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NEWS

For Release: IMMEDIATE – May 12, 2011

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Michigan State, Montana State, Penn State, and University of Tennessee Win Regional Community Engagement Awards

Institutions to Compete for National Community Engagement Award

WASHINGTON, DC (May 12, 2011) – Community outreach initiatives at Michigan State University, Montana State University, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Tennessee Knoxville have been selected as regional winners of the 2011 Outreach Scholarship/W.K. Kellogg Foundation Engagement Award.

The awards will be presented during the 12th Annual National Outreach Scholarship Conference, to be hosted by Michigan State University October 2-4, 2011, at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing, MI. Winners of the Outreach Scholarship Awards each receive a prize of \$5,000 and qualify to compete for the 2011 C. Peter Magrath University Community Engagement Award presented annually by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU).

"Engagement with society is one of the three pillars in the mission of public research universities along with education and research," said A•P•L•U President Peter McPherson. "These projects exemplify the outstanding quality and range of outreach and engagement activities of the nation's public universities. We salute each of these model programs, which feature students, faculty and administrators working to improve the quality of life for all."

Michigan State is being recognized for a 10-year effort to help Epilepsy patients in Zambia, while Montana State's Engineers Without Borders chapter is recognized for their work on water projects in the Khwisero District of Kenya. The community development projects of Penn State landscape architecture students in Pittsburgh and the efforts of faculty and students at the University of Tennessee to help a local Burundian refugee community adapt to life in Knoxville also were honored.

Established in 2006, the Outreach Scholarship and Magrath University Community Engagement Awards recognize four-year public universities that have redesigned their learning, discovery and engagement functions to become more closely and productively involved with their communities.

The C. Peter Magrath University Community Engagement Award, made possible by a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, includes \$20,000 and a sculpture. The award is named for C. Peter Magrath, A·P·L·U president from 1992-2005, and a leading advocate for public universities embracing the concept of outreach and community engagement. The Magrath Award will be announced during the A·P·L·U Annual Meeting, Nov. 13-15, 2011 at the San Francisco Marriott in San Francisco, CA.

Use of Engagement Award prize funds are restricted to advancement of engagement activities and may be used to: sustain and or enhance the winning project or other partnerships, incubate new outreach/engagement projects, support university/community partners, or recognize individual outreach contributions.

The four 2011 Outreach Scholarship W.K. Kellogg Foundation Engagement Award recipients and finalists for the Magrath Award are:

Michigan State University

Working Together to Improve the Lives of People Affected by Epilepsy in Zambia

Gretchen L. Birbeck, MD, MPH, DTMH, FAAN

Director and Associate Professor, International Neurologic & Psychiatric Epidemiology Program

Director, Chikankata Epilepsy Care Team

Epilepsy is a neurologic disorder resulting in recurrent, unprovoked seizures. The biomedical burden can be substantial, but for many Epilepsy victims often suffer from social abandonment and economic and physical vulnerabilities.

As a medical student, Gretchen L. Birbeck, MD, took an elective rotation at Chikankata Hospital in rural Zambia, curious to see how medicine was practiced without the advanced technologies and extensive resources available in the United State. Among the many devastating conditions she observed, the realities of living with Epilepsy were the most disturbing. While Epilepsy patients in the United States generally live full and active lives, the social and medical realities of people with Epilepsy in the Chikankata community were “soul crushing.”

With few Epilepsy patients receiving treatment, Dr. Birbeck notice she was caring for children and adults with fatal and/or seriously disabling burns that occurred during a seizure often while the family stood by too paralyzed by contagion fears to pull them from the fire. Children with Epilepsy were routinely ejected from schools and often prevented from playing with other children—dooming them to social isolation and long term economic vulnerability. In moments of confidence, women with Epilepsy offered details of spousal and familial abandonment with subsequent social vulnerability, physical violence and sexual assault. Epilepsy wasn’t formally recognized as a common chronic condition in the community and yet the consequences of untreated seizures filled the hospital.

