



**CELEBRATING  
EXCELLENCE  
2016**



# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARDS  
FOR EXCELLENCE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2016

THE INTERCONTINENTAL SAINT PAUL RIVERFRONT  
HOTEL BALLROOM  
11 EAST KELLOGG BOULEVARD  
SAINT PAUL



## LUNCHEON AND AWARDS CEREMONY

11:30 A.M. — 1:15 P.M.

The Board of Trustees Awards for Excellence are system-level honors conferred annually in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system to recognize professional achievement and to encourage the ongoing pursuit of excellence.

**Music** • Cole Oehlers (trumpet), Randi Friedl (vocal), Kevin Gamble (piano), Erik Saxton (bass), Erin Bekkers (drums), students at Anoka-Ramsey Community College

**Emcee** • Cathy Wurzer

**Welcome** • Chancellor Steven Rosenstone and Board of Trustees Chair Michael Vekich

**Recognition of Outstanding Service Faculty Members** • Board of Trustees Academic and Student Affairs Committee Chair Alexander Cirillo, Chancellor Rosenstone

**Presentation of the Service Faculty Member of the Year Award** • Chair Cirillo, Chancellor Rosenstone

**Recognition of Outstanding Educators** • Chair Cirillo, Chancellor Rosenstone and Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs Ron Anderson

**Presentation of the Educator of the Year Awards** • Chair Cirillo, Chancellor Rosenstone and Vice Chancellor Anderson

**Closing** • Vice Chancellor Anderson

## PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE AWARD

The award is an honor bestowed upon university service faculty to acknowledge and reward exceptional individual professional accomplishment, and to encourage ongoing excellence in the key roles that service faculty fulfill at our system's universities. They are responsible for advising and counseling students; for the recruitment, retention, and placement of students; for residential life programming; facilitation of student groups and student leadership; and other involvement in university and community activities. This is the second year the award is being bestowed.

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*"It is humbling to read of the accomplishments of my esteemed colleagues around the system. I think is it also indicative of the good work we see from all of our ASF brothers and sisters across the state."*

*— Mike Sharp, St. Cloud State University  
and member of the Board of Trustees Review Committee*

## Selection Criteria

The Professional Excellence in Service Award Review Committee evaluated each nominee in the following areas:

- **Exceptional work performance:** The nominee should demonstrate excellence in professional activities within and beyond the parameters of the job description. The ideal nominee fulfills the position's professional requirements in a creative and innovative fashion while demonstrating flexibility and adaptability to institutional and/or system needs. Consideration should be given to capabilities and accomplishments in the areas of leadership, decision-making and problem-solving. Evidence in this category includes, but is not limited to, professional recognitions, initiation of program ideas, development of proposals, and committee activities.
- **Advancement of the university mission:** The nominee should advance the mission of his or her home university and the campus within the context of the campus' mission and core values of teaching, research, and public service. There should be an explanation of the work of the individual and the impact of that work.
- **Expertise, creative achievement and professional development:** Outstanding Service Faculty Members should be professionals whose subject-matter knowledge is evident in their use of well-regarded and current knowledge and practices in their work. They participate in ongoing professional development to support their professional pursuits.
- **Contribution to student growth and development:** Nominees should demonstrate high achievement in this area through evidence of excellence in their service to students. ASF members can demonstrate high achievement in this area through evidence of advising excellence, unusual successful in recruitment, retention or placement of students; counseling excellence; residential life programming excellence; facilitation of student groups and student leadership, student research projects or internships; comments from alumni; or involvement in department, center or extra-departmental student activities.

## System Board of Trustees Professional Excellence in Service Award Review Committee

Sarah Olcott	Winona State University
Wanda Overland	St. Cloud State University
Wendy Robinson	Academic and Student Affairs
Matthew Rubel	Minnesota State University Student Association
Michael Sharp	St. Cloud State University



## Barbara Oertel

*Director, Warrior Success Center  
Winona State University*

Barbara Oertel is known at Winona State University for her focus on student success and for continually searching for opportunities to improve the student experience. Oertel's career at WSU spans more than 30 years, and throughout that time she has worked tirelessly, often behind the scenes, to improve the experience and foster the success of the many students who have chosen Winona State for their

education. She is the founding director of the Warrior Success Center, a comprehensive student services department that helps students successfully transition into the university through orientation and placement testing; supports students during their time at WSU through tutoring, advising, and disabilities services; and assists students for the next steps beyond their studies through job searching and career advising.

Oertel began her work at Winona State as a student, earning her bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees in English. In addition, she holds an Ed.D. in educational policy and administration from the University of Minnesota. Throughout her 30+ years at WSU, she has contributed an impressive range of presentations and professional activities in service to the students, the university, and the system. Among other things, she developed a completion plan for students of color that collected and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data in cooperation with the office of inclusion and diversity, and she has received multiple special initiative awards to do research to benefit the institution.

