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## Two awarded University President's Award for Outstanding Service

*Summary: Jenny Nellis, professor emeritus of studio art and Paula O'Loughlin, professor of political science received this highest service award from the University.*

(May 11, 2012)-Two members of the Morris campus community were awarded the University of Minnesota President's Award for Outstanding Service. Jenny Nellis, professor emeritus of studio art and Paula O'Loughlin, professor of political science received this highest service award from the University. The President's Award recognizes exceptional commitment and service beyond the regular duties of a faculty or staff member.

Honoree **Jenny Nellis** served from 1978 until her retirement in 2011. When she was hired, fewer than 20 percent of the full time faculty members were women. In tenure line positions, women held only 17 of 89 total positions. Nellis played a pivotal role in changing those numbers—the faculty is now about 45 percent female. From 1994-1997, she served on the board of the Commission on Women, which provided a place for professional and clerical staff to come together to support one another and to address women's issues. Nellis also served as Chair of the Division of the Humanities. Elected to the position in 2000, she was the first female division chair in the campus's history, and the first faculty member in a fine arts position to be the Humanities Division Chair.

Nellis was a member of the UMM Minority Experience Committee between 1998 and 2003. During her tenure on the committee, she focused on local businesses and convinced them to carry products for a more diverse range of people. Her effort helped Morris become a more hospitable community and helped the businesses reach new customers.

Her work to enhance the diversity of Morris extended to faculty as well. Through the Faculty Enrichment Program, Nellis mentored four assistant professors, including the first female tenure line faculty member in English—now a full professor—and a Native American faculty member in studio arts who is now an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Nellis's community building interests also guided her influential participation in the Women's Art Registry of Minnesota (WARM), which was the first registry and gallery devoted exclusively to support women's art.

“The service that Jenny Nellis has provided to the University of Minnesota during the 33 years she worked at UMM has been truly outstanding. Whether modeling new collaborative leadership or mentoring students and faculty with sensitivity and individual attention to their personalities, career goals, and talents, or combining strength and elegance in her sculptures, Jenny Nellis has made this university a more inclusive and more creative institution of learning, and her service continues to ripple into and help shape a wide array of communities,” said the nominating committee.

A recipient of the Horace T. Morse-University of Minnesota Alumni Association Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, Nellis earned her bachelor of arts in ceramics from the University of Nebraska and her Master of Arts and master of fine arts in ceramics and sculpture from the University of Iowa.

Honoree **Paula O'Loughlin** was hired to the University of Minnesota, Morris in 1996, and since then has been committed to serving the Morris campus and the University of Minnesota system.

O'Loughlin's impact on the Morris campus is manifold. While an assistant to the Dean, she focused on student retention. She recreated and chaired the retention group that established a National Student Exchange Program, collaborated with Student Affairs to provide more entertainment opportunities, and convinced faculty to create 17 interdisciplinary majors to appeal to a more diverse student population. The retention group also devised the Early Alert System, which identifies students experiencing academic difficulty and implements interventions before issues develop further. Additionally, in collaboration with Academic Advising director Brenda Boever, she developed the Deciding Project, which pairs students unsure of a career path or major with advisors who are specifically trained to work with them.

O'Loughlin has also taken an advising role for multiple student organizations, including College Republicans, Democracy Matters, the Morris Campus Student Association (MCSA), the Political Science/International Relations Club, and Equality. Through her advising position to these groups she taught the students how to lead. As Bryan Herrmann recalls, "She was the adviser for [MCSA] and I witnessed first-hand her tireless efforts to help students learn and grow as leaders. Paula's ability to be fair, thoughtful, and always willing to teach shined through—even in situations where varied opinions in the organization caused growing pains for the student group."

The founding director of the Academic Center for Enrichment, O'Loughlin created a one-stop location to support students' access to all manner of academic enrichment, from Undergraduate Research Opportunity Programs to national scholarships. Previous to 2007, when the ACE opened, there was no central office responsible for making the opportunities available to all students. Students had to depend on connections with their professors and their own initiative.

Over the past several years, O'Loughlin's work has taken a more University-wide perspective. She served as the Vice-Chair and Chair of the all-University Senate Judicial Committee, and as such has had direct input into the latest revision of the Promotion and Tenure procedures.

As a recipient of the Morse-Alumni Award, she became a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers (ADT). Within a year she became a member of the ADT Steering Committee and its chair within two years. Six years ago, O'Loughlin began developing a University of Minnesota proposal for a teaching fellows program that would benefit both Morris undergraduates and Twin Cities graduate students. She launched the University of Minnesota specific ABD (All But Dissertation) teaching fellows program. The fellowship offers mentoring by members of the ADT as support for the participants and targets those who want to teach at a liberal arts institution.

"Our students, our campus, and the University of Minnesota are well served by Dr. O'Loughlin's unique and unusual commitment to UMM. The impact and legacy of this inspiring and passionate champion for UMM will endure," says Susan Schmidgall, Development Officer, Office of Fund Development.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at [morris.umn.edu](http://morris.umn.edu) or call 888-866-3382.