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Obeta, Lopez receive César Chávez Award

Summary: Two members of the University of Minnesota, Morris community are recipients of the 2007 César Chávez Award. Andy Lopez, professor of computer science, and junior Miracle Obeta were nominated by the United Latinos at UMM for their outstanding leadership.

(May 4, 2007)-Two members of the University of Minnesota, Morris community are recipients of the 2007 César Chávez Award. Andy Lopez, professor of computer science, and junior Miracle Obeta, St. Paul, were nominated by the United Latinos at UMM for their outstanding leadership.

The César E. Chávez Award is presented each year to a UMM student and a UMM faculty or staff member. Award recipients are recognized for their contribution to the Latino community, communities of color, and for support of workers rights while personifying the values embodied by the late legendary labor and civil rights leader, César E. Chávez. These values include service to others, sacrifice, a preference to help the most needy, determination, non-violence, tolerance, respect for life, celebrating community, knowledge, and innovation.

Lopez, who has been at UMM for 37 years, said, “I think the current leaders of United Latinos are outstanding people. They are very committed and responsible.” Lopez, as the adviser to the United Latinos, has helped with their organization for 15 years. He has enjoyed working with them and is honored to win this prestigious award, which recognizes the work Lopez has been committed to for the past 37 years. “I identify very strongly with César Chavez and the things he was trying to do,” Lopez said, “I was very pleased when we had his son stop by a couple years ago to visit UMM.” Lopez recognizes the hard work students put into their studies and teaches with the mentality that it is not for him to just pass judgment on students, but rather to help them when they need him.

Obeta was nominated by The United Latinos based on his active leadership roles. He said, “The César Chávez award is essential to me and I greatly appreciate it because of the great importance of Chávez and his struggle to end those things which plague our world today.” Obeta, former president of the Morris Student Campus Association (2006-2007), has been president of IMANI (2005), a member of the Black Student Union, chair of the MCSA Executive Council, a Campus Ambassador, and an Activities Fee Review Committee member (2006).

“Chávez, and those like him, give people, including myself, someone to look up to,” said Obeta.

The UMM campus has also named a street in honor of Chávez, who was instrumental in the development of the National Farm Workers Association.

Photo by David Nieves, '10, El Paso, Texas: Andy Lopez and Miracle Obeta
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