

# Michigan Campus Compact Member Spotlight

## “Learning to Serve by Pulling Together”

By Charles F. Ganzert

Recently, Northern Michigan University has begun a pilot program in preparation for the campus-wide implementation of its Superior Edge initiative in the Fall 2006 semester. Students can earn Edge credit and a special recognition at graduation for community service they do, both inside and outside the classroom. For 100 hours of their time, students can earn an Edge in one of four categories: Citizenship, Diversity, Leadership, or Real World. A person fulfilling the requirements for all four categories is awarded a Superior Edge. Classes with a service component will count for Edge credits.

One faculty member at NMU who has successfully integrated service into the curriculum is Dwight Brady in the Communication and Performance Studies Department. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Brady and his Advanced Video students won a Michigan Association of Broadcasters Broadcast Excellence Award for one such project. While the Alaska's Iditarod is probably the most famous sled dog race in the country, the U.P. 200 is another competitive sled dog race that takes place in Marquette, Michigan.



In February 2005, Dr. Brady's Advanced Video class recorded the Marquette to Grand Marais and back again race, videoed at each rest stop, and interviewed the race organizers and participants. From this footage, the class produced a half-hour documentary called *The U.P. 200: A Community Pulling Together* that aired across the region on WNMU Public Television.



This project is a good example of what Robert Bringle calls “learning to serve and serving to learn.” The students, the faculty, the Public Television station, the race participants, and the community were all winners by the time this project was completed. The students learned how to plan and produce an award winning documentary, the race organizers got a quality video to use while fund raising, the TV station aired a local show, and the race participants were able to enjoy their event on television. Said Dr. Brady, “My students knew the U.P. Sled Dog Association was counting on them, and of course, I was counting on them to pull this off. This caused them to focus, work as a team, and exercise professionalism in executing the project.” The documentary was, in fact, of such professional quality that John Murname of ESPN2 asked if he could use some of the video footage in their *Timeless* program. As a result, Dr. Brady's class project goes a long way to show how service and learning can complement one another in the academic community, and creative teaching approaches like this will help insure that the Superior Edge program at Northern Michigan University is a success.