Oertel has also led research on and implementation of high impact practices in student services that have had a profound impact at WSU. In fact, WSU has experienced steady upward trends over the years since 1993 when Oertel became director of advising services. The university's retention record of 80% of first-year students returning in the second year is up from 69% two decades ago. Five-year completion rates are also up dramatically, and are among the highest in the system. These results are due in no small part to Barbara's efforts to improve student services and the culture of support for WSU students. Among other things, she has worked on a team to identify and address the financial barriers for underrepresented students and has led a continual improvement of the orientation program for new students, enhanced advising on a university-wide basis, improved the learning environment, and is positively supporting the success of students of color.

Her colleagues, students, and the president praise Barbara for the high quality and consistency of her work in the wide-ranging roles she has held on campus, including serving as Interim Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services. Barbara has served on and chaired multiple university committees, been part of the equity task force, led restructuring of orientation and new strategies for and advising of undeclared students, and been part of three major university restructuring plans.

She has served as president of the Minnesota State University Association of Administrative and Service Faculty, and on multiple statewide MnSCU committees, including the Charting the Future Student Success Implementation Team.

## REVIEWER COMMENTS

**Work Performance** Oertel has an exceptional record of accomplishments over her career at Winona State University. Throughout her lifetime of service to the institution, she has demonstrated a commitment and ability to create opportunities for others. Oertel goes far above and beyond in her service to students at Winona State University and throughout the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Her strong desire to make a positive impact is visible as she partners with others to achieve continual improvement.

**Contribution to Student Growth and Development** Oertel has an unwavering focus on increasing and supporting student success. She is a tremendous innovator when it comes to student success—helping, for example, to create the Success Coach program, which has significantly increased the persistence and retention of students of color. No one has done more than Dr. Oertel to help each and every WSU student succeed.

**Expertise, Creative Achievement and Professional Development** The success of the First Year Experience course, and the changes that she championed, is a good example of creative achievement with broad implications. Oertel demonstrates a strong and ongoing commitment to professional development for herself and her staff, always with a clear connection back to work and the institution.

**Advancement of the University Mission** Oertel transparently connects her work to the mission of the university through efforts such as the implementation of university-wide enhanced advising services and development of tutoring programs for student success. She has incorporated advising into the orientation course and led efforts to retain and support students to graduation. She is very active as a leader on campus for a range of initiatives relating to student success and diversity, leading the Diversity Task Force and the development of the Winona State University Strategic Enrollment Plan.

## OUTSTANDING SERVICE FACULTY MEMBERS

These administrative service faculty members are recognized for the extraordinary service they provide at their universities and to Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Comments were provided by colleagues, presidents and community supporters.

### **Eduardo Gutierrez • Admissions Counselor and Chicano/Latino Advisor**

*Metropolitan State University  
Devinder Malhotra, Interim President*

For over 30 years, Gutierrez has been a fervent and staunch advocate for underserved student populations, particularly those from the Latino community. Respected and admired by university staff, students and community members, this transformational administrator keeps the well-being and development of his students as his focus.



### **Jefferson Lee IV • Director of Diversity and Inclusion**

*Southwest Minnesota State University  
President Connie Gores*

Lee's love for his university and its students is obvious in all his work. On any given day, this SMSU alum can be found acting as a mentor, advisor, counselor or crisis manager. His resume includes extensive examples of service on campus committees, as well as outreach activities in the community.



### **Shirley Piepho • Assistant Director of University Scheduling and Conference Services**

*Minnesota State University, Mankato  
President Richard Davenport*

Piepho is a beloved campus leader whose approach epitomizes service and fosters an inclusive learning atmosphere based upon civility, trust and respect. Piepho's incredible work ethic, as well as her friendly demeanor, make her office a cornerstone in the university's relationships with the community.



### **Carolyn Zehren • Director of Scholarship and Financial Aid**

*Minnesota State University Moorhead  
President Anne Blackhurst*

Zehren's vast knowledge of financial aid rules and regulations, as well as her strong commitment to process improvement, has had a direct and positive impact on the lives of students. Dedicated and influential, this remarkable director is always willing to do more than is required.



### **Owen Zimpel • Director of Student Disability Services**

*St. Cloud State University  
President Earl Potter*

At the core of Zimpel's distinguished list of accomplishments is an unwavering desire to promote student success and opportunity. A phenomenal leader in disability services, he has been instrumental in enhancing campus mental health services and creating accessible, safe, welcoming learning and activity spaces.



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## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES SERVICE FACULTY MEMBERS OF THE YEAR**

### **2015**

Shahzad Ahmad • Director for Multicultural Student Services  
St. Cloud State University

## THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

The Board of Trustees Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching was established in 2007. The Board of Trustees bestows the award upon faculty within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system to acknowledge and reward exceptional professional accomplishment, and to encourage ongoing excellence in teaching. The award proclaims, on behalf of the entire system, the Board of Trustees' pride in the dedication and accomplishment of our faculty, who provide instruction that prepares Minnesota college and university students for their professional, scholarly, and civic lives. This year, presidents designated 35 Outstanding Educators in nomination for the award.

