

THE Current

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The 2014-2015 Academic Senate Awards

The Academic Senate opened its April 23 Faculty Legislature Meeting with the presentation of its 2014-2015 awards for teacher, mentors and teaching assistants. The Senate previously announced the winners of the Faculty Research Lecturer and of the Harold J. Plous Award: Linda Putnam, a professor in the Department of Communication, and Krzysztof Janowicz, an assistant professor in the Department of Geography, respectively.

Stanley Awramik, professor in the Department of Earth Science, announced the six recipients of this academic year's Distinguished Teaching Awards, which acknowledge the efforts of Senate faculty members who have successfully united teaching and research. Non-Senate faculty are judged on their excellence in teaching and their contributions to the teaching mission of the university.

Distinguished Teaching Awards

[Linda Adler-Kassner](#), professor of writing and director the Writing Program, influences not only the graduate students who learn from her, but also the undergraduates whom those students teach. She was described as “an inspiring teacher who has an immense effect on the student body. She mentors graduate students from multiple disciplines and in turn shapes the writing education of every undergraduate student in the school. She does this with a tireless smile and an unwavering commitment.”

[Peter Alagona](#), associate professor in the Department of History, began his career at UC Santa Barbara in 2008 with a joint appointment in the departments of history and environmental studies. He is described as “a superb teacher who is motivated, energetic and committed to keeping his instruction on the cutting edge of content, delivery and outcome.” He oversees senior theses and regularly delivers guest lectures in other courses, demonstrating that he is in demand both as a lecturer and a team player.

English professor [Enda Duffy](#) has been a faculty member in the Department of English since 1993. He is noted for being “one of the most dynamic and versatile teachers in the department” and makes significant contributions to departmental curriculum. In particular, he is praised for building a new model for offering large lectures, one that accommodates significantly more students while maintaining consistently high student evaluations for the quality of his instruction.

[Steven Gaulin](#), professor of anthropology, received particular praise for his teaching of Introduction to Physical Anthropology, which one student described as “a unique and innovative course, due to Professor Gaulin’s efforts.” He uses a variety of multi-media enhancements to offer an engaging and pioneering educational experience to large lectures. He works to keep the material engaging for the broad array of general-education students who take this class, offering challenges and insights for students at all levels of preparation.

History professor [Paul Spickard](#) — who was teaching a class during the awards ceremony — has an exceptionally strong teaching record at all levels. One of his student nominators offered the following assessment: “Some people think that good teachers are the ones who teach you something you didn’t know before. But good teachers are the ones who inspire you to want to learn and educate yourself. Great teachers are the ones who never let you give up on yourself. That is Professor Paul Spickard.”

Non-Senate recipient [Chikako Shinagawa](#), lecturer in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultural Studies, was described as an extraordinary teacher of the Japanese language and is credited with as one of the main actors behind the growing success of the Japanese program. One student offered the following praise: “I love this professor!! She presents everything clearly and makes sure everyone understands. I’ve learned SO much. This is the best course I’ve taken here at UCSB!”

Outstanding Graduate Mentors Awards

Academic Senate chair Kum Kum Bhavnani, a sociology professor, introduced the three winners of the Outstanding Graduate Mentors Awards.

Francesco Bullo, professor and chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering, has had an incredibly strong track record in the mentorship and guidance of many graduate students, both in a research context as well as in a service role, as chair of the graduate program, a role he held for many years before becoming department chair. One of his former students who now holds an assistant professor appointment said of Bullo: “I cannot imagine a better advisor and mentor.

Since coming to UC Santa Barbara in 1996, geography professor **Keith Clarke** has served on a total of 54 Ph.D. committees, including 14 as chair and dozens more master’s committees (10 as chair). Unable to attend the ceremony, he was praised not only for the large volume of graduate students he has mentored, but also for the exceptional quality of his mentoring. The chair of his department wrote, “When Keith Clarke first interviewed at UCSB, the answer he gave me when asked why he was applying was that he wanted better access to higher quality graduate students than were available at Clark University, where he was a professor for 14 years. He has most certainly achieved this goal, and done it well.”

History professor **Mary Furner** has been on the faculty of the Department of History since 1994. She is praised by her students for her “dedication, generosity, and astute intellectual capabilities.” One of her colleagues stated, “On all scores and by all accounts, Mary’s performance as a graduate mentor has been superlative, earning her a well-deserved reputation for rigor, creativity, compassion and effectiveness.”

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards

Four graduate students were singled out from the many applications for Outstanding Teaching Assistant Awards.

Keith Avery, a master’s degree student in computer science, has been a teaching assistant (TA) for four quarters. One of his faculty supporters wrote, “I have taught at UCSB for more than a decade now . . . and with all the TAs I have worked with, there is not a single other student even approaching the level of excellence that Keith brought to his work. Keith’s passion for teaching is absolutely infectious.”

Jeremy Chow, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of English, has served as a TA for four different English literature classes and he currently the TA for a fifth class. One of his faculty letters stated: “Jeremy Chow is the best teacher I have ever witnessed in the classroom. His capacity to integrate and to expand the nascent spark of others into a community that achieves brilliance in 50 minutes seems a miracle to me. This is the only time I have been led to use the word ‘miracle’ in my history of writing letters of praise. What I am calling a miracle here is the presence of a gift that he gives that keeps on giving... We all become better by working with him.”

Since 2011, **Selvi Ersoy**, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, has been the TA for a total of 18 sections. As a head TA, she has also taken on additional responsibilities beyond what is typically expected, including training other TAs and coordinating the grading process. She is credited for creating “an enthusiastic teaching environment in sections with a warm smile on her face, loud and strong speech and interactive teaching methods utilizing discussion and group problem-solving techniques.”

Mario Galicia, Jr., a Ph.D. candidate at the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education, has been a TA for a number of black history classes, as well as courses in sociology and Chicano and Chicana studies. One professor described him as a “pedagogical genius” and asserted, “He knows how to translate abstract and complex theory and methods into palatable lessons that freshman can understand and thrive on.” He constantly receives top student evaluations and students consistently rave about him.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.