

SIUE's Retzlaff honored as Distinguished Research Professor

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Bill Retzlaff, PhD, professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, has joined a prestigious group of tenured faculty members, earning the University's highest academic rank of Distinguished Research Professor.

The distinction is awarded in recognition of significant contributions to research and creative activities. Retzlaff is an active and committed teacher-scholar. He has made outstanding and sustained contributions to green infrastructure and sustainability in the areas of green roof and wall research, including storm water runoff retention and quality, thermal performance, plant survival, and maintenance techniques.

"Dr. Retzlaff's research has not only advanced our understanding of green infrastructure and sustainability, but also has influenced industry practices in the U.S. and Canada," said Jerry Weinberg, associate provost for research and dean of the SIUE Graduate School. "His significant findings have been recognized by fellow scholars and industry leaders alike. As one of SIUE's outstanding teacher-scholars, Dr. Retzlaff includes both undergraduate and graduate students into his research work, providing them an exceptional educational opportunity."

"I am humbled by this academic honor," Retzlaff said. "Working on sustainable practices and green infrastructure is exciting, because it is a rapidly emerging field that is focused on environmental improvement."

Retzlaff's work on green roofs began in 2004. Since then, his research has generated 10 externally funded projects, 114 oral/poster presentations, 11 peer-reviewed publications, 12 peer-reviewed conference proceedings papers and seven other publications – many of them including students. Retzlaff's students have also completed 24 master of science theses on living architecture topics.

He received the Sustainability Leadership Award from the SIUE Center for Sustainability and Spirituality in 2014. In 2015, the distinguished researcher earned the Green Roof and Wall Research Award of Excellence from CITIES ALIVE.

"The importance of Bill's research and his diligent advocacy for our network's research in the community of living architecture cannot be overstated," a colleague noted. "His work has influenced industry leaders to reconcile our expectations for performance in North America with their European techniques and materials. Bill's research is also a substantial presence in the development of policy and incentive programs in North America."

Retzlaff's dedication to the advancement of green wall and roof research shows his strong motivation to achieve excellence. Importantly, he also shows a distinct enthusiasm to continuously involve students in his research.

"One of the things that is most notable and striking about Dr. Retzlaff is his strong involvement of students in his research, his acknowledgement of their contributions, and his inclusion of students as co-authors and co-presenters of the work," another colleague explained. "The performance of his students speaks volumes for the quality of mentoring that Dr. Retzlaff provides, as well as the high level of mutual respect between him and his students. This is impressive and all too rare among researchers."

"Working with my students is an incredible experience, and I'm thrilled I can help them understand the scientific process and learn new ideas and technologies," Retzlaff said. "I can honestly say that my scholarly work would not be as rewarding if not for the contributions of my students."

"I would like to thank and recognize all of the students, faculty collaborators and external collaborators who have been a part of the "green" research team at SIUE," he added.

His impressive efforts also include a commitment to service, as he has given his time and expertise to 41 SIUE committees and 10 local and national professional service committees. Administrators, colleagues and students alike value Retzlaff's leadership, and his exceptional collaborative approach to research. He epitomizes the teacher-scholar philosophy.

An SIUE administrator emphasized: "Dr. Retzlaff reflects the values of scholarship that we celebrate, and he lives the principles of ethics, integrity and citizenship that characterize the rich tradition of Distinguished Research Professors."

Recipients of the Distinguished Research Professor honor are provided one semester of time devoted to research, along with a \$1,000 increase in their academic year base salary. They also receive a medallion to be worn with their academic regalia, and their name is placed on a plaque displayed in Rendleman Hall.

By preparing the next generation of leaders in a knowledge-based economy, [SIUE's Graduate School](#) fulfills the region's demand for highly trained professionals. Graduate school offerings include arts and sciences, business, education, engineering, nursing and interdisciplinary opportunities. SIUE professors provide students with a unique integration of theoretical education and hands-on research experiences. Students can obtain graduate certificates or pursue master's degrees, and be part of a supportive learning and rich intellectual environment that is tailored to the needs of adult learners.

The Graduate School raises the visibility of research at SIUE, which ranks highest among its Illinois Board of Higher Education peers in total research and development expenditures according to the National Science Foundation. Doctoral programs are available in the Schools of Education (Ed.D.) and Nursing (DNP). The School of Engineering and the Department of Historical Studies feature cooperative doctoral programs (Ph.D.).