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Honored for Community Service

05.13.2011 | Campus and Community, Service and Giving The University of Dayton has again been named to the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, the highest federal recognition a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement.

A total 641 schools made the 2010 honor roll, with six recognized as Presidential Awardees, 11 named as finalists and 114 named with distinction. Honorees are chosen based on a series of selection factors including the scope and innovation of service projects, percentage of student participation in service activities, incentives for service, and the extent to which the school offers

academic service-learning courses.

This marks the second consecutive year the University made the honor roll, which is further recognition of the University's commitment to community service. In 2009, the University of Dayton was tied for No. 2 nationally and ranked No. 1 among Catholic universities in the "Saviors of Our Cities" ranking, which honored academic institutions for their positive impact on their urban communities.

Examples of the University's commitment to community service considered by the honor roll included the Lalanne teaching program, the Gamma Epsilon Lambda honor society devoted to service and leadership, and a healthy lifestyles program at a Dayton public elementary school.

Nearly 90 percent of University of Dayton students engaged in community service in the 2009-10 academic year, totaling more than 135,000 hours of community service.

Many of those service hours are coordinated by the University's Center for Social Concern, which promotes education on social justice and opportunities for community service, and the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community, which serves as a liaison with the Dayton region to create partnerships for students to learn and serve while helping to build community in the region.

"The University of Dayton has an extraordinary presence in Dayton and is worthy of presidential recognition," said Dick Ferguson, executive director of the Fitz Center. "I am confident that we are educating leaders who know how to build and strengthen communities. Wherever in the world our graduates go, most will know what it means to be civically engaged and will know how to make a difference. This is the University of Dayton at its best."

In addition to these institutional supports, students at the University of Dayton often act spontaneously and independently to serve their community, and a myriad of clubs, academic opportunities, fraternities, sororities and service organizations exist to facilitate student service.

The University's application to the honor roll included descriptions of three programs that exemplify the University's commitment to community service:

- The Lalanne program — named for Marianist Brother Jean Baptiste Lalanne — helps train and retain strong Catholic school teachers and places them into urban Catholic schools. The teachers make a two-year commitment to a Catholic school while living together and pursuing professional and spiritual development. The Lalanne program, created in 1999 by the University's Center for Catholic Education, serves schools in Ohio, Indiana and Texas. All teachers are graduate students at the University of Dayton, returning to campus during the summer to complete studies. In 2009, 16 Lalanne teachers served nearly 1,000 students from kindergarten through grade 12.
- Gamma Epsilon Lambda (GEL) is a co-educational honor society dedicated to "the art and politics of service and leadership both on campus and in our surrounding communities." GEL is a student-led service organization founded by students and located on two campuses nationwide — the University of Dayton and Miami University. Student leaders of GEL work primarily with three outside organizations: Campfire Kids, a national youth development organization, Dakota Center, a local community center and CHEERS, a program serving mentally handicapped adults. The society is also active in university-wide projects, including the annual Christmas on Campus event for urban school children, Spike for Charity annual volleyball tournament and Dance Marathon fundraiser for Children's Miracle Network.
- The Healthy Lifestyles Program is a service learning opportunity for undergraduate students in the didactic program in

dietetics or in the bachelor of science in nutrition and fitness program. Students lead an after-school program at Dayton's Cleveland PreK-8 School to make the elementary school students aware of the benefits of nutritious food and daily exercise. Since its inception, the program has grown from about 15 children to 40.

The Corporation for National and Community Service oversees the honor roll in collaboration with the Department of Education, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Campus Compact and the American Council on Education.

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