Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
This is an easy one — it’s my wife, Dr. Amy Sheck, herself last year’s Board of Governors’ Teaching Award winner from our sister UNC institution, the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, where she is dean of science. From Amy I’ve learned that the best mark of a great teacher is to be a perpetual, and joyful, learner.

What is something your students would be surprised to learn about you?
Before Amy and I had children, we had an avocation — joining the ranks of “Triple Crown” walkers who had backpacked all three of America’s long-distance trails: the Appalachian Trail, the Pacific Crest Trail and the Continental Divide Trail. Backpacker magazine had an article about us, asking how a couple can spend all that time together without getting divorced.

What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?
We need perseverance because there are few “born” teachers. To be a good teacher means always striving to improve. We also need a sense of professionalism because quantitative measurements of our success are either incomplete or nonexistent. I welcome measurements of data-driven learning, but no one wants to live in a world where teachers merely teach to the test. From the best professors, students both learn and are inspired.

Professor Hornstein’s qualities are best captured in a few powerful words from his students: “charismatic, passionate and unbelievably attentive” and “exceptional in every way, with a continued sense of humility.”
This award was created in 1952 with a bequest by the children of Lola Spencer and Simpson Bobo Tanner in memory of their parents. The award recognizes excellence in inspirational teaching of undergraduate students, particularly first- and second-year students.

Rhonda Lanning

**TITLE AND DEPARTMENT** Assistant professor of nursing  
**FACULTY MEMBER SINCE** 2007  
**HOMETOWN** Homestead, Florida

**Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?**  
David Worley was the best teacher I ever had. I was a first-year, first-generation college student who was completely unsure of herself, but he “saw” me and believed in me as a writer and as a student. He recognized a spark in me and helped me find my academic potential.

**What is something you’ve learned from your students?**  
Fearlessness. My students continually surprise me with their openness and willingness to dive into new and unfamiliar experiences.

**What is the most creative thing you have done to engage your students?**  
Creating an interdisciplinary service-learning course from scratch.

Her greatest strength is her calm, nonjudgmental acceptance and respect of students as they are, and her clear, strong message about the path to their goal behavior.

Matt Redinbo

**TITLE AND DEPARTMENT** Kenan Distinguished Professor of Chemistry, Biochemistry and Microbiology  
**FACULTY MEMBER SINCE** 1999  
**HOMETOWN** Lafayette, Indiana

**Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?**  
Mary Batzer in high school literature. She created an open classroom and shared so much about herself and her world views that it invited us to step up and grow. It was transformative.

**What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?**  
It takes really being present during class and office hours. Students are quite clear about what they understand and what they don’t. If you are open to seeing and hearing it, you can adjust in the moment and really nail a point rather than leaving them semi-mystified. I love the immediacy of teaching and the immediate adjustments you can make.

**What is the most creative thing you have done to engage your students?**  
Biochemistry can be a bit dry, so I try to interject as much humor in as I can. For one particularly boring topic, I interjected a running commentary on a certain pop star. I think it helped. It helped me.

I’ve had a lot of great professors in my life, but out of all the people who have mentored me, Dr. Redinbo was one of the only people who inspired me to think outside the classroom.
Marsha Penner

**TITLE AND DEPARTMENT**  Teaching assistant professor and associate director of neuroscience curricula

**FACULTY MEMBER SINCE**  2014

**HOMETOWN**  Steinbach, Manitoba, Canada

**Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?**
Dr. Bruce Bolster at the University of Winnipeg immediately came to mind. He was the person who introduced me to the brain. I got a C in his biopsychology class, but I was so excited to learn more about the brain after taking his class that I didn’t let the C dissuade me. He had such enthusiasm for the subject, you couldn’t help but be excited about cranial nerves and action potentials.

**What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?**
I am a professional dog trainer in my spare time. I learn a lot about teaching in puppy classes. You might think a dog trainer is primarily training dogs, but really, we spend most of our time training the people.

