

Fall 2011

Academic Affairs Report, Fall 2011

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Academic Affairs

Report

FALL 2011

A LETTER FROM PROVOST GLORIA GIBSON

Even in Difficult Times – Aspire!



My two years at UNI have served as a personal and professional journey filled with wonderful, uplifting experiences juxtaposed with others frayed with complexity and difficulty. I'm sure you too acknowledge there exists highs and lows in university life as well as our everyday lives. Through it all, however,

we must continue to aspire to provide high quality student learning, outstanding scholarship and engaged public and community service.

Without a doubt, May's Commencement served as a pinnacle experience. The UNIDome was spectacular in its grandeur with seating on the floor for faculty, graduates and VIPs, 17,000 family members and friends in the stands, and the dais occupied by Board of Regents and university officials, guests, our student speaker and Michelle Obama, First Lady of the United States. It was a glorious day, one that our graduates will always remember. For me, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience to meet Michelle Obama, even if for only a few minutes. UNI should be very proud of this extraordinary accomplishment, and I want to once again thank everyone who made that day a reality!

After graduation, the campus remained abuzz with activity building on the momentum from the spring. Faculty and students ventured on a record number of study abroad programs. Articles, books, lab and creative works that desperately needed attention quickly were resumed. Pre-tenure faculty who received summer fellowships continued their work for tenure/promotion dossiers. Children of all ages began to fill the classrooms, practice rooms, labs and stages on campus. Faculty challenged young students to aspire to be videographers, scientists, teachers and more. Still other faculty worked on grant applications, the Cornerstone course and our sustainability initiative. Many faculty/staff also carved out time to reconnect with family and friends. Although I didn't complete most of my "to do" list, I was able to catch up on a few things, read "Zeitoun" and also spend time with family and friends.

As summer transitioned into fall, students returned and UNI faculty/staff greeted them with enthusiasm. No matter the challenges, we continue to provide all students an outstanding, comprehensive undergraduate and graduate experience. Dedicated faculty and staff offer excellent



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opportunities for academic growth and exploration. Our students' achievements continue to showcase our work as they pass licensing examinations in record numbers, are accepted to graduate and professional schools, and begin employment in impressive career positions. Faculty publish in top-tier journals, perform on international stages, and receive grants and contracts from leading agencies. Accomplishments are further evidenced by a return to high rankings in "U.S. News and World Report," the "Washington Monthly," and Forbes List of the Nation's Best Colleges.

Our work continues this fall as we begin implementing our Strategic Plan, undertaking renewed internationalization initiatives, piloting the Cornerstone Course, working on revisions to the Liberal Arts Core, instituting a new campus-wide Council on Teacher Education, providing leadership for the governor's state-wide STEM initiative, intensifying our retention efforts, advancing technology adoption across campus, searching for a Dean of the Library, working on assessment plans, strengthening our commitment to diversity and much, much more. Our Strategic Plan, "Leadership and Innovation for the Future: Transforming Opportunities into Reality," serves as our foundation and challenges us to aspire to an even higher level of excellence.

While we acknowledge our mission and vision for the future, we are also cognizant of the economic environment that surrounds our nation, state and university. Articles in the "Chronicle of Higher Education" routinely capture the financial challenges of universities across the country. UNI is not immune from these economic problems. Academic Affairs faces a deficit of more than two million dollars. To deal with our further budget reductions in the short-term we are using one-time bridge dollars, suspending some searches, and funding some faculty/staff who are on phased retirement with one time "bridge" money. However, these solutions are not strategic and soon we will begin to systematically review academic programs to assure strategic allocation of resources. Through this process, we will grow stronger, more focused.

UNI's vision of being "nationally known for innovative education preparing students for success in a rapidly changing, globally competitive and culturally diverse world," will continue unabated. By emphasizing our academic strengths and focusing on continuous improvement and innovation, we will weather this rough economic tide and continue to contribute to the intellectual, creative and economic viability of our state and nation. I sincerely thank each of you for the work you do each day. It is because of your leadership, dedication and commitment that we can aspire for greater success even in difficult times.



Gloria J. Gibson

Executive Vice President and Provost



Provost Gibson talks with a First-Year Cornerstone student at the Cornerstone picnic in August.

