and graduate students leave, and that's it," said Katherine of Richmond, Vt. "Here, there are all kinds of research opportunities, where it's much more hands on and we actually get to use all of the lab instrumentation. We got to spend a lot of time working in the lab alongside amazing professors."

"That never would happen at big schools," said Rachael of Chestertown, N.Y. who was a St. Lawrence Augsburg/North Country Scholar. "The faculty at St. Lawrence really get to know about you and actually care about helping you get where you want to go. They encourage independent thinking, but they're also there to help you when you need it." All three students have had impressive experiences during their undergraduate careers.

Omaru was captain of the men's track and field team and served as president of the University's chapter of the American Chemistry Society. During the summer of 2013, he was a University Fellow and conducted research alongside Larry French, professor of chemistry. Omaru also participated in undergraduate conferences at the University of California, Berkeley, and at the

State University of New York at Buffalo.

Katherine is double majoring in mathematics as well as chemistry, is a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa national leadership honorary society and even played club hockey. She interned one summer at an industrial chemical lab in Illinois, where she experimented with polymers at wastewater treatment facilities, and she took part in a Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) program at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

Rachael, who is minoring in music, has also served as president of the University's chapter of the American Chemistry Society. She spent several summers researching at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Fresh Water Institute and last summer was a St. Lawrence University Fellow, working with Samantha Glazier, associate professor of chemistry, on the binding of an anti-cancer drug to DNA.

Katherine and Rachael both plan pursue analytical chemistry, which is concerned with the chemical composition of natural and artificial materials. Omaru, meanwhile, is interested in organic chemistry and perhaps a career in the biotech, or pharmaceutical, industry.

Despite their impressive academic achievements to date, Rachael easily summed up one of the students' remaining goals: "I just want to be able to tell my mother what I do and have her understand."

About St. Lawrence University:

Founded in 1856, St. Lawrence University is a private, independent liberal arts institution of about 2,400 students located in Canton, N.Y. The educational opportunities at St. Lawrence inspire students and prepare them to be critical and creative thinkers, to find a compass for their lives and careers, and to pursue knowledge and understanding for the benefit of themselves, humanity and the planet. Through its focus on active engagement with ideas in and beyond the classroom, a St. Lawrence education leads students to make connections that transform lives and communities, from the local to the global. Visit <http://www.stlawu.edu>.