

PEER REVIEW OF TEACHING PROJECT WINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

Lincoln, Neb., Feb. 15, 2005 – A 10-year-old program to improve teaching at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has won national recognition.

UNL's Peer Review of Teaching project received a TIAA-CREF Theodore M. Hesburgh Award Certificate of Excellence. The award was announced Feb. 14 in Washington, D.C., at the annual meeting of the American Council on Education. UNL's program was one of only three that were selected by the judges to receive a Certificate of Excellence in the competitive award. The grand-prize winner, Wagner College of Staten Island, N.Y., received \$25,000. The U.S. Military Academy and the University of Wisconsin System also received Certificates of Excellence.

The TIAA-CREF Hesburgh Award recognizes exceptional faculty development programs designed to enhance undergraduate teaching and learning. Named in honor of Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., president emeritus of the University of Notre Dame, the award is given annually to the program judged to have best met the three award criteria: significance of the program to higher education; appropriate program rationale; and successful results and impact on undergraduate teaching and student learning.



Project co-directors Paul Savory, Amy Burnett and Amy Goodburn along with Dave Wilson collected the award. Savory is an associate professor of industrial and management systems engineering. Goodburn is an associate professor of English and women's studies. Burnett is an associate professor of history. Wilson, is professor of teaching, learning and teacher education and a special assistant for faculty development in UNL's Office of Academic Affairs.

The UNL project is an intensive year-long program in which faculty deeply examine and reflect with others on how their teaching supports student learning. Through conversations, writing and analysis, participants document, test and assess their teaching using a model similar to that used when conducting scholarly research. The model validates the notion that teaching is an intellectually rigorous activity, Goodburn said. "It allows you to represent the intellectual work that goes into developing and teaching a course," she said.

UNL started the peer review of teaching project in 1994 when five faculty members attended a meeting sponsored by the American Association for Higher Education. A grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education along with funding from Academic Affairs funded the project from 1995-1998. In 1999, UNL landed a \$750,000 grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, and \$120,000 from the Hewlett Foundation to disseminate the model to four partner campuses. All along, Academic Affairs has provided funds to continue the on-campus effort.

Barbara Couture, senior vice chancellor for academic affairs, praised the work of the co-directors. "This faculty-driven initiative emphasizes the intellectual and scholarly work of teaching, an effort that supports our faculty and helps ensure that our students have the best educational experience that we can deliver," she said. "We are proud of the excellent work done by Amy Burnett, Amy Goodburn, Paul Savory and the many other faculty members who have participated in this project for bringing this honor to UNL."

Since its inception, 101 UNL faculty members from 28 departments in eight different colleges have completed the project. A national conference at UNL last spring attracted nearly 200 faculty from across the country. A book, "The Peer Review of Teaching: Excellence in Student Learning Made Visible," is under contract with Anker Publishing and is due out next fall.