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C E L E B R A T I N G E X C E L L E N C E

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21, 2010

THE HILTON GARDEN INN BALLROOM
TOWN SQUARE

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

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**System Board of Trustees Award for Excellence
in Teaching Review Committee**

Mary Belanger	Dakota County Technical College
Josephine Books	Inver Hills Community College
Joan Costello	Inver Hills Community College
Hattie Dambroski	Normandale Community College
Nathan Hanson	Minnesota State College Student Association
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Louise Hoxworth	Office of the Chancellor
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Manuel Lopez	Office of the Chancellor
Pam Pfaltzgraff	Minnesota State College Student Association
Don Supalla	Rochester Community and Technical College
Doug Thompson	Saint Paul College
Roxanne White	Minnesota State College Student Association

LUNCHEON AND AWARDS CEREMONY

11:30 A.M. – 1:15 P.M.

The Board of Trustees Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching is a system-level honor conferred by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system to recognize professional achievement and to encourage the ongoing pursuit of excellence.

Music • Zach Sershon

Emcee • Cathy Wurzer

Welcome • Chancellor James McCormick and Board of Trustees Chair David Olson

Recognition of the Outstanding Educators • Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee Chair Dan McElroy, Chancellor James McCormick and Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer

Presentation of the Educators of the Year • Chair David Olson, Chancellor James McCormick and Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer

Closing • Senior Vice Chancellor Linda Baer

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

The Board of Trustees Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching was established in 2006. The Board of Trustees bestows the award on faculty within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system to acknowledge and reward exceptional professional accomplishment and to encourage ongoing excellence in teaching. The award proclaims, on behalf of the entire system, the Board of Trustees' pride in the dedication and accomplishment of our faculty, who provide instruction that prepares Minnesota college and university students for their professional, scholarly, and civic lives. This year, presidents named 26 Outstanding Educators in nomination for the award.

As a teacher who's just started her career, I was amazed and enlightened by the portfolio review process and by having had the privilege to connect with some of the system's master teachers. Their ingenuity, their passion for their subjects and their love of teaching was evident in their materials and in their thinking about the profession of teaching. By reading their portfolios I discovered ways to advance my own skills and pass along both knowledge and excitement in learning to my students. This experience as a reviewer has informed my own portfolio development and given me ways to think about my class preparation. I am honored to be in such company.

—Hattie Dambroski, Board of Trustees Review Committee

THANK YOU

To honor the educators of the year and outstanding educators requires the hard work and belief of others to sustain a culture of honor and recognition. The following is a list of the people who helped to do that and to make this ceremony special.

- All of the faculty, administrators, and students who served on the campus selection committees
- The individuals who nominated candidates for the Board of Trustees Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching
- Todd Hawkinson and his students in the jewelry design and manufacturing program at Minneapolis Community and Technical College
- Joanne Sarkilahti and her students in the Floral Design program at Hennepin Technical College, Brooklyn Park
- Zach Sershon, keyboardist, composer and student at Normandale Community College
- Cathy Wurzer, emcee
- Amy Tadewald, Jim McDonald and the staff at the Hilton Garden Inn
- Glen Stubbe, photographer
- Gary Hatteberg and Minnesota Satellite and Technology staff
- Center for Teaching and Learning staff, Office of the Chancellor
- Board of Trustees staff

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR
PAST RECIPIENTS

2007

Donald E. Graves
Biology Instructor
Rainy River Community College

Michele M. Neaton
Speech and Communication Instructor
Century College

Julie A. Rodakowski
English/Communication Studies Instructor
Rochester Community and Technical College

2008

Robin Fruth-Dugstad
Horticultural Technology Instructor
Rochester Community and Technical College

Suzette Overby
Human Services Instructor
Riverland Community College

Daniel Paulnock
Speech and Communication Instructor
Saint Paul College

Eugenia Paulus
Chemistry Instructor
North Hennepin Community College

2009

Chris Austin
Economics Instructor
Normandale Community College

Dorian Beaulieu
Art Instructor
Lake Superior College

Ernie Parker
Fluid Power Engineering Technology Instructor
Hennepin Technical College

Deborah Roiger
Biology Instructor
St. Cloud Technical and Community College

Selection Criteria

The Board of Trustees Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching program evaluates each portfolio in the following areas:

- Teaching strategies and materials
- Content expertise and professional growth
- Service to students, profession, institution, system
- Assessment of student learning and performance

