

CSU Wins National Award for Excellence in International Education

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Columbus State University Tuesday was notified that it's among seven U.S. college and universities — including much-larger institutions such as Rutgers and Ohio State — being recognized for innovative international programs.

“(All seven schools) are excellent models for how higher education across the country can and must innovate to prepare our students for the global economy we live in today,” said Marlene M. Johnson, executive director and CEO of the international education organization founded as the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers.

Now known as the NAFSA Association of International Educators, the organization's Senator Paul Simon Awards for Campus Internationalization are considered the ultimate honor for a university in terms of recognizing innovative efforts to make students more aware of the world at large.

This is a tremendously powerful recognition of what Columbus State University has achieved in comprehensive internationalization,” said Neal McCrillis, director of CSU's Center for International Education. “It sets apart and has the potential to shape Columbus State's image among students, faculty and the community. The fact that we are in the company of (the other winners) is remarkable.”

Other schools also receiving the 2014 Simon Award for Comprehensive Internationalization were North Carolina State University, Ohio State University and Rutgers. Three other schools — Albion College, George Mason University and the University of Texas at Austin — were recognized Tuesday for receiving NAFSA's 2014 Senator Paul Simon Spotlight Award for a specific international program or initiative that contributes to comprehensive internationalization.

Named for the late Illinois senator, the Simon awards recognize outstanding and innovative achievements in campus internationalization, a news release stated. NAFSA noted the 2014 winners reflect a broad diversity of approaches to campus internationalization, both in terms of models and implementation, defining “comprehensive internationalization” as the planned, strategic integration of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the ethos and outcomes of higher education.

Tom Hackett, provost and vice president for academic affairs at CSU, called the Simon award “real recognition of our commitment to internationalize our campus.”

Columbus State President Tim Mescon praised the work of the university's faculty, including McCrillis, who is CSU's Mildred Miller Fort Foundation Eminent Scholar Chair of International Education. McCrillis, also an associate professor of history, joined CSU's faculty in 1998.

“This is a wonderful honor for our Center for International Education, Dr. McCrillis' leadership and our institutional commitment to globalization,” Mescon said. “We consistently benchmark with the very best, and receiving NAFSA's Simon Award acknowledges exceptional faculty programming in the international arena.”

CSU's Center for International Education promotes a global perspective at Columbus State by working with international students, as well as students interested in studying abroad. The center also actively encourages CSU faculty to develop courses that might be taught in a foreign setting; works to infuse international perspectives in routine courses; supports the work of visiting foreign scholars; and sponsors events and activities that raise awareness of international issues and cultures.

One of the more unique aspects of CSU's study abroad program is that the university owns a large former residence in Oxford, England, the Spencer House, where 500-plus faculty and students have lived during study abroad courses over the past 11 years. Back in Columbus, CSU offers a series of 16 Global Dialogues each year that are a key feature of an International Learning Community of classes that students can combine with study abroad as part of an International Studies Certificate, which is a new "add-on" credential available for any major.

"For our students — many of whom are first generation college students and most of whom have never visited another country — the Global Dialogues are their first chance to hear viewpoints and attitudes other than those expressed by their Georgia-born and raised neighbors," McCrillis said.

For more on Columbus State University's Center for International Education, including study abroad, visiting scholars, international student services and more, visit <http://ColumbusState.edu/cie>.

Institutions selected for the Simon awards this year will be featured in NAFSA's fall report, *Internationalizing the Campus: Profiles of Success at Colleges and Universities*, and honored at an event in Washington, D.C. during International Education Week. To learn more about the significance of the Simon awards, visit www.nafsa.org/SimonAward. For more about NAFSA, visit <http://www.nafsa.org>.