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*“There are outstanding faculty at all our colleges and universities who make it possible for us to provide an extraordinary education for all Minnesotans. The programs these faculty members support – academic programs, advising, financial aid, registration, residential life, and student affairs, just to name a few – are vital to our ability serve students and communities in every corner of the state.”*

*– Thomas Renier, Chair of the Board of Trustees 2014-2015*

*“Reading through the portfolios gets harder each year. We have so many faculty throughout the MnSCU system who care so deeply about their students. It’s a very humbling experience.”*

*– Linda Kingston, Saint Paul College and Board of Trustees*

*Review Committee*

### Selection Criteria

The Board of Trustees Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching program evaluates each nominee in the following areas:

- Content expertise and professional growth
- Teaching strategies and materials
- Assessment of student learning and performance
- Service to students, profession, institution, system

Nominations were made by students, faculty peers, or staff, and evaluated by a campus review committee before Outstanding Educator nomination packets were submitted to the Vice Chancellor. At the system level, a committee employed a rubric of detailed criteria in reading and discussing Outstanding Educator portfolios, and made final recommendations of four Educator of the Year recipients to Vice Chancellor Anderson. Those recommendations were reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees.

### System Board of Trustees Award for Excellence in Teaching Review Committee

Adenuga Atewologun	Riverland Community College
Fran Bieganek	Anoka-Ramsey Community College
Joan Bloemendaal-Gruett	Pine Technical and Community College
Julie Daniels	Century College
L. Hazareesingh	Mesabi Range College
Michael Janke	Information Technology Systems
Linda Kingston	Saint Paul College
Becca Larson	Minnesota State College Student Association, Anoka-Ramsey Community College
Craig Larson	North Hennepin Community College
Kimberly Lynch	Academic and Student Affairs
Kerrie Maleski	Minnesota State College Student Association, Anoka Technical College
Jon Dalager	Academic and Student Affairs
Peggy Rejto	Normandale Community College
Rik Stirling	Hennepin Technical College



## Justin Berry

*Instructor of Physical Therapy Assistant  
Northland Community and Technical College*

Justin Berry has been a faculty member in the physical therapy assistant program at Northland Community and Technical College since 2005, and is noted as an “exemplary faculty member, colleague, and community member.” Berry is a recognized expert who has earned multiple academic degrees in physical therapy, including a Doctor of Physical Therapy; he has published and presented many times

on critical topics, and he continues to take workshops and courses to stay current in the field. In addition to the extensive education in physical therapy, he has earned an additional master’s degree in education and was honored by the American Physical Therapy Association as an Outstanding Physical Therapist Educator in 2014.

Berry’s profession is physical therapy, but his passion is teaching. He is known for encouraging students with his “never give up” attitude and high expectations for their success. To ensure the high quality and relevance of the curriculum, Berry collects input from a variety of stakeholders – current students, alumni, employers, faculty, and a program advisory committee – about the quality and content of the curriculum. He uses this data to inform a systematic evaluation of the curriculum every three years. The result is an exemplary program that has seen, over the last five years, 97% of its graduates pass the national licensure exam and 90% of graduates employed within six months of graduation. One student commented, “Justin works hard so all his students can pass the Board Exams and find a career. He uses his own experience from school, career, teaching and in research so his students are educated and well aware of the obstacles they can face in the physical therapy assistant field.”

For Berry, significant student learning comes through assignments that take his students into the community for real-world, meaningful experiences. One example is the “wheelchair excursion project” that requires students to spend time navigating public areas in a wheelchair and then critically reflect on that experience in order to build empathy and awareness of the challenges facing future patients with limited mobility. The understanding students get for their future patients and what struggles they face is a tremendous learning opportunity.

Berry’s dedication and service to his profession is evident in his leadership at Northland. Currently, he serves as director of the physical therapy assistant program and is chair of the Allied Health Division at NCTC. He has served on

multiple college committees, written and received a number of grants, and is sought out as a conference speaker and a facilitator for continuing education workshops for licensed physical therapy assistants.

## REVIEWER COMMENTS

**Content Expertise and Professional Growth** Berry demonstrates evidence of exceptional subject-matter knowledge through his studies and ongoing research and professional development. He is a member of the American Physical Therapy Association, and has served in multiple leadership roles with the North Dakota Physical Therapy Association. He has a long, substantial record of delivering guest lectures and continuing education workshops for practitioners across the region and nationally. In addition to speaking at many national and international conferences, he continues to advance his own education by pursuing a second doctoral degree.

**Teaching Strategies and Materials** Teaching strategies for Berry's courses are driven by the physical therapy assistant program mission statement and its clearly identified learner outcomes. He varies instruction by using lectures, discussions, and many in-class activities, and develops students' skill performance in labs, mock clinics, and classroom games. Berry has an impressive ability to connect with all of his students, no matter what their background or level of knowledge of the subject. One student noted: "He was always prepared and we could dive right into the lesson each day. He was able to make the class fun with projects like assessing our own environment or going into the community using wheelchairs."

**Assessment of Student Learning and Performance** Formative and summative assessment are a regular part of Berry's teaching, and he integrates practice and peer review to ensure that students have mastered learning outcomes and to inform needed changes to the curriculum or his teaching. The laboratory portion of courses begins with careful modeling as a way to introduce new skills, and then students receive support and feedback from peers as they build mastery and confidence. Summative practical examinations using clinical case scenarios ensure that students can weave critical skills together as they would in a real-world context.

