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Morris campus strategic partner in the launch of new Minnesota GreenCorps program

Summary: The University of Minnesota, Morris has partnered with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and ServeMinnesota to launch a new program—Minnesota GreenCorps. The new program is an environmentally focused AmeriCorps program administered by MPCA that aims to protect and preserve Minnesota's environment while developing the next generation of environmental professionals.

(November 9, 2009)-The University of Minnesota, Morris has partnered with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and ServeMinnesota to launch a new program—Minnesota GreenCorps. The new program is an environmentally focused AmeriCorps program administered by MPCA that aims to protect and preserve Minnesota's environment while developing the next generation of environmental professionals.

The Morris campus is a strategic partner in developing the statewide program and plays a unique role in delivering the program to West Central Minnesota. Unlike other organizations hosting full-time GreenCorps members, Morris campus students—all undergraduates—will fulfill half-time service commitments, collaborating with local organizations like Stevens Forward! and the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center.

GreenCorps was co-conceived by the University of Minnesota, Morris and the MPCA who sent separate applications to ServeMinnesota for similar programs. ServeMinnesota brought the institutions together to create this groundbreaking program. The resulting program's goals are to help communities conserve energy reduce waste in its many forms and, through proper recycling and conservation education, reduce the amount of toxic chemicals thrown away.

To carry out these goals in the Morris area, the Morris campus appointed four college students to serve as half-time AmeriCorps members with local units of government and schools. The positions include a local government conservation specialist, school waste prevention specialist, and two living green outreach specialists. The positions were available this fall to all returning juniors and seniors. Chris Droske '11, Stevens Point, Wis. Katie Laughlin '10, Faribault, Minn. Ellie McCann '10, St. Joseph, Minn. and Sydney Sweep '11, Bismarck, N.D., will serve as GreenCorps members through the campus's Center for Small Towns.

The University of Minnesota, Morris GreenCorps students will work 10 hours per week during the school year and 40 hours per week during the summer in order to fulfill their 900-hour service term from September 2009 through August 2010. Students receive a living allowance and, at the end of their service year, an educational stipend.

Morris campus Sustainability Coordinator Troy Goodnough, who oversees the students' efforts, is pleased with the GreenCorps program. Goodnough says, "I'm extremely excited about launching this new program, and I look forward to developing great collaborations with community members."

For more information about the activities of the GreenCorps program in the west central region contact Troy Goodnough, University of Minnesota, Morris GreenCorps program coordinator at 320-589-6451 or good0044@morris.umn.edu.

The University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program that serves as a point-of-entry to the resources of the University of Minnesota. Small towns, local units of government, K-12 schools, nonprofit organizations, and other University units are able to utilize the Center's resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. Their mission is to focus the University's attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota's small towns with locally identified issues by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

Minnesota GreenCorps is funded through a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service with additional support from ServeMinnesota. Partnering in this program is University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns.

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 or call 888-866-3382.