

May 18, 2005

UWSP Graduate Council honors graduate students

The Graduate Council at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point has announced the recipients of this year's Graduate Council Awards.

Jordan Weeks of Cadott, Brian Wahl of Wausau, Katie Flanigan of Winneconne, Elizabeth Felt of Stevens Point, and Nelli Atkinson of Wittenberg were recognized for their outstanding achievements as graduate students at UWSP.

Weeks was named Outstanding Graduate Research Assistant for his far-reaching contributions to research as a master's degree candidate in natural resources with an emphasis in fisheries. Weeks single-handedly designed and implemented every aspect of a complex study of walleye and muskellunge movement in the Manitowish chain of lakes. To accomplish his research, he collaborated with tribal and state agencies, and private groups. The latter resulted in additional funding to incorporate a telemetry component to the study, an aspect that raised the project well above the expectations for a master's thesis.

A member of the Wisconsin DNR avowed in a letter of support that Week's research will be "extremely beneficial to the department and may lead to future management changes."

Wahl was named Outstanding Graduate Instructional Assistant for his exceptional contributions to instruction in forestry. As a master's candidate in natural resource management with an emphasis in forestry, Wahl was instrumental in the development, implementation, and assessment of the Basic Skills Competency Testing program. The program is designed to ensure the skill competency of forestry graduates and thus allows for on-going assessment and prominence of the UWSP Forestry program. In addition to his talents in curriculum development and assessment, Wahl's effectiveness as a teacher has been repeatedly demonstrated in his appointment as teaching assistant for numerous forestry courses and in the CNR summer camp program.

Three students, Flanigan, Felt and Atkinson, were recognized for outstanding overall achievement due to the large number of nominees.

Flanigan was recognized for her academic and professional achievements in the School of Communicative Disorders. While excelling in courses and supervised clinical practice for her master's in speech language pathology, she has served as both a teaching and administrative assistant. In addition, she voluntarily took on a research assistantship (research is not required in a clinical master's degree). She presented her research on

MORE

disfluencies in normal speech at the 2004 American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association convention in Philadelphia.

One of her letters of support stated, “Katie turns her assignments into opportunities to learn new information and develop new skills.”

Felt was recognized for writing a historical novel titled “Charlotte” for her Master of Science in Teaching English. She was lauded for her tireless research on the historical, linguistic, geographic, and cultural context of 19th century England, notably in ornithology and the Quaker culture.

Although many graduate students aspire to write novels, “it is unusual for them to actually do so,” stated one of her letters of support. Ms. Felt completed a novel of “literary and publishable quality.” “Her creative thesis is a book, alive on the page, the characters unforgettable.” In addition, Felt has established herself as an exemplary and “generous” teacher as the English Department’s graduate assistant and tutor.

Atkinson is being recognized for outstanding achievement in research, teaching, professionalism, and leadership. As a master’s candidate in environment education and interpretation, she is the teaching assistant for several core courses in the undergraduate curriculum. Her teaching skills have been recognized by both professors and students. Her thesis research in the Tongas National Forest of Alaska culminated in the development of a comprehensive interpretation and education plan for Prince of Wales Island. Her work will be published as a guidebook useful to program development in rural areas.

She is the program assistant for Schmeeckle Reserve Visitor Center, a volunteer for numerous organizations, and an “excellent role model for undergraduates” whom she has mentored.