**Service to Students, Profession, Institution, System** Berry's care for students extends beyond the classroom: he is available outside of class hours to current students and stays connected to graduates. Justin seeks to further engage students in the discipline through participation in professional organizations, involvement in primary research, and presentations at national conferences. Berry is a key leader in the college as a member of the Shared Governance Committee, representing the health sciences and public services as Division Chair, and serving as co-chair of the Institutional Research Board.



## William Breen

*Instructor of English*

*Anoka-Ramsey Community College*

William Breen has earned the respect and admiration of his students and colleagues at Anoka-Ramsey Community College for the passion, commitment, and joy he brings to his work as a writing instructor. Breen's expertise is built upon earned academic degrees like a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing, but it is also based in staying connected to writing and writers.

He is actively engaged in professional organizations, networks through social media and conferences, has served as a visiting writer to a community school in Minneapolis, and has an ongoing commitment to the Writing in Prison Project where he has served as a visiting writer to the correctional facility at Lino Lakes.

Breen is an exceptional educator in part because he uses these experiences to invigorate his teaching, introducing students to the work of diverse authors, bringing in writers to meet with students, and striving to "be joyful" in the important work he is doing at Anoka-Ramsey. He has found a way to marry his strong background in teaching at college and university, as well as high-school, levels with his passion and skills as a published creative writer. A former student remarked on Breen's ability to balance the serious treatment of subject material with a "subtle, straight-faced humor that reveals how much joy he finds in the written word and how excited he is to share it with others."

Knowing his "audience," and fostering an approach to teaching that is most effective for the students are hallmarks of Breen's teaching. He strives to know each and every student, and to demystify the writing process, and higher education, for the many students who may be overwhelmed by college or the English courses he teaches. Activities in his courses include journaling, adopting a step-by-step approach to research and writing that allows students to build gradually to completion, and allowing the students to become the teachers, as he did when his students taught poetry at a local retirement home. In every case, Breen connects the coursework to course objectives, and seeks to stay on the path to deep learning and a joyful classroom.

Breen's professional activities benefit his students, his department, and his profession. He is involved with students through the Creative Writing Club and the student literary publication on campus, the *Spirit River Review*. He also works tirelessly to ensure that the Cambridge campus and the college are connected with the community. For the past eleven years, Breen has been the curator of the Minnesota Writers Series, bringing Minnesota authors to the college. A highlight of his work thus far was bringing Garrison Keillor to the college for the series' 20th anniversary.

## REVIEWER COMMENTS

**Content Expertise and Professional Growth** William Breen has excellent academic preparation and makes clear connections with students and the active writing experience. In addition to a bachelor of arts degree in English literature and writing, he has earned an M.F.A in creative writing that included an emphasis on composition and literature as well as creative writing. Breen is a lifelong learner who seeks opportunities to learn about new things which change him as a teacher and a writer.

**Teaching Strategies and Materials** Breen creates a solid foundation for learning by being vulnerable with his students, sharing who he is, including his own struggles with writing. He expertly blends vulnerability with authority to be a supportive role model for students who may never have experienced academic success before. A former student had this to say: "What impressed me most was the detailed feedback he gave me on my projects. There wasn't a single paper I wrote throughout my Master's program for which I didn't reflect back on some bit of wisdom William had shared."

**Assessment of Student Learning and Performance** A multilevel approach best summarizes Breen's view and use of assessment. His approach is to "allow for failure, inspire excellence," and he integrates multiple low-risk assessments that provide many opportunities for students to try and try again, to build confidence and to continually practice the craft of writing. Breen strives to close the loop on assessments by utilizing data from class assessments and through regular student surveys to identify ways to improve assignments and adjust teaching strategies.

**Service to Students, Profession, Institution, System** Breen participates on campus and system committees and for five years has served as the coordinator of the college Honors Program. He has served as a grievance representative for the Minnesota State College Faculty, an experience that he says has helped him better understand the role of educators and all the ethical responsibilities that come with the role. Breen has been engaged as a mentor for more than a decade in the college's concurrent enrollment program, serving the Cambridge-Isanti and Rush City high schools. In the larger literary community of Minnesota, he continues to write and stay involved with the Loft Literary Center.



## Shannon Peak Fiene

*Instructor of Mathematics*

*Minnesota West Community and Technical College*

Caring and approachable, noted as a “remarkable teacher,” Dr. Shannon Peak Fiene’s motto, “Tear down the walls,” speaks to her commitment to lowering the barriers that block learning for students, many of whom come to her classes very nervous about math. While keeping expectations high, Fiene lowers those barriers in part by making learning fun: using audio, video, active learning, and humor to reach even the

most math-anxious students. One way she does this is through a word cloud activity at the start of a developmental math class: students are asked to submit two or three words that come to mind when they think about math. Fiene then generates a word cloud that she shares with students; the visual provides reassurance to students that they are not alone in their worries. The students do the activity again at the end of the course, and Fiene notes the growth as student reactions “transform from those of emotions and expressions of hesitation to ideas related to key mathematical concepts.”

