

WAYNE UNIVERSITY

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PROGRAM

Welcome and Remarks

President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching

Charles H. Gershenson Distinguished Faculty Fellowships

Board of Governors Distinguished Faculty Fellowships

Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Awards

Murray E. Jackson University Creative Scholar in the Arts Award

Career Development Chairs

Academic Staff Awards

General Education Teaching Awards

Community Engagement Awards

Academy of Teachers (AoT) New Member Induction

Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award

Outstanding Graduate Mentor Awards

Outstanding Graduate Director Service Awards

Garrett T. Heberlein Endowed Awards for Excellence in Teaching

Closing Remarks

President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching

The President's Award for Excellence in Teaching recognizes faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to teaching. This year, there are ten awards. Since 1977, 318 Wayne State University faculty members have been recognized for their teaching with these awards.

AWARD COMMITTEE

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Department of Political Science
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Mbodja Mougoue

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Division of Teacher Education
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RECIPIENTS

RONALD BROWN

Professor, Department of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

One of the university's best and most beloved teachers, Dr. Ronald Brown inspires students to seek understanding and act for justice. During his three decades of powerful classroom teaching, Professor Brown has been a steady, caring mentor, encouraging hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students and touching thousands more through educational efforts that extend across campus and continue out into our city and our state. He has never ceased his efforts to develop new teaching techniques and innovative methods that push students to engage with the community and one another. Professor Brown seamlessly intertwines his teaching with his profound research on race and religion, leading his students to become fully aware of our nation's deep rifts and to work for a more just society. For his many years helping us all understand and live out the true meaning of our creed, Dr. Brown clearly deserves the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

ERIN CARMANY

Associate Professor (Clinical), Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics, School of Medicine

Professor Erin Carmany serves as an exemplary role model and outstanding educator for graduate students in the Genetic Counseling program, igniting their enthusiasm and ensuring their well-being and success. Her students attest to her unwavering dedication, not only in advancing their academic journey but also in supporting their mental health. Employing innovative teaching approaches such as the flipped classroom and role-playing, Dr. Carmany actively involves her students in the learning process. In the flipped classroom setting, students access didactic content through recorded videos, followed by interactive discussions led by Professor Carmany, focusing on clinical application to reinforce learning. Through role-playing exercises, students gain valuable hands-on experience in counseling sessions, honing their skills and committing essential techniques to memory. Additionally, Dr. Carmany's contributions to genetic counseling education extend nationally as she holds the position of president on the board of directors for the Accreditation Council for Genetic Counseling.

SIMONE CHESS

Associate Professor, Department of English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Simone Chess is a highly regarded teacher known for her transformative, engaging, and empathetic teaching methods. She goes beyond traditional lectures and actively involves groups of students across the campus with her innovative teaching style. Her philosophy is that students at a public urban research university should receive an education emphasizing academic research and fostering a strong connection to service within the University and the surrounding community. Students describe Professor Chess as inspiring, empathetic, and compassionate, highlighting her ability to connect with them and profoundly impact their academic and personal growth. Her exceptional dedication to teaching and her students' well-being has rightfully earned her a place among the most valued educators at the University. The President's Award for Excellence in Teaching is a well-deserved recognition of her outstanding contributions to excellence in teaching.

HELEN DURAND

*Associate Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science,
College of Engineering*

Dr. Helen Durand is an inspiring mentor and role model for our undergraduates, and she has quickly developed an international reputation in her research field among academic and industrial colleagues. Professor Durand integrates her personal industrial experience and that of her network of industry contacts into her courses, enriching the educational experiences of our students. Obtaining funding from the Oak Ridge Associated Universities Events Sponsorship Program, she has organized a "distinguished undergraduate researcher workshop" for students at WSU as well as eight other universities. Moreover, she engages and inspires K-12 students from the Detroit Public School system by participating in programs such as the annual STEM day at WSU and the College of Engineering's cyber security summer camp. Also of note is Dr. Durand's innovative thinking in the area of STEM outreach, which is reflected in the development of animated shorts for communicating science concepts.

KATIE MACDONALD

*Assistant Professor (Teaching), James Pearson Duffy Department of Art, Art History, and Design,
College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts*

Professor Katie MacDonald is an Assistant Professor of Teaching specializing in Sculpture and Metalsmithing, whom her students highly regard. She is recognized as an exceptional teacher and mentor dedicated to helping her students grow academically and personally. According to one student, Professor MacDonald invests time in understanding each student's strengths and weaknesses, providing tailored advice and support. Her positive outlook and commitment create a lasting impact on her students, inspiring them to pursue their goals with determination and confidence. Professor MacDonald's unwavering support and belief in her students' potential empower them to achieve more than they thought possible, making her an exceptional educator and mentor. Moreover, faculty members in her department have stated that her positive attitude is contagious, fostering an environment that promotes creativity, curiosity, resilience, and a love of Art, Art History, and Design. As a result, Professor MacDonald is a deserving recipient of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

ANDREA MATTI

Assistant Professor (Teaching), Department of Chemistry, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Andrea Matti exemplifies an exceptional dedication to teaching, mentoring, and fostering student success. With glowing testimonials from her students, she showcases profound knowledge and expertise in chemistry and consistently provides outstanding classroom instruction. Professor Matti's versatile teaching methods incorporate real-world applications and cultivate a student-centered approach to course design. Employing innovative pedagogical techniques such as active learning and the flipped classroom model, she effectively engages students across large lecture courses and advanced undergraduate classes. Her teaching is celebrated for its transformative impact on students' lives, marked by her outstanding instructional skills. Students commend Dr. Matti for her ability to forge personal connections while upholding the highest standards of professionalism always being accessible to her students. Professor Matti is committed to creating an enriching learning environment through a three-pronged approach: making course material relevant, fostering a sense of community, and encouraging students by acknowledging their diverse backgrounds.