Nominations were made by students, faculty peers or staff and evaluated by a campus review committee before being submitted to the Senior Vice Chancellor as Outstanding Educators by an institution's president. At the system level, a committee employed a rubric of detailed criteria in reading and discussing Outstanding Educator portfolios, and made final recommendations of Educator of the Year recipients to Senior Vice Chancellor Baer. Those recommendations were reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees Excellence in Teaching Award is a public way to recognize, thank and celebrate the great work of thousands of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities faculty. A portfolio review of the best-of-the-best educators in the state reveals that their excellent work extends far beyond the walls of their classrooms, laboratories and shops. These portfolios reflect master teachers who, in addition to their love of the classroom, are actively engaged in their professional organizations, colleges and communities. The good work of the instructors being recognized this year is but a sampling of the great work being carried out day after day, year after year, by all educators who have dedicated their careers to serving students and making the world a better place to live, work and learn. It was an honor to serve on the review committee and to recognize the extraordinary work of our teaching colleagues.

—Don Supalla, Board of Trustees Review Committee



Paula Croonquist

Biology Instructor
Anoka-Ramsey Community College

Paula Croonquist is a biologist by training, and her deep understanding of molecular and developmental structures has informed her work as a teacher. She believes that if the right environment can be created, if opportunities for success are created, all learners can be successful. Her student nominees wrote consistently about how she serves her students—how she makes sure they understand course content before moving on to new

material, how she arranges times to meet with them outside of class, and how she works to establish a nurturing environment in which learning can take place.

Croonquist also believes that the most effective teaching occurs through apprenticeship, so she models the work she expects her students to do and is committed to empowering and engaging students. To this end, she carefully chooses from among many different activities, all based on research, to address her students' varied learning needs. She also employs ongoing formative assessments such as memory matrixes and direct paraphrasing to determine day-to-day whether her students are learning. One of the students who nominated Croonquist wrote, "If she can't get through to her students one way, she will find another." Her commitment to her students is evidenced by their success. Her Anatomy and Physiology II students perform above the national mean on the Human Anatomy and Physiology Society's comprehensive standardized exam.

Because her students study biology to meet a wide range of educational goals, Croonquist is always seeking new ways to further their interests in science. One example is the undergraduate research opportunities she makes possible for her sophomore students. She developed a multidisciplinary Independent Research Summer Internship Program in partnership with the University of Minnesota. Through this program, students get a chance to work with University of Minnesota professors in the university's laboratories and then present their research findings at national conferences. Her hard work and service to students has paid off: this research program has resulted in an increase in the number of Anoka-Ramsey Community College biology transfer students seeking four-year degrees in the biological sciences.

Croonquist holds a Ph.D. in molecular, cellular, developmental biology and genetics, and continues active scholarship by attending local and national conferences. She attends research seminars hosted by the Cancer Center and the Genetics, Cell, and Development Department at the University of Minnesota. She also has received grants from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Foundation and the National Science Foundation.

Croonquist continues to improve her teaching by completing courses such as Designing Community College Courses for Learning at the University

Drew Goddard
Hennepin Technical College
President Cecilia Cervantes

Lori Halverson-Wente
Rochester Community and Technical College
President Don Supalla

Mark Hickman
Dakota County Technical College
President Ronald Thomas

Brian Lewis
Century College
President Larry Litecky

David Page
Inver Hills Community College
President Cheryl Frank

Julien Phillips
North Hennepin Community College
President Ann Wynia

Jocelyn Pihlaja
Lake Superior College
President Kathleen Nelson

Vicky Melbye
Ridgewater College
President Douglas Allen

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St. Cloud Technical and Community College
President Joyce Helens

Pam Whitfield
Rochester Community and Technical College
President Don Supalla

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARD OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS DESIGNATING PRESIDENTS

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of Minnesota. She has participated in National Science Foundation workshops, as well as system-coordinated workshops offered through the Project Kaleidoscope initiative. Through the Center for Teaching and Learning, she took a workshop, "Getting Started: An Overview of Online Teaching," which helped her make the transition from a traditional classroom to an online teaching environment. She contributes to the ongoing development of her own college and colleagues as a member of the leadership team that organizes faculty and professional development activities.

Anoka-Ramsey Community College's solicitation for Outstanding Educator nominees yielded 230 nominations from students, faculty and staff. Paula Croonquist was honored by the unanimous recommendation of the college's selection committee.

REVIEWER COMMENTS

Croonquist's teaching strategies and materials demonstrate scientific rigor and creativity. One biologist on the review committee said, "It's really hard to do research work with first- and second-year students, and she does a great job of it. She puts together half-semester-long research projects of considerable complexity in a short time (e.g., her students clone and sequence a gene in a genetics class)." She finds ways to engage students' scientific imagination through classroom activities like "the dance of the chromosomes."

