The College of Arts and Sciences Office of the Dean

would like to extend a special thank you to all of the faculty, staff and students who took the time to send heartfelt nominations in support of outstanding colleagues and educators. Your consideration of others make this program, and others like it, possible.

Congratulations to all of the award winners. The College appreciates your commitment to excellence and dedication to our programs.

Part-Time Instructor Excellence in Teaching Award

The Part-Time Instructor Excellence in Teaching Award acknowledges significant contributions to the learning environment by part-time instructors and is based on an accumulated record of achievement as a teacher at WMU as evidenced by student evaluations, peer and supervisor feedback and letters of support.

Part-Time Instructor

Dr. James “Gus” Guzinski brings a unique perspective of teaching to the WMU Department of Chemistry. An extremely knowledgeable scientist, he has more than 20 years of industrial and teaching experience and is known for bringing a pragmatic yet affable demeanor to the classroom. In his years of teaching, Guzinski has shown the ability and enthusiasm for chemistry as a science and a way of life. He has brought innovative and industrially relevant laboratory activities to the curriculum and delivers real-world instruction in a clear, organized way. Guzinski is a model teacher who is well respected and revered by his students.
Faculty Achievement Awards

The College of Arts and Sciences presents the Faculty Achievement Awards to those who have made outstanding contributions to global engagement, professional and community service, research and creative activity, and teaching.

Global Engagement

Dr. Patricia Montilla’s exemplary 17-year career in Western’s Department of Spanish is reflective of her commitment to its mission – particularly in those efforts related to global engagement and internationalization. In her instruction and research, as well as in her roles as a Study Abroad director for the Querétaro and Quito programs and graduate director and advisor, she has demonstrated dedication and passion to advance the global and intercultural competence of students. Her contributions in these areas have helped her students form global world views, build skills, and acquire knowledge of global issues that will serve them well in their professional and civic roles.

Professional and Community Service

In 46 years at Western, Dr. Robert Felkel’s enthusiasm for his students, teaching and the university attest that he is an individual who has never lost the zest for his chosen career. In addition to his long list of service work at WMU, he has been a volunteer for Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan since 1999, a passion that has greatly extended Western’s presence into the community. His compassion for the terminally ill is a testament to the kindness he shows others.

No one who observes Felkel could fail to notice and be inspired by his generosity, and his profile of service is a true inspiration to colleagues and students alike.

Dr. Richard Gershon has provided exemplary service to the School of Communication, to WMU and to his discipline. In his 26-plus year career, he has been active in faculty governance, providing particular leadership in curriculum matters. In 2003, he and colleagues in the Haworth College of Business established the interdisciplinary major in Telecommunications and Information Management, a program he continues to co-lead. Gershon has also served the Faculty Senate, as well as the university’s strategic planning efforts and special projects. His scholarly reputation includes leadership in the International Telecommunications Education and Research Association, a consortium of 22 universities committed to the advancement of media business and telecommunications education. Gershon continues to serve this association, supporting its mission and representing its goals to the broader academic community.
Research and Creative Activity

**Drs. Autumn and Chad Edwards** take seriously the university pillars of learner-centered, discovery driven and globally engaged. Their research on human-machine interactions represents all three pillars in action. Having established the Communication and Social Robotics Lab at WMU, they have transformed the experiences and lives of many undergraduate and graduate students through engaging them in collaborative research initiatives. Their research on social robotics includes significant global engagement opportunities. In recent years, scholars have become interested in not just the human applications of robotics but the “humanity” of robots and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) devices. Autumn and Chad are building an international reputation that will only expand in the next few years as they address the changing environment, norms and understandings of this new age of AI. They are engaged in scholarship that has significant theoretical and methodological value and enormous practical application as our human connections with machines increase at a rapid pace.

**Dr. Chien-Juh Gu**
Department of Sociology

Dr. Chien-Juh Gu has built a vast, groundbreaking body of research in the sociology of gender, social psychology and immigration. With an extensive publishing record including two books and numerous reviews, papers and lectures, her work has been widely recognized for its valuable contributions to these areas of study. One area of her research, for example, broadly considers the ways that Taiwanese transnational migrant women understand their lives and how social and cultural stressors impact women’s experiences of bodily and emotional distress. Gu’s scholarly work is notable for its intellectual rigor, its wide application across multiple disciplines, and its acknowledged policy relevance. Her 10-plus year career experience, productivity and work ethic have made her a highly respected faculty research leader and colleague at WMU and beyond.

