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UO anthropology professor named mentor of the year

*Students nominated
Professor Jon Erlandson
for his efforts to protect
the Coquille tribe*

By Teri Meeuwse
Higher Education Reporter

Associate anthropology Professor Jon Erlandson was named "Regional Faculty Mentor of the Year" by the Compact for Faculty Diversity at the group's recent annual meeting in New Orleans.

Participants in a program called the Doctoral Scholars Program annually nominate someone for the award. Jason Younker, a student and member of the Coquille Indian Tribe, is one of several students who nominated Erlandson for the award.

"For nearly three years, Dr. Jon Erlandson has been my friend, teacher and trusted counselor, displaying the characteristics which embody true faculty mentorship," Younker wrote in a nomination letter. "With his help, my tribe and many other Native Americans have been empowered to successfully protect and manage their cultural resources."

A delegation representing the

Coquille Indian Tribe attended the meeting and presented Erlandson with a Pendleton blanket and a letter of gratitude.

"We are extremely honored that you would accept the responsibility of mentoring our tribal scholars, so that they are empowered to lead future generations of Coquille Indians and other American Indian communities," the letter stated. "Your mentorship of Jason Younker will inspire community, friendship and humanity for many generations. For this we are truly indebted."

Erlandson's wife, Madonna Moss, also an assistant professor of anthropology at the University, said she is very pleased with Erlandson's award.

"He is so deserving of it," she said. "We were very moved by Jason's letter, and it was a pleasure to work with the Coquille Indian Tribe."

The Compact for Faculty Diversity is a five-year collaboration to increase the number of minority scholars in academia, Erlandson said.

"The faces of America's scholars are changing, so the face of the faculty should change to keep up," he

said.

Members of the compact include the New England Board of Higher Education, the Southern Regional Education Board and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE).

Erlandson, who is part of WICHE, said the commission has established many programs, including the Doctoral Scholars Program, which helps students get through graduate school and cover tuition costs.

Fifteen students have been through the DPS program and now have college or university teaching positions. Currently, 250 students under the Compact for Faculty Diversity are in the program.

Besides being a faculty advisor to students like Younker, Erlandson, along with Moss and a number of their students, have been involved in Coquille-related research by identifying, studying and excavating a variety of archaeological sites.

Erlandson also provided classroom and field training in archaeology to Coquille tribal members and worked with the tribe to develop a comprehensive cultural resources protection plan.

Affirmative action may end in Houston

*A recent poll shows that 56 percent
of voters in Houston want to keep or
expand the program — not eliminate it*

By Terri Langford
The Associated Press

HOUSTON — The clock is ticking for Houston's affirmative action program.

The city's voters will decide Nov. 4 whether to wipe out their program, something Californians did last year.

If the measure passes, Houston will be the first U.S. city to eliminate affirmative action, and the debate could shift from California to another state with a large minority population: Texas.

"Everybody's eyes are on Houston," said Lenoria Walker, who runs the city's program. "If Houston is overtaken, then that will be a trend for the rest of the state to do the same thing."

Houston's program, which began in 1984, requires businesses that win city contracts to try to give 20 percent of their work to women and minorities.

The measure to end preferences has received a cooler reception than the one in California, which passed 55 percent to 45 percent.

A poll released Oct. 2 by the Houston Chronicle and KHOU-TV said 29 percent of voters want to abolish the program and 56 percent want to keep it or expand it. The rest were undecided.

Four of the five leading candidates in this fall's mayoral race said they would vote against the measure. Those four include the two front-runners, Republican activist Rob Mosbacher Jr. and Lee Brown, who was President Clinton's drug czar and would be

Houston's first black mayor.

The measure was put on the ballot by Houston businessman and GOP activist Ed Blum, who last year successfully challenged the creation of several congressional districts that were redrawn to favor minorities.

"The foundation of this program is the presumption that people who are African-American, who are Hispanic, or who are women are disadvantaged and need a special program in which they can compete," he said. "It is our belief that many of the people who are getting contracts from the city are highly successful people who should be competing on their own."

Legislators in about 20 states have tried to pass similar measures, said Carl E. Anderson of the American Contract Compliance Association, a trade organization for affirmative action officers. Those efforts have failed.

Nearly 21 percent of the nearly \$1 billion in contracts Houston gave out in fiscal 1997 were to businesses owned by non-whites and women, up from 16.4 percent during the previous decade. The city is 58 percent white, 18 percent black and 21 percent Hispanic.

Opponents of the city's program say it discriminates against white men and is bogged down in minutiae.

David Bearden, who is white, said he decided to vote for the measure after he tried to subcontract some city work to four black truckers he knew. City officials told him no because the truckers hadn't registered with the affirmative action program.

Bearden went with one of the businesses certified by the city, but when they wouldn't come down on their price — higher than if he had gone with his own team of truckers — he went to arbitration and won.

UNLV study to examine Vegas' sex industry

*Nevada's booming sex
industry has not been
adequately studied, two
UNLV professors say*

By Natalie Patton
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — With bare buttocks on billboards and risqué escort service ads filling Las Vegas' Yellow Pages, UNLV professors Kate Hausbeck and Barbara Brents were shocked by how little information has been uncovered about Nevada's sex industries.

They saw the dearth of research on the state's brothels and illegal prostitution and striptease clubs as a rare academic opportunity to scrutinize a topic that's understudied.

"We're right here in the belly of

the beast," said Brents, a 40-year-old associate professor of sociology at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "That makes it all the more clear to me how important a topic this is to research. You can't sit back from an ivory tower and talk about those people down there doing that work. You have to understand people's real lives and our role in it."

Hausbeck, a 29-year-old assistant professor of sociology, said little college-level research has been done in Nevada on sex industries even though the state is the only one with legalized prostitution in 10 of its 17 counties. Prostitution is outlawed in Nevada's two metropolitan areas, Clark and Washoe counties.

Hausbeck, who has gained regular entry into one of the city's

busiest gentlemen's clubs, said many Las Vegas gamblers and conventioners are confused about whether prostitution is legal in Clark County, and that's why outcall services and illegal prostitution thrive.

Brents said hotel owners benefit from Las Vegas' image of "sex being freely available" at the same time they attempt publicly to distance themselves from the sex industries.

"What's really amazing is that this town is not built just on gaming and on hotels," Hausbeck said. "Like it or not, this town is also built on the sex industry. It is astounding that we have these volumes of really great information and data about hotels and tourism and gaming, and have next to nothing on the sex industries."

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