Faculty Members to Be Honored at Commencement: Part 1

Professors Recognized for Teaching, Research, and Service to the University.

Seven of our most outstanding faculty members will receive awards during this year's Undergraduate Commencement ceremony. Professors Catherine Certo and Cy Yavuzturk and Associate Professors Warren Haston and Jane Horvath are profiled below. Professor David Macbride and Assistant Professors Daphne Berry and Michael Horwitz will be featured on this website on Friday, May 12.

The professors will receive their awards during the Undergraduate Commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 21.

WARREN HASTON, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC EDUCATION, the hartt school: roy e. larsen award for excellence in teaching

Student evaluations of Warren Haston, PhD, are consistently among the highest in The Hartt School. He is known for his high standards, preparation, and constructive feedback. But it is his dedication to his students outside of the classroom that music education graduates praise just as often. This combination earned him the Roy E. Larsen Award for Excellence in Teaching, which honors full-time University of Hartford faculty members for excellence in teaching and contributions to University life.

“Professor Haston truly taught me how to teach,” Vanessa Wudyka, band director at Leonard J. Tyl Middle School in Oakdale, Conn., wrote in her nomination letter. “Some of the things I remember the most were his precise and constructive feedback, discussions about my teaching reflections, lesson plans and experiences, and the genuine feeling that he cared about me and my success.”
Haston’s Hartt School colleagues agree that he truly cares about his students. They note that he attends nearly every band and orchestra concert, many of which are held on nights and weekends, to send a message to his students that musicianship matters.

“Often, music education professors and students get so wrapped up in the pedagogy of teaching music that they forget that mastery of the subject they are teaching is essential,” Glen Adsit, Hartt School director of bands wrote. “This, in part, is what makes Warren so special.”

Haston actively seeks out ways to contribute to University life through leadership positions. He is chair of the undergraduate music education program and director of Summerterm at The Hartt School. He holds workshops for local music teachers, and frequently helps former students who reach out to him for advice and mentorship. These alumni are now sharing his lessons with their own students, extending Haston’s positive influence far beyond campus.

Haston, who joined the University in 2007, earned his bachelor’s degree in music education and his master’s in performance-conducting from the University of Texas at El Paso, and his PhD in music education from Northwestern University.

Cy YaVUZTURK, PROFESSOR OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY, AND ARCHITECTURE: Roy E. Larsen award for excellence in teaching

Many students have been known to “flock” to mechanical engineering courses taught by Cy YaVuzturk, PhD, but even more seek him out for advice. As chair of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and one of the University’s most dedicated academic advisors, he seems to have a near-infinite capacity for guiding students and preparing them for the demands of a professional career. The Roy E. Larsen Award recognizes YaVuzturk’s excellence in teaching and contributions to University life.

“I owe the start of my career to Professor YaVuzturk, who helped me find a paid co-op position that landed me my first job before I even graduated,” says Austen Williams ’14, application engineer at Clarcor, which is based in East Hartford, Conn. “My ability to solve problems, teach others, and care about my actions is directly related to the passion he put into his work and into my education. I worked harder than I ever did under his guidance.”

During his nearly 10 years teaching at the University of Hartford, YaVuzturk has earned some of the most consistent and highest student course evaluations within the College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture (CETA). “He has a special talent for making his topics come alive
for students so they become active learners and participants,” says Louis Manzione, dean of CETA. “His lectures are engaging and full of important insights into the material.”

Yavuzturk’s work with students extends beyond the classroom. He has given many undergraduate and graduate students hands-on learning opportunities by overseeing externally funded research programs for organizations like the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Energy, and Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Yavuzturk is the founder and faculty advisor for the University chapter of the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), which consistently attracts dozens of students.

Yavuzturk has also applied his expertise and experience to many scholarly publications focused on topics related to thermo-fluids. As student success remains one of his highest priorities, his research has translated into the development of new mechanical engineering courses and concentrations, opening up career opportunities in areas like sustainable energy and conservation, and solar energy design.

CATHERINE CERTO, PROFESSOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY, COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS: OSCAR AND SHOSHANA TRACHTENBERG AWARD FOR SUSTAINED SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

Dedicated to her work and to the University, effective in what she does, and always willing to go the extra mile, Catherine Certo, PT, ScD, FAPTA, is a deserving winner of the Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Award, which honors full-time faculty members for their sustained service to the University.

Certo, who joined the University in 1997, is chair of the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences in the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions (ENHP) and director of the physical therapy program. Under her leadership, the department grew from one undergraduate program with approximately 50 students to four different degree programs serving about 245 undergraduate and 192 graduate students. Certo added the Master of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics, the Transitional Master of Science in Prosthetics and Orthotics, and the Doctor of Physical Therapy programs. This growth has been a tremendous benefit to the University as well as the health care community.

Not only has Certo done a remarkable job in her department, she has also made a huge difference on campus chairing numerous committees including the President’s Commission on Compensation, the University Athletics Council, and the University’s Strategic Planning Initiative. As co-chair of the Strategic Planning Committee’s Solution Team V, Certo developed
recommendations on how to create a sustainable economic model for the University. With her leadership and creativity, the team identified several innovative tools, including the Student Success Collaborative, a web-based tool that identifies at-risk students and allows advisors to review data.

In addition to her expansive and ongoing record of service to the University, Certo has also been an active leader in the community. She has held numerous elected positions in the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and the Connecticut Chapter of Physical Therapy Association.

“She is a joy to work with—energetic, creative, respectful of her colleagues, ready to lead, and above all, she is a superb representative of the University of Hartford to the community around us,” says University of Hartford President Emeritus Humphrey Tonkin.

JANE HORVATH, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AND HILLYER COLLEGE: OSCAR AND SHOSHANA TRACHTENBERG AWARD FOR SUSTAINED SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

To quote from the University Values Statement she helped create, Jane Horvath, PhD, is truly “committed to community.” Known across campus for collaborating and consensus building, Horvath is an ideal recipient of the Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Award for her sustained service to the University.

Horvath joined the University in 1985 and has been teaching economics ever since. While her academic contributions are extensive, her dedication to the University extends far beyond the classroom. She has held many leadership positions, including her current roles as director of the Bachelor of Arts in Economics program in the College of Arts and Sciences, chair of the University Pre-Law Advising program, and senior advisor to University President Walter Harrison.

Horvath is the founding director of the van Rooy Center for Complexity and Conflict Analysis, an interdisciplinary initiative that fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, teaching, inquiry, and research. She is working with faculty across the University’s seven schools and colleges to develop a minor in complexity that will be open to any student, regardless of major.

Horvath chaired the University Values Committee, which was charged with establishing a set of shared values that represents the University community and with recommending ways to use it to strengthen a collective sense of community. Horvath and the Committee synthesized the input
from more than 1,200 faculty, staff, and students into the University Values Statement and she coined the often-quoted slogan, “Committed to Community.”

“Jane helps us live our values daily,” Assistant VP for Student Affairs Suzanne Anderson McNeil wrote in her nomination letter. “She is always looking to give a helping hand, especially when it comes to improving the college experience for our students.”

Horvath has been an integral part of educating the community about bystander intervention and campus safety. As special assistant to the president on LGBT issues, Horvath supports LGBT students and their parents, trains Department of Athletics coaches and staff, informs campus policies, and advocates for the University to be inclusive and diverse.

Horvath earned her bachelor’s degree from Eastern Connecticut State College (currently Eastern Connecticut State University), and her master’s and PhD from the University of Connecticut.