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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
MORRIS

Koos, Peters, Macias recognized with Community Engagement Awards

(April 29, 2024) The University of Minnesota Morris Center for Community Partnerships has announced the 2024 Community Engagement award winners. The awards recognize Morris students, faculty, and staff, as well as community partners, for engaging in meaningful campus-community partnerships.



The Student Leadership 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. This year's recipient is Allison Koos '24, Bemidji. Koos contributed research to food systems assessments to determine the best next steps in supporting people in need. They took the initiative to ensure that the campus and community food shelves had a clear connection by doing a weekly community food shelf shift for

three years and stocking the campus food shelf. They coordinated a food rescue program that provided leftover food from campus dining to people in need. They have mentored peers to ensure that their work will continue after they graduate.

Associate professor of psychology Heather Peters received the Faculty/Staff Community Engagement Award. This award recognizes a member of the faculty, administration, or staff or for a group 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. Peters facilitated Otter Tail County's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion workgroup and supported Horizon Public Health's efforts to improve health equity in its five-county service area. Her long-time partnership with Dakota Wicoh'an, a Native nonprofit organization dedicated to revitalizing Dakota language and



life ways, documented the impacts of the group's landmark work and supported new funding to promote health and well-being in Dakota communities. This research partnership is centered on the Dakota concept of wowa-chin'-ye — being reliable, accountable, and trustworthy – all qualities Heather embodies daily in her work.



Autumn Macias was honored with the Community Partner Award, which recognizes a community-based partner or organization that has enhanced the quality of life in the community in meaningful and measurable ways and has engaged in the development of sustained, reciprocal partnerships with the college or university, thus enriching educational as well as community outcomes. Macias has been instrumental in serving as a core partner for the Rural Intercultural Education Initiative. She serves on the advisory council for the initiative, providing insightful feedback about the challenges the Latino community is facing and ideas for ways to address these; she routinely connects students and community members to address

and meet needs and encourage learning. Through her work with the local schools, she has advocated for the Latino parents' needs, ensuring that student teacher conferences were extended to allow for interpretation, that interpreters were trained through the UMN Morris TERCERO program and were engaging ethically and skillfully, and that interpreters were paid a stipend for their work.

These individuals were honored as part of awards celebrations at both Macalester College in St. Paul and on the UMN Morris campus.