Special Awards

2008-2009 EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

presented to

Wendy Walker

Assistant Professor, Huxley College of the Environment

Wendy Walker has spent the last 18 years inspiring Western students to reach their full academic and personal potential by learning from each other. An alumna of Western herself, Walker believes in experiential education: learning by doing.

After providing a knowledge base and theoretical framework in class, Walker challenges students to apply that knowledge and develop their own skills to solve real-world problems. The philosophy works. Many of Walker's students name her as one of their most influential professors at Western.

"Wendy is truly unique in her field – a professor who goes above and beyond the call of duty in her support of students and enthusiasm for the subject matter," said former graduate student Katie Fleming, who is now the education coordinator for RE Sources in Bellingham. "Wendy Walker is an asset to the Environmental Studies Department, to Western Washington University, to her students and the other communities in which these inspired students live and work."

The Excellence in Teaching Award is given to a faculty member of the College of Business and Economics, Fairhaven College, the College of Fine and Performing Arts, Huxley College of the Environment or Woodring College of Education.

The Excellence in Teaching Award, *which includes a $1,500 stipend to use for research, teaching equipment/supplies or professional enhancement, is provided through donations to the Western Washington University Foundation. Nominations for the award, presented to faculty members from the cluster of colleges, are solicited from faculty, students and alumni.*

2008-2009 FACULTY OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

presented to

Michael Medler

Associate Professor of Environmental Studies

Michael Medler, an expert in pyrogeography, studies how to map and predict the phenomena associated with forest fires in the American West. His study of forest fires dates back to his stint as a fire fighter for the U.S. Forest Service in Oregon in the 1980s. Today, he's a national expert in the field of fire ecology and past president of the Association for Fire Ecology. He also founded the association's online journal and recently testified before Congress on the link between climate change and fire behavior.

On campus, Medler serves as Huxley College of the Environment's representative to the President's Waterfront Development Committee, securing more than $50,000 in grants to help Huxley plan for a move to the waterfront. He developed the popular Huxley College Speaker Series, chaired of the college's Community Affairs Committee and serves as the department's adviser to students earning a master's degree in geography. In the community, Medler works with the Bellingham Mountaineers as a volunteer climbing instructor.

The Faculty Outstanding Service Award, honors a faculty member whose efforts have enriched the intellectual vitality of the campus and broader community.

The Faculty Outstanding Service Award, *which includes a $1,500 stipend to use to purchase supplies and equipment, fund travel to professional conferences, and fund other expenses related to service-focused programs and activities, is provided through donations to the Western Washington University Foundation.*

2008-2009 PETER J. ELICH EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

presented to

Jackie Caplan-Auerbach

Assistant Professor, Geology

College of Sciences and Technology

Jackie Caplan-Auerbach's enthusiastic classroom presentation style wins over many of her Geology 101 students, judging by the number who decide to become Geology majors. A former high school physics teacher, she knows how to highlight what's exciting and relevant about Earth science to capture and keep students' attention.

But her students also know Caplan-Auerbach is adept at challenging and guiding them through difficult material, such as the complicated mathematical concepts in her geophysics courses.

Students also know her as academic role model and research mentor: Caplan-Auerbach serves on a large number of graduate thesis committees and advises many undergraduates' independent senior research projects. Many of these students end up publishing and presenting their research in journals and at conferences.

The Peter J. Elich Excellence in Teaching Award, *which includes a $1,500 stipend to use for research, teaching, equipment/supplies or professional enhancements, is provided through donations to The Western Washington University Foundation to recognize Peter J. Elich's dedicated years of service as the dean of the former College of Arts and Sciences. Nominations for the award are solicited from faculty, students and alumni. Faculty members are chosen from the College of Hummanities and Social Sciences or the College of Sciences and Technology.*

2008-2009 DIVERSITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

presented to

Lorraine Kasprisin

Professor, Secondary Education, Woodring College of Education

Lorraine Kasprisin has served Western for nearly 30 years as an educator, philosopher and scholar. Devoted to sharing perspectives on diversity and social justice, her work reaches students, educators, practitioners and scholars at Western and throughout the world.

Most recently Kasprisin founded the highly acclaimed Journal of Educational Controversy. This peer reviewed electronic journal is a significant contributor to the body of research on diversity and brings international attention to Western.

"Lorraine has a very respectful and graceful way of bringing up traditionally challenging topics," said John Korsmo, assistant professor of Human Services. "Her work has heightened public awareness at Western and has drawn attention to diversity by holding people accountable."

The Diversity Achievement Award, *which includes a certificate of recognition and a $1,500 stipend to use for research, teaching equipment/supplies or professional enhancement, is made possible through donations to The Western Washington University Foundation. Recipients are chosen by Western's President. The award recognizes outstanding contributions to enhancing multiculturalism on campus and beyond. These contributions may include research, programming, leadership, teaching and service to students or the community.*

2008-2009 PAUL J. OLSCAMP RESEARCH AWARD

presented to

Merrill Peterson

Professor of Biology

Merrill Peterson is a rigorous, highly regarded field biologist whose research explores ecological and evolutionary theory. His latest research, examining two closely related beetles living in a "hybrid zone" in Eastern Washington, has made important contributions to our understanding of the origin of species. Funded by a recent $450,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, Peterson's research has appeared in well-regarded journals such as "Evolution," for which he has also served as an associate editor. He's also prolific, with at least 14 peer-reviewed papers or book chapters published since 2000.

Peterson is also known as an important mentor to students. He collaborates with graduates and undergraduates with whom he often co-authors research papers. And he established a summer research internship program for underrepresented minority students.

Fascinated with insects since childhood, Peterson shares his passion and knowledge with the broader community, answering calls from the public with bug-related questions and giving talks to groups of nature enthusiasts. He is currently writing a field guide to insects in the Pacific Northwest to be published by the Seattle Audubon Society.

***The Paul J. Olscamp Research Award** was established in 1983 through an endowment provided by former WWU President Paul J. Olscamp. An award of $1,000 is presented annually by the President of the University at the June commencement exercises to a WWU faculty member selected by the Research Advisory Committee and the President for having made an outstanding contribution to research and scholarship.*

2008-2009 CARL SIMPSON BRIDGING AWARD

presented to

Carmen Werder

Director, Teaching-Learning Academy & Writing Instruction Support

Affiliated Faculty, Communication

During her 24-plus years as a teacher and administrator at Western, Carmen Werder has consistently sought ways to bridge the gaps between the academic, professional and intellectual worlds of faculty, students and staff.

She currently serves as director of Western's Writing Instruction Support, working with faculty throughout the university to improve Writing Proficiency courses and writing across the curriculum. And as a cluster facilitator for the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Institutional Leadership Program, Werder leads faculty and students from six other institutions to integrate student voices into the study of teaching and learning. She leads those kinds of conversations on campus, too, as head of the Teaching-Learning Academy, a university-wide forum inspiring faculty, students, staff and administrators to share their perspectives on teaching and learning.

"Carl was a good friend of mine, and the award is really special to me," Werder said. "I don't think I'm in the same league as him, but I certainly do aspire to do the kind of work that he did."

***The Carl H. Simpson Award**, new in 2008-2009, recognizes efforts to create bridges and forge new paths that others may follow and build upon. The award benefits a WWU staff, faculty member or student who demonstrates a remarkable ability or innovative approach to bridging some aspect of academic or campus life, and includes a $1,000 award.*