FACULTY DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARDS / 2024

RECIPIENTS

CHANCELLOR’S DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD
Sarah Clayton, Professor, Anthropology
Derek Johnson, Professor, Communication Arts
Neil Kodesh, Professor, History
Douglas M. McLeod, Professor, Journalism & Mass Communication
Aurélie Mamisoa Rakotondrafara, Associate Professor, Plant Pathology

CHANCELLOR’S INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE TEACHING AWARD
Sarah Ensor, Assistant Professor, English
Emily Machado, Assistant Professor, Curriculum & Instruction

CHANCELLOR’S TEACHING INNOVATION AWARD
Hannah Beth Blum, Assistant Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering

CLASS OF 1955 TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD
Annie Menzel, Associate Professor, Gender & Women’s Studies

EMIL H. STEIGER TEACHING AWARD
Katherine Jensen, Assistant Professor, Sociology and International Studies

EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING TEACHING AWARD
Travis Wright, Associate Professor, Counseling Psychology

VAN HISE OUTREACH TEACHING AWARD
Jerome R. Clark, Professor, Extension

WILLIAM H. KIEKHOFER TEACHING AWARD
Hilary Dugan, Associate Professor, Integrative Biology
PROFESSOR SARAH CLAYTON

College of Letters & Science
Department of Anthropology

Clayton excels in both classroom and field teaching, in part because she works hard to bring the hands-on engagement of field learning to the classroom and the intellectual framing of the classroom to the field. At her long-term field research site near Teotihuacan, Mexico, she has mentored undergraduate and graduate students to become skilled archaeologists and community-engaged researchers. Her project offers professional training opportunities for students from the U.S. and Mexico and participants from the local community. Clayton’s teaching reflects her wide-ranging intellectual and research interests, inspiring and benefiting her students. While the topics deal with the archaeological past, her research and courses make explicit linkages with the concerns of present-day societies.

“Dr. Clayton reaches a wide variety of students in her coursework, including many who were not initially drawn to anthropology at all. From the novice to the experienced, and from the meticulous to the swashbuckling, students really value Dr. Clayton’s enthusiasm, her breadth of knowledge, her capacity for mentorship that is both positive and demanding, and her innovative pedagogical strategies.”

—Professor Claire Wendland
CHANCELLOR’S DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

PROFESSOR DEREK JOHNSON
College of Letters & Science
Department of Communication Arts

Since joining the faculty in 2011, Johnson has had a transformative impact on undergraduate education, graduate education and the culture of teaching within the Department of Communication Arts. One example is CA 547: Digital Games Cultures, one of the popular courses Johnson developed for the department. Rather than a series of traditional assignments, Johnson turned the course into a play-based experience meant to simulate a video game. The result is a tremendously fun course for students that advances the learning outcomes and encourages student reflection on the subject matter at every step along the way. He also challenges students to be critical about the media they consume and the systemic inequalities in the media industries. Given that many undergrads will go on to work in these very same industries, Johnson’s courses have a significant impact not just on students in the program, but also on the future executives, managers, screenwriters and showrunners who will define these industries for the next generation.

“He is an outstanding teacher who challenges his students, colleagues, and himself to grow and become even better. He has designed some of the most innovative courses in the department’s history, finding bold and creative ways to advance learning goals and prepare students for their lives and careers after graduation.”

–Professor Lyn van Swol
Kodesh has made extraordinary contributions to the teaching mission of the university through his engaging and accessible pedagogical style, his devotion to mentoring and his commitment to fostering collaboration across departments, disciplines, institutions and continents. Few students come to UW–Madison believing that Africa is immediately relevant to their lives. And yet, in his classes, particularly the high-enrolling, cross-listed “History 277: Introduction to African Studies,” Kodesh shows them that it is — or it should be. His devoted students consistently comment on how he brings African history alive, something they may never have studied in a formal setting before. He has an abiding commitment to creating an inclusive climate for all students and has worked closely with the Global Gateway program, which allows students with financial need to access study abroad programs. Kodesh prioritizes equity, recognizing everyone’s unique contributions.

“Professor Kodesh has enlivened African history by showing a remarkable commitment to fostering interdisciplinary collaboration across campus, particularly between the sciences and the humanities. He shows how we cannot begin to find solutions to today’s pressing global problems—epidemic diseases and climate change, among them—if we remain mired in our disciplinary silos.”

