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**Page, associate professor of education, receives UMMAA Teaching Award**

*Summary: The award honors faculty for outstanding contributions to undergraduate education at Morris.*

(April 29, 2010)-Michelle Page, associate professor of education and coordinator of secondary education, is the 2010 recipient of the University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association Teaching Award. The award honors faculty for outstanding contributions to undergraduate education at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

“Michelle has been a dedicated and tireless teacher and advocate for students since she arrived on campus in 2000,” states Cheryl Contant, vice chancellor for academic affairs and dean. Students and colleagues acknowledge her as a challenging, supportive, and enlightening teacher. The campus community congratulates Dr. Page on her outstanding teaching, advising, and mentoring of our students.”

With gratitude, Page states, “It is very humbling and gratifying to be chosen for this award from such an excellent pool of nominees and such a great group of people. It is especially meaningful to receive a teaching award here at Morris, where we are so teaching oriented.”

Discovering teaching

As an undergraduate student, Page was drawn to English. With the encouragement of her language professor, she also completed a French major. While she found her first education classes “sort of interesting,” an out-of-the-classroom experience resulted in an epiphany. “It really came together at the Concordia Language Villages where I first served as an instructor and later as village dean. Bonding with kids of various ages and experiencing the joy of those relationships helped me realize ‘this is what I am going to do.’”

Page 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. “I enjoyed Omaha because it was racially and culturally diverse, which I find good, and interesting, and fun,” remembers Page. “But, under the surface, I was noticing that there were not a lot of students of color studying French.”

Questions began forming about inequities and perspectives. “Once I began learning about these issues, I became quite outraged,” shares Page. “I had not been challenged to look at the world differently. I was clueless in my own teaching and in my own school.”

Page channeled those emotions into pursuing an advanced degree at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she studied with Carl Grant, professor of education and a leader in multicultural education. “I was forced to confront the inequities and to understand the world in a different way. It was really uncomfortable for me, but I came alive with that experience.”

It was Grant who encouraged her to pursue a doctorate. “Carl was a powerful influence,” she says, “and maybe I can do that for my students, too.”

### Teaching and living transformative education

As a teacher of teachers, Page embraces “transformative” education, not only providing information on principles and methods, but also inspiring and equipping students to be informed citizens and critical thinkers. Her nominators for the award state, “Michelle has the ability to frame a career as an educator as an act of social advocacy and responsibility in a changing world.”

Page notes that the students who come to the secondary education program are well rounded and open minded, and her greatest joy is to be a part of this diverse community of learners “all in it together.”

“It is a wonderful privilege to be a part of that process,” states Page, “that gratifying ‘ah ha’ moment when the students become engaged and passionate, and I as their teacher become energized by their passion.”

In her letter of support for Page’s award, Rae Fredrich ’09, a New Ulm High School mathematics teacher, says that to have a class with Dr. Page is to know Dr. Page.

“She pours her spirit into the course,” says Fredrich. “She draws on a vast array of experiences—hers and our own—and makes the material that much more personal and meaningful. This is an essential portion of the education program’s curriculum, and a well-taught practice. Every teacher should strive to make the subject matter meaningful and applicable to the lives of their students, and Dr. Page lives and breathes that example in every encounter.”

### Recognition events

Page was honored at the Morris Faculty and Staff Recognition Dinner on Thursday, April 29, 2010, and will give the address, “Make it Right,” at the Honors and Awards Ceremony on Friday, May 14, 2010.

After receiving a bachelor of arts in English and French with secondary education licensure at Concordia College, Moorhead, Page earned a master of science and doctorate in curriculum and instruction with a literacy and multicultural education emphasis at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. At Morris, she has served as facilitator, planner, and presenter at the Multicultural Student Leadership Retreat, has consulted regarding the Respectful U freshman orientation session, and serves on several University committees.

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