

April 19, 2005

Outstanding faculty and staff recognized at UWSP

Outstanding faculty and staff for 2004-2005 have been named at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and will be honored at a 4:30 p.m. reception, Wednesday, April 27 in the University Center Alumni Room.

Selected for Excellence in Teaching are Karyn Biasca, associate professor of paper science, Amy Boelk, assistant professor of sociology; Jane Jones, professor of health promotion and human development; Jeffrey Morin, professor and chair of art and design; and J. Rixey Ruffin, assistant professor of history.

Recognized for scholarship are Corinne Dempsey, assistant professor of philosophy, and Christopher Hartleb, associate professor of biology. The University Service Award recipient is James Ramsey, associate professor of health promotion and human development.

Recipient of the Academic Staff Excellence Award is Carl Rasmussen, director of facilities planning and space management, and the Academic Staff Spirit of Community Service Award goes to Nancy Turyk, water resource scientist with the Center for Watershed Science and Education.

Winner of the Classified Staff Carolyn Rolfson Sargis Award is Bonnie Maher, program assistant in the Mary K. Croft Tutoring-Learning Center (TLC).

Nominated by her department and by the Student Government Association (SGA), Biasca, also known affectionately to her students as "Dr. B," "has been the most highly rated teacher in paper science for the past 16 years. Her actions inside and outside of the classroom have taught us not only the curricular material, but priceless life lessons such as kindness and respect," say the members of the senior paper science and engineering class. "Another quality that sets Dr. B. apart from other professors is her commitment to incorporating different learning tools into her lessons," they continue. In addition, Biasca has been active in research and development as well as teaching hands-on papermaking courses for industrial clients.

She holds master's and Ph.D. degrees from the Institute of Paper Chemistry and a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the University of California at Los Angeles. Before coming to UWSP in 1989, she was a process engineer with Kimberly Clark and a teaching assistant at the Institute for Paper Chemistry.

Boelk, who came to UWSP five years ago, is a certified social worker whose philosophy involves using student diversity as a strength and as a teaching tool. Nominated by the Department of Sociology, she began her career at UWSP as a guest lecturer and was the department's first choice for a tenure-track teaching position. Her students describe her as "the most effective teacher I have had at this university," "a genuine and passionate educator," and

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“caring, understanding, helpful, sincere and concerned with her students – a leader in the teaching profession.”

Boelk, who has given several presentations on death and dying and family dynamics of terminal illness, holds degrees from UW-Eau Claire and UW-Madison and is pursuing a doctorate at the University of Texas-Austin.

Jones, who has taught at UWSP for 16 years, “provides an environment in the classroom where there is mutual respect, caring and thoughtfulness, while her discussions are thought provoking and interesting,” says one of her students. With a background in counseling and a belief in healthy lifestyles, Jones serves as a role model to her students. “I wish that everyone would have the chance to take your classes. I believe the world would be a better place if that was the case,” says another former student. She was nominated by the School of Health Promotion and Human Development.

Prior to joining the UWSP faculty, Jones was assistant director of the National Wellness Institute, a librarian and a fifth grade teacher. She holds degrees from Coker College, Clemson University and the University of Georgia.

Morin, who came to UWSP nine years ago, formerly taught at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga and Bethany College. He was nominated for the teaching award by SGA.

“The best thing about taking a class with Professor Morin is that he teaches you to question everything and be prepared to answer anything,” says one of his former graphic design students. “His ability to connect with his students has created a network of UWSP designers working professionally throughout the United States, from New York to LA and everywhere in between.”

Morin says the great student potential at UWSP inspired him to start the Design Center which provides students with professional experience and the opportunity to collaborate with faculty members. An active artist, designer and role model to his students, Morin has completed four of his most successful projects since taking on the role of department chair. He holds degrees from Tyler School of Art of Temple University and UW-Madison.

Nominated by his department and SGA, Ruffin came to UWSP just two years ago after serving a teaching fellowship at Harvard University. He holds degrees from the University of Virginia and the University of Delaware. A specialist in the history of colonial America and the Early Republic, “Ruffin is, quite simply, the embodiment of what a college professor should be. He is knowledgeable and engaging and makes one eager to come to class. He also is courteous and helpful,” says one of his students.

From the perspective of Ruffin’s department colleagues, three things receive special notice. “First, he is very skilled in the classroom; second, he encourages and fosters critical thinking in his classes; and finally, he is a very accessible professor.”

