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Contact:
Melissa Vangsness, Director of Communications
Phone: [320-589-6414](tel:320-589-6414), melissav@morris.umn.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Three Awarded Compact Awards

Summary: Three leaders from the University of Minnesota, Morris have been recognized for their contributions to civic life.

MORRIS, Minnesota (April 13, 2016)— Kyle Klausing, Tammy Berberi, and Muriel Krusemark received Minnesota Campus Compact Presidents’ awards. The three were honored at the annual Summit and Awards Ceremony April 7 at Macalester College in St. Paul and at a Community Engagement Celebration May 5 in Morris.

The Presidents’ awards recognize civic leadership, innovative approaches to solving public issues, campus-community partnerships, and integration of civic engagement into the college experience. Recipients from 26 Minnesota colleges earned Presidents’ awards this year.

Morris student Kyle Klausing, a senior from St. Louis Park, received the Presidents’ Student Leadership Award. Klausing, a history, Spanish, and Latin American area studies major, has taught in the Community ESL program for four years, starting as a volunteer assistant teacher during his freshman year, and advancing to lead teacher. The Community ESL program offers English language courses for Morris’s large Latino immigrant community. As a member of Sigma Delta Pi, the Spanish Language Honors Society, Klausing also helped organize bilingual reading events at the Morris Public Library.

Through his work with the campus Office of Sustainability, Klausing helped bring local leaders and policymakers together to plan for extreme weather events caused by climate change. New weather patterns, such as more frequent and intense storms, raise public issues such as flooding, water quality, and insurance coverage, he says. “It was really cool to see people come together and start to prepare for climate changes.”

Klausing received the Ernest Kemble Scholarship and a Morris Academic Partnership grant to help develop a new academic course on modern British history. He also studied abroad, serving as a State Department intern at the U.S. Embassy in Quito, Ecuador, where he worked in the economic sector. Klausing says, “It was an eye-opening experience for me to see that side of diplomacy, where language, culture, politics and economics come together.” He plans to pursue a career in international affairs.

Tammy Berberi, associate professor of French, received the Presidents’ Civic Engagement Steward Award, which recognizes a faculty or staff member who has advanced the college’s civic mission. Berberi, who has taught at Morris since 2002, is co-creator of TERCERO, a volunteer interpreter and translator program serving Spanish-speaking families in Morris. The program, launched in 2014 as part of the Morris Intercultural Education Initiative,

prepares bilingual volunteers to assist in the Morris Area Public Schools. Volunteers translate written materials for parents and interpret for parent-teacher conferences. Volunteers perform other language services too, including bilingual story hour at the public library. Six volunteers have completed the intensive, 12-hour training. TERCERO has attracted interest from other Minnesota communities with immigrant populations, too. “It’s a terrific way to bring people together,” Berberi says, and helps newcomers “feel they have a place in our schools and in our community.”

Muriel Krusemark, recently retired director of the Hoffman Economic Development Authority, received the Presidents’ Community Partner Award, which honors a community member who has helped develop lasting partnerships with the college, enriching both educational and community outcomes.

Krusemark served as economic developer in Hoffman — population 682 — from 2007 to December, 2015. Before that, she was a small business owner. Krusemark led a revitalization of Hoffman’s main street, transforming four vacant buildings into a clinic and a retail mall. Today, Prairie Ridge Hospital and Health Care operates a satellite clinic in Hoffman, so residents don’t have to travel to see the doctor. The clinic also provides space for a physical therapist, chiropractor and reflexologist. The retail mall houses 35 small businesses plus the city library. Krusemark also helped secure a bike path to nearby Elk Lake and led planning for a 20-unit assisted living and memory care facility, which is scheduled to break ground later this year.

Krusemark served on the UMM Center for Small Towns advisory council from 2011 to 2015. She also mentored more than a dozen Center for Small Towns interns, helping students develop a passion for small towns. “We had excellent students. I tried to give each one a project they could call their own,” she says, “substantial projects,” such as a community garden, a health care survey, a new farmers market, baseball field improvements and bike path development. “I still keep up with quite a few of my interns.”

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