

2008

UNIVERSITY
TEACHING AWARDS

“It was my honor and great pleasure to serve as the chair of the 2008 University Teaching Awards Committee, especially working with a great group of faculty, staff and students on the individual committees. My favorite parts of this role were reading the many incredible nominations where I got a glimpse of just what an amazing set of teachers we have at UNC, then hearing the winners, and finally reading the write up on each of the winners.



BOXILL

After doing this, I invariably find myself saying, ‘Wow, I would love to take this person’s class.’

How lucky our students are to have such dedicated, brilliant

and effective teachers. We are also fortunate to have these same teachers give back by working on the various committees, who gave their time and commitment to the success of this process, especially as the selection process is not easy given the hundreds of outstanding nominations.

The entire process runs smoothly thanks to Debbie Stevenson who is just simply amazing in coordinating all of this.”

—Jan Boxill, Chair, 2008 University Teaching Awards Committee

Board of Governors’ Award for Excellence in Teaching

Established by the Board of Governors in April 1994 to underscore the importance of teaching and to reward good teaching across the university system, the awards are given annually to a tenured faculty member from each UNC campus. Winners must have taught at their present institutions at least seven years. No one may receive the award more than once.

Carolina’s nominee, Kevin Stewart, will be recognized at a May 9 luncheon to be held in conjunction with the Board of Governors’ meeting. He will receive a commemorative bronze medallion and a \$7,500 cash prize, presented by Erskine Bowles, UNC president, and Jim Phillips, chair of the board.

KEVIN STEWART

- Associate professor of geological sciences
- Faculty member: 1986
- Classes taught last year: Structural Geology, First Year Seminar on the Geology of North Carolina, Geology of North America

How do you motivate your students to learn?

I’m fortunate because I get to teach something which I find exciting and interesting, and I hope my enthusiasm for the material is at least a little bit infectious. Many of the world’s most pressing problems, such as global warming, are geologic problems, so I think the students can see an immediate connection between what they learn in the classroom and what they see in the news.

Excerpts from award citation:

‘Professor Stewart is hands down my favorite instructor. His approach is invigorating and engaging. I’ve taken every class with Professor Stewart that I can. You really cannot overstate how much he inspires students.’ ... Passion is a quality that distinguishes Stewart’s teaching. Students find themselves drawn into geology because of his enthusiasm and deep love of the subject. He awakens what he calls the geologic imagination, an ability to think about the natural world in innovative ways. As one former student observed, ‘I was honestly caught off guard by how much I enjoyed this course. I’m not a science person, but I found the material lively and exciting.’

Stewart finds a rocky perch on campus behind the Ackland Art Museum.



Tanner Faculty Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching

The awards were created in 1952 with a bequest by Kenneth Spencer Tanner, class of 1911, and his sister, Sara Tanner Crawford (and by them on behalf of their deceased brothers, Simpson Bobo Tanner Jr. and Jesse Spencer Tanner), establishing an endowment fund in memory of their parents, Lola Spencer and Simpson Bobo Tanner.

The award was established to recognize excellence in inspirational teaching of undergraduate students, particularly first- and second-year students.

Each of the five winners receives a one-time stipend of \$5,000 and a framed citation.

MARK J.C. CRESCENZI

- Associate professor of political science
- Faculty member since: 1999
- Classes taught last year: Introduction to International Relations; Introduction to International Relations, Honors; Defense and National Security Policy; International Conflict Processes

How do you motivate your students to learn?

My primary teaching goal is to get my students to think analytically about politics. I want them to be able to understand the political motivations for events that occur in world politics, such as trade agreements or wars. I motivate my students by getting them to think about current world politics in a new way. Just by taking a look at an event and breaking it down into its causes and consequences, the students start to see politics in a new light. They quickly make the shift from news consumers to political analysts, and we can then proceed to learning about theories of international relations. Events change rapidly in the political arena, but the underlying explanations remain important.

Excerpts from award citation:

Students consistently praise Crescenzi for his classroom manner, his concern for their learning and his ability to connect the abstract with the concrete and to give them tools to carry beyond college into the real world. It was striking how students also appreciated Crescenzi's ability to arm them with important tools for navigating the real world. In describing his classroom manner, students and colleagues called him an inspiration, very enthusiastic, understatedly funny, laid-back, open to questions, bubbly and very effective. Crescenzi not only embodies excellence in undergraduate teaching, but also changes students' lives on a daily basis.

WILLIAM C. MAISCH

- Senior lecturer, Romance Languages
- Faculty member since: 1995
- Classes taught last year: Spanish 204, APPLES service-learning; Spanish 101; Spanish 260H, Honors fifth-semester Introduction to Literature; Cervantes in Translation.