TIM MORAN

Assistant Professor (Teaching), Irvin D. Reid Honors College

An exceptionally caring teacher and colleague, Dr. Tim Moran uses his experience as a journalist and his training as a historian to bring the city of Detroit alive for his students. Through Dr. Moran's engaging, creative, and meticulously designed courses, his students see their own personal stories as part of our collective histories. Professor Moran's students know how deeply he cares for them, and they stay in contact with him for years, returning again and again for his counsel and encouragement. Dr. Moran's generosity extends to his colleagues in the Honors College and across the university, to whom he gives unreserved support and encouragement. He builds our university community with one compassionate conversation after another, and his work on assessment and curriculum helps us to become an institution that recognizes and truly values excellent teaching. For his generosity and engagement, Dr. Moran is well-deserving of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

SYLVIA TASCHKA

Associate Professor (Teaching), Department of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Sylvia Taschka is an engaging and caring teacher who goes out of her way to foster a nurturing environment for her students. Her students value her expertise, as demonstrated by her excellent SET scores, which are consistently above her department's average. Whether in her classes or more broadly in her pedagogical philosophy, Professor Taschka conceives of the study of history as a community endeavor and asset. Her work with Wiki Education and her project assignment for her students to write new Wikipedia entries encourages students to think of history for a broad public audience and to master their course material to such an extent that they are able to present it clearly to others. Professor Taschka's teaching is deeply defined by her commitment to her students' well-being, personal as well as pedagogical, and her efforts to serve Wayne State's student body in all its diversity. Dr. Taschka is a beloved and much-appreciated teacher among both undergraduate and graduate students and is highly deserving of the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

CAISHENG WANG

Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, College of Engineering

Dr. Caisheng Wang's commitment to fostering the educational, professional, and personal growth of students has been nothing short of exemplary. He has taught a diverse range of 14 courses, spanning fundamental undergraduate classes to advanced graduate-level studies. His pivotal role in launching the first master's degree program on electric vehicles in the nation showcases his dedication to staying at the forefront of academic innovation. Professor Wang is committed to integrating applied learning experiences and undergraduate research into his instructional endeavors. For example, he has been a driving force behind the historic investment by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in expanding workforce training programs for the semiconductor and electronics industry. He has also mentored a high number of undergraduate students from various universities through the NSF REU Site on Sustainable Engineering at Wayne State University.

MARY WIDTH

Associate Professor (Teaching), Department of Nutrition and Food Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Mary Width is a dynamic and enthusiastic teacher who cares deeply about her students. Professor Width's unwavering passion for teaching nutrition and dietetics is evident through her exceptional Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) scores, surpassing the departmental average. Her students' comments and interactions with her further testify to her dedication. Beyond her extensive teaching experience, Professor Width stands out for her continuous commitment to improving her teaching methods. For example, she has completed various training courses and workshops, both at WSU and through her professional dietetic association. This commitment has earned her multiple prestigious awards, including the CLAS Excellence in Teaching Award (WSU), Outstanding Dietetics Educator Award, Recognized Young Dietitian of the Year Award (Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics), Registered Dietitian of the Year (Michigan Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics), and RD Distinguished Service Award (Southeastern Michigan Dietetic Association) among others.

Charles H. Gershenson Distinguished Faculty Fellowships/Board of Governors Distinguished Faculty Fellowships

These fellowships were created to recognize and provide support for members of the faculty whose continuing achievements and current activities in scholarship, research, or the fine and performing arts are nationally distinguished.

The Charles H. Gershenson Distinguished Faculty Fellowships are part of the benefaction to Wayne State University by Charles H. Gershenson, who formerly served on the Board of Governors. The Board of Governors Distinguished Faculty Fellowships are derived from revenues especially available to the Board. The term of each fellowship is two years. Since 1985, 95 Charles H. Gershenson Fellowships and 98 Board of Governors Fellowships have been awarded.

AWARD COMMITTEE

Sara Kacin, Chair

Office of the Provost

Abhijit Biswas

Department of Marketing

Mike Ilitch School of Business

Daniel Isaksen

Department of Mathematics

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Mary Kay Pflum

Department of Chemistry

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

RECIPIENTS

Charles H. Gershenson Distinguished Faculty Fellowships

MOH MALEK

Professor, Department of Health Care Sciences,

Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Since joining Wayne State University in 2010, Dr. Moh Malek has made significant contributions to the field of rehabilitative science and kinesiology. His impressive scholarly achievements, exemplified by an h-index of 40, underscore his expertise in the discipline. Throughout his academic career, Dr. Malek has published over 100 peer-reviewed papers, with 51 of them being featured in top physiology and sports science journals since his tenure at WSU. Additionally, he has authored or co-authored 11 invited book chapters. Dr. Malek's research primarily focuses on mitochondrial function, with a specific interest in studies related to fatigue. In the long term, his plans involve concentrating on the development of a novel therapeutic intervention to mitigate aging-induced mitochondrial dysfunction, a leading cause of sarcopenia. Recognized for his outstanding contributions, Dr. Malek is a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine (FACSM) and the National Strength and Conditioning Association (FNCSA). Furthermore, he serves on the Editorial Board of Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise and holds the position of Senior Associate Editor for the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research.

CLAUDE PRUNEAU

Professor, Department of Physics & Astronomy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Claude Pruneau has had a long and distinguished research career in experimental heavy ion physics studying a phase of matter called quark-gluon plasma, which ultimately can help us understand the universe in the moments after the Big Bang. As evidence of his significant research contribution, Dr. Pruneau was a founding member of the STAR collaboration at the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider at Brookhaven National Lab and was elected as a Fellow of the American Physical Society in 2022. His impactful contributions have generated over 550 publications and consistent funding from the U.S. Department of Energy. Dr. Pruneau also has been a leader in teaching, as exemplified by the authorship of a popular textbook entitled, "Data Analysis Techniques for Physical Scientists." Dr. Pruneau has been actively involved in departmental committees and outreach. Dr. Pruneau is truly deserving of the honor of 2024 Distinguished Faculty Fellow.

Board of Governors Distinguished Faculty Fellowships

KIRSTEN CARLSON

Professor, Law School

Professor Kirsten Carlson, a highly recognized scholar in the Law School specializing in the rights of indigenous people and tribal governance, joined Wayne State University in 2011. Her remarkable publication record has left an indelible mark in peer-reviewed political science journals and leading law reviews. With a Master's degree in Māori Studies from Victoria University in New Zealand, a Ph.D. in Political Science, and a J.D. degree, Professor Carlson brings a wealth of knowledge to her field. Notably, she was awarded a \$250,000 NSF grant, leveraging it to create several unique databases. One such database encompasses all 7,799 bills referencing American Indians, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, Alaska Natives, and their governments introduced in Congress between 1975 and 2013. Professor Carlson's ongoing research expands the current understanding of how legal services facilitate access to justice. She employs community-based perspectives to enhance the implementation and evaluation of access to justice initiatives. Recently, Professor Carlson was honored as an ABF/JPB Access to Justice Scholar for the 2023-24 Cohort, a testament to her commitment to advancing justice.

