

COMMITTEE ON DISTINGUISHED TEACHING

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2015-2016 DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

The Committee on Distinguished Teaching is pleased to nominate two outstanding, award-winning educators as co-recipients of the 2015-16 Distinguished Teaching Award. Both are graduates of the UC System, recruited to UCR from faculty positions at Colleges of Medicine. Both are tireless in bringing research experiences to larger undergraduate classes than is traditionally imagined possible.

PROFESSOR Katherine Borkovich

Professor Katherine Borkovich moved to UCR's Department of Plant Pathology, from the UT Houston Medical School in 2001, the same year that she won their Dean's award for Teaching Excellence. At UCR, she became a driving force in establishing the undergraduate microbiology major, the first director of the reinstated microbiology graduate program, and then Chair of the department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology..

Dr. Borkovich embraces the most time-consuming aspects of excellent teaching. She incorporates scientific writing, statistical computation, and original research experiments into her undergraduate courses, following up with generous office hours. She is one of the few instructors who assign and grade papers in large undergraduate science courses. Students value this writing component because she devotes so much time to reading their papers and providing feedback in time for informed revision.

The microbiology capstone course, which Dr. Borkovich developed, has the structure of a group senior thesis in which students design and perform experiments, prepare illustrations and draft manuscripts. The course generates valuable research data and peer-reviewed publications with student authors. Colleagues who copied the course structure at Texas A&M were "surprised by the amount of time and effort it took to do this successfully." Dr. Borkovich has trained 45 STEM undergraduate researchers and collaborated with colleagues in CNAS to secure two substantial grants to improve STEM education.

Letters from colleagues and students establish that Dr. Borkovich is a "leader in both teaching and developing new educational opportunities for undergraduate students." We find her fully deserving of the Academic Senate's Distinguished Teaching Award.

PROFESSOR Juliet McMullin

Professor Juliet McMullin moved to UCR's Department of Anthropology in 2005 from the UC Irvine College of Medicine. She won the CHASS Junior Faculty Teaching Award in 2008 and was named the 2014-15 recipient of the CHASS McSweeney McCauley Chair for Teaching Excellence. She is currently the Associate Director for Community Engagement in the School of Medicine's Global Health Initiative.

Dr. McMullin uses a wide range of communication methods to foster learning environments in which students, researchers, and local communities “not only learn from her but also from listening to and interacting with one another.” She explores the overlap of social inequality, health disparity and art. Her courses are a brilliant fusion of subject matter with research projects and community outreach. Dr. McMullin welcomes students as junior researchers who bring valuable insights from their home communities and contribute to conferences built around their findings. They recognize that “she offers guidance by asking the right questions and making us make the tough calls.”

Dr. McMullin’s concern for students begins with CHASS activities that help orient and socialize first year-undergraduates. Graduate students “vie to join her teaching teams because of the versatile and effective pedagogies she deploys and the careful mentoring she provides.” Senior faculty colleagues “look to her as a role model for classroom effectiveness,” whether in a small graduate seminar or a mixed media presentation to hundreds of undergraduates.

For her tireless and effective commitment to students and their communities, Dr. McMullin has thoroughly earned the Distinguished Teaching Award.