After completing her training in neurology, she returned to Zambia and with other concerned healthcare workers at the hospital undertook a formal study hospital-based study of Epilepsy at Chikankata. The study confirmed several disturbing facts include people with Epilepsy were presenting to the hospital with their seizure-related injuries but not with their seizures. Less than 10 percent of the people with Epilepsy seen as inpatients had ever been treated for the disorder and many of those identified and treated were provided uselessly low doses of antiepileptic drugs (AEDs) for seizure prevention. Clearly, the healthcare

workers required additional training in Epilepsy care. At this time, the hospital registry of patients with chronic conditions listed only 32 people with Epilepsy. This was a very low number given the catchment area of 65,000.

In 2000, with support from hospital administration and seed money from Michigan State University, the Chikankata Epilepsy Care Team (ECT) was founded. For more than 10 years, the collaborative project between Michigan State University and Chikankata has worked to improve the lives of people with Epilepsy. What began as a local nurse-medical student partnership in one small rural Zambian hospital has grown into a program that supports and enriches clinical services and advocacy programs throughout Zambia. The scholarly contributions from this work are regularly utilized by the World Health Organization in the development of more optimal programs of Epilepsy care and care delivery in Africa.

Epilepsy Care Team members serve as expert advisors on community-based Epilepsy care for the Zambian Ministry of Health, the World Bank and the U.S. Institute of Medicine. Through research and advocacy, they have identified global problems in drug access for people with Epilepsy in low-income countries, famine-related drug toxicity and the lack of appropriate treatment for co-morbid HIV and Epilepsy in most of Africa. Recognizing the imperative for knowledge to impact policy, they work tirelessly to bring their findings to the attention of key stakeholders and policy makers.

In 2007, Dr. Birbeck was selected as an Ambassador for Global Research by the Paul Rogers Society. She has been featured in the Lancet Neurology and has more than 60 publications related to her research in sub-Saharan Africa. Over the past decade, she has been awarded more than \$2 million for research and capacity building in sub-Saharan Africa.

In March 2010, this MSU-Zambia collaboration was declared to be “a global success story” by the U.S. National Institute of Health’s Fogarty International Center.

Montana State University

From Bozeman to Khwisero: Engineers Without Borders

Douglas Steele, Ph.D.

Vice President for External Relations and Director of Extension

The Montana State University Student Chapter of Engineers Without Borders (EWB) is a student-initiated and largely student-managed partnership between Montana State University students and faculty; the Bozeman, MT community; and the people of Khwisero District of Western Province, Kenya. The organization’s primary mission, to bring potable water and clean sanitation facilities to 58 primary schools and the surrounding communities of Khwisero, necessitates a long-term commitment and cultural exchange between MSU undergraduate students and the Khwisero community.

In 2004, the newly established Montana State University EWB Student Chapter accepted a proposal by Kenyan architect Ronald Omyonga for a partnership to develop potable water and sanitation facilities for 58 primary schools in the Khwisero District. The scope of the partnership, consisting of instituting projects at a multitude of schools and sustaining them over the long-term, is unique. Like other EWB chapters, the MSU chapter designs and generates financial resources for infrastructure facilities. But unlike other chapters, MSU’s project necessitates building sustainable relationships across race, class and cultural difference. Indeed, EWB has embarked on an ambitious project whose success depends on securing the on-going trust of, and collaboration with, the people of Khwisero. As the students are fond of saying, EWB is engaged in “a social project with an engineering component.”

Initial fundraising allowed a two-person EWB team to visit Khwisero in 2004 and led to the determination that potable water was best delivered to schools via deep-well boreholes. Additional fundraising allowed teams to return and drill boreholes at Mr. Omyonga's childhood school and at a second school in 2006 and 2007 respectively. By 2007-2008, EWB's success had attracted a larger and more diverse generation of enthusiastic students. It included, for example, a film student who directed and produced "The Water Carriers," an award-winning film about the interactions between a EWB student and a member of the Khwisero community.