CAROLYN LOH

Professor, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Carolyn Loh has served Wayne State University as a Professor of Urban Studies and Planning since 2009. She is an internationally recognized urban planning expert with a focus on arts, culture, equity, and inclusion. Her work promotes ethical considerations within the practice of urban planning. She builds connections to urban planning practitioners outside of academia and includes students in her efforts. Her work is supported by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. Professor Loh's highly regarded standing in her field is reflected in her extensive publication record, her frequent contributions to national meetings of urban planners, and her service as an editor for several influential academic journals. Professor Loh plans to use the fellowship to support a new book project that provides practical advice on handling equity issues in urban planning. The fellowship will support the participation of students in this project.

Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Awards

In 1974 the Board of Governors, in conjunction with the president, established an annual Board of Governors Faculty Recognition Award to be given each year to members of the regular full-time faculty in recognition of a particular work of merit brought to fruition in the 12-month period immediately preceding the year of the award. Awards made in 2024 are based on accomplishments in 2022-23. The work of merit is a single act or event that constituted an outstanding contribution to scholarship and learning. Since 1975, 239 faculty members have received this award.

AWARD COMMITTEE

Sara Kacin, Chair

Office of the Provost

R. Khari Brown

Department of Sociology

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Hilary Marusak

Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Neurosciences

School of Medicine

Rebecca Robichaud

Law School

RECIPIENTS

MAIK HÜTTEMANN

Professor, Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics, School of Medicine

The Board of Governors recognizes Maik Hüttemann for the publication of *Cytochrome c lysine acetylation regulates cellular respiration and cell death in ischemic skeletal muscle* (Nature Communications, 2023). Professor Hüttemann has pioneered the discovery of regulatory protein modifications in mitochondria, particularly phosphorylation, which alters protein activity. This new publication reveals that cytochrome c undergoes acetylation during ischemia, indicating reduced oxygen supply. This groundbreaking discovery represents a significant advancement in biology with potential implications for human health and medicine. Professor Hüttemann's work is internationally recognized and may improve the quality of life and overall health of individuals with skeletal muscle disorders, particularly in the context of the elderly or sports medicine. Their dedication to exceptional research, mentorship, and education is inspiring and exemplary.

DANIEL ISAKSEN

Professor, Department of Mathematics, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes Daniel Isaksen for the publication of *Stable Homotopy Group of Spheres: From dimension 0 to 90* (Publications Mathématiques de l'IHÉS, 2023). Professor Isaksen and his collaborators' work is the most significant advancement in modern topology seen in 50 years. In addition to the tremendous advancements in knowledge, Professor Isaksen created an infrastructure to engage colleagues and students in this area of study. He developed the Computational Homotopy Theory research community, an online community. His success in building community and encouraging collaboration are in themselves significant contributions to this work. Professor Isaksen's advancements in topology and his efforts to engage and build community are evidence that he is committed to the pursuit of learning and scientific study.

MICHELLE JACOBS

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes Michelle Jacobs for the publication of *Indigenous Memory, Urban Reality: Stories of American Indian Relocation and Reclamation* (New York University Press, 2023). This seminal piece on race and identity is increasingly timely as Americans continue to struggle with our founding myths about democracy and freedom amidst sociological and historical research pointing to conquest and enslavement as key factors that led to American wealth and global hegemony. In examining Native American identity, Dr. Jacobs relies upon over thirty interviews conducted over two and half years to investigate differences in how Native Americans living in an urban context and who have lived on reservations, known as relocators, define what it means to be indigenous relative to those with no such history. In doing so, Dr. Jacobs tells a story about the importance of class position and, relatedly, one's history of living on or off reservations shapes how relocators and reclaimers understand indigeneity. Overall, Dr. Jacobs's work does an excellent job of discussing how Native people understand who has a right to claim authentic indigenous identities and, more generally, how racial group members define what it means to be part of their in-group.

DANIEL KASHIAN

Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes Daniel Kashian for the publication of *Forest Ecology, 5th Edition* (Wiley Press, 2023). This textbook, the first edition of which was published in 1964, is one of the most important sources for students, academics, and forest practitioners to gain information about climate change, invasive species, and ecological sustainability. While always important, this text has become increasingly so over the decades as the United States and other highly industrialized nations attempt to balance economic growth, largely powered by fossil fuel energy, with ecological sustainability. In addition to the thoroughness with which he examined these complex topics, Professor Kashian adeptly made his work accessible to those new to the field and those who have done research and worked in the field for years. In doing so, his seminal work undoubtedly inspires undergraduate and graduate students to pursue careers in forest ecology, contributes to furthering academic rigor in the field, and provides important guides for ecological practitioners.

KIDADA WILLIAMS

Professor, Department of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes Kidada Williams for the publication of *I Saw Death Coming: The History of Terror and Survival in the War Against Reconstruction* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023). Professor Williams's book was long-listed for the National Book Award in the non-fiction category; this book looks at the violence following the Civil War from a social aspect. It focuses on the long-lasting trauma resulting from the white supremacist violence inflicted on Black families. This book challenges the idea that Reconstruction failed, instead using the experience of Black families to evidence how Reconstruction was overthrown by white conservatives aided by a federal government unwilling to bring the perpetrators to account. This book is a major contribution to African American history and U.S. history generally.

Murray E. Jackson University Creative Scholar in the Arts Award

The Murray E. Jackson University Creative Scholar in the Arts award supports a faculty-artist in residence program. This presidential initiative showcases exceptional faculty talent in the traditional performing, creative, and visual arts as well as more non-traditional arts, in pursuit of the university's mission and goals. This annual award was created to honor the memory of Murray E. Jackson, a valued member of the WSU community.

Murray E. Jackson (1926–2002) was a poet, college professor and community and civil rights activist. He was a member of the Wayne State University Board of Governors from 1981 to 2001.