**Research and Creative Activity**

Since his arrival to WMU in 2009, **Dr. Natalio Ohanna** has demonstrated a strong record of creativity and quality scholarship. An expert of the Spanish Golden Age, his work has resulted in two books and numerous articles in prestigious journals. In addition, Ohanna has delivered conference papers not only nationally but internationally in Canada, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain, illustrating his strong interest in sharing his scholarly findings and staying connected with the international community. Ohanna’s intellectual vibrancy is evident in his involvement in the creation of the University Center for the Humanities and in becoming one of its founding board members. His work at the center is marked by an unwavering commitment to advancing the humanities on campus and beyond.
Teaching

Ms. Annette Hamel is an outstanding teacher who brings great knowledge, talent, creativity, passion and commitment to student learning. She is often praised by her students and is known for being at the forefront of online instruction in WMU’s School of Communication. Hamel integrates theory, research and practice into her course goals and into her everyday instructional practices. She is committed to the ongoing development of students’ critical thinking, presentational and writing skills, and provides many opportunities for students to practice those competencies. Hamel is also a highly skilled online instructor and has been particularly successful with this contemporary student population. Her passion for teaching is reflected in her service to the university.

Teaching

Dr. Adrienne Redding teaches and provides leadership to the first-year writing and developmental writing programs in the Department of English. She works tirelessly to help vet and assess struggling students, then works with each student one-on-one to provide individual support – the results of which have been extraordinary. Redding is especially effective in engaging students, and in fostering a classroom environment in which they actively participate with curiosity and enthusiasm. She is a tremendous colleague, teacher and scholar who is collaborative, positive and committed to student success.

Teaching

Dr. Pablo Pastrana-Pérez is the embodiment of a master teacher. He possesses expertise in the fields of linguistics, literature and medieval history – a versatile training that has at its core a natural gift for teaching delivered with creativity and passion. As a medievalist and expert in Old Spanish, Dr. Pastrana is a member of the Medieval Institute, to which he has rendered a myriad of services. His zeal for the humanities led him to participate in activities that advance and promote the human experience. These include: representing WMU in the National Humanities Alliance Conference, helping to write the NEH Humanities Connections grant proposal, teaching the First-Year Experience seminar and serving on its task force, creating and directing the Santiago de Compostela Study Abroad program, and directing the Burgos and Santander programs, among many others.

Teaching

Dr. Whitney DeCamp is an accomplished teacher and mentor to both undergraduate and graduate students in the Department of Sociology. He is known for his outstanding dedication to graduate education through quality classroom instruction, thesis and dissertation supervision, and publication leadership. Likewise, undergraduate students are provided with dedicated traditional classroom and online educational experiences designed to engage and develop their sociological imaginations and professional skills. From his teaching record, to advising, innovating and inspiring student achievement, DeCamp excels in every way. His knowledge and passion for teaching make him a magnet for students who want to engage in new and exciting research in the social sciences.

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Staff Excellence Awards
We are fortunate to have an incredible group of dedicated staff in the College of Arts and Sciences. This award recognizes the great work and contribution of extraordinary staff members over the past year. Staff play a critical role in the success of the University and the College of Arts and Sciences, its departments, institutes and schools.

Gender Scholar Award
Dr. Anise Strong is known for her consistent excellence in gender related research. As a scholar of Roman history and the history of gender and sexuality, she has worked to produce many academic articles on the cultural and social history of Roman women. Her book, “Prostitutes and Matrons in the Roman World,” clearly demonstrates excellence in gender related research, and her Gender Scholar Award lecture, “The Empress’s Gaze: Roman Women and Desire in History and Film,” is part of her next book project on how Roman women are represented in contemporary media. Strong’s important and deeply relevant work in these areas is reflective of her dedication to gender research at WMU.

Ms. Amy Degner-Petillon
As administrative assistant II, Ms. Amy Degner-Petillon serves WMU’s Student Success Services with a high standard of excellence that is truly exceptional. Though her responsibilities are vast, she is known for going above and beyond her expected role every day. For example, she manages the department budget, handles payroll for about 100 students and employees, serves as a Gateways to Completion liaison assistant, connects students with peer academic coaches, engages in recruiting events, and so much more. Her compassion and concern for students, instructors and administrators make her an essential asset to Student Success Services and the University as a whole.