



For Immediate Release
October 25, 2006

Contact: Yer L. Vang, Executive Assistant
Office of State Employment Relations
(608) 266-9820, Email: Yer.Vang@wisconsin.gov

State Agencies & UW Campus Recognized for Diversity Achievements

MADISON - The State Council on Affirmative Action and the Office of State Employment Relations recognized three state agencies and a University of Wisconsin System campus today for their innovative efforts to promote workplace diversity in a ceremony at the State Capitol.

“I commend the recipients of this year’s awards for their resourcefulness and innovation in advancing diversity in the state’s institutions and workforces. We hope other agencies and campuses will be inspired by the achievements of their peers and expand their own efforts to foster diversity,” said OSER Director Karen Timberlake.

The ceremony’s keynote speaker, Department of Revenue Secretary Michael L. Morgan, emphasized that “today’s award recipients demonstrate the state’s commitment to expanding diversity in our workforce in order to better serve the people of Wisconsin. Our diverse workforce is a key element to maintaining a strong foundation for state government.”

Following are the state agencies and university campus that received recognition today and descriptions of their award-winning programs:

Department of Workforce Development. The Council selected the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to receive the top diversity honor for its extensive outreach efforts to the Spanish speaking population, retention of at-risk employees, and impressive upward mobility programs. The Limited English Proficient Program ensures that employees, customers and applicants, who speak or read limited English, are provided access to all DWD programs and services. These include having bilingual employees, interpreters, translators (e.g., translations of complaints into Spanish,) and a web portal in Spanish. DWD also developed initiatives which have increased the ability to retain limited term, project, and current permanent employees who have been designated as at-risk. The initiatives for the at-risk employees include: providing training opportunities for employees who have been identified as having a disability; offering

--more--

Public Manager Program classes onsite to assist employees with the development of supervisory and leadership skills; and utilizing flex-schedules and work-at-home schedules. During FY 05-06, fourteen DWD employees were promoted to a higher level position of which eleven were women, and three were minority women.

Office of Justice Assistance. The Council selected the Office of Justice Assistance (OJA) for their top diversity honor for its special commitment to equal opportunity and affirmative action practices in the recruitment and hiring of racial/ethnic minorities. Since 2004, OJA has increased its minority employment. In addition, women comprised 37.5% of all supervisors, with 80% of women serving as team leads. OJA management demonstrates its commitment to improving diversity by setting written performance goals for OJA supervisors and involving them in AA activities. OJA has made the hiring and retention of racial/ethnic minorities a top priority.

University of Wisconsin – Whitewater. UW Whitewater was selected to receive the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award for its successful McNair Scholars program. The McNair Scholars program assists first generation/low income college students from multicultural backgrounds in their quest for higher education, getting a PhD or becoming a college professor. Since receiving initial funding from the US Department of Education in 1992, UW-Whitewater has distinguished itself by an undergraduate degree completion rate of 99%. UW-Whitewater also has an exceptional enrollment and graduation rate for Master's degrees and PhDs. Over 75% of McNair alums have enrolled in graduate school. Since 1992, 148 students have been served, of which 6 received PhD's, 14 are Ph.D. prospects, 53 are recipients of a Masters, 28 are prospects for a Masters degree, 112 have received bachelor degrees and 25 are bachelor degree prospects. These achievements have done much to change the perceptions of multicultural students and their ability to excel in higher education.

Department of Transportation. The Department of Transportation was selected to receive the Program Achievement Award for its outstanding minority recruitment efforts within the state Division of Motor Vehicles and its innovative partnerships with Native American businesses and community. Nearly 60% of new hires into entry-level Customer Service Representative positions were racial/ethnic minorities, with 48% of hires being bi-lingual. The Community/Minority Outreach Committee played a pivotal role by intensifying recruitment efforts in minority communities and conducting workshops in preparation for the state hiring exam. DOT provided entrepreneurial assistance to Native Americans through its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program and American Indian and Business Capacity Building Project. The National Summer Transportation Institute, conducted in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration, the College of Menominee Nation and the Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College in Hayward, provides career orientation and educational experiences to motivate secondary school students toward professions in the field of transportation.

--more--

About the State Council on Affirmative Action

The Council's overall purpose is to foster measurable progress towards an equitable and diverse workforce in state government. The Council consists of fifteen public members, the majority of whom are members of racial or ethnic minority groups, women and persons with disabilities. They are appointed for three-year terms by the senate president and minority leader, the assembly speaker and assembly minority leader, and the governor.

Current Council members include: James R. Parker (Chair), La Crosse; Sandra Ryan (Vice-Chair), Sun Prairie; Yolanda Santos Adams (Secretary), Kenosha; Quasan Shaw, Green Bay, (Member-At-Large); Lakshmi Bharadwaj, Milwaukee; Dave Dunham, Madison; Janice K. Hughes, Madison; Hugo Henry, Beloit; Blong Moua, Schofield; Roger L. Pulliam, Whitewater; Adelene Greene, Kenosha; Roland Wetley, Milwaukee, Meredith Reitman, Milwaukee, Santiago Rosas, Madison; and Thresessa Childs, Milwaukee.

--END--