



Minnesota State Mankato sweeps MnSCU program excellence awards

Michael Miller wins Outstanding Administrator award

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Minnesota State University, Mankato swept this year's awards for academic and student affairs program excellence from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities – the first time that any university has won all four awards in one year.

It is the sixth consecutive year in which Minnesota State Mankato won one or more of the awards. The university was honored for curriculum, student programming and partnership excellence. In addition, Michael Miller, interim vice president for University Advancement, received the outstanding administrator award.

The awards were presented at the MnSCU trustees' "Celebrating Excellence" banquet April 16. Winners were selected by a panel of administrators from various campuses. Minnesota State Mankato's 2008 awards:

- The College of Science, Engineering & Technology received the Curriculum Award for its "Intro to Chemistry Course Redesign" initiative.
- The Division of Student Affairs earned the Innovative Student Programming Award for its "Rights and Responsibilities Partnership."
- The College of Education received the Partnership Award for its "Mankato Mentoring Program."
- Miller was honored as Outstanding Academic or Student Affairs Administrator, for demonstrating outstanding leadership and significant contributions to academic and student affairs programming in Minnesota.

“These awards recognize the outstanding work by many individuals and various colleges and universities to deliver high-quality programs to our students,” said Chancellor James H. McCormick. “They also demonstrate the many creative ways that our faculty and staff employ to continuously improve our programs and services.”

The “Intro to Chemistry Course Redesign” initiative, supported by a National Science Foundation grant, has transformed the way introductory chemistry is taught at Minnesota State Mankato. Using laptop computers and “guided inquiry” instruction, students learn by using higher levels of critical thinking skills than are needed for rote memorization.

The “Mankato Mentoring Program” partnership with Mankato area public schools – in place for more than 10 years – helps to reduce the shortage of qualified teachers. The program has reduced teacher turnover through classroom observations, informal group dialogues, structured in-service experiences and one-on-one interaction between veteran and novice educators.

The “Rights and Responsibilities” partnership with the City of Mankato gives students information and skills to understand leases and public nuisance ordinances, and helps students select responsible roommates and get along with neighbors. The program explains the disciplinary and legal consequences of violating the law, including hosting loud parties, serving alcohol to minors, driving under the influence and using false identification. The program has improved cooperation and communication among the university, city and neighborhood associations.

Miller, winner of the Outstanding Administrator award, served as dean of the College of Education from 2003 until late last year, when he was appointed interim vice president of University Advancement by President Richard Davenport. He leads the Advancement Division, overseeing offices of development, alumni relations, special events, integrated marketing and the University Foundation, and he serves on the President’s Cabinet.

In addition to being the only university to win all four awards in one year, Minnesota State Mankato is the only Minnesota college or university to receive an excellence award each year since the competition started in 2003, and the only institution to capture two or more awards for five years in a row. This year only one other university – Southwest Minnesota State at Marshall – won an award.

The awards mark the second time in 2008 that Minnesota State Mankato has been honored by the MnSCU system for outstanding leadership and programming. Earlier this year the university received MnSCU awards for financial and facilities management.

Minnesota State Mankato is part of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, which employs nearly 11,000 full- and part-time faculty and comprises 32 state universities and community and technical colleges. The system serves 242,000 students per year in credit-based courses and an additional 140,000 students in non-credit courses.