Row, row, row your boat is what Monique Gaines does each morning with the exception of Sundays. Being a member of the Women’s Novice Rowing Team at the University of Oklahoma is no small endeavor. Monique rises before dawn each morning to catch the bus departing from the Oklahoma Memorial Stadium at 5:30 am. The bus takes the students to the Oklahoma River for rowing practice lasting until 8:00 am. Monique hopes her efforts will lead to a place in this new program in either a varsity or junior varsity position. “It’s exciting to be a part of this inaugural team,” Monique said.

Monique, a junior industrial engineering major from Muskogee, is also dedicated to her academic pursuits. It is obvious she takes her education seriously: Monique is both a McNair Scholar and OKLSAMP (Oklahoma Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) recipient. She initially majored in math education, but a friend encouraged her to consider engineering. For a natural problem solver, Monique found the process management and efficiency emphasis of particular interest. She hopes to dovetail her bachelor’s degree with a master’s in Industrial Engineering or Health Administration.

Most would find managing being a member of the Novice Rowing Team and an engineering major more than enough for one day. But Monique has become a master of time management. She is also the President of the Sigma Lambda Gamma Sorority, Executive Vice-President of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, a Dean’s Leadership Council Mentor, member of the Honor’s College serving as a Peer Mentor and volunteer manager for the OU Women’s Basketball team.