



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, May 19, 2009

Madonna Director Applies Doctoral Research to Peer Mentoring Program

LIVONIA, Mich. – Connie Tingson-Gatuz, director of Madonna University’s federal Student Support Services TRIO program that assists low-income, first generation and disabled students, earned her doctoral degree in higher education administration this spring from Michigan State University.

Tingson-Gatuz’s doctoral dissertation addressed the positive effects mentoring has on leadership development of minority populations. Inspired by her research, Tingson-Gatuz initiated a peer mentoring program for Madonna University students in 2006. She brought together a diverse group of TRIO students to assist their peers academically, and provide encouragement and moral support.

Reflective of Tingson-Gatuz’s research, many students benefit from the mentoring experience, developing leadership skills. Gina DeMatteo of Allen Park took on the role of student-mentor after having been a recipient of tutoring and support through the TRIO program. “Gina grew from the experience,” Tingson-Gatuz said. “She gained confidence and communication skills, and emerged as a leader within the TRIO program and throughout campus.”

DeMatteo received the Outstanding Peer Mentor Award at TRIO’s graduation reception in April. “You can’t ask for a better college experience than having the opportunity to lead as a mentor,” she said. “I will apply the leadership skills I developed to my career and life.”

Motivated by the success of the mentoring program, Tingson-Gatuz plans to continue providing leadership opportunities and activities for TRIO students, i.e. an expanded student mentoring program, a leadership training series, and leadership retreats and conferences.

A resident of Westland, Tingson-Gatuz began her doctoral studies in the late 90s while working full-time as TRIO academic program coordinator. In 2001, she chose to pursue the degree more intently under a revised curriculum, which required additional course work, to ensure she was current in the field.

Madonna University’s TRIO program celebrated its 30th anniversary last fall and to date has completed approximately 37,000 hours of tutoring, involving more than 400 students. Other program services include academic and technological resources, cultural and leadership experiences, and peer-assisted study.

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