Five faculty members will be honored for their career-long achievements during the University’s 2010 Commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 16.

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, which was established in 2009, will be awarded.

Robert L. Duran, professor of communication in the College of Arts and Sciences, is this year’s recipient of the Roy E. Larsen Award for Excellence in Teaching.

With degrees in the area of human communication, Duran teaches courses in small group communication, interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication, and research methodology. If students’ comments in course evaluations are any indication, Duran is setting the standard in teaching at the University: “I wanted to come to class,” “the best teacher I’ve had,” and “his enthusiasm is contagious.” One student praises Duran for his “remarkable skills to teach, motivate, and engage students from diverse educational backgrounds.”

Equally impressed are Duran’s colleagues. As one University administrator says, “He reinvents his courses so they are new and alive all the time.” Duran’s commitment to teaching extends beyond the classroom and into his scholarship and service activities. He has published a number of articles, often with undergraduate and graduate students, on course development, course and program evaluation, and student–teacher interaction. Additionally, he chaired the committee that produced the course evaluation form used throughout the University and worked with a team to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of the University’s First Year Interest Group (FIG) program. Duran has directed or served as a reader on 20 theses, further demonstrating the priority he places on providing individual guidance and support to students.

John Feierabend holds many titles at The Hartt School: director of the music education division, chair of...
undergraduate music education, and professor of music education. His immense contributions to Hartt and the field of music education worldwide have earned him the James E. and Frances W. Bent Award for Scholarly and/or Artistic Creativity.

Feierabend is one of the country’s leading authorities on music and movement development in early childhood. The talented innovator developed his first early childhood music program in Philadelphia in 1979 at Temple University, where he earned a PhD in music education. As a music educator for more than 30 years, Feierabend has collected, preserved, and taught the diverse folk music of America and used that folk music as a bridge to help children understand and enjoy classical music. Through research and interviews with elders, Feierabend gathered songs and rhymes that parents and grandparents had sung to their offspring for generations. The resulting “First Steps in Music” curricular materials have influenced music educators worldwide.

In addition to serving as the lead scriptwriter for the Van Cliburn Foundation’s “Musical Awakenings” program of classical concerts for children, Feierabend promotes music education through frequent presentations in the United States and abroad. He is also the author of more than 60 books, recordings, and DVDs, many of which served as the inspiration for the PBS children’s television series Lomax: The Hound of Music.

Susan Coleman, professor of finance in the Barney School of Business, will receive the Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Award for Sustained Service to the University. Coleman is a highly respected teacher and scholar known for her extensive research in such areas as small business finance, entrepreneurial finance, and financial literacy. From serving on a wide range of committees to developing partnerships with educational institutions in China, Coleman’s efforts on behalf of the University have been remarkable in their scope and achievement.

Coleman has held leadership roles on a variety of committees within the Barney School of Business and the University. She has served as chair of the Barney School’s Promotion and Tenure Committee and Strategic Planning Committee; and as a member of the University’s Strategic Planning Committee, Budget Advisory Team, Provost Search Committee, and Athletics Council, among others.

In addition, Coleman has been deeply committed to making sure that students have the knowledge and skills to make good financial decisions throughout their lives. Together with financial consultant and adjunct faculty member Mitchell Weiss, Coleman developed a course on personal financial management and established a Center for Personal Financial Responsibility to promote financial literacy. Now she is working to forge partnerships for the University in China. This spring, Coleman made her second trip to Shandong University of Finance, where she lectured, collaborated with faculty to develop an entrepreneurial finance course, and explored the possibility of short-term study abroad in China for University of Hartford students.

Professor Donn Weinholtz, chair of the Department of Educational Leadership in the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions, is the recipient of the Donald W. Davis All-University Curriculum Award. The All-University Curriculum (AUC) is an innovative program that allows students to explore the depth and breadth of a liberal education, including heritage, culture, the arts, social context, science, and technology.

Weinholtz has participated in the AUC for 18 years, teaching four courses and helping to develop two, including the long-running
course, "Gender, Identity, and Society." Most recently, he collaborated with an interdisciplinary team of colleagues to create the new course, "Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities." He launched this course in the fall of 2009 to very favorable student reviews.

During the past 12 years, Weinholdt has joined with President Walter Harrison to team-teach the course "Discovering America 1945–Present." They developed the course using the culture and history of Hartford to explain the culture and history of America. As part of the coursework, students take tours of Hartford and its suburbs. Guest speakers in the course have included Hartford mayors, U.S. congressmen, and community activists.

The Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize, now in its second year, will be awarded to Catharine "Cat" Balco, assistant professor of painting and drawing at the Hartford Art School.

Balco, who came to the art school in 2007, is already having a transformational effect on her students. Her course evaluations describe her as a teacher who pushes young artists beyond their comfort zones at times, but with exhilarating results. As one student says, "I did things I probably would never have done with my art without this course."

The recipient of an artist's residency at the prestigious Josef and Anni Albers Foundation in Bethany, Conn., Balco also has been awarded a University grant to develop a service-learning initiative that will provide opportunities for students to engage in art forms that contribute meaningfully to the health field. Another Balco contribution to the Art School is her creation of the Drawing Marathon, in which students engaged in 12 straight hours of drawing. The drawings were then shown at the Silpe Gallery at HAS. Balco has exhibited her own work in New York state and Connecticut. Her upcoming solo show of large-scale public works will open at Artspace New Haven this summer.

The Belle K. Ribicoff Junior Faculty Prize recognizes an outstanding junior faculty member — one who is in a tenure track position, but not yet tenured. The prize and an endowed chair for junior faculty were established through a generous gift from Belle K. Ribicoff, a long-time supporter and life regent of the University. Every three years, beginning in 2011-2012, one of the prize recipients from the prior three years will be chosen to hold the Belle K. Ribicoff Professorship for a period of three years.