Croonquist's expertise and professional growth are exemplified by how she reviews her teaching evaluations and then uses them to improve her teaching. When students' written comments expressed a concern that she "talked too fast," she worked on correcting that to improve her students' understanding. Born in Argentina, Croonquist was aware that some students had difficulty with her non-native-English accent; she turned to technology (a tablet PC) to ensure that her lectures were expressed clearly for all. She demonstrates dedication to her profession, research and professional associations and involves students in her own professional development in the form of undergraduate research opportunities.

In regard to service to students, profession, institution and system, her portfolio shows evidence of a highly effective instructor in her discipline who gives significant service to students in the community. Her professional work stood out in this category. She attends professional conferences and takes her first- and second-year students to these conferences to learn and present work.

Croonquist truly understands assessment and employs it to ensure improved student learning. She uses meaningful, well-controlled, efficiently collected data. She uses formative and summative assessment to understand how students are learning and achieving the course goals. She sets expectations clearly for her courses and has well-defined assessment rubrics.



Lori Halverson-Wente

Speech Instructor
Rochester Community and Technical College

Lori Halverson-Wente has been teaching for 23 years, five of which she spent working for educational development in Cambodia. Encouraging social activism and instilling in her students a sense of service are at the core of her professional life.

In letters of nomination, her students sang Halverson-Wente's praises. They wrote about life-changing experiences in her classes and in the service-learning trips

she organizes to Cambodia. A student wrote, "Go to Cambodia with Lori. This will change your life. I cannot begin to write here what the class, the trip, the other students or Lori mean to me. My life will never be the same."

In her teaching philosophy, Halverson-Wente writes about learning as a life long process that must "find a home in one's personal, social and professional life." She writes specifically about the field of speech communication as being relevant locally and globally, and describes the teaching strategies that back that assertion—mainly civic engagement and service learning. Furthermore, she displays a firm grasp of the mission of the community college and the collaboration with and service to the community that is central to its success. One example is her work with the Rochester Boys and Girls Club. As a service-learning project, she coordinated an opportunity for her speech students to work one-on-one with children at the club.

Halverson-Wente views teaching as a vocation, not a career. Her work at Rochester has given her the opportunity to serve and learn from diverse groups of students—from culturally diverse immigrants to energetic PSEO students to single parents seeking to make their lives better. She thrives on the challenges and rewards these various groups of students bring to her each semester. Many of her students write about the apprehension and nervousness they felt in entering a speech class and of Halverson-Wente's ability to calm their fears. Other students write about health problems that threatened to affect their academic careers and of Halverson-Wente's support. She can counted on to provide or direct them to the resources they needed to get through their crises.

Halverson-Wente is able to meet challenges because she has always sought to improve herself professionally. Even the briefest review of her qualifications beyond a master's degree in communication shows how dedicated she is to ongoing professional development. She has been the recipient and manager of 10 grants, has mentored and trained her fellow faculty members in Web Camp and online teaching techniques, developed curriculum for international travel abroad courses, consulted on inter-cultural communication, and taught more than 250 leadership and teambuilding workshops for local nonprofit groups. This only scratches the surface of what she has done and continues to do outside the classroom.

Girl Scout Council of River Trails and the Olmsted and Fillmore County 4-H organizations. She also developed a training program for 20 facilitators of the Rochester Diversity Council which eventually led to 30 community dialogues called "VOICES: Valuing Our Immigrants." Whitfield is also the member of a musical group called Midnight Cowgirls; she writes, "We might be geeky English professors, but we like to take our literature and song on the road and share it with our community."

Whitfield's nomination came from a student, which makes sense given her dedication to students, to their learning and to enriching their lives. Her teaching career has been and continues to be about understanding her students and helping them define and achieve their goals.

REVIEWER COMMENTS

Whitfield's teaching methods are student-centered and reflected in her use of active learning; she engages her students through group work, class discussions and peer-led supplemental instruction, a technique that works effectively in her learning center. Whitfield believes that students must take charge of their own education and that as a class they are a "community of scholars who will make knowledge together."

The content and professional expertise that Whitfield brings to her work is evident in both of her disciplines or "arenas." She's both a published author (English) and noted equine judge (Equine Science). Whitfield values the necessity of developing an individual professional plan, for it focuses her energies and permits her to set realistic goals for herself, the very thing that informs her work with students. To further her professional growth, she has received numerous instructional development grants, faculty internships and awards for excellence.

