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## NEWS RELEASE

### COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES JOIN NEW CONSORTIUM TO ENCOURAGE HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMS

DAYTON, Ohio — Organized by the University of Dayton and Utica College, a group of 10 human rights educators from the United States, Canada and Great Britain have formed the International Human Rights Education Consortium with nine founding members.

The consortium's co-chairs are Mark Ensalaco, director of the human rights program at the University of Dayton, and Theodore Orlin, director of the human rights advocacy program at Utica College of Syracuse University.

"The consortium reflects the recognition by some very prestigious scholars of the need to teach human rights at the undergraduate level," said Ensalaco, who also serves as director of international studies at UD. "UD was the first to have a program, and a number of universities are also teaching human rights, but this represents the agreement that more has to be done. We believe it is necessary, and now we have this to make it happen."

UD's interdisciplinary undergraduate program in human rights began in 1999.

Working as a nonprofit organization, the consortium will promote collaboration among colleges and universities offering undergraduate courses or degree-granting programs in human rights. It will encourage the development of human rights courses, curricula and faculty, and it will foster the training of future human rights professionals through undergraduate education and internships with nongovernmental and inter-governmental organizations throughout the world.

According to Ensalaco, the consortium was inspired by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution declaring the 10-year period ending in 2005 the United Nations decade for Human Rights Education. That resolution calls on educators to promote human rights education, noting that "education for human rights and democracy is itself a human right and

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prerequisite for the realization of human rights, democracy, and social justice.”

Kevin Boyle, director of the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex in England and one of the founders of the consortium, cited “the need to fill the gap in human rights education that exists at the undergraduate level.” Boyle views human rights as defining the core of what he calls “citizenship education” or “global literacy.”

The consortium is also committed to recruiting and training human rights educators and the development of innovative pedagogies. Noël Kinsella, director of the Atlantic Human Rights Center at St. Thomas University in New Brunswick, emphasized the need for a “learned society” for educators from across disciplines who teach and conduct research related to human rights. “The consortium meets an immediate need to help each other and our colleagues to develop new programs and to enhance our teaching,” he said.

According to Bert Lockwood, director of the Urban Morgan Institute of Human Rights at the University of Cincinnati College of Law and editor of the *Human Rights Quarterly*, “the unique and unifying core is the focus on teachers. The core idea of the consortium, if nurtured carefully, will meet an important need and could very well develop into something that many of us have been dreaming of. This is an exciting development in the evolution of human rights.”

Institutional membership in the consortium is open to all universities and colleges with human rights programs. Individual membership is open to all educators offering human rights-related courses in institutions around the world. The consortium seeks to work closely with human rights institutes, inter-governmental organizations and nongovernmental organizations.

Nine university-based human rights programs or centers representing the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia have joined the consortium: The University of Dayton, Utica College of Syracuse University, Trinity College, Florida State University and University of Cincinnati College of Law, (United States); St Thomas University, (New Brunswick, Canada); Abo Akademi University (Finland); University of Essex (United Kingdom); and Soochow University (Taiwan).

For more information on the International Human Rights Education Consortium, contact Mark Ensalaco at (937) 229-2761 or (937) 229-2765. He can be reached via e-mail at [Ensalaco@udayton.edu](mailto:Ensalaco@udayton.edu).