To Fiene, tearing down walls is also about making connections with her students. She works hard to create a welcoming environment, greeting students by name before each class, offering online office hours, and finding ways for students to connect to each other, whether in face-to-face classes or online. Building opportunities like these aren’t just good for students; these aid in retention and help meet department and college goals for student success. Hailed as the “Video Queen” at M-State, Fiene has crafted over two-hundred “how to do math” videos for students. She also recognizes that learning can be messy, and allows students to fail as often as needed to achieve successful mastery of their learning. “Challenging but rewarding” is how one student described Fiene’s classes.

Fiene has earned both a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in biomathematics and is currently completing a second master’s degree in educational leadership. It is very clear that she loves her content and possesses a vast practical knowledge of math gained through graduate school and industry. One student who has taken multiple classes from Fiene, commented, “What makes her an outstanding professor is her patience, accessibility, and her own love of learning.” To be the best teacher she can be, Fiene believes she must stay current not only in her field of mathematics, but also in education and technology. She continues to grow as a professional by taking courses, attending workshops and conferences, and interacting with colleagues in industry and within the college. She continues to consult with various companies in the community in areas such as experimental design.

Fiene has served on multiple campus committees, has also served as division chair, and is currently on a college Charting the Future committee to align institutional and system-wide goals. She was the college's Energy Grant Coordinator for a major Department of Labor grant, which will soon result in a new grant from Xcel Energy. Finally, Shannon teaches new MnSCU two-year-college faculty through the Southwest Minnesota State University college pedagogy credentialing courses.

## REVIEWER COMMENTS

**Content Expertise and Professional Growth** Fiene herself notes, "It is no secret I love math." Through graduate school and her vast experience with the animal agriculture industry, she has built a vast practical knowledge of mathematics including experimental design and statistical applications. Her pursuit of the second M.S. degree shows her developing expertise in education as well as math. She brings lots of practical examples from industry into her classroom, and is actively seeking to advance her own skills in teaching with technology.

**Teaching Strategies and Materials** She holds online office hours, is known for her quick responses to student questions, uses web conferencing as an effective and meaningful way to reach students where they are, and has created YouTube tutorials to assist students. Fiene's lesson plans are well-thought-out and she uses humor, games and other techniques to help students learn content that many may otherwise find intimidating.

**Assessment of Student Learning and Performance** Direct and indirect measures are important to Fiene in assessing student learning and she uses both to inform changes to her teaching and curriculum. She uses a number of non-graded assignments, such as "quick-writes" to gauge how well students understand the material and if and how she might need to change her delivery and her portfolio demonstrates how she is constantly looking at the results of her assessments and using them to improve her teaching methods and delivery.

**Service to Students, Profession, Institution, System** Students are Fiene's first priority, and she takes seriously the need for meeting the needs of a variety of students through creation of math acceleration programs or thinking about retention for math students. She has served on multiple committees at the college, including a presidential search committee, and supports colleagues throughout the system by teaching the pedagogy courses for new college faculty through Southwest Minnesota State University.



## Adam Marcotte

*Instructor of English  
Central Lakes College*

Adam Marcotte “breathes teaching.” He is enthusiastic, passionate, creative, committed, relational, an expert in his field and, most importantly, totally dedicated to seeing that each student succeeds. He tells a story about announcing to his high-school English teacher that he wanted to be a teacher himself. She “dramatically gestured around her desk to the stacks of papers and folders for assignments that needed to

be sorted and said, “This is what your life will look like, Adam, are you sure it’s what you want?” Marcotte was sure then, and he has not wavered from that certainty. Every syllabus at Central Lakes College includes this statement: “Facilitating this class is—without exception—the best part of my day.”

Marcotte is passionate about his own learning. He continues to take classes in a variety of disciplines beyond his master of arts in English literature. These include, notably, courses in welding and music; he’s also earned a network specialist certificate in computer science. As he continues to practice and model life-long learning, he is also known for bringing and translating his own learning experiences into his teaching. All have helped him to connect and engage with students.

There is no question that Marcotte practices a student-centered approach. Marcotte approaches each class individually by meeting his students before deciding how course objectives will be accomplished. He encourages students to be inquisitive and assertive, and his energy and positive attitude encourage students to explore, take risks, and invest in their own learning. Students comment on Marcotte’s responsiveness and ability to answer email questions within hours or minutes, prompting one to wonder if Marcotte isn’t actually “part computer!” His use of real-world examples, hands-on techniques, and out-of-the-box approaches in class make learning “challenging yet fulfilling.” Another student described a class with Marcotte as a “wild, intellectual ride.” The learning environment created by Marcotte engages and excites students to master writing—and life. One student remarked, “I would not be where I am today without [him], the first teacher who told me that I had potential, talent, and intellect.”

Marcotte is very active within the college community. He has served on multiple committees, including the Diversity Committee and the International Club. In 2015, he served as co-coordinator for Student Success Day and helped to coordinate a full-day event to connect and build relationships among faculty, staff and students. Adam currently serves as

the Honors Program Coordinator and is working to rebuild the Honors Program and meet enrollment expectations; enrollments have begun to grow under his leadership and in fall 2015 most honors courses were filled to capacity. Finally, he has served on the college's Higher Learning Commission task force and is now a College in the Schools Collaborator.

