



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Gil Kline 202-966-4994

Len Rickman 301-649-7073

NEW EFFORTS TO DEFINE COLLEGE SUCCESS CAN HELP BOOST VALUE OF U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION, SAY TOP ACCREDITING EXPERTS

- **National Awards Focus on New Benchmarks of Excellence**
- **Global Competitiveness Drives U.S. College Programs to Define, Measure Success**
- **Colleges and Programs Nationwide Are Evaluated**

WASH, DC....A growing focus on how we define success in college may also help set benchmarks to enhance higher education value overall, according to new efforts by experts in college accreditation. Facing an increasingly competitive global economy, prominent leaders in higher education accreditation are reviewing new ways institutions can evaluate and demonstrate student knowledge, skills and outcomes.

One of the leading voices in this undertaking, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), has initiated the first in a series of annual national awards to recognize these efforts, the “2006 Award for Institutional Progress in Student Learning Outcomes,” and has announced the four winners. CHEA is the largest institutional higher education membership organization in the nation, with 3,000 degree-granting colleges and universities. It is a private, nonprofit national organization that coordinates accreditation activity in the U.S.

The awards, according to CHEA, are meant to encourage institutions nationwide to utilize new, effective and innovative systems to evaluate and demonstrate student outcomes and provide increasing accountability of that information to the public. The four institutions awarded are:

- James Madison University, Center for Assessment and Research Studies, General Education Program, Virginia
- The Community College of Baltimore County, Learning and Student Development, Maryland
- Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Department of Psychology, Illinois
- Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Implementing the Principles of Undergraduate Learning, Indiana

“The ability to define and demonstrate success in higher education is a critical factor in raising the overall standards of educational quality,” stated Judith Eaton, President of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). “Students, colleges and society need public evidence of educational excellence in schools and programs in order to compete in a global economy, and accrediting organizations are leading the way in driving these innovations, and in quality assurance and public accountability. These annual awards represent an important benchmark of documented excellence.”

The four awards were presented by CHEA for excellence in four criteria: articulating and providing evidence of outcomes; providing evidence of success

with regard to outcomes; informing the public about outcomes, and using outcomes for institutional improvement.

Thirty two applications representing institutions and programs were reviewed by nine members of CHEA's award committee, consisting of high-level educational officials and experts:

- Roger Benjamin, President and Chief Executive Officer, Council for Aid to Education
- John Dill, Deputy Chancellor, Office of the Chancellor for Education and Professional Development, Department of Defense
- Peter Ewell, Vice President, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
- Bret Eynon, Assistant Dean, Center for Teaching and Learning, LaGuardia Community College
- Debra Humphreys, Vice President, Communications and Public Affairs, Association of American Colleges and Universities
- Laura Palmer Noone, President, University of Phoenix
- Kathleen O'Brien, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Alverno College
- Jerry Trapnell, Executive Vice President and Chief Accreditation Officer, The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International
- Belle Wheelan, President, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

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Members of the press who wish to know more about CHEA, the award or the awardees can contact Gil Kline at 202-966-4664 or visit www.chea.org.