Springdale Student Receives Golden Eagle Award

Hernandez Active in Student Ambassador, Mentoring Programs

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (April 15, 2013) – Rubicely Hernandez, who has been a mentor in empowering and educating minority students about the opportunities a college education offers, recently was named NorthWest Arkansas Community College’s Golden Eagle Award recipient for April.

Students are nominated for NWACC’s Golden Eagle Award by an instructor, administrative staff person or a student organization adviser. Each candidate must have at least a 3.0 grade point average in a minimum of six credit hours of class as well as demonstrate social awareness, personal development, a diverse interest and involvement in varied activities, interpersonal communication skills and a commitment to education. The award was presented at the April 8 Board of Trustees meeting.

Hernandez, of Springdale, was nominated by Kathryn Birkhead, director for diversity and inclusion at NWACC.

“In describing Rubicely Hernandez’ strengths, it is difficult to know where to begin,” Birkhead wrote. “If her academic abilities are emphasized, her kindness seems to be shortchanged. If the focus is on her strength of character, her ability to observe and quietly build bridges between people doesn’t get the attention it deserves. None of these characteristics by itself shows what a remarkable young woman she is.”

Hernandez has a 3.95 grade point average and earned her Associate of Arts from NWACC in December. She is now working on completing a certificate in business management. After completing that certificate, she plans to transfer to the University of Arkansas in the fall of 2013 to complete her major in cultural anthropology with minors in marketing and Spanish. She also hopes to eventually pursue a master’s degree in higher education.
She has been an English/Spanish interpreter at Helen Tyson Middle School, and in that role, she has helped provide effective communication between teachers and parents who do not speak English efficiently during parent-teacher conferences. She also has been a mentor in the College’s Learning, Improvement, Fun and Empowerment program (known as LIFE). Her role as mentor has been to educate minority students about the opportunities higher education can offer while still allowing them to have fun.

In the LIFE program, she has visited Har-Ber High School on a weekly basis to meet with students and provide them with the tools that would enhance success at a college by giving them insights into college life. She also has helped recruit students for a three-day summer program and has collaborated with other mentors and the program coordinator to develop the 2013 summer LIFE program.

She also is completed her second year as a student ambassador. As an ALPFA member, she attended the ALPFA national convention in Las Vegas last summer. As a member of DREAMers of NWACC, she attended the United We Dream conference in Kansas City, Mo., in December.

“In both instances, her knowledge of herself and her ability to lead in a quiet way made her stand out,” Birkhead wrote. “A club sponsor never needs to worry about the well-being of students who are in Rubicely’s company.”

Birkhead added that Hernandez has made a wonderful difference in her community. “She generously shares of her gifts and her talents, creating good will in every environment.”

Hernandez said she was honored to receive the award. “I am really thankful for all the people I have known at NWACC and for the support of my family and friends,” she said.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a smart choice for students wanting to pursue quality higher education. As an accredited institution through The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, NWACC is a public two-year institution that serves and strengthens its surrounding communities in Benton and Washington counties by helping our students maximize their potential and exceed expectations. With state-of-the-art facilities, NWACC provides excellent academic instruction and workforce training needed to succeed, offering personalized attention from highly respected faculty, staff, and administrators. For more information, visit www.nwacc.edu.