



CONNECTICUT STATE
COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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FACULTY AWARDS

2014-15 ACADEMIC YEAR

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FACULTY AWARDS

2014 –15 ACADEMIC YEAR

NOMINATION ABSTRACTS

CAMPUS-BASED AWARDS

TEACHING AWARDS

(Connecticut State Universities)

Dr. Julia Kara-Soteriou
Associate Professor, Reading and Language Arts
Central Connecticut State University

Department Chair Dr. Helen Abadiano describes Dr. Kara-Soteriou as a dedicated educator and scholar, devoting her career to promoting excellence in teaching and learning. She has upgraded departmental curriculum and made major contributions to the field of literacy; integrating scholarly activities, research and teaching. Her peers confirm and her students testify to her high caliber of teaching. Students say she is passionate for her field, models high expectations and her “thorough teaching style” is extremely personable and genuinely supportive of students.

Dr. Daniel Donaghy
Associate Professor, English
Eastern Connecticut State University

An award-winning poet, Dr. Donaghy is an inspiration to students as a model of excellence. According to his colleague, Dr. Christopher Torockio, he is living proof of what can be accomplished with hard work and dedication. He has developed courses, guided the university’s literary magazine into a widely distributed journal of beauty and merit, and established the department’s study abroad experience. His students say he fosters a welcoming, engaging classroom environment and helps them recognize and appreciate the power of life’s moments.

Dr. Marie Basile McDaniel
Assistant Professor, History
Southern Connecticut State University

Dr. McDaniel is an excellent teacher who strives to become even better in order to improve student learning and promote their success. She is described by Dr. Troy Paddock, Department Chair, as committed to curricular innovation, having developed courses and revised others. Students observe a vibrant pedagogical style that exhibits her enthusiasm for her field. She cultivates a refreshing learning environment that makes learning enjoyable, and awakens the mind to new ideas and interpretations of the living breathing history that surrounds us.

Dr. Nicholas Greco
Associate Professor, Chemistry
Western Connecticut State University

See nomination abstract under System-Wide Awards

TEACHING AWARDS

(Connecticut Community Colleges)

Ms. Carol LaLiberte

Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education
Asnuntuck Community College

Department Chair Fredric Stefanowicz describes Professor LaLiberte's teaching as having a certain artistry, as her curricular materials reflect creativity, careful planning, outstanding organizational skills and a direct focus on course outcomes. The institution's former dean of Academic Affairs, Dr. Barbara McCarthy, states that Professor LaLiberte is a master teacher, a curricular innovator and a college-wide leader – "she is in the top 5 percent of over 200 faculty members I have observed in the classroom."

Ms. Teresa M. Russo

Assistant Professor, Social Sciences
Gateway Community College

Dr. Mark Kosinski, Dean of Academic Affairs, declares Professor Russo is an outstanding teacher with innovative and effective instructional skills. Department Chair Susan Logan supports the nomination in noting Professor Russo is especially cognizant of meeting the variety of learning needs that the diverse students of GCC present. She implements a variety of pedagogical techniques, focusing on collaborative and experiential learning. Additionally, she assumed leadership of the Center for Teaching – a laboratory promoting faculty development.

Ms. Jamilet Ortiz

Assistant Professor, Language
Housatonic Community College

Acting Academic Dean Rebecca Adams states Professor Ortiz is developing new literature courses at HCC, spearheads the study abroad program, and has been working with the Interdisciplinary Studies committee to offer a course in the History Department. She has been active in developing pedagogy and instructional approaches and in improving foreign language instruction through the creation of a laboratory and online delivery of courses, as well as the development and implementation of placement testing for foreign language courses.

Dr. Lin Lin

Assistant Professor, Engineering Science and Computer Engineering Technology
Middlesex Community College

See nomination abstract under System-Wide Awards

TEACHING AWARDS
(Connecticut Community Colleges)
(continued)

Mr. Steve Parlato
Assistant Professor, English
Naugatuck Valley Community College

Dr. Lisa Schucter, Department Chair, is impressed by the way Professor Parlato integrates creative instructional techniques using technology and the arts to engage students in the learning process. He utilizes a variety of teaching methodologies such as collaborative learning, mini lectures, peer groups, and teams to meet the diverse learning styles and needs in the classroom. The Chair observes that a genuine bond has been created between the instructor and his students who are fully engaged and actively participating in classroom activities.

