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**Chancellor, students attend Clinton Global Initiative U**

*Summary: Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson, along with four Morris campus students—Kate Grabosky, Joseph Hartmann, Qinglu (Chris) Shao and Rachel Olm—have been invited by President Clinton to participate in the Clinton Global Initiative University February 13-15.*

(February 5, 2009)-University of Minnesota, Morris Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson, along with four Morris campus students—Kate Grabosky, Joseph Hartmann, Qinglu (Chris) Shao and Rachel Olm—have been invited by President Bill Clinton to participate in the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) February 13-15. The event will be held at the University of Texas at Austin. Johnson will serve as a panelist, along with the Mayor of Freiberg (Germany) a student from Macalester College and the founder of the Clean Energy Revolving Fund, during a session on “The University as Laboratory: Towards Carbon Neutral Communities.” The session is scheduled to begin at 2:20 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14.

Although Johnson is honored to have received the letter—signed by Bill Clinton himself—she shared other reasons for accepting the invitation.

“When I received Clinton’s invitation, I knew [UMM] had students who had applied and been accepted to attend, and I wanted to support those students who are going,” said Johnson.

“This event aroused my views towards the global issues,” said Shao, who is a senior sociology major attending Morris as an exchange student from China. “Suddenly I found I can do something and make some changes. Since I’m an exchange student here, the event seems more meaningful for me because I can bring this experience and idea back to China and make more students there involved in global issues.”

Grabosky agrees.

“This event is a think-tank for college students,” said Grabosky, a senior from New Prague. “Attending this conference will help me learn about many important global issues and share ideas. This [conference will enhance] my UMM experience because I am constantly given opportunities to learn and spread my ideas. Our campus is very eco-friendly and that adds to my passion to attend this conference and [then] share sustainable living with children. They are who will be making a difference...”

Johnson said that a phrase often used by renewable energy coordinator, Mike Reese, of the West Central Research and Outreach Center—“We can make a difference...now”—says that much is already being done at Morris with existing technology, but that the work needs additional funding and appropriate policies in place.

“We’re doing work here that other institutions aren’t doing. We have an obligation to share our work and our vision with others,” said Johnson.

College students, as well as administrators from institutions of higher learning nationwide, will convene “to address the

issues that they care most about,” stated Clinton’s letter. The student-focused CGI U will include opening remarks by Clinton, presentations and panels by such notables as actress and activist Natalie Portman, actress and Ambassador Against Hunger, UN World Food Programme Drew Barrymore and presidents of colleges and businesses, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among others. On Sunday, CGI U attendees will partner with University of Texas students to take part in a wide range of community service activities at the Rosewood Park and Community Center in East Austin.

During the panel on carbon neutral communities, students will be organized into groups and will be given a problem for which they need to provide a solution. The panelists will then engage the students in a conversational dialogue.

“Students must come [to the CGI U] prepared to learn, and they must submit an action plan or they will not be invited back next year,” stated Johnson.

“Our commitment to action is to use our campus resources to educate and involve the middle school students of Morris about the benefits of eco-friendly living,” shared Grabosky. “We would be teaching sustainable environmental practices, what it means to be carbon neutral and the potential for positive long-term environmental mitigation by simply changing everyday living behaviors. By working with [Morris’] middle school students, we will be promoting long-term environmental stewardship for the region. We would be volunteering our time to the community and giving back to local middle schools in Morris.”

Johnson also views attending national events such as the CGI U as having the potential for increased visibility for the Morris campus and the region in terms of grant opportunities, federal government funding and student recruitment. “Although we are a small institution, we have the potential to build a reputation,” said Johnson. “Our name is already ‘out there’ in the national arena. They’re hearing our story and find that it’s compelling.”

An interview with Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson can be heard at [Live at Five on Demand](#).

Photo: Kate Grabosky, Joseph Hartmann, Qinglu (Chris) Shao and Rachel Olm

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.