

For Immediate Release

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HSSU Receives \$1 Million in Stimulus Funds to Restore Vashon Community Center

St. Louis, MO (September 25, 2009) – Harris-Stowe State University this week received a \$1 million preservation grant to assist with the renovations of the historic Vashon Community Center, which is housed on the west corner of Harris-Stowe’s main campus. Harris-Stowe is one of 20 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) that received stimulus funding to help protect historic buildings on their campuses.

The grant, which was awarded through President Barack Obama’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, was designed to boost the national and local economy, while focusing on community outreach and academic and cultural programming. The Vashon Community Center, located at 3145 Market Street, falls into this category as one of only a few recreation facilities that catered to the needs of African-Americans during segregation. Today, the center it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

“It is an honor to have such a historic building on our campus,” said Dr. Henry Givens Jr., President of Harris-Stowe. “We have been patiently waiting on some sort of funding to renovate the Vashon Center, and this is the first step toward our goal of transforming the facility into something extraordinary.”

Upon completion, the Vashon Center will be the venue for the Don and Heide Wolff Jazz Institute, which is now located in the Dr. Henry Givens Jr. Administration Building of the University’s main campus; also included in the floor plan is a new repository for historic documents that will house works from Atty. Frankie Freeman and William L. Clay Sr., to name a few; an art museum and for Harris-Stowe’s Center of Excellence for Homeland Security, a program that is in the works.

The \$1 million provided to Harris-Stowe will go toward much-needed repairs to the interior and exterior of the center. Congressman William L. Clay Jr., a major supporter of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, played a lead role in ensuring that Harris-Stowe was included in the stimulus awards to HBCUs.

“I was pleased to work with President Obama to bring \$1 million to Harris-Stowe State University for the restoration and renovation of historic structures on campus,” said

Congressman Clay. “The President and I understand that historically black colleges and universities play a huge role in preparing our young people for success. Congratulations to Dr. Givens and his entire staff.”

Harris-Stowe State University, located in midtown St. Louis, is a four-year institution that offers 12 degree programs in the areas of Accounting, Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Health Care Management, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Information Sciences and Computer Technology, Middle School Education, Professional Interdisciplinary Studies, Secondary Education and Urban Education. Ranked by *U.S. News* as one of America’s Best Colleges in the Midwest, the University, which has been in existence for more than 150 years, offers the most affordable bachelor’s degree in the metropolitan area.

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