Ms. Christine Mangone
Assistant Professor, Humanities
Norwalk Community College

Professor Mangone is an outstanding teacher and her impact on NCC has been transformative. She has built a vibrant and high quality performing arts program wherein students explore and develop their abilities in acting, singing and instrumental performance, said Dr. Vanessa Smith Mostert, Interim Dean of Academic Affairs. Endorsements from students describe her passion and creativity, and testify about the ways in which she has touched and changed their lives by providing them with the essential tools to help them grow throughout their lives.

Mr. Jonathan Anderson
Associate Professor, English
Quinebaug Valley Community College

In nominating Professor Anderson for a Teaching Award, Dr. Scott DeShong, Department Chair, describes him as one of the finest, naturally talented teachers he has ever encountered. He is extraordinarily patient and welcoming, yet engaging and inspiring. He makes the learning environment highly productive, bringing all students into active participation by placing them at the center of their learning. He also embodies collegiality through several roles in curricular development and innovations that impact teaching across QVCC and other community colleges.

TEACHING AWARDS
(Connecticut Community Colleges)
(continued)

Ms. Heidi P. Zenie
Assistant Professor, Natural Sciences
Three Rivers Community College

Her colleague, June Decker describes Professor Zenie as the ultimate teacher who motivates and creates beyond the boundaries of the classroom. She demonstrates imaginative techniques in class, often employing an experiential learning approach. In five years, she has grown a degree program from 0 to 120 students. Other colleagues consider her to be an outstanding teacher, and note that her student evaluations were the highest in the department. They also observe that Professor Zenie forges a personal connection with students who express a great deal of respect for her.

Ms. Lucy Kiermaier
Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education
Tunxis Community College

Tunxis Community College's Teaching Award Recipient for 2013–14, Dr. Terry Cassidy depicts Professor Kiermaier as a very effective teacher who prefers students to be at the center of learning and continuously strives to improve in order to meet students' intellectual and affective needs. Other colleagues state that she brings dedication, commitment and caring for her students, and observes that she is the archetypal educator: knowledgeable and passionate about her field, energetic inside and outside the classroom and employs multiple modalities in her intentional teaching.

RESEARCH AWARDS

(Connecticut State Universities)

Dr. Khaled J. Hammad
Associate Professor, Engineering
Central Connecticut State University

Department Chair Dr. Peter Baumann nominates Dr. Hammad on the basis of the substantial impact his research and scholarly activity have made on the thermal and fluid sciences and upon Central. He has an impressive record of more than 65 papers in refereed journals, technical reports, proceedings and presentations; and his publications have been cited more than 250 times, per the search engine Google Scholar. A colleague describes his research as an excellent mix of experimental, analytical and numerical simulations, and he is internationally recognized.

Dr. Kristalyn Salters-Pedneault
Associate Professor, Psychology
Eastern Connecticut State University

See nomination abstract under System-Wide Awards

Dr. Chulguen Yang
Associate Professor, Management
Southern Connecticut State University

Dr. Robert Forbus cites Dr. Yang as a model teacher-scholar who receives excellent course evaluations from students and produces empirical research at an almost unbelievable rate, authoring 17 peer-reviewed journal articles since joining Southern in 2007. A colleague calls him the most productive associate professor in the School of Business, notes that his writings are well-known for meeting high quality standards, and observes that the importance and impact of his contributions have been formally recognized on the discipline's international stage.

Dr. Jessica Eckstein
Associate Professor, Communication & Media Arts
Western Connecticut State University

In her nomination of Dr. Eckstein, Dr. Kathryn Wiss remarks that her extensive list of publications and conference presentations, and her work in national and regional organizations have established her as one of the primary experts in the field of communication. Her work has been critical in shaping the dialogue among those who work in the field of Interpersonal Violence, declares practitioner David Mandel, a child welfare social worker. An external colleague describes her as a trailblazer, and the foremost scholar studying domestic violence.

