

First diversity awards announced by Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system awards recognized six programs recently for exceptional accomplishment in diversity leadership, programming and services. This is the first time these awards have been presented.

“The awards reflect the system’s pride in the diversity work that creates welcoming environments for all students, staff and faculty on our campuses and prepares students for their professional, scholarly and civic lives,” said Whitney Harris, the system’s executive director of diversity and multiculturalism.

The winners were selected from nominations made by presidents and other college and university leadership for work in 2008. The awards will be presented May 28 on the Eden Prairie campus of Hennepin Technical College. The categories and winners follow:

Best Practices in Diversity recognizes programs and practices that improve access and retention of diverse campus community members. The winners are Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical, Winona State University and Southeast Technical College Partnership and Century College for its Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity Program.

Innovative Practices in Diversity recognizes practices that foster inclusivity and are 2 or more years old. The winners are Riverland Community College for its Be Your Best College Prep Academy and Minnesota State University, Mankato for its Pre-Doctoral Fellowship program.

Outstanding Student Organization Diversity recognizes student-led groups, staff, faculty or administrators’ initiatives that foster diversity and inclusion within the campus and larger community. The winners are Itasca Community College, a part of the Northeast Higher Education District, for its O-Gitch-I-Dah celebration during American Indian Heritage Month and Minnesota State University, Mankato for its Hmong Student Association. Riverland Community College Gay and Straight Alliance/Stage Left received an honorable mention.

Institutional Excellence Diversity recognizes institutions that have made significant contributions in intentional learning and collaborations that promote inclusiveness, access and opportunities within the community, the institution and academic programs. The winner is Minnesota State University, Mankato for its Division of Institutional Diversity.

The awards also acknowledge work that strengthens the system’s commitment to creating campuses that support access and success in higher education for all Minnesotans, especially those from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher

education, such as students of color, low-income students or students who are the first in their families to attend college.