–Professor Anne Hansen
PROFESSOR DOUGLAS M. McLEOD
College of Letters & Science
School of Journalism & Mass Communication

McLeod has a worldwide reputation as a leading scholar of the interplay between media and democratic citizenship, specializing in the study of how news coverage of social conflict affects audiences’ thoughts, feelings and actions. He strives to innovate curriculum to stay current with the rapid changes reshaping the mass media system, media-related industries and the scholarly study of these transformations. McLeod initiated the development and implementation of a new sports communication certificate that has proven to be among the most popular SJMC offerings, enrolling hundreds of undergraduate students and preparing them for careers in sports broadcasting, writing, marketing and management, all growing career domains. He emphasizes experiential learning, where undergraduate and graduate students apply the ideas they encounter to real world problems, often through social research. As a scholar deeply attentive to the power of media to both inform and distort, McLeod centers his teaching in an abiding concern for creating ethical communication serving the public interest.

“Doug exemplifies teaching practices of the highest caliber, with an emphasis on conceptual depth and professional relevance, a combination our field prizes. ... The experiences Doug enables for students are singular because of his unique combination of intellect, energy, enthusiasm, experience, and sense of purpose.”

– Professor Kathleen Bartzen Culver
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
AURÉLIE MAMISOA RAKOTONDRAFARA
College of Agricultural & Life Sciences
Department of Plant Pathology

The core of Rakotondrafara’s teaching philosophy lies in the continuous integration of innovative teaching practices to fit the needs, interests and educational levels of her students. She possesses a deep understanding of the diverse needs of her students, allowing her to tailor instructional methods for student comprehension and retention, setting a high standard for inclusivity in her field. This commitment to inclusivity and to ensuring that every student feels valued and actively involved in the learning process has resulted in remarkable gains in student participation and achievement, fostering an equitable educational experience. Rakotondrafara uses innovative teaching approaches such as interactive online platforms, multimedia resources and gamification. These practices have transformed classrooms into vibrant places of active learning, promoting critical thinking, creativity and student ownership of their educational journey.

“Dr. Rakotondrafara delivers engaging and thought-provoking lectures that prompt students to think critically and deeply understand complex subjects. Her ability to foster a dynamic and inclusive learning environment is evident through the classroom experiences she creates.”

–Professor Amanda Gevens
A leading voice in the field of queer ecologies, Ensor teaches self-designed courses in environmental humanities and American environmental literature, with an emphasis on gender and sexuality. She makes challenging literary and philosophical texts interesting and accessible to all students, igniting curiosity, critical thinking and ethical attentiveness. Ensor instills the idea that literature is a powerful tool for both understanding the world and enacting change. Her pedagogical approach goes beyond imparting knowledge; it creates a space for students to evolve intellectually. Ensor understands the classroom as a space of collaboration, both among the students and between the students and herself. She seeks to enfranchise them as each other’s best teachers, and ultimately to make their collective work a project that they can continue even after the class has ended.

“She gives every student close attention as a learner, writer, and thinker. And she is devoted to building communities of engaged readers and learners in the classroom and beyond.”

—Professor Christa Olson
Machado brings her rich scholarly perspectives to the classroom, creating space for her graduate and undergraduate students to grapple with how to create equitable, inclusive and humanizing education for young multilingual children as they expand their abilities to read and write. She excels in building relationships with students and creating classroom environments of care and support. Machado prioritizes student interaction and creates assignments that consider student interests. She seamlessly blends theory and practice, weaving into her instruction critical ideas and concepts with examples from her own experiences as a teacher and researcher of young children. She helps students make connections with their own lives and experiences, and apply what they are learning to educational contexts and their own future careers. Machado brings joy to learning and fosters excitement among students for education and their own pathways as educators.

“Dr. Machado demonstrates the ability to thoughtfully and carefully design classroom activities that support student engagement and learning. Her teaching evaluations tell the story of an expert in her field who designs engaging classes, is focused on relationship building, and is dedicated to social justice.”

–Professor Leema Berland
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR HANNAH BETH BLUM
College of Engineering
Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering

Blum uses virtual and mixed reality learning exercises to keep students engaged and help them visualize the work they’ll do as structural engineers. Students in her Steel Structures course take virtual reality building tours, allowing them to see what a real construction site looks like. It’s a promising alternative to physical tours, which can be difficult to plan due to access, timing, travel and safety issues. Students say they retain more than if the same information was presented in a typical slideshow format. They also say these virtual tours help stimulate their interest in the design of steel structures. With an eye toward the future, Blum established the first Virtual and Mixed Reality Teaching Laboratory in the College of Engineering, a valuable resource for students as well as colleagues. Blum also serves as an important role model for women in the structural engineering discipline. Her presence coincides with an increased number of women students in construction and structural engineering courses.