**Spencer Barnes**

**TITLE AND DEPARTMENT**  Associate professor of media and journalism

**FACULTY MEMBER SINCE**  2011

**HOMETOWN**  Raleigh, North Carolina

**Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?**
The amount of patience Dr. Barnes shows, as well as his attention to detail when teaching new concepts, is proof of his love both of teaching and of the subject matter.

**What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?**
Most people do not realize that I hold two terminal degrees [highest degree in a specific field]. My master’s degree in industrial design (product design) is the terminal degree for its field and my doctorate of education is also terminal.

**What is something you’ve learned from your students?**
I’ve learned that my students and I have a vested interest in pursuing excellence and that it takes all of our efforts to achieve success in the classroom. As a result, I’ve learned to appreciate their desire to learn, their ambition and their individuality. This has led to a high level of morale in my classes and the development of some very creative solutions to the design problems that I pose to my students.

**What is the most creative thing you have done to engage your students?**
Most of my instruction involves creativity. I teach graphic design, 3D animation and statistics classes. I record each of my class lectures and provide them to the students afterwards. The recordings provide the students with a verbatim account of every activity that occurred during class and they help the students to achieve a deeper level of learning.
In 1990, the University expanded the purview of the Tanner Awards to recognize excellence in the teaching of undergraduates by graduate teaching assistants.

**Philip Bold**  
**DEPARTMENT** Philosophy  
**HOMETOWN** Wakefield, Rhode Island

*What is something you’ve learned from your students?*  
That no matter how wise you are, no one will be willing to listen unless you show your students compassion. And when you do that, you’ll learn more from your students than they’ll ever learn from you.

*What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?*  
I get the sense that the United States right now is extremely divided and lots of people are feeling angry, alienated and pessimistic. In light of this, I think it’s important to foster honesty, creativity, compassion and fun in the classroom. This will help our students — future leaders of the world — enter the next stage of their life with courage and hope, ready to use their knowledge to make the world a better place.

**Ani Govjian**  
**DEPARTMENT** English and comparative literature  
**HOMETOWN** Los Angeles, California

*Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?*  
Dr. Theresia de Vroom fostered an interdisciplinary environment that engaged so many of my interests. She taught Shakespeare and Medieval literature in a way that ignited curiosity and demanded rigor from each of her students. Her classroom was a space in which discussion flourished as she led undergraduates in honing their critical thinking and civil discourse skills. Dr. de Vroom provided the academic foundation for my future path towards the doctorate.

*What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?*  
I used to work for a scuba diving magazine, and I have an oddly robust knowledge of marine life.

**Holly Shablack**  
**DEPARTMENT** Psychology and neuroscience  
**HOMETOWN** California, Maryland

*Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?*  
I’ve been lucky to have a number of wonderful teachers throughout my academic career. The two who solidified my interest in education and science are my high school AP biology teacher, Mrs. Illingworth, and physics teacher, Mr. Skinner. Both were great at distilling information and discussing the implications of the material that we learned about to real life. They believed in their students and had expectations that we were able to work toward in a supported way.

*What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?*  
It is important to be open to changing how you share and distill information. I don’t think this applies to just 2019, but with ever-growing technology, every year there are new apps and avenues in which everyone, especially students, gather information. It is important to be aware of these to use them.

**Aisling Winston**  
**DEPARTMENT** Economics

*What is something you’ve learned from your students?*  
I learn something from my students every day. My students have different experiences than I do, so they have different perspectives. My conversations with my students help me see the world through different lenses. My students regularly raise questions and posit answers that I would otherwise not have considered. I am as much their student as they are mine.

*What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?*  
While technology has changed, I don’t think the qualities of a good teacher have changed significantly. Good teachers are as enthusiastic about learning as they are about teaching. They are concerned with their students’ abilities to understand and apply material, and they are devoted to creating an environment in which students feel free to ask questions and think critically.

