



DR. JANET PISANESCHI  
Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs,  
Western Michigan University

2007 HONOREE, Seventh Recipient of the  
Distinguished Woman in Higher Education Leadership Award

Dr. Janet I. Pisaneschi is Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Western Michigan University. She began her career as a mentor to young women as a biology teacher for students from elementary age through high school, following her graduation from Ursuline College. After earning an MA degree from St. John's University and a doctoral in the Philosophy of Science at St. Louis University, Dr. Pisaneschi became the first woman to lead an academic division at Christian Brothers College in Memphis. She also served on the staff of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

After moving to the University of Kentucky as an Assistant Dean, she became a Congressional Fellow of the American Society for Allied Health Professions, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. While in Washington DC, Dr. Pisaneschi assisted with HIV/AIDS legislation, which led to her position in Manhattan as an educational programming consultant to the American Foundation for AIDS Research.

In 1989, Janet Pisaneschi was recruited by the Provost to head Western Michigan's College of Health and Human Services, where she led the development of the Bronson School of Nursing and established the Unified Clinics to provide clinical experience for WMU students and serve the Kalamazoo area community. She oversaw the construction of a \$50 million health and social services facility to house all the university's programs in one state-of-the-art building, and she has created a research enterprise at WMU that is one of the nation's ten largest for an allied health college of its kind.

Always ready to serve, Dr. Pisaneschi delayed her retirement to answer Western Michigan's call to become its Provost during the University's present search for a new President and Provost.

In the words of her nominator, WMU President Diether Haenicke, who first hired her in 1989, "I count that hire as one of my best... and (today) have learned anew the power of her leadership style . I can think of no leader more deserving of this coveted award."