

Press Release

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MTU Retains opusWeb.com for EdOpp Web Site Overhaul

Houghton, Michigan (July 26, 2006) - The Department of Educational Opportunity (EdOpp) which serves as the center for diversity and multicultural programming at Michigan Tech has partnered with Houghton-based Web developer, opusWeb.com, to completely revamp the department's Web presence.

Press Contact:
Jeffery Primeau
Co-Founder and
Director of
Marketing/Communications

Tel: +1 906.482.3235
e-mail: jeff@opusweb.com

Focusing on the development of a truly inclusive community through campus-wide collaborations, the department directs and implements programs that create a pipeline of potential undergraduate and graduate students to Michigan Tech. In addition, EdOpp ensures the needs of underrepresented students, faculty and staff are met and provide resources to encourage and support the development of cultural competencies across campus.

Chris Anderson, Executive Director of Educational Opportunity and Special Assistant to the President for Institutional Diversity stated, "our staff work with academic departments and individual faculty to design and implement outreach and professional development activities that support students as well as faculty retention and success. This is often accomplished by building partnerships with external federal and state organizations, schools and teachers, corporations and other funding agents, and the local community.

According to Shalini Suryanarayana, EdOpp Special Academic Programs Director, "Diversity and outreach is our fundamental core and while our previous Web site was somewhat functional, we needed a more vibrant concept and look to ramp up our overall department and Web-based objectives."

The new site, which contains a photo-rich introductory/main page, immediately sets the tone and overall voice that the department needs to convey. Furthermore, keeping the site gender neutral was another important objective during the development stages.

"One of the biggest concerns presented to us for this project was that the new site needs to be 'gender neutral.' While the idea may sound easy to achieve, it's an altogether different story when you sit down at the drawing board," said Jeffery Primeau, opusWeb.com Co-Founder and Director of Marketing/Communications.

"The interesting aspect of that portion of the project was when the inspiration to balance out 'male dominant' colors and making room for the 'female dominant' colors came from browsing a Web site of a world-renowned skincare and cosmetics Web site. It just fell together flawlessly, and when the idea was pitched to the client, not only did they like it, they understood it," Primeau added.

The new site is also part of a goal to increase traffic and to retain visitors to the site. With improved navigation and better organized content, visitors looking for information on the new EdOpp site should be inclined to stay longer and review the content available to them without having to put much effort into it. While standard features embedded into most Web sites are available, the new site will also allow the EdOpp department to effectively market themselves with a tool that reflects their fundamental core.

In addition to the Web project, opusWeb.com will be responsible for the monthly maintenance and updating of the site. The site was also designed and structured around a concept that makes the adding of additional content easy to accomplish without having to worry about major design constraints or overhauls in the future.

"We needed something completely different than what we had before, but didn't have the in-house expertise to meet that goal. There are many firms that do Web development, but we needed the "hometown" customer service that would give us and our site the attention it needed," said Matt Grulke, MTU/EdOpp Computer Support Specialist.

"With the success of the Summer Youth Programs Web site here at MTU, also done by opusWeb.com, we're really looking forward to the same results with EdOpp. We really appreciate their balance of listening to what we have say, yet pointing us in the direction of where we actually need to be," Suryanarayana added.

Les Cook, Vice President for Student Affairs commented on the improved Web presence and feels the improvements will be two-fold.

"I think the new site is visually appealing as well as easily navigable. The site does a fabulous job presenting many of our students and articulates a vision for initiatives and programs within Educational Opportunity," said Cook.

The new Web site is located at <http://www.edopp.mtu.edu>

Founded in 1996, opusWeb.com leverages Web development strategies to help companies and organizations approach and maintain their viability on the Web. The firm delivers a host of Web-based solutions including strategy, design, programming and agency-side assistance. opusWeb.com is a partnered firm by Jeffery Primeau of Calumet, and Heath Sundstrom of Hancock, and is headquartered at 600 E. Lakeshore Drive (UPPCO Building) in Houghton, Michigan.

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