SCHOLARLY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

(Connecticut Community Colleges)

Mr. Michael Demers
Assistant Professor, Liberal Arts
Asnuntuck Community College

Dr. Patricia Hirschy, Department Chair, asserts Professor Demers' scholarly work has broadened horizons for Asnuntuck Community College, its students and the national and international art communities. He has established a curriculum for fine and performing arts and shared his expertise through exhibits and publications. He established the Art Club and the club's exhibits have become notable. Colleagues state that his experience and expertise in digital photography and mixed media resonant in the strength of his professional standing and potential for further growth and development.

Dr. Hannelore Moeckel-Rieke
Associate Professor, ESL and English
Norwalk Community College

See nomination abstract under System-Wide Awards

Dr. Roxanne Tisch
Assistant Professor, Mathematics
Three Rivers Community College

Dr. Tisch exemplifies how to put a teaching philosophy and its concomitant research into practice according to her colleague June Decker. She has operationalized the teaching of critical math literacy and makes pedagogical and professional decisions based on her original research, extensive reading and research in educational and math literature. Other colleagues observe that her curriculum development activities, particularly incorporating "real world models," have had a profound impact upon the ways in which developmental math is taught at Three Rivers Community College.

Mr. Hendree Milward
Associate Professor, Mathematics
Tunxis Community College

Dr. Michael Rooke, Dean of Academic Affairs, states that Professor Milward has passionately engaged in many innovative approaches to teaching, especially in finding usage of educational technology to improve student learning. Colleagues report he plays a respected leadership role in teaching and supporting other faculty members in learning how to improve math instruction and how to teach online courses in any discipline. He plans to spend an upcoming half-year sabbatical developing a more affordable textbook for the institution's gatekeeper math course.

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SYSTEM-WIDE AWARDS

Board of Regents Adjunct Faculty Teaching Awards

Mr. Kevin C. Donohue

**Adjunct Assistant Professor, Business Administration
Eastern Connecticut State University**

Dr. Doncho Petkov nominates his colleague Professor Donohue on the basis of his remarkable professional career that enables him to apply considerable practical experience and knowledge in his teaching. He emphasizes the important integration of students' practical project-driven work with the relevance of course material to their future professions in Information Technology through which he motivates students to enhance their engagement with the learning process. He is also cited for his curricular development and innovations in pedagogy. A team-teaching colleague collaborated on developing a story-based modular project with vignettes tightly integrated with weekly course content as a teaching tool. He observes what makes Professor Donohue an outstanding teacher is that his interactions with his students are gentle, creative, positive and yet continually viewed with critical reflection. A student notes Professor Donohue's assignments are interactive and creative, as students learn to breakdown complicated business functions and to apply technologies through step-by-step manners to analyze and present information. In describing his teaching philosophy, Professor Donohue states that he strives to align course curriculum with learning objectives, employs varied teaching methods to address different learning styles, incorporates his corporate experiences, and collaborates with colleagues to improve classroom instruction.

Mr. Christopher Rempfer

**Adjunct Lecture, English
Naugatuck Valley Community College**

Dr. Ron Picard, Department Chair attests to Professor Rempfer's instruction as exemplary. His innovative teaching involves opportunities for students to write using multiple media, often requiring them to link literature to their own writing. He is described as dedicated to understanding the needs of students and to professional growth – his own and that of his colleagues. He plays a leadership role in activities designed to improve instructor pedagogy – most notably online tools through which instructors share teaching approaches and resources. A student notes that Professor Rempfer teaches with passion and conviction, engaging students through innovations to write purposefully and analytically – embodying the school's mission to promote student success. A fellow professor considers him to be a valued colleague and an excellent instructor, well-respected by faculty and students alike. His student-centered philosophy and efforts to continually improve his own teaching is readily apparent to others. Professor Rempfer reveals that his road to becoming a teacher of college English began on the theatrical stage where he first felt the exhilaration of standing in front of an audience, sharing a part of himself with others. He believes that what is created in the writing classroom is the foundation for the successful articulation of the ideas and expressions that can serve student in whatever career choice he or she might make.

