

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cathy Jordan, 612-625-7591
Andy Furco, 612-624-1562

February 12, 2008

U of M Key Player in National Initiative to Build Cadre of Community-Engaged Faculty
Faculty are Key Ingredient to Sustained Community Engagement of Colleges and Universities

Community-engaged learning and research are gaining recognition and legitimacy in higher education. The critical issue facing colleges and universities today is how to institutionalize community-engaged learning and research and sustain them as core values and practices. Having a cadre of faculty with the commitment and competencies to link their scholarship with communities is central to answering this question.

Faculty for the Engaged Campus, a national initiative of Community-Campus Partnerships for Health in partnership with the University of Minnesota and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, aims to strengthen community-engaged career paths in the academy by developing innovative competency-based models of faculty development, facilitating peer review and dissemination of products of community-engaged scholarship, and supporting community-engaged faculty through the promotion and tenure process.

The Faculty for the Engaged Campus Initiative, supported by a three year grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) in the U.S. Department of Education, builds on the work of the FIPSE-funded Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative of health professional schools that has been working to build capacity for community engaged scholarship (CES) on their campuses and among their peers nationally (Details at <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/healthcollab.html>).

Faculty for the Engaged Campus initiative Co-Director Lynn Blanchard, Director of the Carolina Center for Public Service at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill explains, "Through the Community-Engaged Scholarship for Health Collaborative, we articulated a set of Community Engaged Scholarship (CES) competencies and faculty development approaches. Faculty for the Engaged Campus takes this work 'to the next level' by collaborating with campuses across the country to test innovative models for developing community-engaged faculty." Adds Initiative Co-Director Cathy Jordan, Director of the Children, Youth, and Family Consortium at the University of Minnesota, "The Collaborative's indicators of quality CES and methods for documentation and assessment clearly point to the need for new approaches to peer review -- both for products of CES and for community-engaged scholars."

Under the guidance of Associate Vice President for Public Engagement, Andy Furco, the U of M is preparing its application in response to the Faculty for the Engaged Campus initiative's "call for applications." Teams from twenty diverse colleges and universities will be selected to participate in a faculty development charrette¹ from May 28-30, 2008 in Chapel Hill, NC. At least four of the teams attending will subsequently be awarded two-year grants to implement and evaluate their designs. The initiative is also developing an online clearinghouse for peer review and dissemination of products of CES that are in forms other than journal articles, and a searchable online database of CES mentors and peer reviewers.

The University of Minnesota is one of the premier comprehensive, publicly-engaged research universities in the world. It aims to generate and preserve knowledge, understanding and creativity; share that knowledge, understanding and creativity through education for a diverse community; and extend, apply and exchange this knowledge to benefit the people of the state, the nation, and the world. It's commitment to public engagement

is exemplified in numerous multidisciplinary and community-engaged centers under the umbrella of the Associate Vice President for Public Engagement, an active community involvement and service learning center, and new promotion and tenure guidelines that recognize and reward community-engaged scholarship.

“This FIPSE initiative provides us with an excellent opportunity to work with representatives from other universities to explore advanced strategies for building faculty expertise with community engaged research and scholarship” states Associate Vice President for Public Engagement, Andy Furco. “Having the opportunity to be a member of this high profile, national initiative reinforces the important and valuable role that community-based and community-focused scholarly work has for achieving our mission as a public land grant university.

¹A charrette is an intensely focused multi-day session that uses a collaborative approach to create realistic and achievable designs. Charrettes have mainly been used in architecture, urban planning and community design projects. Faculty for the Engaged Campus will convene campus teams, project staff and expert advisors to collaboratively design innovative models of CES faculty development.