Today, EWB is the largest and most successful student-led organization at MSU with more than 60 active students representing every college within the university. With local fundraising and grant writing, the group has raised over \$375,000 for project implementation, drilled wells at seven primary schools, constructed composting latrines at five schools and a biogas latrine at another, designed a distribution pipeline to link one of the wells to additional schools, a health clinic and a market, and sent over 75 MSU students to collaborate with the people of Khwisero in their development efforts. In addition, the group has developed peripheral projects benefiting various communities in Montana, including Native American tribes.

EWB has also transformed how students and faculty interact—student leaders are actively involved on university committees focused on curriculum development. Students and faculty are collectively progressing interdisciplinary, service learning and global action initiatives across the campus. New international outreach initiatives, not directly associated with EWB, are also expanding as a result of this organization's groundwork. This partnership has realized an unanticipated reach, as communities throughout Montana have become connected to the Khwisero community. And locally, EWB project work is expanding to communities across Montana.

Penn State University:

Regenerative Design in Stressed Communities

Ken Tamminga,

Professor, Penn State University

Dr. Deno De Ciantis

The Penn State Center—Engaging Pittsburgh

For three years, landscape architecture Professor Ken Tamminga of Penn State University has made stressed Pittsburgh neighborhoods the platform for the Pittsburgh Studio, a fourth/fifth-year design studio. Tamminga, along with Dr. Deno De Ciantis at The Penn State Center—Engaging Pittsburgh, identify underserved Pittsburgh neighborhoods with grassroots organizations eager to engage in a community revitalization process. Undergraduate and graduate students partner with community participants to explore how re-greening and sustainable place-making can improve deeply entrenched problems.

The process includes a series of meetings and engagement opportunities where students become more familiar with each neighborhood. Diverse stakeholders identify the community's needs, share stories of past and present, and begin to imagine a better future. Students, working with community members, conduct site and contextual analyses that encompass physical attributes and amenities as well as socioeconomic factors.

Guided by residents, students come to understand that successful community design cannot be decontextualized or confined to a campus studio. Students learn that even highly stressed communities retain a core of hope and opportunity, and that the design abilities they bring are a necessary ingredient in

the recovery process. Guided by the students, residents (re)learn to see potential in their own places. Together, the collaborators understand the power that good design can have in creating safe, healthy, productive, and beautiful places breathing life back into their community. Each group gains an understanding and admiration for the other, developing relationships that cross age and culture. It is this intertwining of elegant, sustainable design solutions and productive, convivial relationships that make The Pittsburgh Studio a transformative learning and revitalization initiative.

The main impact on the communities has been capacity building within each community group. This has enabled the engagement of the stakeholders to envision improvement for their own place making. Penn State landscape architecture students have created integral environmental, social and economic solutions utilizing the visions of each individual community.

One example is Coraopolis where business owners, community residents, and elected officials were able to rediscover their riverfront – a post-industrial river that is now significantly cleaner with a shoreline greener than anyone could remember. For many decades the community had turned its back on the river, spoiled by industrial pollution and commercial development along the shoreline. Even following the clean-up of the river and the re-greening of the shoreline through a blend of ecology and riparian urbanism, the community did not recognize the change until the students provided a fresh perspective.

The Pittsburgh Studio series has inspired new approaches to community design education integral to participatory action research models currently being developed on two projects. One is a National Science Foundation (NSF) funded project, Anticipatory Learning for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience (ALCCAR), developing village-based anticipatory learning models for climate change adaptation in Ghana and Tanzania. The other is called The Mountain project. It involves educational communities (high school students, teachers, parents) addressing water and land resource sustainability issues using participatory video in Nepal and North India. In both cases, techniques for place-based exploration used in The Pittsburgh Studio have served as proof-of-concept for research application.

