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SMU's Diversity Efforts Earn National Award

DALLAS (SMU) – SMU has become the first Texas university to receive an Exemplary Voluntary Efforts (EVE) Award from the U.S. Department of Labor for its equal opportunity programs. The university was honored along with two other recipients at an awards ceremony Wednesday, April 26, in Washington, D.C.

The Labor Department's EVE Award honors federal contractors that have demonstrated exemplary and innovative efforts to increase the employment opportunities of minorities, women, individuals with disabilities and veterans. The award recognizes SMU's development and implementation of multifaceted equal employment opportunity programs.

Beth Wilson, J.D., executive assistant to the president and director of SMU's

Office of Institutional Access and Equity, and Dana Gibson, Ph.D., vice president for

Business and Finance, accepted the award for SMU.

"The Eve Award reflects SMU's dedication to a diverse workforce and student body," said SMU President R. Gerald Turner. "We are proud to be the first university in the state to win this honor, and we look forward to our continuing progress."

In the more than 20 years since the Labor Department has given the EVE Award, only a few universities have received it.

"One of the reasons SMU is being honored with this award is the university's sponsorship of an annual Higher Education Symposium, which promotes a partnership between universities, colleges and the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)," said Wilson, who also served as this year's Symposium chair. The Symposia also provide information and technical assistance to participants.

"Dr. Turner has opened several spring Higher Education Symposia with a President's Roundtable discussion held in conjunction with the OFCCP. That willingness to maintain an ongoing dialogue and to reach out to the community, and the diversity reflected in his own staff, demonstrate both SMU's and Dr. Turner's commitment to equal employment opportunity, diversity and fairness," added Wilson.

A variety of other innovative equal opportunity programs contributed to SMU winning this award, including:

- The President's Commission on the Status of Women
- The President's Commission on the Status of Racial and Ethnic Minorities
- The President's Commission on the Needs of Persons with Disabilities
- Diversity training for faculty, staff and students
- Equal compensation efforts
- Numerous lecture series featuring diverse speakers and honoring achievement

- Outreach programs for public schools and inner-city children

This year's other EVE Award recipients are Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and Bright Horizons Family Solutions of Watertown, Mass.

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