Outstanding Faculty to Receive Awards at Commencement

Posted 04/28/2015

Submitted by Barbara Steinberger

Category: Campus Announcements
Roger Desmond
Adam Goodworth
Five faculty members will be honored for their exceptional achievements during the University's undergraduate Commencement ceremony on **Sunday, May 17**.

Awards will be presented for outstanding accomplishments in the areas of **teaching**, **scholarship**, **service**, and contributions to the **All-University Curriculum**. In addition, the **Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize** will be awarded.

**Roger Desmond: Roy E. Larsen Award for Excellence in Teaching**

Desmond, a professor in the School of Communication, College of Arts and Sciences, is known to generations of students as both an outstanding teacher and a mentor for life. Desmond is deeply dedicated to helping students and challenging them to find their right place in the world, both during and after their time at the University of Hartford.

“I clearly would not be who I am and where I am without the benefit of my nearly four-decades-long relationship with Roger Desmond,” says **Mark Zampino ’81**, public affairs director for the Connecticut Society of Certified Public Accountants.

In his nearly 40 years at the University of Hartford, Desmond’s passion for teaching is reflected in his eagerness to stay on top of trends and developments in communication, offering students the latest research and preparing them for professional careers. His scholarly publications focus on how the media influences the development of children and adolescents. Desmond engages students with lively anecdotes, bringing to life the academic material he presents. He even takes his journalism students to the courtroom, town meetings, and other community events to give them practical writing experience in real-world situations.

**Nat Reeves: James E. and Frances W. Bent Award for Scholarly and/or Artistic Creativity**

Internationally acclaimed jazz bassist Nat Reeves, associate professor of music at The Hartt School, has been a teacher and mentor for more than 30 years to hundreds of Jazz Studies students, many of whom have gone on to become noted jazz musicians themselves.

As a professional musician, Reeves has played for more than 40 years with many jazz greats, including the late **Jackie McLean**, founder of the University of Hartford’s Jazz Studies program (now the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz). Reeves continues to tour and record, with more than 60 recordings in all.

Reeves’s students are inspired not only by his professional reputation and his gift for teaching, but also by his efforts to put his students in front of live audiences as much as possible to give them real-world experience. Jazz trombonist **Steve Davis ’89**, a fellow Hartt faculty member, says he continues to learn from Reeves, his former teacher and mentor, and praises Reeves’s “wisdom, patience, and inherent understanding of the essence of things, musical and otherwise.”

**Joan Pedro: Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Award for Sustained Service to the University**

Pedro, associate professor of education and associate dean in the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions (ENHP), is always there for a student who needs support, a colleague looking for advice, or a committee chair searching for a volunteer.
Pedro was just 18 years old when she began teaching in her native Trinidad. She went on to help change the island’s education system by working with her colleagues to develop its first teacher education program in special education. Pedro joined the University of Hartford faculty in 2001 and was appointed associate dean for academic affairs six years later. Her scholarly interests focus on teacher education and reflective practice, and she is deeply committed to the research of best practices in education.

“Pedro’s deeply held values and actions to promote and facilitate the college’s mantra of ‘excellence through relevance’ are expressed through her steadfast and humble service as a faculty member and administrator to better the experiences of our students, faculty, and staff members here at the University of Hartford,” said ENHP Dean Ralph O. Mueller.

**Nicholas Ealy: Donald W. Davis All-University Curriculum Award**

Ealy, associate professor of English and modern languages in the College of Arts and Sciences, is deeply committed to interdisciplinary education and has been a prolific contributor to UHart’s All-University Curriculum (AUC), which allows students to explore the depth and breadth of a liberal arts education through integrative, cross-disciplinary courses.

Ealy has taught a wide range of language and literature courses at the University, including three courses in the AUC program, and he has been a co-creator of several AUC courses. In 2011, Ealy and Professor Maria Esposito Frank created the AUC course “Mediterranean Studies,” which Ealy has taught twice. In 2014, Ealy and three other faculty members created the AUC course “Literature and Psychology,” which Ealy taught last fall. Currently, Ealy and Assistant Professor Sarah Senk are proposing a new AUC course tentatively titled “The Millennial Journey: HBO’s Girls,” which is intended to focus on the contemporary social narrative of the Millennial Generation.

In these and other courses, Ealy challenges his students to become critical thinkers and to analyze literature by going beyond the surface and approaching the texts from many different perspectives. At the same time, he engages students and stimulates passionate discussion on centuries-old literary works by drawing parallels to popular culture and everyday life.

**Adam Goodworth: Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize**

Goodworth, assistant professor of physical therapy, ENHP, conducts groundbreaking research and innovative teaching across the disciplines of physical therapy, neuroscience, biomedical engineering, and prosthetics.

Among his many achievements, Goodworth, who holds a PhD in biomedical engineering, designed an omnidirectional treadmill for curved walking and balance research—a project that required him to integrate rehabilitation science applications with engineering design and instrumentation. Responsible for the development of the Human Balance Control Laboratory in Dana Hall, Goodworth also helped to design the Pediatrics Balance Laboratory. He has been awarded more than $500,000 in five external grants.

Goodworth provided leadership for the Center for Health, Care, and Well-being, one of the three centers that constitute ENHP’s Institute for Translational Research. He also initiated and
facilitated the University’s partnership with LIMBS International, a nonprofit organization that works to provide prosthetic devices to amputees in developing countries. Known as an exceptionally dedicated teacher, Goodworth has mentored many ENHP students majoring in physical therapy and prosthetics and orthotics, as well as biomedical engineering majors in CETA.

The **Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize** recognizes an outstanding junior faculty member in a tenure-track position who has not yet been tenured. It is made possible by a generous gift from **Belle K. Ribicoff**, a life regent of the University.