**Megan Ford**  
**DEPARTMENT** Chemistry  
**HOMETOWN** Shawano, Wisconsin

*What is something you’ve learned from your students?*  
I had a student tell me that to be successful at Carolina you had to study hard, keep your tea sweet and beat Duke. I try to live by those words.

*What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?*  
During my first chemistry lab in high school I burned my finger making glass elbows. This started a long string of mishaps that built my reputation as the clumsy lab partner. Despite this, I loved my chemistry classes. I realized that if burns and cuts didn’t change how I felt about it, then chemistry must be the subject for me.
Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?

My own Ph.D. mentor, Dr. Eric Stanley, at the University of California, Irvine. He believed in me when I did not, providing me with just the right balance of support and challenge. He continues to this day to be a mentor to me. His mentoring approach has served as a foundation for how I have approached mentoring my own students and post-doctoral trainees.

What is something you’ve learned from your students?

It is amazing how simple acts of appreciation on my part can motivate students to do their best because they don’t want to let me down.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?

I’ve now experienced seven NCAA men’s basketball championships during the course of my academic career. I’ve also had the honor of meeting both Coach Dean Smith and Coach Roy Williams. That Coach Smith was the first recipient of the Mentor Award for Lifetime Achievement was a bonus and makes me feel especially honored to receive this award.

What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?

Being flexible. After having mentored over 30 Ph.D. students, I have seen that no two students are alike, each represents a unique experience/challenge in mentoring. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for being a good teacher.

What is something you’ve learned from your students?

I was fortunate to have not one but three fantastic teachers in high school, whom I think of as the “dream team of teachers” that made a positive impact in my life. David Javela, Carlos Morán and Marco T. Rodríguez taught me philosophy, chemistry and calculus, respectively. They were rigorous, well-respected and, above all, fair. They deeply cared about our success.

What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?

Versatility and responsiveness can be game-changers in the classroom. Being able to rapidly shift between various instructional methods that balance knowledge transfer and self-discovery can lead to a lively and engaged atmosphere. Listening to the students is key to this approach, as their feedback can guide instructional choices tailored to that class at that moment.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?

When I was a first-year undergraduate student, I was torn between a major in philosophy or chemistry. I still enjoy pondering big questions, but it was the hands-on laboratory research that sparked a lasting love of chemistry.

What is the most creative thing you have done to engage your students?

A few times throughout the semester, I spend five to eight minutes of class highlighting upcoming funding or job opportunities, discussing career paths or sharing professional experiences from my own path. I have noticed that this tends to engage students more in the course materials because they identify the benefit they could gain from their time in college.
Beth Kurtz-Costes
William C. Friday/Class of 1986 Award for Excellence in Teaching

TITLE AND DEPARTMENT  Director, doctoral program in developmental psychology, and Zachary Taylor Smith Distinguished Term Professor

FACULTY MEMBER SINCE  1990

HOMETOWN  Defiance, Ohio

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
The best teacher I ever had was Dr. T. Wayne Riemann at Manchester College. I learned from him that education is more about posing the right questions than about learning answers. The more we learn, the better we understand how little we truly know.

What is something you've learned from your students?
one of the many things I've learned from my students is how privileged I was in childhood. I grew up with parents who loved each other and their children and who were part of a very loving, supportive, extended family network.

What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?
An openness to different perspectives, curiosity, genuine interest in students. Some knowledge about technology is also an asset.

The award was created by members of the 1986 graduating class to recognize faculty who have exemplified excellence in inspirational teaching. It is named in honor of the late William C. Friday, who devoted a lifetime of service to the University as president of the University of North Carolina System.

EXCERPT FROM AWARD CITATION

Dr. Beth Kurtz-Costes is more than just an amazing teacher. She is a thoughtful mentor, a dedicated advocate and, quite frankly, the world’s most patient life coach.

JOHNSTON TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

This award was created in 1991 to recognize excellence in undergraduate teaching. The awards are funded by the James M. Johnston Scholarship Program.