## REVIEWER COMMENTS

**Content Expertise and Professional Growth** Marcotte has earned bachelor's and master's degrees in English literature in addition to his many other intellectual pursuits. He's also a writer himself, publishing his first book of poetry, *What We Want and Other Poems*, in 2000. In January 2015, he started taking graduate courses in English again to focus on composition, rhetoric, and language, adding to his content expertise and ensuring he has the tools he needs to best meet the needs of students.

**Teaching Strategies and Materials** Marcotte is noted for using technology effectively and has been part of delivering education to military students overseas. He has created his own textbooks for the class as well as "how-to" videos that are then made available at no cost to students. Reviewers were struck by the variety of creative strategies and materials that Marcotte uses to engage students and to push them to think critically.

**Standard for Assessment of Student Learning and Performance** Most of Marcotte's assignments are papers that are sometimes accompanied by a presentation and require teamwork. He provides immediate feedback and returns assignments to students within 72 hours. His rubrics and assessments were noted as well-developed and clear, so there is no mystery to how students will be assessed. Marcotte incorporates real-world tasks and allows "multiple" tries for students, focusing on student learning rather than penalizing failure at the start. He invests time throughout the semester for in-class discussions regarding student progress and learning that he can then use to gauge whether they are on target to meet learning goals. In addition, he makes time to meet with each student four times per semester.

**Service to Students, Profession, Institution, System** Marcotte contributes on many levels to the life of the college. He did a stellar job of leading a group of peers to revitalize the honors programs, which today has resulted in waiting lists. In addition, he serves on a number of important committees, including the Academic Affairs and Standards Council and the Diversity Committee. He's helped to make students feel welcomed and to make student success days successful. Marcotte even shares his musical talents with the campus on special occasions.

## OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS

A sampling of comments from students, colleagues, deans, and presidents. They recognized these faculty as outstanding in every regard: as teachers, advisors, colleagues, scholars and professionals.

### Mark Ahrens • Mathematics

*Normandale Community College*

*President Joyce Ester*

Ahrens is a master teacher with a reputation for consistently engaging and challenging students and for an impressive level of success. He emphasizes thinking over memorization and expertly uses real-world problems to help students confidently thrive in the world of mathematics.



### Heidi Anderson • ELL/English

*Minnesota State Community and Technical College*

*President Peggy Kennedy*

Anderson knew as a child that teaching was her calling, and students benefit from her boundless passion for the profession. She employs a holistic approach to best meet the needs of her diverse students and works outside the classroom to support the area's growing immigrant population.



### Shelli Arneson • Human Services

*Rochester Community and Technical College*

*Interim President Joyce Helens*

This tremendous teacher shapes and nurtures her students to pursue their dreams while at the same time helping others. Arneson models human services professional values by spending countless hours in the classroom, instructing, mentoring and tutoring, and she is a hands-on community volunteer.



### **Susan Brashaw • Psychology**

*Lake Superior College*

*President Patrick Johns*

Brashaw possesses superior abilities in connecting with students online as well as face-to-face. She is a highly valued teacher who plays an integral role in expanding her colleges' online peer review process, and she provides outstanding service as a faculty trainer, mentor and conference presenter.



### **Pamela Brunfelt • History**

*Vermilion Community College*

*President William Maki*

Possessing a passion for history and politics, Brunfelt skillfully uses experiential learning which allows students to connect the past with what could happen in the future. Generous and kind, Brunfelt has started two campus charitable funds to support student enrichment and success.



### **Annie Clement • Communication Studies**

*Rochester Community and Technical College*

*Interim President Joyce Helens*

Clement has a profound effect on her students' lives through teaching that reflects her student-focused, supportive instructional philosophy. Her impressive list of campus service projects is topped with the creation of two communication certificates aimed at strengthening student employment prospects.



### **Kristin Doneen • Philosophy and World Religions**

*Anoka-Ramsey Community College*

*President Kent Hanson*

Doneen's students use many words to describe their teacher: empathic, intelligent, authentic, passionate, creative and charitable. She continually strives to cultivate both curiosity and empowerment by setting clear educational goals and then tirelessly helping students achieve them.



**Bill Evans • Science**

*Minnesota State Community and Technical College  
President Peggy Kennedy*

This well-respected and admired educator enrolled in and graduated from the college’s nursing program to gain a better understanding of how his anatomy and physiology courses support the program’s career specific courses. It’s just one shining example of Evans’ dedication to his profession. Another is his second designation as an Outstanding Educator.



**Alexis Grinde • Biology**

*Pine Technical and Community College  
President Joseph Mulford*

Called a trailblazer when it comes to classroom innovations, Grinde embraces varied and effective teaching strategies that cater to students’ different learning styles. Her expertise in successfully engaging students makes her an invaluable resource to them and to her campus colleagues.



**Scott Guenther • English**

*Century College  
Interim President Patrick Opatz*

Guenther is regarded as an extraordinary educator who creates a friendly, inclusive and challenging learning environment where students excel and succeed. He deftly incorporates students’ life experience into classroom work and promotes service learning as a way to solidify learning concepts.



