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Michelle Page receives all-University Horace T. Morse Award

Summary: An associate professor of education, Page has been recognized for excelling in teaching, research, creative activities, advising, academic program development, and educational leadership.

(April 26, 2011)-Michelle Page, associate professor of education, is a 2011 recipient of the all-University Horace T. Morse—University of Minnesota Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education award. The award honors faculty who excel in teaching, research, creative activities, advising, academic program development, and educational leadership.

“Dr. Page’s award nomination highlights her unwavering dedication to campus governance and her outstanding service to the institution and her colleagues the thoughtful, sensitive, and oftentimes transformative approach she takes with her students in wrestling with issues of social justice in our educational systems her years of research on multicultural education, and its impact on teaching practices and her holistic approach to student advising and mentoring that lasts long after students graduate,” says Cheryl Contant, vice chancellor for academic affairs and dean. “She is an excellent example of the gifted, devoted, thoughtful, and challenging educators we have here at Morris.”

With gratitude, Page states, “It is very meaningful to me that others recognize that I am ‘doing a good job’, and it is also very humbling. None of us does our work in isolation. There are other people involved in getting us there—students, colleagues, and mentors. I hope they see this award as an affirmation of their work, too, and not just mine.”

Equipping excellent teachers, critical thinkers, informed citizens

Page, who earned a bachelor of arts in English and French with secondary education at Concordia College, began her teaching career in the Omaha, Nebraska area, teaching French in an urban K–12 school and English in a nontraditional evening high school. She was drawn to Omaha because the city was racially and culturally diverse, but soon she began noticing inequities. Very few students of color were studying French. That observation began a lifelong passion for multicultural education.

Says Page, “I do not seek merely to ‘embrace diversity’ or ‘teach tolerance’ alone. Rather, I seek to play a role in creating a more equitable and just society.” A teacher of teachers, Page equips students with the tools to not only be excellent teachers but also to be informed citizens and critical thinkers. She holds a master of science and doctorate in curriculum and instruction with a literacy and multicultural education emphasis from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

As a Horace T. Morse Award recipient, Page will receive additional funding for professional development and research. She plans to attend conferences and trainings that will allow her to bring back new ideas and innovations to the Morris campus, especially in the areas of development support and leadership. She’ll also continue researching culture’s impact on communication and relationships between K–12 student teachers and supervisors, particularly in multicultural communities. In the area of literacy, she will explore the portrayal of sexual orientation in literature and pedagogy at the middle and high school levels.

Multicultural education and faculty development are central to Page's educational philosophy, but teaching secondary education students, she says, is her greatest privilege and greatest joy.

Student Megan Haman's story illustrates Page's relationships with students. The Milaca native shares that meeting Page during the fall of her first year at Morris has impacted her entire academic career. "As a freshman, coming into a new, unexplored, stressful, and thus sometimes scary atmosphere, Michelle came into my life as my freshman seminar professor. Throughout the course, she became that 'shining beacon' so to speak, in my seemingly 'stormy' life. She did well to sacrifice her time to help me through some rough patches, and when I needed an adviser in the education department, agreed to that as well. She's always been around to help me through anything, academic or personal, and has never ceased being supportive despite her busy schedule. She is most deserving of this award, and I am beyond pleased that she received it."

Horace T. Morse Award recognition events

Page formally received the Horace T. Morse Award at the all-University Distinguished Teaching Awards Ceremony and Reception on the Twin Cities campus on April 25, 2011. She will be honored at the Morris Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner on Thursday, April 28, 2011. Recipients are inducted into the University of Minnesota Academy of Distinguished Teachers and receive the title "Distinguished University Teaching Professor." Academy members provide important leadership to the University community as mentors, advisers, and spokespersons for the University's teaching mission. Page joins 17 fellow current Morris professors who have received the award.

The 2010 recipient of the University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association Teaching Award, Page has served as facilitator, planner, and presenter at the Multicultural Student Leadership Retreat, as consultant for the Respectful U freshman orientation session, and as a member on several University committees.

Photo credit: Patrick O'Leary, University Relations, Twin Cities

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