



Where leaders are made

Office of the Associate Vice President for
Academic Affairs

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July 10, 2008

Dr. Barbara Nicholson
Professor of Leadership Studies
Marshall University
1 John Marshall Dr
Huntington, WV 25755-0001

Dear Dr. Nicholson:

On behalf of the American Association of University Administrators awards committee, I want to recognize James Owston who completed his dissertation under you in 2007. His work, "Survival of the Fittest? The Rebranding of West Virginia Higher Education," recently was awarded the Leo and Margaret Goodman Malamuth Award for an outstanding recent dissertation in higher education.

Jim presented a summary of his work at the AAUA conference June 26-28 in Salt Lake City. He clearly described the multiple methodologies underlying his work including the use of statistical, ethnographic, and case study methods. He made it clear that the breadth of his inquiry made it necessary for him to frame questions in different formats and seek answers with different tools.

Jim's presentation sparked a good deal of discussion about the many ways in which branding decisions are made and why some are better than others. It so happened that the president of Utah Valley College, soon to become Utah Valley University, also presented at the conference. Jim commented that U.V.U. has used an exemplary process of planning, communication, and resource gathering in the transition.

All in all, Jim made a wonderful contribution to our meeting. Our thanks to you for guiding his work.

Sincerely,


Jerome L. Neuner
AAUA Award Chairman

JLN/klp

Cc: Jim Owston, Mountain State University ✓