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6-8-2022

Three Receive Campus Compact Awards

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MORRIS

Three receive Campus Compact Awards



Front row from left: James Wojtaszek, Molly Falnes, Argie Manolis, Peggy Kill; back row: Windy Roberts, Brenda Boever, Danny Kenyon, Sarah Eckel, Stacey Aronson and Cathy Solvie.

Molly Falnes, James Wojtaszek, and Peggy Kill have received Iowa & Minnesota Campus Compact Presidents' awards. The Presidents' awards recognize civic leadership, innovative approaches to solving public issues, campus community partnerships, and integration of civic engagement into the college experience. The three were honored at a virtual Community Engagement Celebration on May 4.

UMN Morris student Molly Falnes, a senior from Brooklyn Center, received the Presidents' Student Leadership Award. This award recognizes an individual student or a student organization that models a deep commitment to civic responsibility and leadership, evidenced by initiative, innovative and collaborative approaches to addressing public issues, effective community building, and integration of civic engagement into the college experience. Molly's leadership and optimism have drawn students and community members into volunteer opportunities ranging from the local food shelf to the campus Saddle Club and French Club. But

it's her collaborative and inclusive style that has resulted in a deeper engagement between the campus and community. Falnes attended Fall Day of Service during her first year at UMN Morris, and she did so well at engaging with elders and her peers during her service project that she was invited to apply for a position as a co-curricular leader with the Office of Community Engagement—and the rest is history! Among Molly's many contributions both as a part of her job and as a volunteer, she was a team leader for the annual "Trick or Can" Halloween food drive; was among the earliest to deliver programming for the after-school elementary program, *Entre Nous Teaches You*; and was one of the most active members of the campus Saddle Club, helping to plan ways to connect the club to local community members. Falnes has also been inducted into Pi Delta Phi, the French National Honor Society.

James Wojtaszek, associate professor of Spanish, received the President's Civic Engagement Leadership Award, which recognizes a member of the faculty, administration, or staff that has significantly advanced their campus' distinctive civic mission by forming strong partnerships, supporting others' civic and community engagement, and working to institutionalize a culture and practice of engagement. Wojtaszek began incorporating community-engaged learning into his 3000-level Spanish course in the Spring of 2019 and continues to provide his students with opportunities to create Spanish-language resources for use by Morris Public Library patrons. The program provides a special collection of books to the library, which have been enriched by material added by UMN Morris students. The students each read and wrote reviews of the books along with discussion questions, all in Spanish, as a way to help the community members find the book more enticing. Wojtaszek updated the project in response to the COVID pandemic by having his students film themselves reading a selection of Spanish language books. The library uploaded those videos to their YouTube channel, benefitting both non-English and bilingual library patrons.

Peggy Kill, retired Salvation Army field representative, 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. Peggy has dedicated her life to serving the Stevens County community. Over the course of 45 years she has taken the holiday toy distribution from a small program that initially handed out used toys to young children to a distribution for hundreds with new toys, hat sets, blankets, games. Her enthusiasm has inspired UMN Morris to create "Presents from Pounce," a supporting program that helps garner additional donations. She has ensured that, as our community changed, these programs remained accessible to all people in the county. She's partnered with Studio Art and Spanish faculty to improve Salvation Army programs. Peggy has been an excellent mentor and supporter for many UMN Morris students who are inspired by her dedication and positive attitude.

Molly Falnes is one of three to receive the Iowa & Minnesota Campus Compact Presidents' awards