Awardee to be named at the 2024 academic recognition ceremony.

Career Development Chairs

Career Development Chairs are awarded to as many as ten recently tenured faculty as part of the university's program to support the teaching and research endeavors of faculty members in the developmental stages of their scholarly careers. Since 1982, 299 university faculty members have held Career Development Chairs.

The Career Development Chairs were established by generous grants to the Wayne State Fund, which provides recipients financial support, encouragement and recognition at a critical time in their careers.

AWARD COMMITTEE

Sara Kacin, Chair

Office of the Provost

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Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and
Health Sciences

Billicia Hines

Maggie Allesee Department of Theatre and Dance
College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts

Natalia Rakhlin

Department of English
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

RECIPIENTS

HELEN DURAND

Associate Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Sciences, College of Engineering

Dr. Helen Durand is a leader in the field of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science. Her research is supported by multiple grants from the National Science Foundation, the American Chemical Society, the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, and Lam Research. She has published over 45 papers that have received more than 2000 citations with an h-index of 21, demonstrating the impact of her work. Her research and mentorship have been recognized by numerous awards, including an NSF career award and the Air Force Office of Scientific Research Young Investigator Award. Dr. Durand's CDC award aims to extend her computational modeling to human response to various medications. The long-term goal of this method will be to implement mathematical algorithms that enable individualized drug treatment and precision medicine in a way that enhances patient outcomes while minimizing adverse effects.

MICHAEL FUHLHAGE

Associate Professor, Department of Communication, College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts

Dr. Michael Fuhlhage is a nationally esteemed media historian whose research program examines how ethnicity and identity have been historically represented in the U.S. media. Dr. Fuhlhage's work is noteworthy for its broad range, spanning ethics, Latinx studies, the Civil War, and espionage. Among his most impactful work is his scholarship on the othering of Mexican Americans and the role early nineteenth-century magazines and other periodicals played in perpetuating harmful stereotypes. For his new project, "Pleading Their Own Cause: Chicano Counter-Narratives in the Late 20th Century," Dr. Fuhlhage will use the archives at the University of Texas at Austin's Latin American Collection and the special collections at Stanford University to document Mexican American agency in combatting media stereotyping. This will represent an important evolution in the understanding of Mexican American history by showing the way this marginalized group fought back against systemic oppression.

SARAH LENHOFF

Associate Professor, Division of Administrative & Organizational Studies, College of Education

Dr. Sarah Lenhoff has established herself as a national expert on education policy with a focus on student attendance and chronic absenteeism. She has made significant contributions to education policy in Michigan and beyond through her impressive scholarship and community engagement work with Detroit Public Schools and community-based organizations, such as the Detroit Partnership for Education Equity & Research (Detroit PEER). Her research examines how inequality in social policy domains, such as housing, transportation, and work, intersects with education policy to create a racially unjust educational ecosystem. In her next book project, *De-Educationalizing Student Absenteeism*, Dr. Lenhoff and her collaborators will draw on the past six years of their research to demonstrate how framing absenteeism as a purely educational problem and focusing on individual behavior leads to ineffective solutions. They will argue that reducing educational inequality requires social policy innovations and an ecological approach with systemic coordinated strategies in schools and beyond.

JULIE LESNIK

Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Julie Lesnik is an internationally recognized expert in biological anthropology, especially in the areas of human evolution, edible insects, and multi-species scholarship. Her scholarly profile has continued to grow in recent years. One such professional milestone involved the invitation by the Nobel Committee to discuss her research on edible insects and human evolution at the 59th Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus College. Dr. Lesnik intends to use the CDC award to complete a book on her community-based research project with Detroit Horse Power, an organization that connects underserved youth populations with horses. Dr. Lesnik began this research and collaboration in 2023 with seed funding from a CLAS Social Justice Research Grant. As detailed in her proposal, during the summers of 2024 and 2025, she intends to work collaboratively with youth in the Detroit Horse Power group and generate findings she will write up as a book. In doing so, she will complete the first joint biological and cultural anthropological study of the long-term history and ethnography of the role of horses in Detroit.

SAMANTHA NOËL

Associate Professor, James Pearson Duffy Department of Art, Art History, and Design, College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts

Professor Samantha Noël's CDC award is proposed to conduct research and production toward her second book, *Diasporic Art in the Age of Black Power*. This is a rigorous research project that explores how visual art was impacted by the social and political contexts of the Black Power Movement in the African Diaspora. This work is an innovative counterpoint to the mainstream art historical narratives of the 1960s and 1970s that celebrated and reinforced abstraction and formalism. Professor Noël's research highlights the work of African American and African Caribbean artists whose work did not subscribe to formalist abstraction. Noël will investigate how their work may have generated a black aesthetic that explores black subjectivity and political views. *Diasporic Art in the Age of Black Power* is poised to be a work that makes significant contributions to the Art History field that will also benefit WSU and its students.

AARON RURY

Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Aaron Rury is an expert in spectroscopy and quantum materials, with research focusing on ultrafast spectroscopy of organic molecules and using fast laser pulses to examine molecular processes. He is actively involved in DEI initiatives, co-advising the WSU chapter of the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBCCChE). Dr. Rury is dedicated to the Chemistry department's mission of educating a diverse student community, advancing chemical knowledge, and positively impacting society. His support for underrepresented students and mentorship of high school students through Project SEED is diversifying the field of Chemistry. Professor Rury's CDC work will explore angular momentum transfer in photo-excited semiconducting materials to increase our understanding of how to produce useful energy from the sun directly. As committed as he is to student success, he will also use the unrestricted research funds to support a graduate student over one spring/summer term.

MARIANNA SADAGURSKI

Associate Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Marianna Sadagurski is a renowned expert in metabolic studies with a focus on hypothalamic regulation in states of environmental stress, obesity, and aging, as well as the metabolic effects of environmental pollutants. She holds positions in the Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Center for Molecular Medicine and Genetics at Wayne State School of Medicine. Since joining WSU in 2017, Professor Sadagurski has shown remarkable effectiveness as a mentor, and her significant contributions in the field of mammalian metabolism regulation have garnered international recognition, positioning her as a rising star. Her CDC work will explore how environmental factors, particularly parental exposure to cigarette smoke, can pose health risks to their offspring, specifically focusing on epigenetic factors involving paternal exposure to benzene.

