Bergstrom awarded 2006 Service Learning Scholarship

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MILWAUKEE… MIAD President Robert Rindler has announced that senior Illustration major and Glendale-resident Sam Bergstrom is the 2006 Service Learning Scholarship recipient based on his leadership in the classroom and his outstanding service to Saint Benedict’s Community Meal Program in spring 2005.

For the past five years, since the inception of MIAD’s service learning graduation requirement, MIAD has awarded this scholarship with the generous support of the Northwestern Mutual Foundation. MIAD is the only art and design college in the country with this graduation requirement.

Liberal Studies Professor David H. Martin, who teaches the service learning course at MIAD, said, “Bergstrom received the award because in sharing challenging stories and observations from his experience, he served as a powerful motivator to his classmates and energized them to share their own experiences in a more engaging dialogue.”

In his reflections for his final course project, Bergstrom wrote of the practice at St. Benedict’s to have every volunteer eat a meal with the guests: “There but for the grace of God go I… and I realize that these people are homemakers, fathers, mothers, friends, family … good, hardworking men and women who have fallen on difficult times…. They stand in a position of extreme vulnerability. Sitting beside them, eating with them … ‘them’ is no longer appropriate. ‘We’ eat together, in peace, and the vulnerability is laid aside in the acceptance that it will be faced, and overcome.”

The service-learning requirement exemplifies MIAD’s commitment to civic engagement. To graduate, each junior must perform 50 hours of community service unrelated to the arts in one of more than 100 non-profit agencies that partner with MIAD. The requirement is part of a rigorous academic program including research, readings and written and oral presentations.

Since the requirement’s inception, MIAD college students have contributed more than 30,000 hours and a half million dollars in volunteer support to Southeastern Wisconsin.

MIAD is Wisconsin’s only college devoted exclusively to the education of artists and designers. Founded in 1974, it enrolls 650 talented students from across the country who are taught by artists and designers recognized regionally and nationally for their professional and educational accomplishments. Its unique academic approach blends curricular and extracurricular experiences, a community service requirement and liberal studies in 11 majors toward the bachelor of fine arts degree. 80 percent of MIAD’s graduates remain in Wisconsin, contributing a vital “brain gain” to the state.