

2005-2006 Academic and Student Affairs Award Recipients

Innovative Student Affairs Program Award

The “Ask Us” program at Anoka-Ramsey Community College provides students and the public with answers to important questions about the college and its services on a 24/7 basis. By using RightNow Technologies® on the college’s Web site, the college provides fast, convenient and friendly support services for the continually growing population of online students. The service offers answers to frequently asked questions on 73 topics, including course registration procedures, student health insurance and graduation requirements. This tool provides ease for students who might choose not to seek such information in person. For these students, unanswered questions are a barrier to learning. This program serves as a showcase for other colleges and universities within the system to adopt.

Diversity Development Day at Normandale Community College is a full-day conference for all faculty, staff and administrators. No classes are scheduled. All college offices are closed. And, all faculty and staff participate. The conference begins with a plenary session focusing on issues of inclusion at Normandale. Breakout sessions are provided as options for the entire community. Topics include immigration rights, mental health issues, the Asian press in the Twin Cities, white privilege, transgender identity, Latino educational models, poverty and homelessness and the divide between staff and faculty. Speakers and performers have included the Mixed Blood Theatre and the Institute for Authentic Dialogue, which trained student leaders on facilitating dialogues about race. Diversity Day creates a stimulating context for focusing discussion of and attention to multicultural issues, thereby promoting learning and positive relations.

Service Learning at Minnesota State University, Mankato celebrates 13 years of integrating service learning opportunities into the curriculum. More than 50 professors now use service learning as an effective pedagogy that ties classroom learning to “real-life” experiences in the community. Begun in 1994 with a grant from the AmeriCorps National Service Program, the program led to a second grant for the National Jumpstart literacy program. Minnesota State University, Mankato was the first institution in the Midwest to receive this prestigious grant and remains the only program of its kind in Minnesota. The Jumpstart program enables 40 college students to teach literacy and school readiness skills to children ages three through five. In 2004, the university opened a new Center for Community-Based Learning and Civic Engagement, a unique partnership to help faculty, students and staff become more engaged in the Greater Mankato community. In 2005, the university began the Campus Kitchens project – a food recovery program that uses leftover food from residence halls to make more than 200 meals a week for Mankato residents identified as “in need.” Classes from the College of Business, Family and Consumer Science, the College of Education and the Honors and First Year Seminars contribute to sustaining this program. Other service learning initiatives include: Earth Day, Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, National Children’s Book Week (more than 5,800 books collected), and the Sound of Reading literacy project. The program also raised more than \$8,000 for victims of the Tsunami disaster.

Excellence in Curriculum Programming Award

Bemidji State University was recognized for its bachelor of fine arts in creative and professional writing. Begun in 2001, the program is the only such bachelor’s degree offered in Minnesota and one of only 13 programs in the United States. Drawing students from as far as Pennsylvania, the program adopted a “workshop model,” so students create, read and respond to each other’s writing in the classroom. More than 60 students are currently enrolled. Besides providing workshops in fiction, poetry and creative nonfiction, the program offers innovative professional and technical writing courses, which are also beginning to be offered online. Students and faculty serve

together on the editorial boards, and the faculty advises various student publications. Students have held internships as writers, editors and teachers with Milkweed Press, the Minnesota Historical Society Press, Copper Canyon Press in Washington and Hold Magazine in Los Angeles, among other publications and writing organizations. Their work has been published in many literary anthologies, journals, e-zines and weblogs. Graduates have been accepted for graduate study at Vermont College, the University of Iowa (one of the premier master's program in writing in the country), Bowling Green State University and others.

The English division at **Minneapolis Community and Technical College** was recognized for undertaking an assessment and subsequent restructuring of its writing courses. Faculty members created a new set of desired outcomes, an evaluation guide and an improved sequencing of assignments. The model is being developed for use across the entire writing curriculum. Recognizing that many students have unconventional ways of learning, the division moved from a blunt and uncompromising high-stakes test toward a more comprehensive and labor-intensive committee assessment.

The faculty also has been in the forefront of integrating technology as a vital part of students' work. They regularly work across disciplines to improve assessment of student learning, among other things. Students enrolled in these courses embody the system's goal of providing access and opportunity to historically underserved populations. Nearly half of the students in these courses are students of color, 56 percent are economically disadvantaged, 14 percent are non-native speakers of English and 44 percent are first-generation college students. In evaluating the program, students speak nearly unanimously of how the faculty's time and effort has made a distinct difference in their learning and subsequent success beyond college.