CHUN SHEN

Associate Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Chun Shen is an exceptional physicist who has garnered much recognition for his accomplishments in high-energy nuclear physics. He has published over 160 articles that have been cited over 8800 times, and his current h-index is 45. His research is supported by multiple grants from the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy, and he has been recognized with multiple national research awards. Dr. Shen has also demonstrated strong mentorship in his lab with numerous student and post-doctoral publications arising from his lab. Dr. Shen's CDC project aims to establish an open-source theoretical framework to lead the frontier of high-energy nuclear physics in the next decade. It also aims to create a next-generation collaboration in nuclear physics with Wayne State University as the leading institution. Dr. Shen's work aims to propel his career and Wayne State University's visibility as a leader in physics.

Academic Staff Awards

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes significant service to students, the university, department and/or community organizations, and committee work and/or other service beyond job responsibility.

The Outstanding Contributor Award is presented in recognition of significant accomplishments during the previous academic year and emerging leadership among junior academic staff.

AWARD COMMITTEE

LaSondra Dawn, Co-Chair

College of Education

Bianca Fielder

Mike Ilitch School of Business

Wendy Wu

University Libraries

Emily Reetz, Co-Chair

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Erika Robinson

College of Fine, Performing, and
Communication Arts

RECIPIENTS

Distinguished Service Award

VERONICA BIELAT

Librarian IV, University Libraries

Veronica Bielat is the Student Success Librarian, Honors Program Liaison Librarian, and Subject Specialist for the English, Linguistics, and Political Science Departments. As Student Success librarian, she coordinates activities supporting our students, including collaboration with the University's undergraduate student success initiatives and integrating information literacy skills in the General Education Foundational Competencies courses in Composition and Communication.

Outstanding Contributor Award

GEOFFREY JONES

Academic Services Officer II, School of Social Work

Geoffrey Jones is an Academic Services Officer in the School of Social Work. Geoffrey provides academic advising to B.S.W. students at the main campus, University Center at Macomb, Schoolcraft Center and for the online social work program. Geoffrey is responsible for scheduling, plans of work, and degree certification. In addition, Geoffrey provides oversight of student support services, including the Student Success Program.

Outstanding Contributor Award

LAUREN ORR

Academic Advisor II, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Lauren Orr is an undergraduate advisor in the Department of Public Health. Lauren's responsibilities include but are not limited to developing student Plans of Work, integrating co-curricular involvement, providing leadership development, career exploration, graduate school investigation, and civic engagement.

General Education Teaching Awards

The General Education Teaching Award recognizes instructors who have demonstrated commitment and excellence in supporting the General Education Program through teaching inside and outside the classroom. The award will be presented to outstanding instructors who demonstrate a commitment to the academic mission of the university through collaboration, innovation, excellence, and inclusion in general education teaching.

AWARD COMMITTEE

Pynthia Caffee

University Advising Center

Manoj Kulchania

Mike Ilitch School of Business

Thomas Trimble

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Norma Love-Schropshire

School of Social Work

Tricia Miranda-Hartsuff

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Laurel Whalen

College of Education

RECIPIENTS

LAUREN DUQUETTE-RURY

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

In her general education courses, Dr. Lauren Duquette-Rury invites students to explore and deepen their understanding of critical sociological issues while honing a skillset necessary for “real life” after college. To do this, she focuses her learning objectives on critical thinking, persuasive and analytic writing, problem-solving, intellectual curiosity, collaboration, independence of thought, and articulation of complex ideas. Her courses broaden students’ body of knowledge and methodological toolkits to heighten understanding and encourage independent exploration in and beyond the classroom environment.

PETER MARRA

Assistant Professor (Teaching), Department of English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Peter Marra’s courses engage meaningfully with the General Education Program’s mission to prepare students “to participate effectively in a competitive global economy and to contribute as citizens in a diverse and engaged democracy” by equipping students of all majors with a better understanding of queer-inclusive language and a foundational knowledge of queer history and contemporary queer social issues. He has adapted compassionate course policies that focus on adaptable student learning rather than rigid standardization in an effort to meet students where they are and allow them to learn in a manner that best fits their learning style and personal strengths. Dr. Marra encourages students to become self-motivated learners who see the syllabus and the classroom as only the beginning of their commitment to themselves and their communities.

FELICE SPERONE

Assistant Professor (Teaching), Department of Environmental Science & Geology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Felice Sperone’s ESG 1010 course is often the only STEM class that students take, and each student comes to class with their own ideas, experiences, perspectives, and sometimes misconceptions about how scientific inquiry works. His approach in class is to help them think about science not as a series of set answers about natural phenomena but as a continuous process of asking questions, collecting and analyzing data to answer those questions, and explaining natural phenomena based on evidence. His highest teaching priority is helping students develop critical thinking, which is an essential and valuable skill in science and their personal and professional lives. Professor Sperone’s approach to teaching critical thinking includes a story-based narrative to show the progression between lecture topics designed to help students connect the major course concepts. He aims to create a learning environment that works for all students and to ensure that each one has equal access to opportunities for learning.

Community Engagement Awards

To celebrate work that strengthens the bond between university and community, the Wayne State University Provost's Office established an annual Community Engagement Award, to be given each year to full-time or part-time faculty member(s), academic staff member(s), or faculty-staff team(s) in recognition of community-based research, creative activities, teaching, and service collaborations that positively impact both the community and scholarship.

AWARD COMMITTEE

Sara Kacin, Chair
Office of the Provost

Loreleigh Keashly
College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts

Veronica Bielat
University Libraries

Richard Smith
School of Social Work

RECIPIENTS

RHONDA DAILEY

Assistant Professor (Research), Department of Family Medicine and Public Health Sciences, School of Medicine

Professor Rhonda Dailey is a highly skilled researcher and a powerful advocate for community-engaged research, bringing together healthcare providers, researchers, and community stakeholders to address behavioral and health disparities, specifically perinatal health, health equity, and disparities related to systemic racism and chronic disease, patient attitudes and beliefs about health, and healthcare quality. Through her work in community engagement, Dr. Dailey identified the urgent need for cultural competency for professionals in research and clinical care who interact with and treat community members. She addresses that need by conducting training on microaggressions and implicit bias within the School of Medicine and for healthcare professionals and organizations across Detroit and Michigan, with the goal of improving the quality of healthcare for community members. In addition, Dr. Dailey is also active in leadership positions for several local organizations committed to addressing health equity for community members. Dr. Dailey brings fresh ideas, energy, and passion to furthering the nature and quality of engagement between healthcare providers, researchers, and citizens in the Detroit community and highlights WSU as a committed and innovative partner for public health and well-being.

