

Ph.D. Mentors for 2013

Each year the Graduate School recognizes five faculty members for excellence in mentoring doctoral students with the Doctoral Dissertation/Mentoring Award.

A committee of faculty and students chose this year's recipients from among more than 200 eligible faculty across campus. Nominees are required to have served as a committee chair or co-chair for at least one doctoral or MFA student in the last year and at least three in the past five years.

Each of the faculty members receives \$3,000, plus an additional \$1,000 to support graduate students.



"I feel like I really belong." One of Bonnie Moradi's students expressed this sentiment about her sense of commitment and belonging to a research career. This testament, especially from an ethnic, minority woman, had a profound effect on Moradi.

"Her sense of belonging in science stays with me, fuels my commitment to mentoring and makes mentoring one of the most meaningful aspects of my work," said Moradi, a psychology professor whose research is in the field of social stressors, such as prejudice or discrimination.

Although she is just a decade into her own career, Moradi has already been named a distinguished mentor by two national organizations and has former students in academic and clinical positions in psychology. Moradi has shared her expertise and her success, with well over half of her 68 publications and 90

percent of her 100-plus presentations co-authored by her students.

Former student Cirleen DeBlaere, now an assistant professor at Lehigh University, said Moradi often believes in her students more than they believe in themselves.

"Bonnie has what I believe to be a rare ability to meet students where they are when they begin their graduate experience while simultaneously assisting them in developing a vision of where it is that they can go," said DeBlaere.

DeBlaere entered her doctoral studies with a general research interest and vague career goals, she said. By graduation, she had published a chapter and five articles in top journals and obtained her tenure-track post at Lehigh. ⊗



Michael Marsiske is such an exceptional teacher that the only years

other instructors have won the teaching award in the Department of Clinical and Health Psychology are those in which he recused himself from the competition. He has won his department's outstanding graduate teaching award six times and outstanding graduate mentorship award twice.

Now, he can add a University of Florida Doctoral Dissertation/Mentoring Award to his accolades.

Anna Yam, one of three students who nominated Marsiske, said she could "imagine how he might blush over all this praise." Kelsey Thomas noted that when Marsiske taught her introductory statistics class, he remembered the names of all 40 students by the second class meeting, and remembered them through subsequent courses. Shannon Sisco, now a practicing clinical psychologist, said her most challenging questions often came from Marsiske because "he believed I could think bigger."

For his part, Marsiske calls working with doctoral students the "fuel in my furnace."

"Work with doctoral students keeps one's research current, future-focused, generative, and collegial. There is something exciting about building a team to advance science and scholarship," said Marsiske, who has served on more than 55 doctoral committees and 27 masters committees.

Sisco, who chose Marsiske as a mentor for both her masters and doctoral work, said no idea was off-limits with Marsiske: "I was his junior colleague, and my ideas mattered to him." ⊗

Ph.D. Mentors



For Jack Stenner, associate professor of art + technology in the College of Fine Arts, the journey to a doctoral degree or MFA is a path a student and professor walk together.

His students call him mentor, adviser, collaborator, friend and inspiration, and their successes are a tribute to his guidance.

Former student Daniel Tankersley, now a professor himself, said of Stenner: “He taught me not about what to do, make, think, learn, or see, but how.”

“Every day in my own classroom, I hear echoes of Jack’s voice in the way I interact with my students,” said Tankersley, an assistant professor of art at Western Oregon University.

In the art world, Stenner is known for combining art and technology. He is a co-founder of the Digital Fabrication Laboratory, a collaboration between the School of Art + Art History and

the School of Architecture. Stenner has encouraged his students to participate in the world of art and beyond through conferences and exhibitions, resulting in students who are “more world aware than ever,” said Richard Heipp, professor and director of the School of Art + Art History.

Stenner said his students stimulate his creativity as much as he hopes to stimulate theirs.

“Especially in a field that combines art with emerging technologies that are constantly evolving, it is important for students to realize there is no singular answer; exploration is a goal unto itself,” Stenner said. ☒



Former students describe Kara Dawson as a natural mentor, always ready to troubleshoot any problem and quick to offer encouragement.

Wendy Drexler, now director of Online Development at Brown University, said she did not realize how special her relationship with her advisor was until her final semester of doctoral work, when she collaborated with doctoral students in other departments.

“It soon became clear that I had a very special advisor who was mentoring me to become a successful future faculty member,” Drexler said.

Drexler said Dawson helped her refine her skills and get exposure for her scholarly work. In fact, Dawson has co-authored more than 25 refereed articles and book chapters with her doctoral students, and all of her doctoral students have presented at conferences. Drexler said she credits Dawson with preparing her for the leadership position she is in today.

Dawson said she makes a point of encouraging students to seek the advice and guidance of other faculty members and colleagues, in stark contrast to the historical one-to-one model of the student-mentor relationship.

“I believe students should take full advantage of all the talent and resources around them,” Dawson said.

Elizabeth Bondy, professor and director of the School of Teaching and Learning, said Dawson’s skill as a problem-solver helps her students navigate the challenging terrain of doctoral study. Dawson, she said, is a model mentor.

“She is available. She is determined,” Bondy said. ☒

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Edward Chan
Professor
College of Dentistry

Edward Chan has been known to get so wrapped up in mentoring his doctoral students that he has forgotten to go home for dinner.

That devotion does not surprise his colleagues.

“It is incredibly rare to find Ed alone, whether in his office, the hall or his lab. Instead, he is usually with a student or a small group of students discussing their data or new findings in the literature,” said Robert A. Burne, distinguished professor and chair and associate dean for research in the College of Dentistry.

Burne notes that Chan is so popular that he sits on doctoral committees in five different departments in the Colleges of Dentistry, Medicine and Engineering.

Chan said there “is no simple protocol for all students. To a great extent, engaging the interest of a student is an art form.” To listen to his students tell it, Chan is a master.

Former student Songqing Li, now a researcher with his wife, another Chan mentee, at St. Jude Children’s Hospital, recalls giving his first conference presentation with “hands wet, feet cold.” After training with Chan, he said, he gained confidence and even won the Silver Award in one conference.

“As mentors, it is a fun journey where, with only a few short years, we guide and make a difference to some of the best individuals we will ever work with and, we hope this will create a close bond for years to come,” Chan said. ⊗