University of Tennessee Knoxville

Ready for the World

Elizabeth Burman

Coordinator, University Outreach and Engagement

Ready for the World is part of a long-range plan at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) to transform the campus culture and prepare students for the 21st century. While UTK supports a robust study abroad program, it also recognizes opportunities presented by the global cultures represented in the university's own backyard. The new approach to internationalization and outreach/engagement is both economical and effective.

A model program within UTK's *Ready for the World* initiative is the engagement with a local community of Burundian refugees. In 2007, Burundians resettling in Knoxville faced systems unprepared for their arrival and transition. The city's school district, public health department, public housing, and social service agencies were overloaded with the unique challenges of these families, who arrived with virtually no English language skills and were largely pre-literate even in their own language (Kirundi). Knoxville's service agencies lacked funding, personnel, and the necessary infrastructure and cultural competency to address the many needs of the incoming refugees. Initial interviews by UTK faculty and students indicated these families were having difficulty adjusting to their new environment.

UTK faculty and students launched a community-based service-learning and research initiative that they named *Healing Transitions: Program Interventions for Refugee Youth and Families* (subsequently, with input from the Burundians, the name was changed to Healthy Transitions). Drs. Denise Bates and Allison Anders, assistant professors in the UTK College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences (CEHHS), received a UTK *Ready for the World* grant in 2008 to develop infrastructure for community-based programming and research. With further support from CEHHS, additional UTK faculty and students became engaged in a dynamic relationship between UTK and the new Burundians.

Work began using a set of priorities established by the Burundians, including (1) A community-based organization, (2) Youth programs for Burundian children, (3) Educational opportunities for adults learning English, (4) Computer lessons for the adults, and (5) Job skill development. UTK faculty and students, working with several community partners, used multiple research methods to identify cultural competency education needs in Knoxville community. The chief community partners included Bridge Refugee and Sponsorship Services and Cherokee Health Systems, as well as others.

By September 2009, with assistance from Healthy Transitions and the UTK College of Law Advocacy Clinic, a Burundian-directed association was founded and incorporated as a non-profit. The Burundian community elected its own officers and named the new organization SODELA, an acronym for Solidarity, Development and Light Association. SODELA's mission is "to support the healthy transition of refugees through the promotion of education, employment, cultural preservation, and the long-term sustainability of families resulting in better personal adjustment to resettlement and positive mental and physical health."

SODELA impacts the Burundian community by coordinating ESL and GED courses for its membership and providing economic support via basket weaving and other business ventures in the Burundian community. SODELA distributed "emergency cards" created by Healthy Transitions that include the Burundians' names, addresses, and languages spoken. These cards have allowed the Burundians to be more trustful of police; they include a police department phone number that they can call directly, instead of having to find and involve an intermediary.

With the support of the partnership, all Burundian children in Knoxville are now going to school, while the adults are taking English classes, pre-GED classes, and computer classes. Many Burundian families already have a car, and some have been accepted by the Habitat for Humanity program. Despite the serious language barrier, most Burundians now know where to go for health care, insurance, and groceries. They have contact with churches and are socializing with people outside of the Burundian community. Among other things, SODELA has helped organize the Knoxville African Soccer Team, welcoming men from several African countries. In addition to the men's soccer team, students from a service-learning course taught by Dr. Sarah Hillyer and graduate student Ashleigh Huffman in the department of Kinesiology, Recreation, and Sport Studies collaborate with Healthy Transitions and a large group of additional volunteers to lead an annual intercultural soccer camp for school children called "Knox Kicks," which is open to refugee and non-refugee children alike.

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC AND LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITIES

Founded in 1887, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) is a research and advocacy organization of public research universities, land-grant institutions, and state university systems. As the nation's oldest higher education association, APLU is dedicated to excellence in learning, discovery and engagement. Member campuses enroll more than 3.6 million undergraduate and 1.1 million graduate students, employ more than 670,000 faculty and

administrators, and conduct nearly two-thirds of all university-based research, totaling more than \$34 billion annually. For more information, visit www.aplu.org

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