How do you motivate your students to learn?

The question that I am qualified to answer is not how I motivate my students but how

my students motivate me. If my students are motivated, it is a product of what happens in the classroom when one has the privilege to work with extraordinary students like ours. I am passionate about teaching, but it only works when it works, because of the motivation I get from my students' amazing enthusiasm for life and learning.

Excerpts from award citation:

William Maisch is an expert on Spanish poetry and literature — all of his students note that; but what is even more impressive is his expertise in teaching. His passion for Spanish and his creative and fresh teaching strategies inspire his students to immerse themselves in their coursework and to continue learning even outside of the classroom. Maisch's students feel his investment in their education, whether he encounters them in



CRESCENZI



MAISCH



MCCOMBS



PRINZ



THRAILLKILL

class, office hours, or even on a quad. One student said that when Professor Maisch was teaching and interfacing with students, she felt that 'There was nothing else in his life that he would rather be doing.' With his passion, creativity, energy, and teaching expertise, Maisch inspires the lives and the intellectual pursuits of his students.

MARK MCCOMBS

- Senior lecturer, mathematics
- Faculty member since: 1989
- Classes taught last year: Algebra, Pre-calculus Mathematics, Calculus of Functions of One Variable II, Discrete Mathematics, First Year Seminar: Math, Art and the Human Experience.

How do you motivate your students to learn?

Whenever possible, I try to illuminate the human face behind the numbers and formulae which often make mathematics classes seem so intimidating. Even the most complex mathematical concepts grow out of real people's attempts to make sense of their world. My most gratifying teaching moments include those in which students have said,

'Before your course, I never thought I really belonged in a math class. But I'm actually understanding some of this stuff now!'

Excerpts from award citation:

Many students have approached their first class in mathematics at Carolina with anxiety and even dread; yet those fortunate to be taught by Professor Mark McCombs complete their course not only with a confident understanding of mathematical principles but also with a renewed faith in their abilities to think and learn for themselves. The contagious enthusiasm of McCombs extends beyond his work in the classroom. As a generous mentor, adviser and department member, McCombs epitomizes the approachable teacher who earns the loyalty of his students through his own dedication to his subject. One student

one of the great teachers at Carolina. He displays a scintillating intellect and has the expectation that his students will be intellectual beings throughout their lives. Under his guidance, they too become philosophers. His devotion to his subject is matched by his devotion to engaging with his students. Such teachers are rare, but Jesse Prinz is one of them. One senior declared him to be 'the most energetic, devoted and inspiring professor I have had throughout my undergraduate career.'

JANE THRAILLKILL

- Associate professor and director of undergraduate studies, Department of English and Comparative Literature
- Faculty member since: 2000

■ Classes taught last year: The American Novel, American Nervousness (graduate seminar), American Literature After the Civil War.

How do you motivate your students to learn?

I try to cultivate a spirit of inquiry and open conversation in my classes. We spend a good deal of time discussing the cultural context of a work

of fiction, on the principle that characters such as Daisy Miller or Huck Finn can come into focus only with some knowledge of the changing economic and social structure of the Gilded Age. Together we look closely and deeply, focusing on passages and talking about the strangeness, humor, complexity, or sheer beauty of an author's language.

JESSE PRINZ

- John J. Rogers Professor of Philosophy
- Faculty member since: 2003
- Classes taught last year: First-year Seminar on Human Nature, Moral Psychology, Philosophy of Cognitive Science

How do you motivate your students to learn?

Students come into a class motivated; they enjoy learning, and they select courses that sound interesting. The trick to maintaining that level of motivation is to teach material that is as fascinating as it sounds from a course description. I am especially drawn to questions that challenge us to deepen our understanding of human behavior, but absolutely anything can be an object of wonder if you ask the right questions about it.

Excerpts from award citation:

Good teachers help their students learn about a subject. Great teachers help their students learn how to make real contributions to it. By this measure, Jesse Prinz is

credited McCombs with being the most inspiring and entertaining teacher that I had throughout my entire academic career."

Excerpts from award citation:

Students are excited and engaged in the variety of classes that Professor Thraillkill instructs. Her large lecture courses are infused with the same level of passion and insightfulness as smaller classes. One such example is a course on the American novel offered last fall. One colleague said that Thraillkill thinks about issues like class size pedagogically as well as logistically. ... She reaches each student with her boundless enthusiasm. ... Rarely have I seen a teacher perform in class with such a dazzling combination of casual off-the-cuff improvisation and incisive, focused analysis of literary history, texts, and experience. What can I say? I laughed and learned along with her admiring students. ... Thraillkill exemplifies the greatest assets of a successful teacher — intelligence, passion, a sense of humor, and a commitment to excellence.

