

Midwestern Higher Education Compact: Wegenke Receives Sirotkin Award

Posted on Friday, Nov 17, 2017

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OVERLAND PARK, KS; MINNEAPOLIS, MN; MADISON, WI — During the annual business meeting of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) on November 13, Dr. Rolf Wegenke was presented with the Phillip Sirotkin Award for exemplary leadership in advancing Midwestern higher education through interstate cooperation.

“Dr. Wegenke’s passion for higher education is evidenced by his extensive experience,” said MHEC President Larry Isaak. “His leadership as president of the Wisconsin Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) and his tireless efforts to create innovative and cost saving collaborative services, foster dialogue about policy and practice between policymakers and postsecondary education leaders in the Midwest, and his focus on opportunities to promote student success were all reasons the commission nominated him.”

Wegenke has served as a MHEC commissioner since 1995. He has been appointed by four different governors.

Upon receiving the award, Wegenke stated, “The MHEC commissioners in this room evidently all knew about this award, but none of you spilled the beans. I am so impressed!” He went on to quote his favorite author, C.S. Lewis on friendship, and then addressed the commissioners saying, “I count all of you as friends because we are all united in the same great cause, the cause of educational opportunity”

In the early 1990s, Sirotkin was the visionary behind the regional higher education cooperation in the Midwest. MHEC established the Phillip Sirotkin Award in his honor in 1999 and periodically confers the award upon individuals that have been voted upon by the entire commission.

In addition to Dr. Wegenke, current Wisconsin commissioners are: Representative Joan Ballweg, Wisconsin State Legislature; Ms. Margaret Farrow, regent for the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents; and Mr. Don Madelung, vice president of Pierce Mortuary Colleges. Dr. Morna K. Foy, president of the Wisconsin Technical College System and Mr. David L. Miller, vice president for administration of the University of Wisconsin System serve as commissioner alternates.

ABOUT MHEC

Legislatively created, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact’s purpose is to provide greater higher education opportunities and services in the Midwestern region. Collectively, MHEC creates solutions that build higher education’s capacity to better serve individuals, institutions, and states by leveraging the region’s expertise, ideas, and experiences through multi-state: convening, programs, research, and contracts. Member states are: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. [Learn more.](#)