



PHI THETA KAPPA

INTERNATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY OF THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

FOR RELEASE

4/01/04

CONTACT: CASSIUS O. JOHNSON

512.496.7274

601.984.3513

cassius.johnson@ptk.org

Phi Theta Kappa Joins National Efforts to Promote Civic Engagement

Minneapolis, MN—Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society of the two-year college committed today to joining the ongoing national efforts to promote civic engagement in higher education. This announcement was made at the organization's annual convention being held over the next three days in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The convention attracts more than 3500 community college students, faculty, staff, administrators and alumni.

"We galvanize our effective programs, our collective and diverse human resources at more than 1200 community colleges, and our mission of excellence to further civic engagement in America. From this moment forth, we will not only be known as the best that community colleges have to offer, but we will be further characterized by our drive as civic-minded scholars," Rod A. Risley, Phi Theta Kappa Executive Director stated in remarks before the convention.

George Boggs, president of the American Association of Community Colleges commended Phi Theta Kappa for making civic engagement a priority. "There is no better way to improve the health of communities across America than to encourage the individual's responsibility for service. Phi Theta Kappa has a history of promoting civic engagement through its many programs, and it has the capacity to make an even bigger difference by engaging our finest students in this commitment," expressed Dr. Boggs. Phi Theta Kappa's chapters, located at community colleges throughout the United States and abroad, include some 250,000 active members, with nearly 100,000 new members inducted annually, making it the fastest growing honor society in higher education.

This focused commitment is being well received within the educational community. Mark Davis of the Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation, a Phi Theta Kappa partner in recognizing outstanding student achievement, pointed out how much Phi Theta Kappa has done already to promote civic engagement. "When we consider the scope and reach of this organization and its reputation for shaping and changing the lives of students, the expanded impact of their commitment will be exceptional."

Phi Theta Kappa will use its extensive portfolio of student programs to promote civic engagement through newspaper readership, voter awareness, leadership development, which includes service-learning opportunities, and the recognition of best practices through awards and in organizational publications.

USA TODAY newspaper and Phi Theta Kappa jointly launched the Community College Readership Program as a component of its civic engagement strategy. This program promotes civic engagement through newspaper readership. Diane Barrett, USA TODAY Director of Education Programs heralded the timeliness of this announcement. "The time to engage this generation as active participants in American democracy is now. Relevant and timely information found in daily newspapers encourages critical thinking and decision-making."

Phi Theta Kappa is the oldest, largest, and most prestigious honor society serving two-year and community colleges in all 50 of the United States, Canada, Germany, and U.S. territorial possessions.