



American Association of State Colleges and Universities
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Three Public Universities Recognized for Excellence in Teacher Education
Campuses Honored for Documenting Pupil Achievement

WASHINGTON, DC—Three public universities have been honored for leadership and innovation in teacher education. St. Cloud State University, the University of Northern Colorado, and Western Carolina University have been named the 2007 recipients of the Christa McAuliffe Award for Excellence in Teacher Education by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU).

The purpose of the award is two fold: To recognize excellence in teacher education programs and to advance the field of teacher education by identifying promising practices and critical issues related to measuring the impact of programs on teacher candidate knowledge and the impact of these teachers on pupil learning.

In announcing the awards, AASCU President Constantine W. (Deno) Curris said, “Many of our teacher education programs are doing outstanding jobs. We want to recognize the best among those programs.”

The 2007 Christa McAuliffe awardees and the programs for which they are being recognized are as follows:

St. Cloud State University is being recognized for its Teacher Quality Enhancement Partnership, *Utilizing Co-Teaching during the Student Teaching Experience* that improves the preparation of teachers by re-designing the student teaching experience through co-teaching. The program has also integrated co-teaching into select teacher preparation courses through collaboration among faculty from Education, Fine Arts & Humanities, Science & Engineering and Social Sciences, as well as public school teachers.

“The St. Cloud State University College of Education, which trains 500 professionals for the nation’s schools every year, has been dedicated to the preparation of high quality teachers, administrators, counselors and other school and community professionals since our founding as a State Normal School in 1869,” said Earl H. Potter III, university president. “We take pride in our leadership in developing innovative programs that effectively prepare young people for lifelong learning and success in the fields of their choice. It is gratifying to

receive this prestigious acknowledgement of the value of one such program, an example of how our faculty work in concert with the community to constantly develop new ways to deliver the quality education our nation's children deserve and need in an ever-changing world."

The University of Northern Colorado is being recognized for the innovative and exemplary manner in which elementary and secondary teacher education programs have designed and implemented a comprehensive assessment system, *Assessment and Program Innovation for Quality Teacher Preparation*. The system permits ongoing and continuous improvement of programs, high-quality feedback to teacher candidates, and excellent, technologically sophisticated role models of assessments for prospective classroom teachers.

"We are honored to be selected by our peers for the Christa McAuliffe Award," said Kay Norton, president of the University of Northern Colorado. "Teacher education represents a mission-critical area of the university that can be traced back to our institution's earliest beginnings. This award speaks to the devoted and knowledgeable faculty who serve a vital role in delivering a top-notch education to our future teachers and who transform lives along the way."

Western Carolina University is being recognized for its School University Teacher Education Partnership (SUTEP), *Partnership for Performance*, that uses a data-based assessment system for decision-making. The partnership is a collaborative effort among faculty in education, faculty in arts and sciences, and professional educators in P-12 schools.

"I can think of no better evidence of the strength and the impact of the efforts of our faculty, staff, students and school partners than for Western to win this prestigious national honor for our teacher education program" said WCU Chancellor John W. Bardo. "We are facing serious shortages across the state and nationally in the number of qualified teachers needed to help ensure that our children are prepared for careers in an increasingly global economy. I hope this recognition will increase the number of teacher education majors at Western. I am convinced than no institution prepares teachers better than Western – period."

George L. Mehaffy, AASCU's vice president for Academic Leadership and Change, and whose division oversees the award process, said, "The Christa McAuliffe Award challenges teacher education programs to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs, an incredibly difficult task. Yet these three award winners have made striking progress in demonstrating the impact of their program on graduates and the impact of those graduates on K-12 students.

"Through this award, these nationally-selected programs offer innovative leadership in the continuing redesign and improvement of teacher education," he said. "The proposals we received demonstrate that AASCU institutions are committed to placing highly trained and fully qualified teachers in America's classrooms."

AASCU's Christa McAuliffe award, named in honor of the teacher who died in the 1986 Challenger disaster, was first presented in the 1980s. McAuliffe was a graduate of Framingham State College (Mass.) and Bowie State University (Md.), both AASCU members. In 2001 the AASCU Board of Directors authorized a change in focus for the award—an emphasis on honoring programs that could document the success of their graduates and their impact on the pupils that they teach.

AASCU institutions prepare more than 50 percent of all new teachers in the United States. Curris noted, "AASCU members are working to increase both the quantity and quality of teachers for America's classrooms."

AASCU will present the award at its 2007 Annual Meeting scheduled for November 18-20 in San Francisco, California.

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Members of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) work to extend higher education to all citizens, including those who have been traditionally underrepresented on college campuses. By Delivering America's Promise, these institutions fulfill the expectations of a public university by working for the public good through education and engagement, thereby improving the lives of people in their community, their region and their state. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities represents more than 430 public colleges, universities and systems of higher education throughout the United States and its territories.