



Bouvier Recognized as SIUE Paul Simon Outstanding Teacher-Scholar

by Megan Wieser
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EDWARDSVILLE – Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Dennis Bouvier, PhD, professor in the School of Engineering's Department of Computer Science, is the recipient of the 2022 [Paul Simon Outstanding Teacher-Scholar Award](#).



The highly competitive award is annually presented by the SIUE Graduate School to a faculty member who has a proven record of combining scholarship and teaching. The recognition demonstrates the belief that to be a good teacher, one must also be a good scholar. Award recipients have made significant contributions to original research or creative activities, and have successfully integrated those contributions into their teaching practices.

“I am surprised and pleased,” shared Bouvier. “Surprised because I know there are many other wonderful teacher-scholars at SIUE, and pleased that others see the value in the work I have been doing.”

Bouvier’s research interest is in the area of computing education, specifically improving the educational experience for novice programmers. Since many students are first exposed to computer science and programming in college, Bouvier is committed to solidifying these students’ foundational knowledge and experience through high-quality and engaging introductory computer programming courses.

“I have been involved in efforts to better understand the learning experience from students’ point of view, experimenting with novel learning techniques and authoring new educational materials for beginning programmers,” Bouvier said.

“I have been fortunate to involve students in my research on teaching and conducting research with the purpose of improving teaching, all to achieve the teacher-scholar model,” he added. “As a result, the students in my classroom benefit from the work students in my laboratory have done, and some of the students in my laboratory have gone on to become collegiate faculty members doing more educational research.”

Bouvier’s outstanding scholarship and research in computer education to improve students’ learning experiences have produced several teaching materials for the field. Among his works is “Commonsense Computing” with seven publications including a best conference paper supported by the National Science Foundation. He has also published research on “Peer Instruction,” student engagement and problem contextualization, including a highly-cited best conference paper. Other research efforts are ongoing projects in the areas of student feedback systems, student motivation and imposter phenomena.

Igor Crk, PhD, associate professor and chair in the Department of Computer Science, wrote in support of Bouvier, noting his appreciation for the interdependence of teaching and scholarship present in Bouvier’s research thrusts, revolving around learner beliefs, motivation, and contextualization of information.

“Dr. Dennis Bouvier shows a record of integrating research and teaching, not only through instructional methods that are informed by research, but also research that is informed by instructional methods,” said Crk. “The fruitful bidirectional relationship of Dr. Bouvier’s scholarship and teaching is a rarity worthy of recognition and could serve to motivate other faculty to reflect on and systematically improve the pedagogical methods used in their classrooms.”

By all standards, Bouvier epitomizes the teacher-scholar model, as one who finds joy in helping others rise by playing significant roles in their career paths.

John Matta, PhD, a former student of Bouvier, is an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science. He describes Bouvier as a “teacher-scholar in the truest sense,” while noting Bouvier’s impact on his career choice.

“Dr. Bouvier gave me my first opportunity to teach a class, my first opportunity to lead a top-tier conference working group, and the opportunity to enroll in a PhD program in computer science,” said Matta. “He has been a great support and resource for me at every step in both my education and career, and his influence continues to this day.”

“Dennis Bouvier is my mentor, teacher, collaborator, and now also my friend,” said former student Ellie Lovellette, PhD, an associate professor in the Department of Computer Science at the College of Charleston in South Carolina. “He recognized and nurtured my skills, helped me develop as an educator and a researcher, and led me toward a career path in academia. His influence inspired me to be a teacher-scholar.”

Timothy Kluthe, Bouvier’s former student and now a graduate student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said, “He always goes above and beyond to help his students further their goals and he provides thoughtful advice. He taught many lessons that I use in my career and provided me with opportunities that shaped my life.”

“In addition to the real-world technical exposure, he coached us through the process of obtaining school and sponsorship funding, working with alumni to identify keynote speakers, and building partnerships with other universities to encourage attendance,” wrote former student Joe Cheatham, now a Facebook software engineer. “This was important not only to establish a stronger computer science culture at SIUE, but it also helped student organizers better understand complex organizations with many external stakeholders. I am regularly reminded of his guidance when I am navigating work-related dependencies across different organizations.”

“Bouvier was by far the best teacher I have had the pleasure to learn from both in and out of school,” said Jacob Baird, SIUE computer science alumnus. “He would go above and beyond, creating opportunities for students. Bouvier not only taught us about tech,

but also showed us the hunger for learning that is required to stay relevant in this ever-changing field.”

In his ongoing effort to bring together research and teaching, Bouvier is currently working on a game-changing project for novice programmers. He hopes the project will make a difference in computing education worldwide.

The [School of Engineering](#) offers one of the most comprehensive and affordable engineering programs in the St. Louis region with eight undergraduate degrees, five master’s degrees and two cooperative doctoral programs, all housed in a state-of-the-art facility. Students learn from expert faculty, perform cutting-edge research and participate in intercollegiate design competitions. Companies in the metropolitan St. Louis area provide students challenging internships and co-op opportunities, which often turn into permanent employment. All undergraduate programs are accredited by