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
I’ve had so many wonderful teachers, but the best was perhaps Wayne Booth at the University of Chicago. We had a grad seminar weekly at his house. He was dedicated to a kind of Socratic teaching method; lecturing was anathema to him. He emphasized asking good questions. He was teaching us a life skill about seeking understanding for its own sake and learning to debate among ourselves.

What is something you’ve learned from your students?
I constantly learn from my students. I learn about popular culture from them, and they struggle to keep me moderately up to date. Many of the courses that I teach are interdisciplinary in nature, and in those classes, students are more willing to share insights from their particular disciplines in class. That’s one of my favorite kinds of exchanges. I’m always inspired by how many things our students do outside the classroom.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?
(a) I’ve always had a fear of public speaking. (b) I am a bird magnet.

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What is something you’ve learned from your students?
I’ve learned that the next generation is a game-changer. I admire Carolina students’ general curiosity for knowledge, passion for civic-minded change and forward-thinking leadership.

What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?
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Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
I have been blessed with many wonderful teachers with different personalities and teaching styles. To name just one example: Anna Lisa Crone, my dissertation adviser from the University of Chicago. She never looked at her watch while sharing her knowledge with students. Her guiding presence in my life has not been minimized by her departure from us.

What is something you’ve learned from your students?
I am on the other side of the fence now, being a devoted vegetarian.

What is the most creative thing you’ve learned from your students?
I took three gap years after college, running a turkey farm. The other fact is that "sound of surprise" leads me through the day and right to the classroom.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?
I consider myself an introvert. Also, the worst grade I ever got in college was on my first economics exam.

What is the most creative thing you have done to engage your students?
I created help sheets for 18 different topics in my class. These help sheets summarize and synthesize information. In addition, for each help sheet I created a video in which I walk students through an application of the material. I also wrote a list of Bloom’s Taxonomy-inspired learning objectives for each help sheet to model for students how to achieve a high-order level of understanding.

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Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
I’ve been blessed and inspired by so many excellent teachers, and for all of them I am grateful. My very best teachers were my parents, who encouraged me and gave me courage. I thank them both for their emphasis on the cultivation of historical consciousness, regardless of one’s area of endeavor. And I thank my mom in particular for her unwavering belief in the arts and humanities as the path to self-knowledge.

What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?
One must be in touch with the world, with what is happening in it, with “our time,” its enormous challenges, regardless of what one is teaching, historical or contemporary.

Who was the best teacher you ever had and why?
While I have benefited from many effective teachers during my 24 years of schooling, the teacher who has had the most lasting impression is my father. He had a unique way of teaching. He taught by having me figure out the answers and letting me experience outcomes. He never let me give up, yet he always had my back. To this day, I seek his wisdom in many situations.

What is something you’ve learned from your students?
My students have been instrumental in helping me learn how to present material in different ways. It is easy to assume that how one understands a concept is the way others will understand it. I am still learning how to put myself in the shoes (or desk chairs) of my students.

What is the most creative thing you have done to engage your students?
One way to understand “creative” is to think about what has been most “generative,” what has sparked the emergence of an ongoing plurality of activities. By that definition, the most creative thing I have done at Carolina to engage my students is to establish, with the help of my colleagues, the UNC Latina/o Studies Program with its courses, minor, various speakers’ series, working groups and other evolving formations.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?
People might be surprised to learn that I recently took a curling lesson from the Canadian National Team coach at the oldest active curling sports club in North America.

What is something you’ve learned from your students?
The best teacher I had was John Rawls at Harvard. He supervised my honors thesis and met with me one-on-one weekly to discuss what I was thinking about that week. But what made him a great teacher for me was not simply that he was willing to meet with me individually and regularly — though that helped — he could understand what I was trying to say better than I could.

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What does it take to be a good professor in 2019?
Compassion, a commitment to listening, and a dedication to encouraging critical and creative thoughtfulness in all aspects of intellectual and everyday life. I just want students to be confident in how they encounter, recognize and engage the universe of possibility.

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