

VP for Student Affairs, Laurie Hamre, Wins 2015 Thomas Jefferson Award

St. Paul, Minn. – Laurie Hamre, Vice President for Student Affairs at Macalester College, has been awarded the 2015 Thomas Jefferson Award. The award was established in 1961 by the Robert Earll McConnell Foundation to honor members of the community who exemplify the principles and ideals of Thomas Jefferson. Hamre was selected by a committee of past Jefferson Award winners.

Here's the citation:

Laurie Hamre. After 14 years in student affairs at other institutions, you came to Macalester in 1992 to work as associate dean of students. You were the college's Dean of Students for 12 years, and in 2000, you were appointed Vice President of Student Affairs. During your tenure, you have helped guide and steer Macalester through momentous changes. The steady expansion of your job description is, among many things, a clear reflection of the seemingly unparalleled skills and insights you possess, and the tremendous confidence your peers have placed in you. Currently that job description lists at least 10 large areas that you direct and oversee, from Athletics to Career Development, International Student Programs to Residential Life, and many more. That description does not include your presence at major events in the college's history: helping staff and visitors with protocol, nurturing the Dalai Lama, or pointing John Kerry in the right direction. You have worked for three presidents and five provosts.

But these are only the facts. They do not begin to tell your story and the impact you have had at Macalester, on the entire community here.

“Keep students at the center of what we do” has been your mantra, and that vision has guided your work and that of your staff. “When you are with Laurie, that is what you constantly hear, over and over,” say your colleagues. You are firm, fair, and supportive. At any hour of the day or night, many of us in this room have turned to you for help and wisdom. In one colleague's words, “We all know, when you have a problem or challenge with a student, to call Laurie.”

Years ago, when a student party on campus got out of hand and resulted in arrests, some students gathered in the street, concerned and upset. You moved into the middle of the crowd and raised both hands, and calm ensued. “It's late, and everything will be okay,” you told them. “Go to bed.” The crowd dispersed. In the



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wake of 9/11, it was you who gathered our community in the chapel. Many were afraid; all were uncertain. You brought security and order to a situation no one could have anticipated. You especially made our international students feel safe, protected, and in the right place.

No job description can capture these actions. You, Laurie, have always cared for our whole college. And as one of your colleagues wrote, you have “always cared for the whole person—heart, mind, and soul.” Your quiet, calm wisdom and your deep, abiding commitment to Macalester have enriched countless students, staff, and faculty since 1992. The number of lives you have changed is beyond number. The number of students’ lives you have literally saved is unknown, except perhaps only to you. Throughout a demanding schedule including early hours at Weyerhaeuser beginning by 6:30 a.m. each day, whenever anyone took time to thank you for the myriad things you do for us, your simple answer was always the same: “It was *my* honor.”

Laurie Hamre, today it is *our* honor to give to you the 2015 Thomas Jefferson Award. Congratulations. And thank you. Thank you.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,045 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at macalester.edu

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