Post-Baccalaureate Teaching and Mentoring Award

This award was first given by the University in 1995 to recognize the important role of post-baccalaureate teaching. Each of the four winners receives a one-time stipend of \$5,000 and a framed citation.

HIROSHI MOTOMURA

- Kenan Distinguished Professor of Law
- Faculty member since: 2003
- Classes taught last year: Immigration and Citizenship, Civil Procedure

How do you motivate your students to learn?

Once I taught an 8-year-old to ride a bike. She thought she wanted to learn but fell repeatedly in frustration. Adults pushed her bike, only to watch her crash alone seconds later. This seemed backwards. Let her start on her own, then catch her before she falls. I stood one foot away, she rolled to me, and I caught her. I backed up another foot and we did the same thing. And again. Soon I was back 15 feet, and she didn't need me at all.

Excerpts from award citation:

Refreshing, amazing, passionate, a professor who genuinely enjoys teaching. ... Students consistently rave that his courses are among the best ... in 20 years of education and that he is one of the most dedicated professors. ... As one student says, he's a fantastic mentor, professor, and a reminder that it's possible to be a lawyer and a well-rounded person.



MOTOMURA

DELLA POLLOCK

- Professor of communication studies
- Faculty member since: 1986
- Classes taught last year: Special Topics in Performance Studies, Performance and Oral History

How do you motivate your students to learn?

I try to imagine with each student what's possible in his/her work, to help each to strengthen the broader vision and essential commitments on which it relies, and then to do what I can to pave the way. Ultimately, this means variously enabling students to own their Respective projects, to claim and pursue initiatives that integrate theory and practice and to understand how and why their work matters — in the field, the



POLLOCK

University, the communities (local to global) in which we live and work.

Excerpts from award citation:

Students and colleagues ... emphasize Pollock's commitment to education at every level and in every setting and often comment on her as a scholar who models the highest level of collaborative and giving intellectual practice. ... Pollock models a synergistic approach to teaching, service and scholarship that sets an empowering example for all of her students.

STEPHEN J. WALSH

- Professor of geography
- Faculty member since: 1986
- Classes taught last year: Coupled Human Natural Systems and Land Use Dynamics, Geographic Information Systems, People and Environment in Southeast Asia.

How do you motivate your students to learn?

My general goal is to seamlessly integrate spatial analytical techniques and substantive geographic issues in a holistic manner that knows no artificial boundaries that are often seen through traditional course boundaries and content partitions. The challenge is to educate students about tools, techniques and spatial digital methods; train them in their applications; and integrate theory and practice within a basic and applied research context that is rooted within the spatial analytical methods, but extends throughout the natural, social and spatial sciences for assessing important research paradigms and scientific and societal questions. Every course that I teach is based to some degree within my research, and, as such, creative thinking and development of an analytical strategy and executable processing streams are essential to simulate 'real world' conditions and learning through problem solving within a research and scientific context.

Excerpts from award citation:

Walsh is a true mentor, who gives unselfishly of himself to all his students. He goes out of his way to provide exciting research



WALSH

opportunities for his students. ... From his joyful teaching style to his challenging classes, from his thoughtful guidance on ethical issues to his generous open-door policy, from his practical career advice to his concern for a student's whole graduate experience, it is clear

that graduate education is Steve's greatest love ... and he is really good at it.

RAY C. WILLIAMS

- Straumann Distinguished Professor and chair of periodontology, School of Dentistry
- Faculty member since: 1994
- Classes taught last year: Fundamentals of Periodontology, Four Graduate Seminars in Periodontology, Elective Seminar in Periodontology

How do you motivate your students to learn?

I want my students to develop the understanding that dentistry is a dynamic and rapidly emerging discipline that will require life-long learning. Thus the seminars and discussions are focused on new and emerging science in dentistry and medicine that has the likelihood of changing, in a short time, how they conduct themselves in dentistry. Equally important, I want my students to understand that their main role as a doctor is to bring to bear all of the latest knowledge and skill to help people live better lives for longer; to dedicate their life to caring for and helping people.



WILLIAMS

Excerpts from award citation:

Williams instructs his dental students to remember that they are becoming more than just dental professionals but doctors who care for people, who consider the whole patient — doctors who think outside the mouth, as it were. His commitment to training compassionate, caring medical professionals is at the heart of the reason he is receiving this award.

William C. Friday Class of 1986 Award for Excellence in Teaching

The award was created by members of the 1986 graduating class to recognize members of the faculty who have exemplified excellence in inspirational teaching and is named in honor of William C. Friday, who devoted a lifetime of service to the University as president of the UNC System. The winner receives a stipend of \$5,000 and a framed citation.

