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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **[Heather J. Peters Earns Teaching Award Honors](#)**

*Summary: Peters received both the Horace T. Morse Award and the 2016 Alumni Association Teaching Award.*

MORRIS, Minnesota (March 29, 2016)— Heather J. Peters, associate professor of psychology, has received the [Horace T. Morse - University of Minnesota Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education](#) and the [2016 University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association \(UMMAA\) Teaching Award](#). These honors are testaments to Peters’s dedication to and excellence in undergraduate education.

The UMMAA Teaching Award honors faculty members for outstanding contributions to undergraduate education, while the Morse award honors faculty who excel in teaching, research, creative activities, advising, academic program development, and educational leadership. Both call attention to educational philosophies, objectives, and methods. In these regards, Peters stands out for her profound commitment to social justice and to serving students from marginalized identities and communities; this commitment is the driving force behind her teaching, advising, research, and service work.

“Social justice underlies everything I do,” says Peters. “I’m very aware of diversity within my community and how it gets played out around me. I don’t want to live in a community where we tolerate each other; I want to live in a community where we value difference, and that’s something I can do through my work.”

Peters’s interest in community, culture, and justice began at an early age. She pursued these interests as an undergraduate and graduate student, ultimately cultivating areas of expertise in multicultural psychology and community-based research. Prompted by [Morris’s institutional history](#) and beginnings as an American Indian boarding school, during her tenure Peters has collaborated with partners like research and evaluation specialist Teresa Peterson, EdD ’91 and cultural resource center Dakota Wicohan on projects that explore [Dakota language and lifeway revitalization](#) and [culturally based youth suicide intervention](#). All of this work is done with respect to—and for—community strengths and priorities.

“It’s really important in community-based research that you don’t go in and tell people how to solve their problems, but instead say, “I have these skills, so how can I be an ally?,” she says. “It’s not my research agenda; it’s a combination of my skills and the skills of the partners I’m with and what we are going to work on that helps their community.”

Peters’s passion for social justice has earned the admiration of students and colleagues alike. Nominators write that she is “an outstanding classroom instructor...and is a potent force in student academic life.” Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Dean Bart Finzel echoes their sentiments, adding “Heather’s passion for bringing people together and creating a just society are obvious to all of the students lucky enough to intersect her path. This passion is infectious.”

Peters is the twenty-first recipient of the UMMAA Teaching Award and the forty-fourth Morris faculty member to receive the Horace T. Morse Award. She will be honored by the UMMAA during the 2016 Homecoming celebration. As a Morse award winner, she also will be named a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers, which provides leadership to the University community as mentors, advisers, and spokespersons for the University’s teaching mission.

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