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Creating a Multicultural University: Examining Assumptions and Creating a Paradigm

ANDREA TERESA "TESS" ARENAS, Ph.D.

Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Wisconsin System

Andrea-Teresa "Tess" Arenas received her Ph.D. and M.s. degrees in Educational Administration (Higher Education) from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Arenas currently serves as Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs for the University of Wisconsin System. She has oversight for: Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity; one of the most comprehensive, systematic strategic plans to increase higher education diversity developed in this decade; increasing targeted multicultural student enrollment; preparation of policy options and reports, policy analysis, advising the President about trends affecting multicultural and disadvantaged programs; identifying multicultural needs for the UW System; and is the UW System liaison for multicultural! disadvantaged policies; the Multicultural Information Center and Institute on Race and Ethnicity.

Dr. Arenas has been a consultant to Midwest universities and businesses for twenty years on the topic of diversity and organizational skills (i.e., multicultural organizational development, cross-cultural communication skills, alliance building, team building and conflict resolution). She is the recipient of the YWCA Annual Women of Distinction Award and is also an award-winning Chicana poet.

In her keynote address, Dr. Arenas will examine the underlying assumptions of U.S. post secondary institutions. By reflecting upon the underlying assumptions of the value of work, the role of religion and the autonomy of the academy, conference participants can rethink the current model that often makes higher education access unachievable for people of color and low-income populations. The University of Wisconsin System now has its second ten year strategic plan to create a multicultural infrastructure at each campus. The current initiative, Plan 2008 is considered a national model. Dr. Arenas will share campus success stories in organizational change, student recruitment, curricular design, fundraising and other related issues.