



March 20, 2006

Vermont Women in Higher Education

For Immediate Release

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BENNION AND LIPTAK HONORED WITH FIRST VWHE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Vermont Women in Higher Education (VWHE) recently awarded grants to two women, helping them to reach lifelong professional goals.

The grants are part of a new initiative by VWHE called the Educational and Professional Development Fund, intending to recognize women currently working in Vermont higher education who want to further their career. This is the first year VWHE has given the grants, worth \$1,000 each. VWHE plans to give at least one grant every year.

“Our two grant recipients exemplify what Vermont Women in Higher Education is all about,” says Karen Nevin, chair of VWHE’s State Planning Committee. “One is a faculty member presenting her research at Oxford, the other an executive secretary pursuing her Bachelor’s degree. VWHE cultivates women leaders, and we are so proud to support the important work of these two incredible people.”

Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology and Chair of the Social Science Department at Lyndon State College, **Dr. Janet Bennion** will put her grant towards travel expenses to attend the Oxford Round Table at the University of Oxford this month.

Bennion, a resident of Waterford, Vt., was invited to present at this prestigious public policy forum designed to look for solutions to crises around the world. This year the Round Table is focusing on the crises of women’s rights and factors contributing to abuse of women and girls worldwide. Bennion has particular expertise in this arena, having researched and published on women’s activities in rigid fundamentalist movements in the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Africa.

The second grant recipient, **Ellen Danahy Liptak**, plans to use the money towards tuition and expenses as she pursues her Bachelor’s degree, a personal goal since she earned her Associate’s degree in Executive Secretarial Science in 1980.

For the past 26 year, Liptak—the first person in her family to earn an advanced degree—has worked as a secretary for various schools and organizations before landing her current position as Executive Secretary in the Office of the President at Norwich University. Liptak is currently enrolled in the External Degree Program at Johnson State College, and hopes to complete her Bachelor’s in General Studies in the spring of 2007. Liptak lives in Moretown, Vt.

VWHE is sponsored by the American Council on Education's Office of Women in Higher Education, based in Washington, D.C., and has been active in the state of Vermont for over 20 years. VWHE works to foster connections among women in various sectors of higher education, promote women's leadership and encourage and support women leaders of diverse backgrounds. In addition, VWHE works through state and national organization networks to identify, recommend and advance women in higher education here in Vermont. The organization maintains an open membership policy and welcomes the participation of women from all levels of administration, staff and faculty.

Additional information on Vermont Women in Higher Education can be found at www.vwhe.org.

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