JOSEPH FAVA

Assistant Professor (Clinical), Department of Pharmacy Practice, Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

WSU alumnus and Clinical Assistant Professor of Pharmacy Practice Joseph Fava's professional and personal passion is community-engaged health care, outreach, and access to care. Through collaborations with and between Pharm.D. students, interprofessional faculty members across campus, and community partners such as the Central Detroit Christian Development Corporation, Dr. Fava has established innovative public health care and education initiatives such as WSU Operation Immunization, #KnockOut HPV, free Community Health Fairs in the Detroit area, and piloted the Getting Back on Track: An Interprofessional Approach to Improve Vaccine Uptake. Dr. Fava's work has and continues to have a strong positive impact on our surrounding communities within the city and the WSU campus. His outreach and practice work has also generated research and scholarship, making it accessible to other communities across the country and highlighting WSU as a leading institution in public health innovation for medically underserved communities and on college campuses.

HOLLY FEEN-CALLIGAN

Associate Professor, Division of Theoretical and Behavioral Foundations, College of Education

Professor Holly Feen-Calligan is the coordinator of the graduate art therapy program in the College of Education. She has developed innovative visual art practicum and service-learning experiences with community partners. For example, Dr. Feen-Calligan currently leads art therapy projects at Brilliant Detroit in partnership with the College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts and the School of Social Work. Caregivers create an “ArtOBiography” visual book, then collaborate on a community book. With the Samaritas Refugee Resettlement agency, she provides crucial support to newly arrived refugee adults and youth managing stress and trauma by offering art therapy. Her commitment to community engagement is also evident through decade-long partnerships with Mack Alive and the Heidelberg Project. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Feen-Calligan continued to advocate for service learning and community partnerships, exemplifying the university’s commitment to outreach and engagement. For these reasons, she has been awarded an inaugural Community Engagement Recognition Award.

SAEED KHAN

Associate Professor (Teaching), Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Saeed Khan is well known for his extensive community engagement spanning nearly two decades. He has become a pivotal figure in promoting civil discourse, human rights, and interfaith dialogue. Professor Khan has facilitated tours of local mosques, taught courses on Christian-Muslim dialogue, and delivers the annual lecture for Citizens for Peace in commemoration of 9/11. With Global Ties Detroit, a US State Department partner, he brought Ukrainian exchange students to his global studies course. Furthermore, Professor Khan serves as a consultant for governmental and international bodies on critical issues related to the Near East/ Islamic world and is the founder of the International Center for Study of Transatlantic Diasporas. For these reasons, he has been awarded an inaugural Community Engagement Recognition Award.

TAREQ RAMADAN

Part-Time Faculty, Department of Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

KRYSTA RYZEWSKI

Department Chair, Department of Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Tareq Ramadan and Dr. Krysta Ryzewski are being honored for their work with the Malcolm X House Archeological Project and their engagement with the Inkster-based nonprofit Project We Hope, Dream, and Believe (PWHDB). Each significantly contributed to this project, which, through mutual collaboration, built positive relationships between Inkster community members and Wayne State University. Dr. Ramadan secured a sizable National Park Service grant to provide for the restoration of the Inkster home where Malcolm X lived in the early 1950s, which had been preserved from demolition by Inkster resident and founder of PWHDB Aaron Sims. Dr. Ramadan worked tirelessly with the community to ensure acknowledgment and inclusion of their voices in this important project, which preserves the cultural heritage and civil rights history of this important landmark in the historically Black city of Inkster. Archaeological excavation was identified as a critical component of the project to create a museum and community space. Dr. Ryzewski’s Urban Archaeology students worked side-by-side with members of the community, ages 4 to 60, to excavate the property for artifacts that could one day be displayed in the museum. Through this grassroots preservation project, Drs. Ramadan and Ryzewski thoughtfully engaged the community throughout their work, connecting WSU in a positive way and providing our students with an opportunity for real-world practice that also gave voice to community members who participated in the actual work of discovery and preservation of their local history. The work of Drs. Ramadan and Ryzewski contributes to Mr. Sim’s goal of preserving important local history while continuing Wayne State’s commitment to supporting its surrounding community in advocating for civil rights and social justice.

Academy of Teachers 2023-24 Inductees

The Academy of Teachers (AoT) is committed to promoting the shared value and culture of teaching excellence and student achievement at Wayne State University. The AoT strive to engage faculty, students, and staff in conversations about learning, and to move from conversations to concrete actions that improve the educational experience for all students. They also work to encourage policies at the university, local, state, and national levels that support teachers and promote and reward effective teaching.

The academy selects up to five new members each year from nominees who have had a significant impact on the WSU undergraduate learning experience, practice innovative pedagogy, and demonstrate instructional excellence.

Inductees to be named at the 2024 academic recognition ceremony.

Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award

The purpose of the Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award is to recognize outstanding scholarly activities that have contributed significantly to Wayne State University's graduate programs. Since 1974, 53 graduate faculty members have received the Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award.

Selected by the graduate school awards committee

RECIPIENT

JAZLIN EBENEZER

Professor, Division of Teacher Education, College of Education

Jazlin Ebenezer, Professor of Science Education and Charles H. Gershenson Distinguished Faculty Fellow, is the recipient of the 2024 Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award. Her journey has been defined by a deep commitment to mentorship and the cultivation of academic excellence in her graduate students. Over the years, she has mentored 19 graduate students on their journey to complete an Ed.D. or a Ph.D. in their chosen fields, each leaving a memorable mark on the education landscape. For Professor Ebenezer and her doctoral advisees, school classroom research is a deeply ingrained passion—a response to the profound impact on science education. Professor Ebenezer seeks every opportunity to work with her graduate students to contribute to science teaching and learning, driving classroom research with an unyielding belief in its transformative power. She is steadfast in her dedication to supporting each student on their journey toward academic excellence. Professor Ebenezer's dedication to her students extends beyond graduation, as evidenced by their significant contributions to academic literature in science education. Through innovative research, they have enriched teaching practices, curriculum development, and technology integration in classrooms, reflecting the enduring legacy of Professor Ebenezer's mentorship. Professor Ebenezer's mentorship in the WSU College of Education has inspired numerous graduate students and cultivated world-class researchers. She is an exceptional academic mentor known for pushing boundaries with grace and compassion. Professor Jazlin Ebenezer's substantial contributions to science education, leadership, and service make her a global role model for educators and researchers. She unquestionably deserves the Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award.