Board of Regents Scholarly Excellence Award

Dr. Hannelore Moeckel-Rieke
Associate Professor, ESL and English
Norwalk Community College

Dr. Moeckel-Rieke epitomizes life-long learning. Although she migrated to the United States from Germany in the late 1990s with a doctorate in English, she has continued her pursuit of knowledge in an interdisciplinary manner — studying a wide range of subjects through institutes, workshops, courses, independent research, writing and her travels — and of course those activities related to teaching like curriculum development, course upgrades and activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning. One of those activities is a professional learning community through which she and her partners have established collaborations between ESL, English and Sociology. Dr. Vanessa Smith Morest, Interim Academic Dean, states that Dr. Moeckel-Rieke has recently expanded her scholarly work into the area of peace and conflict studies. After her intellectual curiosity was aroused further during an intensive week-long summer program at the Kroc Institute for Peace, Dr. Moeckel-Rieke received a graduate certificate at NYU in International Affairs and additional peace education training through the School of International Training's CONTACT Summer Peacebuilding Program. She plans to finish another advanced degree so that she can better serve the Norwalk Community College community.

Board of Regents Research Award

Dr. Kristalyn Salters-Pedneault
Associate Professor, Psychology
Eastern Connecticut State University

According to her Google Scholar profile, Dr. Salters-Pedneault's research has been cited 823 times, indicating a broad reach of her research and the influence she has had on her discipline; observes Dr. James Diller in the nomination of his colleague who he describes as a devoted and successful scholar, mentor and teacher. In mentoring research assistants, she has provided the highest quality supervision, working with them through the research process from generating questions to the implementation of studies and analyzing and presenting results. Several of the assistants have gone on to doctoral training programs. Dr. Wendi Everton, Department Chair, notes her accomplishments including being selected to sit on the editorial board of a prestigious impact journal and being an ad hoc reviewer for 17 other journals. Her graduate mentor observes that she has made numerous substantive contributions to the empirical literature in anxiety disorders, describing her as enthusiastic, dedicated to and exceptionally skilled in intellectual and scholarly inquiry in psychology. Dr. Salters-Pedneault is particularly proud of the high level of student involvement in her research. She believes many of her undergraduate research assistants will go on to impact the field in their own ways – an accomplishment that gives her the most pride.

Board of Regents Teaching Awards

(Connecticut Community Colleges)

Dr. Lin Lin

**Assistant Professor, Engineering Science and Computer Engineering Technology
Middlesex Community College**

Dr. Mary Rayappan, Academic Division Director, states that Dr. Lin always exhibits tremendous passion for teaching and uses a variety of instructional techniques and approaches to meet the diverse needs and ability levels of students. She has created and developed courses, and continuously collaborates with others in reviewing and updating STEM courses taken by engineering students. She is effective in implementing online courses and in creating collaborative group projects and searches for alternative textbooks, course materials and other means to facilitate student learning. Colleagues comment on her creation of challenging, stimulating and interactive learning experiences wherein students hone their critical thinking and other academic skills through analytical applications. A student remarks that Professor Lin creates opportunities for students to see technology in new ways and notes that her classes encourage active participation, hands-on instruction and student presentations that help reinforce the lessons. Dr. Lin has found Flipped Classroom techniques to be effective working with students with varying prior experience with computers. It appears she has applied lessons learned from that approach in her design of online courses and usage of numerous computer applications and teaching/learning software.

(Connecticut State Universities)

Dr. Nicholas Greco

**Associate Professor, Chemistry
Western Connecticut State University**

Dr. Greco is an exemplary teacher and colleague, embodying the ideal characteristics of a Western Connecticut State University chemistry professor – friendly, engaging, approachable, caring, scholarly and rigorous in the practice of his discipline, declares Dr. Russ Seizer, Department Chair. Student evaluations are consistently very high due to his gentle, accommodating style coupled with his demand for an intellectually challenging learning experience. A colleague describes his teaching style as a perfect blend of traditional versus technological lecturing, coupled with a respectful and nurturing environment that results in a highly interactive classroom brimming with active learners. A second colleague comments that he has been instrumental in persuading fellow instructors to “modernize” aspects of their teaching pedagogy. Dr. Greco believes that thorough instruction one must foster critical and logical thinking skills – the foundation of a strong scientist. He employs a teaching approach that utilizes multiple styles and multiple assessments of students’ understanding. Data driven self-reflection is a process he undertakes to enhance his teaching and in making curriculum changes to improve students learning.