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Nominated by the Department of Philosophy, Dempsey “is at the forefront of religious studies scholarship.” She is the author of two books, “Kerala Christian Sainthood: Collisions of Culture and World Views in South India,” winner of the outstanding book award from the Society for Hindu-Christian Studies, and “The Goddess Lives in Upstate New York: Breaking Conventions and Making Home at a North American Hindu Temple,” both published by Oxford University Press. She also co-edited “Popular Christianity in India: Riting Between the Lines,” with Selva Raj, published by SUNY Press. In addition, she has published numerous articles and book reviews in religious studies journals and made presentations at many professional meetings.

Dempsey, who came to UWSP five years ago after teaching at Syracuse University, holds degrees from Oregon State University, University of California-Berkeley and Syracuse.

Hartleb, nominated by the Department of Biology, is a fisheries ecologist who has diversified his scholarly interests into aquaculture (fish farming) and application of technology in science education. This is the third time in nine years his department has nominated him for the Scholar Award, “based on his reputation for innovative and economically valuable work, an impressive list of undergraduate research students and a consistent record of attracting research funds.” He holds degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, University of New Hampshire and University of Maine.

Since joining the biology faculty in 1996, Hartleb has mentored and collaborated with 47 UWSP undergraduate students on more than 26 research studies. He has co-authored an aquaculture manual for regional fish culturists and has authored or co-authored more than 13 articles in scientific journals and magazines. In addition, he has written a laboratory manual and co-edited and co-authored a manual for aquaculture in the Great Lakes region. He also has furthered the development of internet materials in ecology and biology and has led the development of the only university undergraduate emphasis in aquaculture in Wisconsin.

Ramsay, who came to UWSP 10 years ago, has served his school as graduate coordinator, chair of the personnel committee and coordinator of the program in Safety and Health Protection. He chairs UWSP’s program review committee, has served on many other campus groups and chaired the Environmental Health and Safety Committee. In the community, he works with several wellness committees and the Community Foundation.

In his profession, he has received national recognition for service. Last year he was named Safety Educator of the Year by the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE). He has held leadership positions in several national health and safety organizations, serves as editor of the “Journal of Safety, Health and Environmental Research,” and is a founding member of the ASSE’s Academic Practice Specialty. He holds degrees from UWSP and UW-Madison.

The academic staff recipients are recognized for excellence on the job and in the community. Rasmussen, who came to UWSP in 1990, serves as campus planner.

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“Carl’s sense of mission, his strong work ethic and level of accuracy pay huge benefits for the Stevens Point campus,” says Dean of Fine Arts and Communication Gerard McKenna. “The \$26 million Noel Fine Arts Center project is one of many that Carl has led, resulting in millions of dollars in renovating and remodeling of buildings on campus.”

“The Paper Science Department owes a great debt to Carl Rasmussen for his outstanding efforts in the installation of our pilot paper machine,” says Gerry Ring, professor and interim chair of paper science. “Carl assisted us in every aspect of construction At the end, the department acquired a unique teaching machine that is unequalled anywhere in the country.”

The former planning director for the Oneida Tribe of Wisconsin, Rasmussen holds a degree from UW-Green Bay and is a licensed Wisconsin commercial building Inspector.

Turyk, who was nominated by the College of Natural Resources, works with the community assessing and communicating on the health of rivers and lakes, collaborating on river and lake projects, and supervising project implementation. Her service spans the scale of campus, neighborhood, municipality, county and state.

At the municipal level, Nancy is a member of the Town of Lanark’s Plan Commission and serves as the town’s representative to the Comprehensive Planning Joint Steering Committee. She also has served on the Portage County Groundwater Advisory Committee and is co-chair of that group’s Continuous Assessment Sub-committee. Her work on behalf of Portage County lakes and the Friends of the Tomorrow-Waupaca River also are noteworthy. At the state level, Nancy has served on the North Central Conservancy Trust Properties Committee and has helped dozens of local lake and rivers groups.

Turyk, who earned both of her degrees at UWSP, formerly was an air quality specialist for the Department of the Interior at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon.

Maher, who has been employed at UWSP for 35 years, was nominated by her colleagues at the TLC with support from Professor Emerita Mary Croft, founder and retired director of the center. “Bonnie has a record of distinguished service not only to her home unit, the TLC, but also to the university and community,” says TLC Director Bobbie Stokes. Maher is responsible for peer tutors, who number up to 200 per semester and serves as office manager, including the development of personnel, budget and payroll systems. In addition to numerous TLC committees, Maher has served on UWSP committees including Equity and Affirmative Action, Historic Preservation, and Classified Staff Advisory Committee. Her involvement in the community includes membership on the Historic Design Review Commission, Downtown Design and Image Committee, and Downtown Business Association.