

2018/2019 Internal Awards Mathematics and Computer Science

Teaching

Jim Smith (performance) is the recipient of the Mathematics and Computer Science award for performance in teaching.

Jim consistently receives very high teaching evaluations and had the highest teaching evaluation score in the Department for this award period. Besides being an outstanding teacher, Jim regularly attends teaching workshops and conferences. He also accepted to take over the coordination of basic calculus, a task he is meticulously working on. Included below are a few student comments from his course evaluations.

The teacher's clarity of explanation is fantastic.

- Coupled together with the simulations ran on the projector, he effectively explained what we were calculation with various mathematical expressions. He teaches as if it is his one true calling.
- Smith presents information in a very organized manner and is always sure to thoroughly cover all of the theorems before he begins doing the examples problems.
- James Smith is an excellent instructor very kind and very encouraging towards his students and you can
- You can tell he genuinely does care for his students and we the students pick up on that and we very much appreciate that.
- Honestly, walking away from this class I feel like I have learned a tremendous amount and I had fun while learning it.
- When I took Professor Jim Smith's calculus III course in Spring 2017 I walked away with a tremendous amount of knowledge and gained critical problem solving strategies that I've been using throughout all of my physics courses. I appraise his teaching style and always urge math students to take the courses he teaches. Professor Smith is easily ranked in the top 3 professors I've had while attending UMSL.

One of the faculty who observe his class said:

- Overall, I was very impressed with Jim's teaching, organization, and his communication with his students. Perhaps more important, however, is that I could tell that his students themselves appreciated Jim's teaching – they were engaged, seemed to follow the lecture well, and felt comfortable asking questions when they had them.

He attended various workshops and conferences to further improve his teaching.

Service

Al Stanger (achievements) is this year's recipient of the department award in service. The award recognizes his outstanding work managing the Math Academic Center. Al's management of the Math Academic Center has benefited the students as well as the faculty members who teach them. His constant presence in the lab has led the faculty members to strongly encourage their students to seek help in the lab. Students receiving As and Bs in the calculus sequence, and are hired as tutors, do not always retain the information in order to explain it to others. This makes it tough at times to make sure all tutees are receiving accurate information. He prepares his tutors well, they still rely on him when they encounter questions that they are not confident about. Countless students associate their success in school with him.

Students have praised Al for his efforts to make their learning experience successful in the Math Lab. Here are some of their comments.

- The amount of help Al provided probably can't be measured.
- Al Stanger was great with his help in calculus II and he went above and beyond in Math lab all the time.
- Thanks you for getting me through the semester. You are amazing and I would never graduate without you.

Students have said in their exit interviews that Math lab is great resource for the calculus sequence course. His tutors are thankful for getting a chance to work with him. One of them wrote:

- Thanks for giving me a chance to work with you in the math lab. It is one of the best experience for me and it is helpful for my career. I have learned a lot from your teaching style and interaction with the students.
- Without a doubt, Al Stanger is the best there is on this campus when it comes to helping students understand higher level mathematics. He has been a partial influence when it comes to me wanting to understand the physical implications of math. Also he has been an influence on me wanting to teach math to other students. I cherish his work and dedication.

He has been available to teach for faculty members who needed a substitute when they were faced with an emergency or when they were attending a conference. Some of these requests have happened at the last minute. We have heard excellent comments from the students when he has stepped in and covered in those situations.

Research

Dr. Sharlee Climer (achievements) is the recipient of the departmental research award for her research achievement over the last a few years on developing Custom Correlation Coefficients (CCC) method for genetic data which has revealed genetic patterns in a diverse variety of domains, including heart disease, psoriasis, human vitamin D production, and bioenergy. It also revealed a striking genetic ‘yin-yang’ pattern that appears throughout global populations. Dr. Climer, along with the six other members of the team, received ACM’s Gordon Bell Prize for their accomplishment in breaking the exascale barrier on the Oak Ridge National Laboratory’s Summit supercomputer. In addition to her own research, Dr. Climer has also been very actively involving graduate students in cutting-edge research, and involving female CS students through the departmental “Women. Can” club.