“Advanced communications and immersive technologies are at the forefront of national initiatives for both research and teaching, and are explicitly identified as topics of national need. Dr. Blum is placing our department and college on the front line of these innovations.”

–Professor William J. Likos
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ANNIE MENZEL
College of Letters & Science
Department of Gender & Women's Studies

Menzel is a dedicated and talented teacher who has developed new and exciting courses for Gender and Women's Studies, updated some of the long-established intermediate and advanced courses and brought energy and inspiration to one of the introductory courses. Peers and students alike affirm the quality, creativity and effectiveness of her instruction. Menzel approaches her teaching and interactions with compassion, patience and intention. She has actively sought out resources, such as the Discussion Project, to deepen her repertoire as a facilitator of inclusive and generative class discussions, and enrich student learning from 100-level to advanced undergrad and graduate courses. It is evident throughout her courses that she wants to learn from students as well. Beyond creating powerful lectures, Menzel works to compassionately support and train her graduate teaching assistants, many of whom are teaching for the first time each fall.

“Professor Annie Menzel teaches our students with passion, commitment, and creativity. Her courses lead students into their communities and bring community experts, leaders, and activists into her classrooms. Students learn how they can parlay their academic skills into a variety of outlets beyond the academia.”

–Professor Judith A. Houck
Jensen has an extraordinary ability to cultivate curiosity in her students. She combines a command of her subject matter with a communication style that engages students and demystifies otherwise difficult and complicated academic material. A central principle that shines through her teaching is her persistent call for students to question taken-for-granted ideas and beliefs. One way she does this is through free associations in which she asks students to share what comes to mind when they think of a refugee or a migrant, for example. These kinds of activities not only encourage students to participate in their own learning, something that is hard in a 300-person lecture, but also importantly to spark multifaceted and far-ranging discussions. The way Jensen teaches not only models a persistent commitment to critical thinking but also teaches students how they can hone these analytical skills.

“Katie Jensen is truly an exceptional instructor. She is thoughtful, intentional, and skilled. She has invested in the craft of teaching over many years and her students reap the rewards of her care and attention.”

--Professor Eric Grodsky
EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING TEACHING AWARD

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR TRAVIS WRIGHT
School of Education
Department of Counseling Psychology

A centerpiece of Wright’s contributions to UW–Madison and the larger Madison community has been his partnership with the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), initially funded by a Baldwin Award, to develop the BASES (Building Academic, Social, and Emotional Supports) project — a mentoring and teacher development program aimed at improving outcomes for children experiencing homelessness. The BASES project has facilitated over 14,000 hours of direct student support in MMSD classrooms over the past 11 years. This initiative grew out of Wright’s research on resilience and the importance of the student-teacher relationship, and it embodies the Wisconsin Idea of putting research into action to benefit the community. Wright clearly believes each of us can change the world and inspires students to make a difference in the lives of others.

“Professor Wright provides a conceptual grounding for a set of humanistic and relational competencies that are critical to creating a nurturing school environment, especially for children who experience chaotic or conflictual home environments. His community-based learning BASES course positively impacts students who are experiencing homelessness while providing experiences that the UW students will remember for many years.”

—Professor Mindi N. Thompson
Clark connects farmers, agriculture industry representatives, clients in Dunn, Eau Claire and Chippewa counties and stakeholders across the state of Wisconsin and throughout the nation with UW–Madison research and resources. To do this, he has adopted new teaching methods, including podcasts like “The Cutting Edge: Podcasts for New Crops in Wisconsin,” as a way of reaching new audiences. He also dedicates a significant part of his teaching efforts to reaching underrepresented audiences. His work to translate two Canvas courses into Spanish and to offer live interpretation (virtual and in-person) has resulted in improved outcomes in manure application safety for Latinx farmers and their employees. He has also worked with members of the Ho-Chunk Nation to learn and apply culturally relevant practices related to the manufacturing of hemp grain and fiber that benefited both the industry and the tribe. His service has provided him with the opportunity to coach many new agricultural educators and college interns as they begin their careers with the Division of Extension.

“Across our department, academic staff and faculty of all disciplines seek out Jerry Clark as a mentor who will guide them in their outreach efforts. Without a doubt, he is regarded and respected as a colleague with highly impactful teaching and mentoring skills.”

