For the second year in a row, Oklahoma State University is the recipient of a national honor for its commitment to diversity and inclusion, the 2013 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine. The university will be featured with other colleges and universities in the publication’s November issue.

“Oklahoma State University prides itself on being a campus rich in diversity and is pleased to once again be recognized nationally for our efforts,” said OSU President Burns Hargis. “Our work supports OSU’s land-grant mission and commitment to make higher education accessible to all. I am excited about the incredible strides our campus is making in the area of diversity.”

“This award signifies that diversity is an opportunity rather than an obligation that continues to move OSU forward as a national leader in diversity and inclusion,” said Dr. Jason Kirksey, associate vice president for institutional diversity.

OSU was also recently named a 2013 Top 100 Degree Producer by Diverse: Issues in Higher Education magazine, which is based on U.S. Department of Education reports on institutions that confer the most degrees to minority students. During the 2012-2013 academic year, a record of nearly 5,000 undergraduates at OSU were students of color. The university also ranks as the number one land-grant institution in the nation for the number of Native American students earning a bachelor’s degree.

More than 40 diversity-related student organizations at OSU allow students to promote their heritage and become leaders. Many of these students begin programs in high school that transition them into a college environment, explained Kirksey.

Kacie Cardenas, a biochemistry and molecular biology freshman from Edmond, participated in the Retired Educators for Youth Agricultural Program while she was in high school. The four-day residential summer research institute offered by the Division of Institutional Diversity at OSU, helped her gain skills that she is applying to pursue her degree.

“Being part of these programs has truly impacted my college experience by providing me constant support, not only in academics but in my personal life,” said Cardenas.
“Diversity at OSU begins at the top and permeates down throughout the university campus,” Kirksey said. “We are fortunate to have President Hargis as a leader who gives us confident, compassionate and committed leadership in the area of diversity and inclusion.”

For more information about the 2013 HEED award winners, visit www.insightintodiversity.com.

By Kaitlin Loyd