



Weissinger named SIUE Teaching Excellence Award Winner

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Office of the Provost announced that Sandra Weissinger, PhD, is the recipient of the annual Teaching Excellence Award for tenure-track faculty. It is the most prestigious teaching award for an SIUE faculty member. Three additional faculty members were saluted for their teaching skills and accomplishments with Teaching Distinction Awards, and seven more received Teaching Recognition Awards.

Weissinger, PhD, is an assistant professor of sociology and graduate program director in the SIUE College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). She received a \$2,000 prize as part of the award.

“This award provides encouragement, that my observations of what it means to be a professional and a professor are accurate, and that my skills as a sociologist are sharp,” said Weissinger, who joined the SIUE faculty in 2012. “To the best of my ability, I provide students with the type of education I would want - knowing what I know now, as a person with three degrees.

“This means that I am straight forward. I illuminate facts. I tell students where to find facts, and I provide learners with solutions, as I see them. I give students the opportunity to consider alternative solutions, too.”

Weissinger will be recognized during SIUE’s May commencement ceremony and speak at the 2018 fall commencement ceremony. The Upstate New York native will be nominated for the Council of Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) for the National Professor of the Year Award.

Teaching Excellence Awards committee chair Kelly Gable, PharmD, an associate professor and coordinator of global partnerships in the SIUE School of Pharmacy, cited Weissinger as representing all of the qualities and characteristics of an exceptional

educator. The committee noted her ability to bring delicate topics on race, class, gender and sexual orientation into classroom discussion with sensitivity and professionalism.

Weissinger impressed the committee with her utilization of practical, real-world examples within her teaching style, while keeping students actively engaged as her enthusiasm and passion shine through to students. The committee called her an inspirational teacher that encourages students to dig deeply and think critically about current events. Her teaching style is expected to have a strong and long-lasting impact on student learning and professional growth.

“Dr. Weissinger’s outstanding scholarship connects perfectly with her excellence in the classroom,” said CAS Dean Greg Budzban, PhD. “Her ability to unite critically important ideas with real and significant events in our society provides a wonderful example of an ideal teacher-scholar, and provides our students with the exceptional educational experience they deserve.”

Weissinger’s teaching areas include African American communities, race and ethnic relations, urban sociology and qualitative research methods. Her research areas focus on African American communities and institutions, inequality and intragroup marginalization. She was the lead editor on two books “[Law Enforcement in the Age of Black Lives Matter](#)” and “[Violence Against Black Bodies](#).”

Weissinger earned bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2005, 2008 and 2010, respectively.

In addition, the \$1,500 Teaching Distinction Award went to Barbara Gillian, instructor in the Department of Educational Leadership within the School of Education Health and Human Behavior (SEHHB). Teaching Distinction Awards valued at \$500 were awarded to Kathryn Brady, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Applied Health, Speech Pathology and Audiology Program within the SEHHB, and Junvie Pailden, PhD, assistant professor and graduate program director in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics in CAS.

The committee noted Gillian’s ability to successfully bring her professional experience and skill into the classroom. They pointed to her long history within school system education as standing out and clearly enhancing her teaching style, as well as student learning. She impressed the committee with her ability to utilize a variety of teaching strategies to keep students engaged in course content. Her comfortable and enriched learning environment is highlighted by a perfect combination of practical experience and teaching that encourages thoughtful discussion.

The committee acknowledged Brady as a wonderful educator who actively engages students in a variety of ways through large group, small group and individual student teaching. She impressed the committee with her ability to connect previously taught material and new course content in a clear way that allows for improved and active student learning. Particularly remarkable was her ability gain a high level of quality student participation.

Pailden moved the committee with his ability to teach challenging topics, yet make the topics interesting and easy to understand. He utilizes multiple modes of classroom teaching, including active demonstrations. His teaching style is described as flexible, allowing for thoughtful and educational on-the-fly topic discussions. According to the committee, student evaluations of his teaching were phenomenal, and his passion for teaching is clearly evident.

Teaching Recognition Awards were bestowed upon Ari Belasen, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Economics and Finance within the School of Business (SOB); Katherine Robberson, instructor in the Department of Management and Marketing within the SOB; Jocelyn DeGroot, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Applied Communication Studies within CAS; Jianwei Huang, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Civil Engineering within the School of Engineering; Sophia Wilson, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Political Science within CAS; Kevin Rowland, DMD, associate professor in the School of Dental Medicine; and Michelle Ertel, DNAP, assistant director in the Nurse Anesthesia Program in the Department of Primary Care and Health Systems Nursing within the School of Nursing.

All Teaching Recognition awardees receive \$250.

[Southern Illinois University Edwardsville](#) provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River's rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of nearly 14,000.