**Kelli Hallsten-Erickson • English**

*Lake Superior College  
President Patrick Johns*

Being creative is a hallmark of Hallsten-Erickson’s teaching, and it’s evident in her unique newsletter-style syllabi and portfolio pages. This thoughtful, highly energetic instructor is also praised for being instrumental in developing campus-based faculty development in the classroom and online.



### **Charles Haus • Welding**

*St. Cloud Technical and Community College  
Acting President Peg Shroyer*

It doesn't take long for students to recognize that Haus not only has extensive knowledge about welding, but also has a genuine interest in their well-being and success. This caring educator engages students in active learning, while modeling good citizenship and solid working habits that result in successful job placement.



### **Paul Johnson • Communication Art & Design**

*Alexandria Technical and Community College  
President Laura Urban*

Passionate is the best way to describe Johnson's service to his profession, college and community. Using grant resources and scholarships, this hardworking, dedicated instructor works diligently to ensure students from all backgrounds can graduate and go on to careers in art and design.



### **Rahul Kane • Biology**

*Century College  
Interim President Patrick Opatz*

Kane is a gifted educator who is guided by a deep appreciation of science. He pushes his students to use scientific reasoning and decision-making as a way to solve problems in their lives. In addition to being an expert in the craft of teaching, Kane is an active leader in his college community.



### **Benjamin Kiely • English**

*North Hennepin Community College  
President Barbara McDonald*

Kiely's authentic teaching philosophy places students' histories and experiences at the center of assignments and coursework. He provides remarkable opportunities for students to improve through targeted learning interventions, group and peer learning experiences and open communication.



**Ellen Lewin • English for Speakers of Other Languages**

*Minneapolis Community and Technical College  
Interim President Avelino Mills-Novoa*

Lewin has long been a tireless advocate for English language learners; she pays attention not only to access, but also to success. She makes enormous contributions to her college by teaching courses in two departments, being a superb faculty trainer and spending countless hours tutoring students.



**Jonathan Lofgren • Addiction Counseling**

*Minneapolis Community and Technical College  
Interim President Avelino Mills-Novoa*

Recognized as a terrific role model in his field, Lofgren offers students a warm, welcoming learning environment. This compassionate, committed teacher focuses on building long-term relationships with students and positively influences their engagement, persistence and success.



**Eric Mein • English**

*Normandale Community College  
President Joyce Ester*

Among Mein’s strengths is his keen ability to incorporate real-world experiences into his teaching to help students see the meaning behind the course. Committed to student success, this impressive educator engages with campus committees and presents at numerous events.



**Kendra Miller • Psychology**

*Anoka-Ramsey Community College  
President Kent Hanson*

Miller’s enthusiasm and love for her course content are said by many to be inspiring. This instructor’s student-centered pedagogy, along with her warm and enriching classroom, entice the interest and participation of students across every ability level, demographic and academic pathway.



### **Linda Paquette • Computer Careers/ Information Technology**

*Hennepin Technical College  
President Merrill Irving, Jr.*

Students leave Paquette's class with an "invisible toolkit" filled with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as the ability to adapt and a passion for lifelong learning. This energetic, fun professor strives to give her students a significant edge when they enter the job market.



### **Kristin Pueringer • Mathematics**

*Saint Paul College  
President Rassoul Dastmozd*

Pueringer is an innovative faculty leader held in high esteem by students and colleagues. She is admired for a wonderful ability to lead students toward accepting mathematics as relevant in their lives, and instrumental in their future careers and educational successes.



### **Jeremy Reisinger • Chemistry**

*St. Cloud Technical and Community College  
Acting President Peg Shroyer*

Recognizing the changing demographics at his college, Reisinger designed a chemistry course tailored for non-science majors featuring relevant topics, such as energy production. His teaching philosophy is continually evolving, while his affinity for his students, college and profession is steadfast.



### **Heidi Schara • Speech**

*Riverland Community College  
President Adenuga Atewologun*

Schara has been recognized twice as an Outstanding Educator. She is well-known on her campus as a nurturing, respectful, committed teacher who is not afraid to share her strengths and weaknesses as a communicator. She teaches by example and students feel safe, supported and confident when they enter her positive, open classroom.



**Keith Setley • Electrical Technology**

*Saint Paul College  
President Rassoul Dastmozd*

As a past graduate of Saint Paul College, Setley knows the importance of making the college experience as engaging as the acquisition of content knowledge. This excellent instructor has served on numerous campus committees and advised the student senate and award-winning SkillsUSA team.



**Michael Sieve • Mathematics**

*Ridgewater College  
President Douglas Allen*

A true champion for students, Sieve expresses a firm belief that all can achieve success in math regardless of past experiences. Students leave this stellar educator's classroom not only with a cache of new skills, but also with a confidence in their abilities that they can employ throughout their careers.



**Jeffrey Thorstad • Automation  
Robotics Engineering Technology**

*Hennepin Technical College  
President Merrill Irving, Jr.*

A strong proponent of technical education, Thorstad is an inspiration to peer faculty members. Empowered by creativity and motivated by a sincere interest in students, Thorstad ensures, through deep experience in the manufacturing industry, that students fully meet program outcomes and industry standards.



