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### **For Immediate Release**

## **MIT and Kuali Create Models for Higher Education's Fight to Be Efficient and Produce Economic Benefit**

WEST HARTFORD, CT (July 26, 2010) – Taxpayer disinvestment, rising costs, and the slowing economy have created two distinct challenges for higher education. Those who fund higher education through taxes and tuition expect their dollars to be used wisely and efficiently. At the same time they expect their institutions of higher education to contribute to the economic strength of their communities, states and the nation as a whole.

Two exemplary models of success in meeting these challenges in action were featured awardees of the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education's (NCCI) Leveraging Excellence Award. The first, Kuali, is an innovative collaboration for building open-source administrative software for a community of over 50 institutions and counting, saving all members development costs, as well as ensuring their products work efficiently and effectively in higher education systems. The second, MIT's Venture Mentoring Service, matches innovators and their ideas with experienced entrepreneurs who can help turn their ideas into successful businesses.

Representatives from Kuali and MIT's Venture Mentoring Service (VMS) received the 2010 Leveraging Excellence Award on July 23 at NCCI's 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in San Francisco, CA. The award is sponsored by the Follett Higher Education Group

Jennifer Foutty, Executive Director for Kuali, and Brad Wheeler, Vice President for Information Technology and CIO, Indiana University, and Chairman of the Kuali Foundation Board of Directors, accepted the award on behalf of Kuali.

"Since its inception, we have viewed the purpose of the Kuali Foundation and its projects to help leverage the work of many campuses in service to the full array of higher education institutions. This recognition by NCCI affirms the solid success of Kuali for that essential objective." Brad Wheeler

Sherwin Greenblatt, Director of the MIT Venture Mentoring Service (VMS) accepted the award on behalf of the VMS program. Greenblatt has been exploring the interface between the

entrepreneurial and academic worlds since he was a student at MIT working with Dr. Amar Bose on sound technology. Dr. Bose later hired Greenblatt to help start the Bose Corporation, where he eventually became CEO.

“The MIT Venture Mentoring Service adds immeasurably to the Institute’s ability to spur innovation by providing the guidance and tools to help breakthrough research reach the marketplace. By forming working relationships between fledgling entrepreneurs and seasoned mentors, VMS helps increase the likelihood that new ventures can succeed sooner in delivering the fruits of MIT research to the world.” Dr. Susan Hockfield, President, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

The Kualii Foundation is a growing community of universities, colleges, businesses, and other organizations that have partnered to build and sustain open-source administrative software for higher education, by higher education. Kualii software is designed to meet the needs of all sizes of institutions, from land-grant research universities to community colleges. Members of the Kualii Community share a common vision of open, modular, and distributed systems for their software requirements. Kualii software is released under the Educational Community License. The Kualii Projects are tied together by the Kualii Foundation, a non-profit organization that coordinates the efforts of partners, manages and protects the community’s intellectual property, and handles common concerns among the Kualii Projects. [www.kualii.org](http://www.kualii.org)

MIT’s VMS program harnesses the knowledge and experience of volunteer alumni and other business leaders to help prospective entrepreneurs in the university community bring their ideas and inventions to market. Entrepreneurs receive practical education through a hands-on, team mentoring process that builds a trusted long-term relationship. This experiential learning increases the innovation output of the institution through greater commercialization of ideas and university technologies. [web.mit.edu/vms/](http://web.mit.edu/vms/)

MIT VMS services are offered without charge to MIT students, alumni, faculty and staff who are considering the possibility of starting a new company. Entrepreneurs often come to VMS at very early stages in their idea process—usually before there is a business plan, a strategy and revenue model, a team, or any funding. VMS doesn’t screen to pick winners; rather, VMS’s mission is to use any plausible idea as the focus for practical education on the venture creation process.

Pete Peters, Executive Director of Innovate VMS of St. Louis, said his program is a replicate of the MIT initiative. MIT shared all of its documentation and processes with Innovate VMS of St. Louis. The St. Louis program began with five ventures in 2007 and is now up to 82. It started with 18 mentors and now has 120 mentors. “We could not have done this without help from MIT’s Venture Mentoring Service,” Peters said. MIT has helped eleven institutions start VMS systems, sharing their model openly.

The Leveraging Excellence Award Judging Panel included: Chair Lee Todd, President, University of Kentucky; Ronald A. Crutcher, President, Wheaton College (Massachusetts); Susan Jurow, Senior Vice President, Professional Development and Communications, National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO); Mohammad H. Qayoumi, President, California State University, East Bay; and Reginald Robinson, President & CEO, Kansas Board of Regents.

**Follett Higher Education Group** (<http://www.fheg.follett.com/>) provides sponsorship support for the NCCI Leveraging Excellence Award. “We thank Follett for its strong support of this program. With the challenges facing higher education today, it’s more important than ever for NCCI to promote the dissemination of innovative and effective programs and this Award program does just that,” said NCCI President Margaret Harrington, Director of Organization Improvement Services at the University of Southern California.

**NCCI** represents a wide range of member institutions, with many individuals working in organizational development, quality assessment, planning, and institutional improvement. Its programs promote sharing best practices and supporting professional development of individual members. To learn more about NCCI and the Leveraging Excellence program, and to view information on past Leveraging Excellence Award winners, please visit [www.ncci-cu.org](http://www.ncci-cu.org).