DSU President Receives Distinguished Alumni Award from Alma Mater

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DSU President Harry L. Williams has been honored by his alma mater, Appalachian State University, with its 2013 Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of his achievements during his 23-year higher education career.

Dr. Williams was presented the award on June 8 during a ceremony at the Boone, N.C. university. The award is given annually to an Appalachian graduate who has attained extraordinary distinction and success in his or her career field and has demonstrated exceptional and sustained leadership in the community.

Dr. Harry L. Williams is honored by his alma mater, Appalachian State University, where he earned his bachelor and master degrees.

Dr. Williams was described in the ceremony program as “a first-generation college student and a fierce advocate for higher education and for those hoping to pursue a college degree.” It also noted the numerous accomplishments that have taken place at DSU in his first 3½ years as president, including the research portfolio expansion, the University’s rise in HBCU rankings to 13th, as well as the leadership he has shown in testifying to a U.S. Senate committee on the escalating costs of higher education, student debt and what the federal government can do to make college more affordable for all Americans.

A native of Greenville, N.C., Dr. Williams credits Appalachian for providing him with a strong foundation for success. “I can tie all the wonderful things that have happened in my life back to Appalachian State University,” Williams said.

“While Harry may physically be in another state, his roots and his heart are here at Appalachian,” said Director of ASU Parent and

Family Services Traci Royster.

Susan McCracken, director of ASU External Affairs, added “He credits his mentors here – faculty, supervisors, staff and colleagues – with providing him with the skills and experiences he needed to test his wings, then to fly. We are all so proud that he is an Appalachian State University alumnus.”

At Appalachian State, Dr. Williams earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communication, a Master of Arts Degree in Educational Media, and an Education Specialist degree in Higher Education, Administration. He then went on to earn an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis from East Tennessee State University.

After graduating from Appalachian, he became its vice chancellor for Enrollment Services. He later served with the UNC General Administration as interim associate vice president for Academic Affairs and then interim senior associate vice president for Academic and Student Affairs. The latter allowed him to focus on access and outreach for all 17 campuses in the UNC system.

Dr. Williams began the DSU portion of his career story in 2008 when he was hired as provost and vice president of Academic Affairs

He began his tenure as the 10th president in DSU history in 2010.

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