Outstanding Graduate Mentor Awards

The Graduate School's Outstanding Mentor Award honors graduate faculty who are recognized by their departments and their graduate students as excellent mentors. The awards were established in 1994 to highlight the importance of faculty's mentoring role.

Selected by the graduate school awards committee

RECIPIENTS

DONOVAN HOHN

Professor, Department of English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Donovan Hohn has contributed to the Creative Writing Program in English by integrating his work as a writer and editor with his skillful provision of academic mentorship. Under his guidance, the English department has renovated its curriculum with courses in editing and creative writing pedagogy, established the M.A. concentration in creative writing, and is currently developing a graduate certificate in creative writing. He has also successfully increased funding available to creative writing students through his efforts in development. Professor Hohn has been instrumental in developing a productive partnership between Wayne State and the University of Michigan, where students attend a yearly writers' conference with scholarship support that helps them widen their professional networks. He fostered productive community partnerships with literary nonprofit organizations in Detroit, such as Inside Out Literary Arts, 826 Michigan, and City of Asylum/Detroit, where our students gain valuable internship experiences and benefit from widened programming opportunities. Professor Hohn has further benefitted our students by using his network to invite nationally prominent writers to participate in our writer's series, judge our writing awards, and also serve as guests in his classes. Professor Hohn's students have remarked about the effective and inspiring support he provides to them as developing writers. He has continued to mentor students through their professional development years after they have graduated from their programs. This longstanding support is transformative and has led to national success for his students.

ZHENFEI LIU

Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Zhenfei Liu has built a strong record of mentoring since starting as Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemistry in August 2018. Notably, all of his graduate students beyond their second year have published first-author papers in leading journals. In the last four years, his graduate students have given 14 oral presentations (7 in-person) at national research conferences held by the American Chemical Society and the American Physical Society. Similarly, all of his graduate students beyond their second year have received awards, including the Rumble fellowship from the Graduate School, the Dan Trivich Memorial Award for Research in Physical Chemistry, and teaching awards from the Chemistry Department. He also shows a commitment to diversity in that all of his past and present graduate students are from historically underrepresented groups in science. In addition to mentoring and training graduate students in his research group, Professor Liu has also been active in graduate education. On top of excellent teaching in the classroom, he has held a mini workshop called "Learning PChem with WolframAlpha" for graduate students in an effort to mitigate the math anxiety associated with physical chemistry. Furthermore, Professor Liu has extolled the virtue of extracurricular activities in making an impact on larger professional communities, encouraging graduate students to serve as instructors in a high-school summer camp called "Chemistry Meets Computers" that he has organized annually since Summer 2021. For the aforementioned reasons, Professor Liu has demonstrated that he is unquestionably deserving of this award.

JESSICA ROBBINS-PANKO

Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology & Institute of Gerontology, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Jessica Robbins-Panko has made graduate student mentorship a priority since joining the Department of Anthropology and the Institute of Gerontology in 2014. Since that time, she has actively mentored thirty-two students across MA and PhD programs in Anthropology as well as the Social Work-Anthropology (SWAN) joint doctoral program. Student recommenders spoke highly of her as a source of encouragement, reassurance, and support throughout their studies. Students also emphasized that her mentorship was not only vital to their completion of their degree programs but essential to their success in receiving life-changing fellowships, research grants, and faculty positions. Perhaps the best example of Dr. Robbins-Panko's commitment to mentoring is the Personhood and Social Relations Lab. Dr. Robbins-Panko created this innovative working group to bring together graduate students and predoctoral fellows in Anthropology and the Institute of Gerontology. In bi-weekly meetings, lab members receive mentoring in not only best practices for research but also professionalization and the balancing of career and personal life. Many student recommenders wrote movingly of not only the impact of such mentorship on their development but also its importance as a space of comradeship and community during the challenges of the COVID pandemic. Dr. Robbins-Panko continues to be an active mentor in the present—serving as advisor to no fewer than fourteen graduate students at the time of this writing--and students will no doubt continue to benefit from her mentorship long into the future. She is truly deserving of the Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award.

RYAN THUMMEL

Associate Professor, Department of Ophthalmology, Visual and Anatomical Sciences, School of Medicine

The main focus of Professor Ryan Thummel's lab is to study the development and function of the retina. He utilizes all the genetic and developmental advantages of zebrafish as a model system, most notably their conservation to our human anatomy and physiology in regard to pigmentation, myelin formation, and visual function. In addition, he takes advantage of the amazing capacity of the zebrafish to regenerate its entire retina following injury or disease. Specific projects in the lab fit loosely into three distinct categories. The lab's two main vision research projects focus on retinal development in a zebrafish model of genetic leukoencephalopathy and adult retinal regeneration in zebrafish. In addition, in collaboration with Jeffrey Taub, MD, he has developed a zebrafish model of leukemia and retinoblastoma. Dr. Thummel is an extraordinary mentor who sees the potential for greatness in every student. He encourages and inspires each student he engages with to put forth their best effort and works tirelessly to support his students' success. Evidence of Dr. Thummel's high-quality mentorship is clear when interacting with students from his lab, who, in addition to displaying the traditional metrics of success, such as writing conference proceedings and peer-reviewed publications, share the same thoughtful, inquisitive, and fearless approach to the generation of new knowledge. Dr. Thummel's ability to instill these characteristics in his mentees makes him uniquely deserving of this award.

Outstanding Graduate Director Service Awards

The Office of the Provost and The Graduate School are pleased to co-sponsor the Outstanding Graduate Director, to highlight the important service by graduate directors in advancing graduate education in their programs.

