Excellence in Curriculum Programming Award

Minnesota State University, Mankato's Department of Automotive and Manufacturing Engineering Technology has been developing asynchronous online Manufacturing Engineering Technology bachelor and master degree programs in order to benefit students and industry. This program serves the Minnesota Center of Manufacturing and Engineering Excellence goal of enhancing manufacturing in Minnesota through innovative and flexible curricular programming. Currently, the department's bachelor degree curriculum offers 80% of its senior level courses through asynchronous online multimedia. It is the intention for that number to grow to 95% as more students and industry realize the benefits from this format. Originally funded through an e-curriculum Minnesota Online grant in collaboration with Minnesota West Community and Technical College, the program has grown from 2001 to the present by doubling the number of degree awards. It is hoped that this innovative structure will attract more women and students of color to an industry with historic imbalance in gender and diversity. The primary technology is D2L, with distance meeting access provided through e-Pop and Breeze for students scattered in the Twin Cities, Texas, Iowa, and even Yemen. Using D2L, the online classes use discussion boards as part of course enhancement and interaction with each other to address a variety of learning styles and cross pollinate industry experiences. MET undergraduates experience 98% employment in their field of study within six months of graduation.

Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical received Honorable Mention for its Practical Nursing and Associate Degree Nursing Curriculum. Faculty have redesigned their competency-based curriculum to: enhance experiential learning, restructure courses/credits to remove unnecessary redundancies and allow for flexible course scheduling, incorporate soft-skill competencies in student evaluation, create a secure, accurate and user-friendly electronic academic data management system, and promote student accountability. Enhancements include a greater use of technology, greater collaboration with other college departments, and reaching out to diverse student populations. One of ways technology was infused in the curriculum is through Tegrity, an academic management system that was deployed in 2005. This innovative new technology reinforced learning by giving students time-saving, flexible ways to learn and study. In addition, Minnesota State College - Southeast Technical, in collaboration with Riverland Community College, South Central College, and Rochester Community and Technical College, integrated simulation and virtual reality scenarios in newly developed competency-based curriculum.

Innovative Partnering and Collaboration Award

Metropolitan State University's Peace Corps Baccalaureate is the only program of its kind in the United States. This program is the result of a partnership between Metropolitan State University and the United States Peace Corps. Graduates of community and technical colleges are able to join the Peace Corps and continue work toward a baccalaureate degree simultaneously. While Peace Corps creates potent opportunities for experiential learning, Metropolitan State University's "First College" provides each student learner the flexibility and academic resources needed to tailor his or her degree plan to the strength of their educational background and the learning goals they anticipate while in service. A variety of Creative Learning Strategies are used, including Prior Learning Assessment, for college level learning during Peace Corps service. Online Learning is accessed through Desire to Learn (D2L), and

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' e-folio is used for Student and Faculty Designed Independent Studies. While most Peace Corps volunteers have access to the internet, correspondence is used in places with no access. This program stemmed from a relationship between the Peace Corps and the American Association of Community Colleges, with an emphasis on the higher level of student diversity in the two-year colleges. The partnership benefits from the innovative and flexible Individualized Degree Program at Metropolitan State University's First College. Students are encouraged to document and present for credit evaluation the learning students achieve through Peace Corps training and application, either during their Peace Corps service or upon their return. The Peace Corps Baccalaureate receives support from Senator Norm Coleman and Congresswoman Betty McCollum.

Innovative Partnering and Collaboration Award

The Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs, and the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities have partnered in supporting the reintegration of veterans. One of the hallmarks of this effort has been to reach out to organizations and agencies that can be partners in serving the needs of returning veterans and their families. Accordingly, the Minnesota National Guard (Department of Military Affairs) has invited participation from Minnesota State Colleges and Universities in a variety of activities focusing on the reintegration of veterans. The Department of Military Affairs has actively provided training and professional development workshops for college and university faculty and staff across the system resulting in employees more able to anticipate and meet the needs of their students who are returning veterans. The Department of Veterans Affairs has worked in partnership with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to develop legislation to support students who are returning veterans including the Minnesota G.I. bill and an innovative program to provide veterans as campus representatives on as many campuses as possible. These employees of Veterans Affairs are stationed on campuses and provide assistance to students who are veterans, faculty and staff, and to other colleges and universities within their regions on issues of veterans reintegration.

Innovative Student Affairs Program Award

Inver Hills Community College's IDEAS+: Integrating Developmental Education and Acculturation Skills is a Students Affairs/Faculty Development model to increase student retention through three interconnected objectives. First, student success strategies are integrated into developmental English and math courses. This project connects student success concepts and infuses them into the classroom through developmental instructors. Time-management, study skills, test-taking skills, and career planning are just a few of the skills that are instilled in the curriculum. Second, individual learner profiles are created and mentoring relationships between instructors and students are developed. Third, students are linked with academic support services that meet their individual learner needs, resulting in increased retention and success. The rationale for IDEAS+ is the realization that current strategies to foster student persistence are not addressing the complex lives and needs of our commuter students. This program reaches students where they are, in the classroom, and delivers relevant college success strategies through developmental instructors. To date, 24 faculty and over 1000 students have participated in IDEAS+.

St. Paul College received Honorable Mention for "Quest for Excellence!": Re-engineering Student Development and Services. Student Development and Services were re-engineered through re-organization based on student needs, increasing accessibility to registration for students through technology, and providing early alerts and intrusive advising for students who are struggling. The philosophical underpinnings to the re-engineering are changes with regard to access, technology, accountability, student demographics, governmental roles, economics and funding patterns, as well as the very nature of learning itself. A Learner Services Task Force was established to address the goal of becoming a more learner-centered organization where college services are available when, where, and how the learner wants them. Enrollment management practices were improved through greater accuracy in data, enhanced student learning so that students can navigate services on their own, increased enrollment and retention of students of color and first generation students, and seamless communication between student and academic affairs.

Outstanding ASA Administrator Award

Dr. John Frey, Dean of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Dr. Frey is retiring this spring after a lifetime of service to Minnesota State, Mankato and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, as Biology faculty, Assistant Dean, and Dean of the College. In terms of dedication, leadership, innovation, and integrity, he has displayed these attributes in his work with students and industry in Minnesota. As a sign of his longevity and commitment, Dr. Frey was the first professor to teach in Trafton Hall, which is allegedly the largest building in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. He has been a fixture at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities retreats and has served on various System committees and activities. Dr. Frey's leadership was displayed in many projects including Minnesota Center for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence (partnered with Alexandra, Anoka, Hennepin, and South Central Technical Colleges), Minnesota State, Mankato's Civil Engineering program, and Minnesota Project Lead the Way (a Minnesota State Colleges and Universities co-initiative). He also was a leader and part author in federal legislation to obtain an appropriation for wind power energy training and research. Dr. Frey has exceptional integrity, a combination of wisdom and strength tempered by many years of thoughtful service and leadership. One example of this is when Dr. Frey, after the automobile death of several MSU students who were participating in an engineering demonstration, organized memorial services and tributes, a memorial shrine, a memorial fund, and a permanent campus memorial. He visited each of the decedents' families, and remains very close to them even now.