Whitfield serves her students and her college through her passionate commitment to the college's comprehensive learning center, one she has been involved with since its inception in 2006, and one that exists solely to serve students. She views this work as the "most important service endeavor" of her career. In 2003, she wrote the curriculum for 19 initial equine science courses and worked tirelessly to help establish the Equine Science program at her college, a program that she represents in the larger horse industry, as a clinician, judge and public speaker.

Whitfield's careful assessment of and commitment to student learning is something she does on a daily basis, so that she can find out more about her students' ongoing progress, the effectiveness of her own pedagogy and whether her courses meet the system's competency goals. She uses clearly stated standards and presents clear learning outcomes. Her portfolio demonstrates a strong understanding of assessment and student learning by employing a range of assessment tools: feedback loops, teaching observations, assignment specific rubrics and student self-assessment tools. Whitfield's use of assessment complements her teaching methodology by giving students greater control in their learning experience.



Pam Whitfield

English and Equine Science Instructor
Rochester Community and Technical College

Pam Whitfield put herself through school by doing freelance magazine writing and managing her own horse business. For her, giving riding lessons and writing have ever since been inseparable practices. "I saw my academic work as fueling my equine work, and my horsey pursuits as a healthy antidote to 'the intellectual life,'" writes Whitfield in her teaching philosophy.

Through the lens of teaching, it's easy for her to find relationships between the two disciplines. She is primarily focused on ways to help her students learn. A parent of one of her riding students once told her, "Most people teach a subject. You teach the person." That statement describes perfectly how she works with students at Rochester Community and Technical College. She recognizes that each student is unique and comes to the learning experience with unique learning needs. For example, as she recently returned to teaching developmental writing courses, she was stunned to find the number of students there who were "in recovery:" wounded in earlier learning experiences, they were trying to regain or develop new functional skills. These students require the kind of teaching strategies that Whitfield employs—tailored lesson plans, for example, to address their needs and learning styles.

Looking through Whitfield's curriculum vitae, one easily sees that she is a student of teaching. She has a substantial record of publications and presentations, many of them on teaching and learning. "How Do You Get Away With That?: Teaching Race, Class and Gender in the Freshman Writing Course"; "Teaching the Novel in Context"; and "Empowering Student Literacies: Three Feminists (Re)Teaching Reading, Writing and Speaking" are just a few of her recent titles.

But just as she is a scholar of teaching methodology and pedagogy, Whitfield is a student of her own students. The proof of this is in the way she interacts with them. She writes, "Students are not empty vessels whose lids we unscrew in order to pour knowledge or dump skills. They are agents...of their own educations." She skillfully draws upon the unique experiences and backgrounds they bring to the classroom, and she learns from them every semester. She uses feedback loops and teaching observations to continuously assess student learning and her own performance in the classroom. These and many other assessment practices help Whitfield understand and adjust to her students and their learning process.

Whitfield has a strong sense of service to her college and to her community. In her time at Rochester Community and Technical College, she has served in the development of the learning center, and later of programs for staff and tutor training in that center. She also designed and launched the curriculum that remains Minnesota's only two-year equine degree program. In addition to her service to the college, she does community outreach and education with the

REVIEWER COMMENTS

Halverson-Wente's teaching methods show a blend of theory and practice. Her use of technology is not a gimmick; it is obviously purposeful, strategic, and tied to her teaching methods and techniques. Skills Demos, for example, are videos that she uses to showcase excellence in techniques. Her students are given, through these samples, models to emulate in their own work. She uses video labs, YouTube and digital repositories to introduce essential interpersonal communication skills to her students, and constantly demonstrates creativity in the use of technology in the classroom.

The content and professional expertise Halverson-Wente brings to her teaching is impressive. Her resume was like a book, and included seven pages of non-stop personal growth. In addition to teaching, she has written and been the principal investigator for 10 grant projects that have directly affected her own professional development and her students' learning. One example was a Center for Teaching and Learning grant for a project that allowed her to create a Team Building Challenge course.

Her commitment to service is extensive. As an extension of her classes, she works with students on lobby days. One of the student reviewers noted: "It's very important to get the support of faculty in our interaction with legislators. Halverson-Wente's work in the system, and particularly with CTL, is very impressive." Her favorite teaching tool is to "promote student learning through service learning in the community." Her work with grade-school students connects what she does on campus to her community; she then takes that work, along with her college students and other faculty, to schools in Cambodia. But she does more: she serves the community in Rochester by bringing what she learns of education and people in Cambodia back to Rochester youth in K-12 classrooms.