Selected by the graduate school awards committee

RECIPIENTS

JEREMY KODANKO

Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Dr. Jeremy Kodanko has been a dedicated leader in the Department of Chemistry at WSU since 2016, serving as the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), Associate Chair, and Chair of Graduate Recruiting. Over his seven-year tenure, he has prioritized fairness, diversity, and student advocacy, earning such recognition as the Outstanding Graduate Director Award in 2020. Under Dr. Kodanko's leadership, the graduate program underwent significant improvements, including an overhaul of requirements for the Ph.D. degree and a direct admission policy for students into a Master of Arts degree, resulting in spurred growth in the Chemistry graduate program. Amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, he proactively supported students by organizing virtual town hall meetings, advocating for flexible deadlines, and addressing mental health concerns. Dr. Kodanko's commitment to student well-being extends beyond administrative duties, as he actively assists students in distress, facilitates negotiations, and collaborates with relevant entities for support. Additionally, he remains responsive to student feedback, leading to the elimination of antiquated proficiency requirements and the adoption of a more flexible advising approach. Furthermore, Dr. Kodanko's efforts in organizing career workshops and recruiting initiatives aimed at increasing diversity in the chemistry field highlight his dedication to fostering inclusivity and opportunity for underrepresented minorities. Overall, Dr. Kodanko's unwavering commitment to student success, advocacy, and diversity makes him a highly commendable leader within the department.

ROBERT WESSELLS

Associate Professor, Department of Physiology, School of Medicine

Dr. Robert Wessells has been a member of the department of Physiology since 2014. As part of his service to the department, he has consistently been a member of the Graduate Committee and was offered the position of Department Graduate Officer in early 2023. Upon accepting this position, his first priority was to increase the integration between the department's faculty and its students in order to mitigate the feeling that student voices were not heard since no prior mechanisms were in place to inform students of the changes made in response to their concerns. In addition, he led changes to modernize our curriculum and provide structured mentorship for students. Dr. Wessells also initiated operational changes to our Curriculum Committee, including a new step in which we publish a list of changes and send them out in an email to all students, helping to foster a sense of comradery and common goals for improvement. Dr. Wessells has been enormously helpful in ensuring that student-led changes are consensus-based and that all students are being heard. Dr. Wessells spearheaded the development of several new hands-on lab units. In addition, he has worked to expand the teaching opportunities in our department for graduate students, leading us to incorporate senior graduate students into our Post-Baccalaureate teaching programs as well as the Med Direct teaching program. Dr. Wessells continues to work together with faculty and students to bridge gaps between goals and expectations and move the department forward in a way that benefits everyone.

ZHENGPING YI

*Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences,
Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences*

Professor Zhengping Yi has served as the Director of the graduate program in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences for 2.5 years, and in that short time, he has made a tremendous impact. Professor Yi oversees all aspects of the graduate program, including management, recruiting, admissions, and student progression. He is often the first point of contact for inquiring students and his efforts have led to an increase in admissions of both domestic and underrepresented students. Professor Yi has been instrumental in revamping program policies and moving forms online. This modernization has been highly beneficial for students and faculty but has also been exceedingly important for the assessment of the program. Professor Yi is passionate about student success. He meets individually with every student both before they arrive and as they proceed through the program to ensure that students and faculty can address potential problems before they hinder progression. Professor Yi is also the faculty advisor for the student chapter of the American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists. Under his leadership, this organization has coordinated events that enhance student camaraderie and career development. Taken together, Professor Yi is an outstanding graduate director who has not only demonstrated his administrative skills but also his passion for student success, diversity, and engagement.

Garrett T. Heberlein Endowed Awards for Excellence in Teaching for Graduate Students

The Garrett T. Heberlein Award for Excellence in Teaching recognizes graduate students who demonstrate instructional excellence. It is designed in part to elevate the attention given to teaching as part of graduate education and the preparation of graduate students to serve as college and university teachers.

Selected by the graduate school awards committee

RECIPIENTS

IRYNA HATALA

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Physics and Astronomy, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Iryna Hatala, a Ph.D. student and graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, has taught a wide variety of courses, ranging from teaching intro Astronomy labs to leading discussion sections for calculus-based Physics. Iryna made important contributions to improving online versions of lab classes with the shift to online teaching modes during the pandemic. A dedicated teacher, Iryna cares deeply about the students and thrives in working with small groups of students in problem-solving activities. She uses active learning approaches to encourage student participation and engagement. Excellent evaluations clearly demonstrate that students appreciate Iryna's teaching approach. Students testify to her skills, noting, "What sets Iryna apart is her remarkable blend of knowledge, kindness, and patience, which she consistently demonstrates in her interactions with students." Iryna is mindful of creating a classroom atmosphere that encourages open communication, where students feel comfortable seeking help and expressing their concerns. Students notice and appreciate this, with one stating, "Her commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive learning environment is evident in her ability to connect with students on a personal level. I have consistently observed her going above and beyond to ensure that each student feels valued and supported in their educational journey." Iryna has generously mentored newer teaching assistants, while at the same time also always striving to continually improve her own teaching. For all these reasons, Iryna Hatala is a deserving recipient of the Garrett T. Heberlein Endowed Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching.

KRISTI MORRIS

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Kristi Morris, a Ph.D. candidate and Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Department of English with a concentration in Rhetoric and Writing Studies, has made excellent contributions to the department's General Education Composition Program and the University. Her academic focus on writing pedagogy and multimodal composition has translated into a transformative teaching style that resonates with her students, as evidenced by her exceptional student evaluations and outcomes. Ms. Morris's innovative teaching methods, including integrating student-created music videos and using storyboarding techniques for complex projects, have engaged her students and enhanced their learning experiences. She provides feedback to her students through multimodal written, audio, and video responses, highlighting what students have done well and what needs more development. Her commitment to education extends beyond her classroom; she has played a significant role in revising the curriculum and has generously offered her time to mentor her peers, sharing her insights and strategies with other Graduate Teaching Assistants. She is dedicated to fostering an interactive and dynamic learning environment and contributing generously to the academic community.



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**Office of the Provost and
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
4228 Faculty/Administration Building
Detroit, MI 48202**

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