PRESIDENT’S AWARDS
FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

The President’s Awards for Excellence in Teaching recognize faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to teaching. This year there are six awards. Since 1977, 26 Wayne State University faculty members have been recognized for their teaching with these awards.

AWARD COMMITTEE
Ellen Barton, Chair
Office of the Provost
Lisabeth Hock
Department of Classical and Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Peysetta Keys
School of Social Work
Christopher Lund
Law School
Melvin Rosati
Department of Art and Art History
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
William Volz
Department of Accounting & Business Law
Milli Bish School of Business

RECIPIENTS

SCOTT BOWEN | Associate Professor, Department of Psychology
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Scott Bowen’s commitment to teaching is clear, consistent, and outstanding. He does a masterful job translating concepts and research to make course material comprehensible and interesting to his students. He works to make complex topics interesting by mining in popular culture, current events, and historical examples—no easy feat when teaching topics grounded heavily in biology and chemistry. His colleagues say he is an excellent teacher who offers students first-hand opportunities to experience success at every stage of research and scholarship in a highly supportive and nurturing environment. As an instructor, Dr. Bowen balances high expectations, particularly for his graduate students, with a great deal of compassion and understanding. He is endlessly willing to sacrifice his personal time to work with students, coaching them through more difficult concepts. Dr. Bowen is clearly passionate and dedicated about student learning and success and is well regarded by his colleagues, graduate students and undergraduate students alike, making him an outstanding choice for the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

RANDALL L. COMMISSARIS | Associate Professor, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences
Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Professor Randall Commissaris is considered by his colleagues and students to be the consummate teacher. At all levels and by all measures, Dr. Commissaris has been one of the top teachers of graduate students in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and of PharmD students within the pharmacy program. He holds a deep affection for the material he is teaching. While both his colleagues and the university have benefited greatly from his curricular innovations, Dr. Commissaris takes the greatest pride in the curriculum’s role in student success. He has demonstrated excellence in all aspects of classroom teaching and curricular development. Whether it is in their classroom success, in their published scholarship or in their rising aspirations for graduate studies and a professional career, he has left an impressive trail of accomplished and appreciative students. Their passionate support confirms the choice of Professor Randall L. Commissaris to receive the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

CHERI KEE | Associate Professor, Department of English
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Professor Cheri Kee is an exceptionally effective teacher and mentor of undergraduate and graduate students in film and media studies. In both their visual format and their innovative assignments, her syllabi display her deep knowledge of the subject matter and her use of best teaching practices. Her process-oriented assignments range from analytic papers to the development of publicity materials for a horror film, in the classroom, she skillfully employs presentation strategies that make challenging content more concrete and accessible, while managing discussions in ways that help students to develop their own ideas in dialogue with one another. This involves ensuring that all students have an equal voice. Other aspects of Dr. Kee’s collaborative classrooms include group work and the encouragement of students to physically move in order to interact with one another at different stations she establishes. In her mentoring of graduate students, she provides scholarly and pre-professional training, which has helped two of her PhD. advisees find academic positions. For these reasons, Dr. Kee is highly deserving of the University’s highest teaching award.

MICHELE MAJOR | Lecturer, Department of Communication
College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts

Dr. Shelly Major is an inspiring teacher, known for her humor, empathy, drive, and devotion to her students. Teaching a wide array of classes within the field of public relations, she combines the best of traditional methods (such as an intense emphasis on writing) with new and innovative ones (service learning, hybridized class formats, and new media). She is affirming but demanding, insisting on excellence while simultaneously enabling students to achieve it. Dr. Major’s passion for the field of public relations extends beyond the classroom in ways that pay dividends in the classroom. Her engagement with professional organizations like the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) and the Black Public Relations Society has led to countless professional, civic, and personal benefits for her students. She has developed mentoring programs pairing students with professionals; she has also guided the WSU chapter of the PRSSA into becoming a success in both academic and professional terms. Under Dr. Major’s leadership, the public relations major at Wayne State became the second program in Michigan to be certified by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Dr. Major is a wonderful teacher, respected by her colleagues and beloved by her students. She is an excellent choice for the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

FREDRICK POISKAL | Associate Professor (Clinical), Department of Health Care Sciences, Physical Therapy Program
Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences

Professor Fredrick Pociask demonstrates an exceptionally high degree of comprehensive knowledge of his subject matter and superior classroom performance. He is highly skilled at communicating his subject matter in a manner that is accurate, clear and effective. His personal goals for classroom teaching are to help students draw connections between theoretical materials being presented and real world competencies that will allow students to become successful in the clinical setting. Dr. Pociask continually motivates students to excel both in the classroom and in clinical settings. Past students have commented on his reputation for excellence in the clinical setting and have been excited to have the opportunity to learn under his guidance. He is sought after as a mentor by many experienced clinicians who are looking for a career in academia. Dr. Pociask is a dedicated professional who cares deeply about his students and is a mentor to those who are currently enrolled in the program and to others who have already graduated. He is a model for commitment to the student learning process and is well-deserving of the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.

KELLY YOUNG | Associate Professor, Department of Communication
College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts

Professor Kelly Young is a highly revered teacher by both his students and colleagues who describe his teaching as visionary. He is a skilled communicator, and knowledgeable in the field of communications; he inspires his students to achieve their highest potential in both a traditional and nontraditional classroom. Dr. Young is an energetic and effective instructor for many required courses while serving as director of the highly successful and nationally renowned WSU Forensics team; Part of Dr. Young’s vision is to keep the Forensics program centered within the Metro Detroit area, in addition, he serves as a teaching mentor for graduate teaching assistants and other faculty, and advises countless doctoral students as a PhD advisor. His former students speak to how well Dr. Young’s teaching had a lasting impact and prepared them for their current careers. Dr. Kelly Young is an outstanding professor who deserves the honor of the President’s Award for Excellence in Teaching.