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 2017 are based on accomplishments in 2015-16. The work of merit is a single act or even that constituted an outstanding contribution to scholarship and learning. Since 1975, 208 faculty members have received this award.

AWARD COMMITTEE

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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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Department of English
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Kidda Williams
Department of History
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

RECIPIENTS

SIMONE CHESS
Associate Professor
Department of English
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes Simone Chess, associate professor in the Department of English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, for the publication of Made to Female: Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations (Boutledge, 2016). This is the first monograph that concentrates exclusively on male-to-female crossdressing, as opposed to female-to-male crossdressing, which has received much more attention. Professor Chess’s monograph includes more than 30 dramatic or literary instances of male-to-female crossdressing in an attempt to shed new light on early modern views of gender and sexuality. As historians now believe that plays shaped — rather than simply represented — a culture, theatrical crossdressing has become critical to analyzing the broader history of gender and sexuality in the early modern period. Another unique feature of Professor Chess’s monograph is that it introduces new and provocative terminology, such as “hydraulic exchange,” to describe the dynamic way in which the properties of masculinity and femininity are interconnected. Professor Chess’s monograph not only opens up new perspectives on early modern texts by applying modern concepts, but her work also has the potential to inform contemporary understandings of modern gender performance.

JOHN LEARY
Assistant Professor
Department of English
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes John Patrick Leary, assistant professor in the Department of English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, for the publication of the book: A Cultural History of Underdevelopment: Latin America in the American Imagination (University of Virginia Press, 2016). In his monograph, Professor Leary traces the ways in which the United States defined Latin America from the mid-19th century to the end of the Cold War and, in particular, identifies how the United States came to read the region as underdeveloped, a reading that has as much to do with America’s need to construct a flattering image of itself as it did with actual economic conditions. The book’s breadth extends to original readings of authors such as Langston Hughes, Nicolás Guillén, Stephen Crane, José Martí, Jack Kerouac and Junot Díaz, among others. In its combination of brilliant archival research and transnational cultural analysis, Professor Leary’s book is an important and persuasive account of the place of Latin America in the American Imagination.

FRANCISCO HIGUERO
Professor
Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes Francisco Higuero, Professor in the Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, for the publication of two books: Conceptualizaciones discursivas: Nuevos pensamientos del siglo veintiuno (Disursive Conceptualizations: New Thinking of the 21st Century, 2015) and Desgramamientos existenciales. Nueva narrativa española del siglo veintiuno (Existential Rifts: New Spanish Narrative of the 21st Century, 2016). Disursive Conceptualizations elaborates on the various strands of thinking in contemporary Spain, tackling a panorama of major philosophical concepts and ideas, and exploring, with impressive wisdom and depth, the contradictions and tensions in Spanish sociopolitical and cultural reality. Existential Rifts ties together, in 18 eloquently argued chapters, a variety of representative works by contemporary Spanish authors under the all-encompassing theme of fundamental existential rifts that affect both the inner and social lives of their central characters. In both books, Professor Higuero’s commentaries and analyses succeed in presenting a thorough and deep examination of the most important literary trends and philosophical thought in 21st century Spain.

TRACY NEUMANN
Assistant Professor
Department of History
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes Tracy Neumann, assistant professor in the Department of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, for the publication of Remaking the Rust Belt: The Postindustrial Transformation of North America (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). Remaking the Rust Belt is an innovative and comparative examination of the consequences of deindustrialization in North American cities, focusing on the former steel cities of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Hamilton, Ontario. Professor Neumann argues that Pittsburgh and Hamilton demonstrate alternative paths for addressing the urban crises of the 1960s and 1970s. Suburbanization, population decline, and the shift from manufacturing to a service and knowledge economy fundamentally altered how urban economies were organized and how urban politics were governed. Professor Neumann deftly shows how the urban experience of deindustrialization was shaped by political choices at the local, state and federal levels that created different outcomes for Pittsburgh and Hamilton. Deeply engaged with the literature of urban history, political history and the problem of postindustrialism, Remaking the Rust Belt has and will continue to have a major impact on these fields of study.

RECIPIENTS

SANDRA VANBURLKEO
Professor
Department of History
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

The Board of Governors recognizes Sandra VanBurekko, Professor in the Department of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, for the publication of the book Gender Remade: Citizenship, Suffrage, and Public Power in the New Northwest, 1879–1912 (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Professor VanBurekko’s book is a case study on women’s status, rights and political participation in the Washington Territory and then in Washington State. Merging the fields of constitutional and women’s history, Gender Remade reveals that the history of women’s struggle for equality included, but was not limited to, acquiring the right to vote. During Washington territory’s experimentation with gender equality in the 1870s and 1880s, women fought for and enjoyed a range of privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, including serving on juries, today an underappreciated component of public governance that recognized women as sovereign members of the polity. However, this inclusion and recognition did not translate into full equality. Indeed, women lost legal and political ground when Washington transitioned from a territory to a state and abandoned gender equality to fend off charges that its experiment rendered it unfit for inclusion in the national constitutional order. This was a devastating blow, as women’s civil equality and political sovereignty would not be recognized again until 1910.