**Harold Torrence • Business  
and Management**

*Dakota County Technical College  
President Tim Wynes*

Recognized for his phenomenal expertise and integrity, Torrence is also a highly skilled educator. His enthusiasm for lifelong learning, forward-thinking pedagogy, commitment to professional development, and superior contributions to the college and surrounding communities are unsurpassed.



### **Kristyn VanderWaal • Biology**

*Anoka Technical College*

*President Kent Hanson*

Being a positive, persistent problem-solver who strives to connect with others is part of the creed that shapes VanderWaal as an educator. Her students say her passion for biology is not only obvious, but also contagious, and she's not satisfied until they've reached their full potential.



### **Ursula Walsh • Mathematics**

*Minneapolis Community and Technical College*

*Interim President Avelino Mills-Novoa*

A colleague calls Walsh one of those cherished teachers who has the ability to genuinely connect with students while effectively teaching them. Everything this brilliant professor does in the classroom is based on her confidence that each and every student has what it takes to succeed.



### **Ronald Ward • Geography**

*Normandale Community College*

*President Joyce Ester*

Ward uses his love of teaching, an honest approach, and real-world examples to encourage discussion and information-sharing in his classroom. A strong supporter of service learning, he incorporates it into his curriculum, allowing students to use what they learn in the classroom in service to the world around them.



### **Robert Zbikowski • Engineering/Physics**

*Hibbing Community College*

*President William Maki*

Zbikowski embodies everything that is right about the profession of teaching and being a "community" college faculty member; he's been recognized three times as an Outstanding Educator. This devoted educator makes over 100 presentations in elementary schools annually, team teaches high school courses and leads many club activities.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARDS  
EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR, 2007-2015

**2015**

- Victoria Hutson • Art  
Lake Superior College
- Elizabeth Longley • Chemistry  
Normandale Community College
- Shana Petermann • Biology  
Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- Lisa Smith • Chemistry  
North Hennepin Community College

**2014**

- Deanna Forsman • History  
North Hennepin Community College
- Cheryl Neudauer • Biology  
Minneapolis Community and Technical College
- Sandra Sellner-Wee • Radiography  
Riverland Community College
- Cheryl Tefer • Nursing  
Anoka-Ramsey Community College

**2013**

- Andrew Aspaas • Chemistry  
Anoka-Ramsey Community College
- Alan Erdahl • Biology  
Riverland Community College
- Darci Goeden • Nursing  
Central Lakes College
- Susan Thaemert • Dental Assisting  
Hennepin Technical College

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARDS

## 2012

Phyllis Ballata • English  
Century College

Paul Carney • English  
Minnesota State Community & Technical College

Rod Milbrandt • Physics  
Rochester Community & Technical College

Shawn Mueske • Biology  
Ridgewater College

## 2011

Catherine Egenberger • Art  
Rochester Community & Technical College

David I. Page • Emergency Medical Services  
Inver Hills Community College

Elizabeth Picciano • Reading and College and Career Studies  
Central Lakes College

Pamela Anne Tranby • Biology  
Riverland Community College

## 2010

Paula Croonquist • Biology  
Anoka-Ramsey Community College

Lori Halverson-Wente • Speech Communication  
Rochester Community & Technical College

Mark Hickman • Transportation  
Dakota County Technical College

Pamela Whitfield • English and Equine Science  
Rochester Community & Technical College

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES AWARDS

## 2009

- Chris Austin • Economics  
Normandale Community College
- Dorian Beaulieu • Art  
Lake Superior College
- Ernie Parker • Fluid Power Engineering Technology  
Hennepin Technical College
- Deborah Roiger • Biology  
St. Cloud Technical & Community College

## 2008

- Robin Fruth-Dugstad • Horticultural Technology  
Rochester Community & Technical College
- Suzette Overby • Human Services  
Riverland Community College
- Daniel Paulnock • Speech and Communication  
Saint Paul College
- Eugenia Paulus • Chemistry  
North Hennepin Community College

## 2007

- Donald E. Graves • Biology  
Rainy River Community College
- Michele M. Neaton • Speech and Communication  
Century College
- Julie A. Rodakowski • English/Communication Studies  
Rochester Community & Technical College

## THANK YOU

To celebrate these honorees requires the hard work and belief of many in a culture of honor and recognition. The following is a list of the people who helped to make this ceremony special.

- All of the students, faculty, and administrators who served on the campus selection committees
- The individuals who nominated candidates for the Board of Trustees Educator of the Year Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Professional Excellence in Service Award
- Joanne Sarkilahti and her students in the Floral Design program at Hennepin Technical College, Brooklyn Park, for providing the flowers
- Anoka-Ramsey Community College students Cole Oehlers, Randi Friedl, Kevin Gamble, Erik Saxton, Erin Bekkers, and music instructor Geoff Senn, for their musical performances
- Cathy Wurzer, whose exemplary grace and talent as an emcee are again demonstrated at this event
- Glen Stubbe, photographer
- Ashley Nelson and the staff at the InterContinental Saint Paul Riverfront
- Matt DeCarolis of PSAV
- Gary Hatteberg, who created the video presentation
- Todd Hawkinson, who created the service pins and medallions
- Karen LaPlant and Ray Anschel, who assisted with event details
- Board of Trustees staff; system office staff

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