Halverson-Wente's careful assessment of student learning can be seen in the rubrics she designed. One faculty reviewer noted, "I wanted to copy them." You could use these rubrics effectively to evaluate learning without having an overcomplicated tool get in your way." The committee agreed that the evidence to support the assessment portion of her portfolio was phenomenal—three appendices' worth of classroom assessment techniques, rubrics, longitudinal data, and other tools that allow her to know whether her students are learning, what they're learning, and what she needs to emphasize in her lessons.



Mark Hickman

Transportation Instructor
Dakota County Technical College

Mark Hickman teaches in Dakota County Technical College's General Motors Automotive Service Education Program, which is the only one of its kind in Minnesota. His years of industry experience, 20 years of teaching experience, consistent record of professional development and the relationships he maintains with professionals make for a truly one-of-a-kind learning experience for his students.

Hickman got his start in auto mechanics as a student at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. After graduating, he worked as an auto mechanic for 10 years before getting a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota. Even then, he was gaining experience as an educator. He had started teaching automotive courses at Dakota County while enrolled in his bachelor's program.

Hickman has continued to learn and develop himself as a professional in his field and as an instructor. While teaching at Dakota, he earned a master's of public and nonprofit administration from Metropolitan State University. He always has sought training opportunities that would keep him current in the automotive field as well. In 2006, he attained GM World Class Technician status. At the time, he was the 33rd GM ASEP instructor in the world to have achieved this recognition.

Hickman has a strong sense of duty to his students. In addition to the training he provides them in the classroom, he cares for their development post-graduation. Through his industry experience he is able to maintain strong relationships with employers who can hire his students after they leave Dakota County Technical College. In his teaching portfolio, Hickman notes that he frequently drops by dealerships and service centers in an attempt to secure future places of employment for his students. In 2009, he personally visited more than 100 potential internship worksites across Minnesota.

To ensure their post-graduation success with these employers, Hickman integrates his course materials with exercises on how to work in a professional environment. His unique "crash course in working in a professional environment" exemplifies his attention to student success in a highly competitive marketplace, where professionalism can make a graduate stand out among others in search of limited jobs.

Finally, as a service to his community and to further his students' training, Hickman manages service-learning projects in conjunction with his automotive courses. A standout example is the "Blue Knights for Red Bulls" project, wherein his students repair cars for the benefit of returning vets. In the true

spirit of service learning, this project does tangible good for returning veterans while giving his students real-world, hands-on experience in the field.

A student review committee member said of Hickman, "While some resist the view, I liked his quote that he considers his students customers who can take their business elsewhere." This statement gets at the root of what makes Hickman an Educator of the Year. He recognizes a duty to students, and ensures that together they make mutual contributions to their future success.

REVIEWER COMMENTS

"I was really impressed with how he teaches his students," said one reviewer. "He has figured out a way to get people who admittedly do not read books or take notes to do it." His students (18- to 25-year-old males who, Hickman says, never read books for pleasure) are encouraged to learn to take notes because they are allowed to use notes in tests. That allows him to write more complex tests—not just Scantron multiple-choice exams. His creativity comes through in his teaching methods—using a garden hose in class to demonstrate electrical flow, for example. One classroom management example was memorable. He tells his students in the first class session: "Take out your cell phones." Instead of telling them to turn them off, he instructs them to store his phone number. One student reviewer noted that he's never experienced an instructor who did that.

Hickman's portfolio describes how he has evolved as a teacher, and how he thinks about his own learning and about how his students learn. Hickman shows a constant feedback process—for himself and for his students. He uses peer consultation and student-group-instructional-feedback techniques to get his colleagues to talk with his students about how he can improve his teaching and their learning. "His professional growth and ongoing learning is amazing; in this regard, his portfolio is a standout over any that I read," said a reviewer.

Service learning projects are not yet typical in technical programs, and Hickman's efforts are impressive. He's very engaged in the college—for example, taking an active role in accreditation review. He is also active in his union, serving as vice chair. In addition, he and a colleague have been doing voluntary summer workshops for instructors from a former GM site. Modeling service, he encourages students to be service-oriented, and that's appropriate in a field like his.

In terms of assessment, Hickman's rubrics are simple but effective. He improved on and adapted a national industry rubric to remove subjectivity and to improve its validity. He uses this revised rubric in his program. He uses the theoretical language of assessment in discussing, for example, formative and summative assessment, and shows that he really knows the difference in practice. As a result of his ongoing improvement efforts, his students' test results on standardized, nationally benchmarked tests are consistently higher than the national average.