

News Release

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Thomas Dougan selected for NASPA National Award

University of Rhode Island VPSA Scott Goodnight Award recipient

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Each year, NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, recognizes members who are doing outstanding work in the student affairs profession. Thomas Dougan, vice president for student affairs at the University of Rhode Island, is the 2016 recipient of the Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Performance as a Dean.

The award is given to a senior student affairs officer who has demonstrated sustained professional service in student affairs work, high-level competency in administrative skills, innovative response in meeting students' varied and emerging needs, effectiveness in developing junior staff members and leadership in community and university affairs. The recipient must also have earned stature among and support of students, faculty, and fellow administrators on his or her campus and made significant contributions to the field through publications or professional involvement.

Dougan's colleagues say being a Vice President of Student Affairs is his calling. He's had a lifelong commitment to student affairs, 30 years of that service at the University of Rhode Island (URI). He has made a tremendous impact on the institution, and on the Student Affairs Division.

Dougan's innovative approach is evident in many programs and activities designed for diverse student populations. For example, Dr. Dougan created the institution's first Diversity Committee decades ago. The Committee's primary role was to begin critical conversations among campus constituencies about the needs of diverse students, staff and faculty. He was the leading administrator in identifying the need for the creation of the University's first LGBTQ Center that has now evolved to being the nation's first free-standing Gender and Sexuality Center.

Dougan is well-respected by his colleagues and the President of the University of Rhode Island. "I have not known an individual as dedicated to the welfare and success of students as Dr. Dougan," says David Dooley.

Dougan is also committed to the student affairs profession. In earlier years, he was an active NASPA member involved in regional and national events and programming. He also encourages staff to be involved. Due to his financial support, the University of Rhode Island has an active NASPA Undergraduate Fellows Program, offers ACUHO-I internships, and nominates our staff to attend new- and mid-level professional institutes.

"Dr. Dougan's long-term impact on student affairs is being felt, and will continue to be felt, now and years down the road as the professionals he has mentored, guided and sponsored emerging leaders," says Mary Jo Gonzales, assistant vice president of student affairs and dean of students at URI. "I have the honor of being one of those professionals who has been shaped by Dr. Dougan and can only aspire to be as outstanding as he is every day, in every hour that he serves students and advances our profession."

His colleagues call him humble, innovative, strategic, inspiring and effective.

Dougan and the other National Award winners will be honored in March at the 2016 NASPA Annual Conference in Indianapolis, Ind.

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NASPA is the leading association for the advancement, health, and sustainability of the student affairs profession. Our work provides high-quality professional development, advocacy, and research for 15,000 members in all 50 states, 25 countries, and 8 U.S. territories.