MITCHELL PICKER

- Professor, Departments of Psychology and Neurobiology
- Faculty member since: 1985
- Classes taught last year: Biological Basis of Behavior II, Drugs and Behavior, Psychological Application of Drugs.

How do you motivate your students to learn?

My approach to motivating students is multifaceted, with the foundation being the creation of an open classroom environment that promotes dialogue and communication between student and teacher as well as across students. Making the material of personal value to the students, challenging the students with complicated issues that have no simple solution, and providing an opportunity for students to express their views on controversial, real-world issues help to establish and maintain this open environment.

Excerpts from award citation:

His rapport with students is stellar: from lines at his door during office hours, to evening review sessions, to the wisdom he shares with students working with him on independent research projects and the sound professional advice he offers former students and fellow professors. His quiet and unassuming manner makes him a hidden treasure on campus ... He makes learning relevant to all students by making them so comfortable with advanced intellectual study that they are eager for more.



PICKER

John L. Sanders Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and Service

The award was created in 1995 as a gift from Ben M. Jones III to recognize excellence in the teaching, advising and mentoring of undergraduate students in a manner consistent with the life and values of John L. Sanders. From his days as an undergraduate, John Sanders has worked to improve student life and governance. As director and professor in the Institute of Government, he advised generations of students, quietly nurturing their devotion to the University and the state. At the same time, he has counseled effective political action and pursuit of constructive change.

DANIEL P. GITTERMAN

- Associate professor of public policy
- Faculty member since: 2000
- Classes taught last year: American Public Policy, Senior Honors Thesis in Public Policy

How do you motivate your students to learn?

My experiences as a father profoundly shape my priorities and my work with undergraduate

students. I am most proud of one sentence in my 2004 Tanner Undergraduate Teaching



GITTERMAN

Award Citation: 'Caring' is the single most commonly used word to describe Dan's approach to teaching.' Each day at Carolina, I try to approach my research, teaching, mentoring and service in the same caring and compassionate way that many

educators teach and mentor my own children each and every day.

Excerpts from award citation:

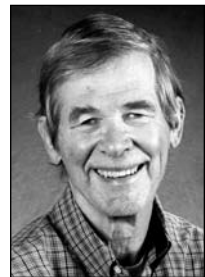
His use of innovative mediums, active guidance for students, and his ability to demonstrate a unique dedication to the process of conveying his passion for the subject have contributed to increased enrollment, revision and strengthening of the curriculum, and initiatives to support the student experience within the department. ... He's been described as truly having a heart for mentoring that extends beyond the classroom.

James M. Johnston Teaching Excellence Awards

The awards were created in 1991 to recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching. The awards are funded by the James M. Johnston Scholarship Program. Each of the winners receives \$5,000 and a framed citation.

JAMES PEACOCK

- Kenan Distinguished Professor of Anthropology
- Faculty member since: 1967
- Classes taught last year: Theory and Ethnography, Consciousness and Change, Anthropology and Religion, Globalization and the South.



PEACOCK

How do you motivate your students to learn?

They are already motivated, so I try to tap their interests while opening new perspectives. I work at trying to learn what their interests and outlooks are.

Excerpts from award citation:

His dedication to thoughtful teaching and his willingness to devote time to students, both through direct engagement and in finding opportunities for them to pursue further study and research or work experience is near

legendary. One of his most marked characteristics as a professor is his respect for his students. When asked to write a definition of public anthropology for the Encyclopedia of Social Science, he wanted to involve some of his students so that their names could be included in the submission. ... 'Keep Dr. Peacock around forever, no matter the means necessary.' ... Students say that Peacock 'makes us all feel valuable, worthy and talented as though we deserve to be here.' ... 'He is one of the reasons I have been so inspired to become a professor myself.'

HUGON J. KARWOWSKI

- Professor of Physics and Astronomy
- Faculty member since: 1984
- Classes taught last year: Mechanics, Digital Electronics

How do you motivate your students to learn?

I like to teach and I am usually prepared for class; I never use PowerPoint in my lectures and I do not ask multiple-choice



KARWOWSKI

questions; I push my students to work as hard as they can and I am constantly trying to get the best out of everyone, whether they like it or not; I am always willing to talk to my students on any subject (including physics); I care about what my students learn, and about what they do in school and in life.

Excerpts from award citation:

Karwowski's devotion to teaching undergraduates can best be described as fanatical. Despite a distinguished career as a nuclear physicist, he is best known by students as an exemplary professor, consistently described as considerate, extremely approachable, always available, humorous, bright, and even crazy. ... Questions are expected, not encouraged in Karwowski's courses. ... According to the chair of the department, he never says he has something more important to do than help a student understand a physics concept.

