

Janet Lu

Celebrating the Outstanding by Rewarding Excellence

The C.O.R.E. award goes to staff members whose “contributions significantly exceed expectations in demonstrating or promoting one or more [of the values]: excellence, liberal arts, personal attention to students, diversity, community, and stewardship.” There is no question that in excellence, liberal arts, and personal attention to students Janet Lu deserves the many compliments and commendations she has received, but those characteristics are all part of the job. What inspires her nomination to receive a C.O.R.E. award are her efforts that go well beyond job expectations to promote both diversity and community on our campus, our city, and beyond. Janet’s efforts connect Nebraska Wesleyan to the community of Lincoln and the world, making our community more aware of the larger world and making the larger world more aware of Nebraska Wesleyan.

While it is true that helping students is the heart of Janet’s regular professional responsibilities, still on numerous occasions, she has so far surpassed those duties that her work on behalf of students warrants special mention here. A recent example of Janet’s extraordinary commitment to students and community building involves her assistance of members of the Wesleyan community with English language acquisition.

Janet helped these non-native speakers of English navigate the university system so they could enroll in Wesleyan classes that would develop their communication skills. Beyond that, she also assisted with special arrangements that teamed them up with a Wesleyan student language tutor. The English language learners benefited greatly because they were able to practice their developing skills with a native speaker of English; furthermore, the student tutor benefited from this unique opportunity to work one on one with individuals from another culture thereby allowing him to fulfill the service learning component of an Intercultural Communication course he was taking at the time. All of the individuals involved benefited immeasurably from the experience -- an experience that never would have happened without Janet’s advocacy and effort beyond the scope of her assigned duties.

Perhaps the most public of Janet’s efforts is the Chinese banquet she has organized annually for the past dozen years in celebration of Tet, the Chinese New Year. On her own time she has arranged with a local Chinese restaurant to serve a special twelve-course meal to the Nebraska Wesleyan community. Working with the restaurateur she selects the particular dishes and their order of serving to make the meal pleasing and harmonious to both eye and palate. She reinforces the harmony through decorative choices at table. Following the meal, artists sometimes visiting musicians, sometimes local students have performed or danced for the sixty to seventy people in attendance. As the Wesleyan revelers gather up the little white boxes of leftovers and head home, they comment again and again, year after year, on the pleasures of being part of such a gathering. Those comments attest to the sense of community fostered by Janet’s efforts to celebrate and showcase Lincoln’s diversity.

Janet also supports many Nebraska Wesleyan cultural events by more than her attendance. For example, this past fall the NWU World Music Concert Series, founded in 2001 to bring diverse music to the Wesleyan campus, hosted Mary Li Ma, *guzheng* virtuoso, as artist in residence. The Music Department’s alumni newsletter, *Communique*, cites Janet first of several people and organizations whose support and generosity made Mary Li’s concert possible. Janet hosted Mary in her home, drove her where she needed to go, and organized a dinner with Mary Li for some of our faculty and the Chinese community in Lincoln.

Besides these and other on-campus activities Janet makes Nebraska Wesleyan more visible off-campus, and enriches the Wesleyan campus community, through activities, lectures, and presentations that surpass her library work. These include:

Co-founder Lincoln Chinese Cultural Association, 2001. Now V.P. for Communication formerly served as President and Vice President of the association.

Member, marketing committee, Celebrate Lincoln Ethnic Festival, 2004.

Organizer, Chinese Culture Exhibition, Celebrate Lincoln Ethnic Festival, 2004

Member, Nebraska State Representative team for the Lincoln Taiping Sister City.

Teacher, summer classes in English conversation to the Lincoln Chinese community.

Presenter to/for:

Lincoln Lead program for groups of Nebraskans preparing for business trips to China, 2004, 2005.

Lincoln Kiwanis International, 2004-2008.

Cultural Awareness Program, Lincoln Public Schools, 1975-1983.

Nebraska Humanities Council Speakers Bureau, 1982 – present.

Lectures on diversity issues to

Union College World Religion class, 2006, 2007.

Alegent NPG Health LINK Conference, 2006.

UNL Winter Series on China, 2006

Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month Celebration, Lincoln State Farm Insurance company, 2005

Lincoln Public Schools Graduation Reception for Asian Students, 2004

8th Annual Conference on People of Color in Predominantly White Institutions, UNL, 2003

UNL Nebraska International Multicultural Exchange, 2002

UNL International Women's Day Celebration, 2001

Member Lincoln Lancaster Women's Commission 2003-2004.

And finally, this past October, Janet garnered even more community-wide recognition in the form of a YWCA Tribute to Women Award.

All of these things, personal attention to students, the dinners, the hosting of campus visitors, the achievements cited, the awards given and the work that lies behind those awards and achievements, represent the spirit and specifics of Nebraska Wesleyan core values. In going well beyond job expectations to promote both diversity and community, Janet Lu merits a C.O.R.E. award for her strength as a Wesleyan community member who shows by her actions what Nebraska Wesleyan is and shares it both on campus and off.