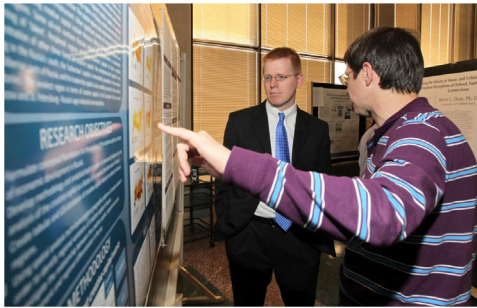
Pre-Tenure Fellowship Symposium

Faculty share their research and creative activity

Provost Gibson was pleased to award thirty-one summer research fellowships to pre-tenure faculty members this summer. Funding was provided by the president and provost offices. On October 3, recipients shared their research with each other and members of the UNI community at the Pre-Tenure Symposium. As Provost Gibson remarked, “This is what UNI is about. We are about students, but we are also about research. We need to keep promoting the fact that:

“We do research at UNI!””

▶ Andrey Petrov explains his research on “Creative Russia” to Steven Briggs, a fellowship recipient who researched “Victim Ethnicity and the Clearance of Violent Crime Incidents.”



◀ Jeremy Schraffenberger, a pre-tenure fellowship recipient from the Department of Languages and Literatures, learns about Tina Su’s transcriptions for the french horn.



▲ Ken Hall discusses his project “Coming Undone” with Richard Featherstone.

▶ Andrew Stollenwerk explains his research on “Hydrogen Absorption in Manganese Thin Films” to Theron Hitchman. In the background, Elizabeth Hughes shares her study of classroom discourse in mathematics with Bill Harwood.



▲ Julie Kang explains her project on leaf development to Heather Olsen, a pre-tenure fellowship recipient from the School of HPELS.



Focusing on Assessment and First-Year Students

A visit with Peggy Maki

By April Chatham-Carpenter

When you hear the words, “outcomes assessment,” what do you think? Do you see it as a meaningless process forced upon you by some administrator wanting another report for an outside agency? “Not so,” says Dr. Peggy Maki, author of “Assessing for Learning: Building a Sustainable Commitment across the Institution” and a nationally recognized higher education expert on assessment currently serving as sole consultant to the Massachusetts Board of Governors for Higher Education.

When Peggy Maki came to UNI in August, as part of a faculty development workshop for First-Year Cornerstone instructors, she was given the task of helping these faculty members develop an assessment plan for the course. During the two days she spent at UNI, she did exactly that and much more.

Provost Gloria Gibson wanted to make sure the entire university community had the opportunity to learn from Maki’s expertise, so Maki conducted two open sessions for faculty and staff. In the first session, entitled “Student Outcomes Assessment: What It Is and How You Do It” Maki presented a problem-based framework for planning the assessment process backwards, framing assessment as an applied research project with a goal of discovering and implementing course or program improvement. As part of the essential tools for completing such projects, Maki recommended the Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) and was delighted to learn that UNI is currently testing

the SALG as a replacement instrument for its existing student course assessment tool. Maki noted that ultimately research based assessment builds knowledge about educational practices for the whole academic community.

In the second open session, “Assessing the First Year: Best Practices,” Maki covered topics specific to assessing a first-year course, such as creating and implementing baseline, formative and summative assessment measures, and providing specific examples of techniques for each of these measures. In addition, she offered multiple strategies which could be used to assess the process of learning, such as Small Group Instructional Diagnosis, think-alouds, journals, mind-mapping and electronic portfolios. She also led discussion on the role of grading of student assignments in the assessment process, noting that not all assignments need to be graded in order to be used for assessment purposes.

Dr. Maki offered many relevant practices for the “dreaded outcomes assessment” process, demonstrating that it is not to be feared. Through her understanding of both assessment techniques and faculty concerns about assessment, Maki paved the way for UNI faculty to find academic practices that will enhance what they already do.

Thank you, Peggy Maki, for leading us through a meaningful assessment process, which can serve as a model for all courses and programs to follow.

– April Chatham-Carpenter is a Professor of Communication Studies and a member of the Cornerstone faculty.

Fall Faculty Workshop

Strategies for teaching critical thinking

By Susan Hill

“When critical thinking happens in your class, what does it look like, feel like, sound like?” This was one of the provocative questions that Dr. Stephen Brookfield asked during his session at the August 18, 2011 Fall Faculty Workshop. Brookfield, a professor of education at University of St. Thomas, focused his afternoon workshop on strategies faculty can use to teach critical thinking skills to students.