Mentor Award for Lifetime Achievement

This award, created in 1997, acknowledges a lifetime of contributions to a broad range of teaching and learning, particularly mentoring beyond the classroom. It rewards those who help students to develop and attain their full potential in important ways during and after their departure from campus. Dean Smith, long-time coach of the men's basketball team, was the first winner of the award and exemplifies the qualities that this award honors. The winner receives a one-time stipend of \$1,000 and a framed citation.

DONALD H. BAUCOM

- Professor of psychology
- Faculty member since: 1980
- Classes taught last year: Behavior Disorders; Cognitive-Behavioral Couple Therapy

How do you motivate your students to learn?

Mentorship means developing healthy, long-term relationships, how we all are called to relate to each other every day. It involves helping a person be the best he or she can be. It includes many roles: being a coach, sharing your knowledge and experience when

appropriate; a cheerleader, always encouraging and believing in that person; an optimist, focusing on and building from the person's many strengths; and a realist, helping the person to face adversity and always strive to improve.

Excerpts from award citation:

The caring qualities that inform his research activities carry over into his interactions with students and colleagues. In his case, there is no apparent distinction between teaching, research, mentoring and living. ... His impulse is collaborative and his orientation forward-looking, whether problems are small or large. Not a teacher-scholar who only mentors as part of



BAUCOM

one's responsibilities, Baucum is acknowledged as someone who mentors as a way of living in the world, by being a model to which others aspire. His is mentorship by leadership and life example rather than attempting to fit students to a pre-determined career path. He is cited for having the approach: 'You are my student; thus, I will help you attain your goals.'

J. Carlyle Sitterson Freshman Teaching Award

This award was created in 1998 by the family of the late J. Carlyle Sitterson to recognize excellence in first-year teaching by a tenured or tenure-track faculty member in the College of Arts and Sciences. Sitterson was a Kenan professor of history and chancellor of the University from 1966 to 1972 and was a passionate advocate for inspired teaching of first-year students. The first award was given in 2000. The winner receives a one-time stipend of \$5,000 and a framed citation.

VALERIE S. ASHBY

- Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Professor of Chemistry
- Faculty member since: 2003
- Classes taught last year: General Descriptive Chemistry I, Introduction to Organic Chemistry II, Introduction to Organic Chemistry I, Honors Organic Chemistry II.

How do you motivate your students to learn?

I try to motivate my students by suggesting to them that their competition is not sitting next to them, but is national and international. Given that is the case, we often discuss what excellence means in action and in attitude when one is facing a significant challenge. In the process, they become determined to give their best effort. The transformation for many of them is significant to them and rewarding to me.



ASHBY

Excerpts from award citation:

Students who admit they don't like chemistry acknowledge that they do like her class and her enthusiasm and that they learn much from her. Even students who end the semester with C grades marvel at how much they liked the class and admire Ashby. ... 'Ashby was by far the best teacher I've had at UNC. She was always available for help and truly cares about her students. She made me want to learn chemistry.' ... Another noted, 'I will continue to seek teachers like Dr. Ashby who truly love what they do, and are excellent at it!'

Nominations open now for 2009 teaching awards

Which of your professors or teaching assistants have aroused your curiosity, opened your mind to new ideas or influenced your choice of career?

The University's annual effort to identify and reward exceptional teaching is under way. The University Committee on Teaching Awards encourages students, faculty, staff and alumni to submit nominations for several campuswide awards.

Nominations may be made at any time, but the deadline for nominations is Oct. 1. For complete information about the awards, refer to provost.unc.edu/teaching-awards.

Chair of the 2009 committee is Donna LeFebvre, senior lecturer in political science (962-0429 or lefebvre@unc.edu). Debbie Stevenson, executive assistant to the provost, can also assist you with more information. She can be reached at 962-7882 or debbie_stevenson@unc.edu.

Winners will be recognized at a basketball game in early 2009 and will receive awards at the annual banquet in April.

Tanner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by Graduate Teaching Assistants

In 1990, the University expanded the purview of the Tanner Awards to recognize excellence in the teaching of undergraduates by graduate teaching assistants. The awards go to graduate teaching assistants. Each of the winners receives a one-time stipend of \$1,000 and a framed citation. 2008 winners were:

Emily Brewer, Department of English;

Marko Dumancic, Department of History;

Terri Bailey, School of Journalism and Mass Communication;

Rachelle Gold, Department of English; and

Meg Gambell Zomordi, School of Nursing.