Innovative Partnering and Collaboration Award

The Teacher Quality Enhancement Initiative at **St. Cloud State University** is a partnership funded by the U.S. Department of Education. St Cloud State University's College of Education has partnered with the colleges of fine arts and science, two businesses (Media X and Diversified Media Resources) and 10 school districts. The partnership promotes and incorporates a "co-teaching model" for student teaching by providing dynamic, active roles for the teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher.

Cooperating teachers are taught to make their instructional decisions more explicit so student teachers more readily see the otherwise invisible workings of the classroom. Using co-teaching in student teaching is an efficient and effective way for districts to lower class size and enhance academic achievement.

Teaching candidates report that they have more confidence in the classroom as a result of co-teaching and that they have a deeper and richer understanding of the curriculum and instructional strategies. Cooperating teachers describe benefits from increased flexibility in meeting their students' needs and enhanced opportunities for professional growth. Interviews with more than 500 elementary and secondary students documented the program's overwhelmingly positive impact.

DMR and Media X helped produce a 22-minute video detailing the impact of co-teaching and develop a web-based system for supervising and assessing candidates. The College of Education has incorporated co-teaching by embedding the strategies within the curriculum. More and more cooperating teachers have said that they will never again work with a teacher candidate without co-teaching. As benefits of this paradigm shift become more apparent, local partners continue to look for ways to use this new student teaching model.

The Dental Institute at **Century College** received this award for providing dental care to patients who do not have access to dental care. Working with the Minnesota Association for Community Dentistry, a pilot collaboration began consisting of Apple Tree Dental, local stakeholders

in the St. Paul area and the Minnesota Department of Human Services. Although funding for the pilot project stalled, the college moved forward with the idea of opening a community clinic that would serve the targeted patient groups.

In 2005, the 3M and Delta Dental Foundations awarded the college a combined \$130,000 in grants to establish the Century College Dental Institute. The three primary goals are: 1) to establish a self-sustaining community clinic, 2) to function as a resource and center of excellence for dental education, and 3) to provide additional service learning opportunities for students. Active patient care began in the summer of 2006. The clinic will shift the burden of caring for low-income patients away from private dental practices and toward the community.

Recruitment of volunteer professionals began with the institute's Give Kids a Smile Day in February. Nearly 170 children from 36 different communities, including some in western Wisconsin, received dental care services. About one-third of these children had never had a dental checkup and 57 children had emerging or urgent dental needs. The services provided at the college were valued at more than \$39,000. This event both demonstrated the clinic's need and led to more dental professionals volunteering to serve the Dental Institute and explore ways in which this model might be replicated in other Minnesota communities.

Outstanding Academic and Student Affairs Administrator

Mary Ann O'Brien, dean of Continuing Education and Customized Training and Resource Development at Century College, has been the driving force behind developing many of the college's most successful and innovative continuing education programs. She created and ran the Community Leadership Academy. She expanded the corporate college sites and achieved growth in both the enrollments and revenue generated by business and industry programming. Her entrepreneurial skill has made continuing education/customized training a thriving profit center for the college. She has become a statewide leader in the development of continuous quality improvement, internal auditing, certified professional secretary recertification, and many other programs. She has shown a great talent for structuring complex partnerships with corporate clients and with other higher education institutions. During the past 20 years, she has obtained federal, state and corporate support for academic programs, instructional equipment, student service initiatives, staff development efforts and countless continuing education and workforce training projects. She has authored successful proposals for grants from National Science Foundation, Minnesota Job Skills Partnership, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Office of the Chancellor and various foundations. These grants helped launch Century's St. Paul Center, 3 TRIO programs, computer-assisted advising, several Title III projects, and many others.

Dr. Jane F. Early, has been the dean of Arts and Humanities, Minnesota State University, Mankato, has been the dean since 1977. Previously, she was the assistant dean. The longest-serving dean in America, she was recently recognized for this record by the national Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences. She served as president of the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences from 1980-81 and on its Board of Directors from 1977-82. She established that organization's Women's Caucus and initiated many other programs that flourish today. She has served as chairperson within the National Conference for Academic Deans, as a consultant-evaluator for the North Central Association's Higher Learning Commission, as a member of the Minnesota Humanities Commission and the Board of Trustees of Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Ia. Early also excels at finding and mentoring the next generation of administrative leaders. Her positive impact on preparing women for leadership is perhaps one of her greatest legacies. Early attends roughly 150 concerts, performances, lectures and exhibitions every year. She is frequently back stage after each event, letting the students know how much their work means to the university and to her.