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Lisa Sharp Receives Friend Award for Innovative Advising in Online Ed Alliance

Ames, Iowa (April 11, 2018) –Lisa Sharp, adviser at Iowa State University, was honored with a 2018 Friend of the Great Plains IDEA Award. She was celebrated for extraordinary leadership advising students in the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (IDEA).

The honor came at the annual meeting of the alliance April 10, 2018, in Kansas City, Missouri. Sharp has improved student advising for the Early Childhood Education for a Mobile Society program of Great Plains IDEA, the alliance’s first online bachelor’s degree offering. The degree program — which prepares students to work with diverse groups of young children, families, and communities in a global society — is known by different names at various member universities. Students who enroll in the program through Iowa State recognize it as the Early Childcare Education and Programming degree program.

Iowa State University offered one of the first courses of the new online bachelor’s completion program in fall 2014. Sharp watched the process unfold and helped students navigate their path to completing the degree in a timely manner. Sharp met regularly with development team faculty to inform them about student needs.

Sharp’s colleagues said she significantly increased understanding of the program for students and improved communication between advisers and students across all seven participating institutions. She contributed student-friendly planning forms and an innovative tracking system for monitoring student eligibility for courses.

Great Plains IDEA brings together faculty from accredited universities to offer high-quality online academic programs cost-effectively. Iowa State participates in six human sciences programs and four agriculture programs through the consortium. Seventeen accredited member institutions and two

accredited affiliate institutions share responsibilities to offer 11 online degrees and 14 online certificates. To take part in the inter-institutional programs, a student chooses one partner as a home institution for enrollment, transcript and graduation.

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