—Professor Annie Lisowski
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR HILARY DUGAN
College of Letters & Science
Department of Integrative Biology

Dugan stands out for her devotion to her students as individuals. She is committed to supporting students from underrepresented groups and works to create an inclusive environment and expand scientific opportunities. Dugan views teaching as an important part of her scholarship and is incredibly effective at passing her understanding and enthusiasm for lakes, data analysis and science on to her students. Her course content is designed to be relevant to students’ lives and experiences. She intersperses creative activities with more traditional lectures and uses innovative assessment strategies to ensure students are understanding the material. Dugan actively seeks input about how to improve her teaching and readily implements changes that she feels will improve student learning. Undergraduates become fully integrated into Dugan’s research group, gaining experience that helps launch them into top graduate programs and careers in the field.

“She is a remarkable scholar and teacher who inspires passion and understanding of nature by offering immersive and innovative teaching in the classroom, field, and lab. Faculty like Hilary Dugan are what make UW–Madison the extraordinary place that it is.”

–Professor Lauren V. Ritters
ABOUT THE AWARDS
Since 1953, the University of Wisconsin–Madison has been honoring its finest educators with Faculty Distinguished Teaching Awards.

Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award
Established by former UW–Madison Chancellor Edwin Young in 1973, the Chancellor’s Distinguished Teaching Award honors up to five faculty members for their excellence in teaching.

Chancellor’s Inclusive Excellence Teaching Award
The Chancellor’s Inclusive Excellence Teaching Award celebrates exemplary achievements in teaching that honor the university’s value of diversity and inclusion as the path to excellence. This award recognizes outstanding faculty whose creative and innovative teaching develops strategies that promote diverse and inclusive environments and practices in the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea.

Chancellor’s Teaching Innovation Award
Established in 2019, the Chancellor’s Teaching Innovation Award recognizes the achievements of outstanding instructors (assistant, associate and full professors) who have shown innovation in approach to learning. This award celebrates innovations with significant impact on the University of Wisconsin learner experience.

Class of 1955 Teaching Excellence Award
During its 25-year reunion, the Class of 1955 established a fund to honor professors, especially at the assistant and associate rank, who have made significant teaching contributions to undergraduate students. The Class of 1955 Teaching Excellence Award was first presented in 2004.
**Emil H. Steiger Teaching Award**
Manufacturer Emil H. Steiger served as the president of the Deltox Grass Rug Company of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, from 1909 until his death in 1929. A passionate supporter of education — and of Wisconsin’s state universities in particular — Steiger sent his two sons, Carl and Emil, to the UW. The younger Emil Steiger became a UW regent in 1952 and served as president of the board of regents from 1959 to 1962. He and Carl created the Emil H. Steiger Teaching Award in 1958 to honor their father. Traditionally, the Steiger Award has been given to a junior faculty member.

**Excellence in Community-Based Learning Teaching Award**
Established in the 2018-2019 academic year, the Excellence in Community-Based Learning Teaching Award celebrates the achievements of outstanding instructors (assistant, associate and full professors) who incorporate meaningful, mutually beneficial community engagement into their courses to create deeper student learning outcomes and community benefit.

**Van Hise Outreach Teaching Award**
As president of the University of Wisconsin from 1903 to 1918, Charles Van Hise developed the doctrine known today as the Wisconsin Idea: the guiding philosophy of UW–Madison’s outreach efforts to extend the borders of the university to touch the lives of people throughout Wisconsin and around the world. The Van Hise Outreach Teaching Award was established in 1990 to honor distinguished outreach teaching by a member of UW–Madison’s faculty.

**William H. Kiekhofer Teaching Award**
Legendary economics professor William “Wild Bill” Kiekhofer taught upwards of 70,000 undergraduates during the course of his 38-year UW career. Known nationally for the textbook Economic Principles, Problems, and Policies — one of the best-selling texts of the first half of the 20th century — he was a beloved figure on campus, and before each of his lectures, his students would give him a “skyrocket” cheer. The Kiekhofer Award, which honors an assistant or associate professor in the College of Letters & Science, was established as the UW’s first teaching award shortly after Wild Bill’s death in 1951.
The Office of the Secretary of the Faculty acknowledges the contributions of the 2023-2024 Faculty Distinguished Teaching Awards Committee.

Nicole Borras, Student
Irena Knezevic, Professor, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Charles Lauhon, Associate Professor, School of Pharmacy
Lori Lopez, Professor, Asian American Studies and Communication Arts
Adam Nelson (chair), Professor, Educational Policy Studies
Sanjana Prabhakar, Student
Michel Wattiaux, Professor, Animal & Dairy Sciences
Julie Scharm, Deputy Secretary of the Faculty, Committee Administrator
Excellence in teaching is part of what makes the University of Wisconsin–Madison a world-class institution. Congratulations to the 2024 Faculty Distinguished Teaching Award recipients.