Brookfield pointed out that different disciplines have distinct ways of understanding what it means to think critically: the analytical tradition, for instance, focuses on analyzing arguments to determine consistent and logical thinking. In the natural sciences, critical thinking engages hypotheses, processes of experimentation, and the principle of falsifiability, while from the perspective of critical theory, critical thinking skills uncover structures of power and ideological manipulation. Thus, although critical thinking may have distinct characteristics in the context of different academic disciplines, what is common to all good critical thinkers is that they can identify and assess the validity of assumptions that inform thought and action, they can view ideas and actions from multiple perspectives and they can take informed action.

In talking about what critical thinking looks like in a classroom, Brookfield pointed out that such classrooms may not be very noisy: they may be quiet and thoughtful because thinking requires time and reflection. In addition, he reminded us that a good way to teach these skills is to model for students what critical thinking looks like. He suggested that one memorable way to do this is to identify two or three different ways of thinking about a particular topic and assign different parts of the room to those ways of thinking. Moving from place to place in the room as you – or students – discuss various perspectives creates visual interest that encourages students to see distinct viewpoints on the topic.

Brookfield also led us through exercises that we can use in our classes to foster critical thinking with our students: the Critical Incident Questionnaire, Circle of Voices and Circular Response. Brief directions for all of these exercises can be found on **Dr. Brookfield’s PowerPoint presentation**, which is available on the provost’s website. Brookfield also encouraged UNI faculty members to “burglarize” the resources on his personal website, www.stephenbrookfield.com.

– Susan Hill is an Administrative Fellow and an Associate Professor of Philosophy and World Religions.

Reaching for HIGHER
GROUND
COMMUNITY AFTER 9/11

For more information visit:

[www.uni.edu/
higherground/events](http://www.uni.edu/higherground/events)

SPRING EVENTS

9/11 FILM SERIES: “Free Speech in Times of National Crises” (January 23, 7:00 pm, CME)

9/11 FILM SERIES: “Ghosts of Abu Ghraib” (February 20, 7:00 pm, CME)

ANDREW BACEVICH – “The US Military in the Post-9/11 World” (February 29, 7:30 pm, Sabin 002)

“Torture and the Possibility of Community” (March 1, 5:00 pm, Location TBD)

REZA ASLAN – “The Future of the New Middle East” (March 1, 7:00 pm, GBPAC)

Sustainability and Curriculum Development

The UNI Faculty Leadership in Sustainability Education Program

By William Stigliani

With generous support from the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, the UNI Faculty Leadership in Sustainability Education Program was launched this spring. Twenty-six UNI faculty members are participating in this year-long program with the goal of infusing sustainability themes into courses they teach. The participants represent 15 departments and all four Colleges, blending a broad-based skill set of disciplinary expertise ranging from the social sciences and humanities to the life and physical sciences. This breadth of disciplines is essential to the program, for sustainability is inherently multidisciplinary, spanning the three domains of the environment, the economy and society.

The leadership team gathered for the first time at the Center for Energy and Environmental Education (CEEE) for a two-day workshop on June 9-10, 2011. Invited speakers presented on topics that cut across disciplines including environmental justice, systems thinking, energy for sustainable agriculture and the application of design to sustainability. A multidisciplinary break-out session followed each presentation. The dialogue broadened each group member's understanding of the presentation topic as they learned how it connected to other disciplines represented in the group. After the first day, participants were asked to think about the principles of sustainability and how they intersected with big ideas in their disciplines. This led to a stimulating whole-group discussion as group members shared ideas about their disciplinary intersections with sustainability.

Building on what had been learned at the workshop, each participant's summer assignment was to integrate an aspect of sustainability into a course



A break out session with Jeremy Schraffenberger, Marybeth Stalp, Adele Santana, Katherine van Wormer and Nilmani Pramanik.

and prepare a new syllabus reflecting this change. The revised syllabi were submitted August 19 when the group reconvened at CEEE for a half-day meeting combining a discussion with a guided tour of PFGBest, a large office space incorporating many features of sustainable design.

In this academic year faculty members are testing their new curriculum in the classroom and will meet with Provost Gibson on March 30, 2012. At that time each will reflect on his or her teaching experiment, describing successes, lessons learned and assessment data on students' understanding of sustainability.

A SAMPLE OF SUSTAINABILITY COURSES

The following courses will include a sustainability component developed by the professor as part of the Faculty Leadership in Sustainability Program.

Intervention and Prevention through the Developmental Lifespan
(Jan Bartlett)

BioMedical Ethics
(Francis Degnin)

Introduction to Reading Playscripts
(Jay Edelnant)

Graphic Design: Motion Graphics
(Soo Hostetler)

Introduction to Electronics
(Tim Kidd)

Beginning Fiction Writing
(Jim O'Loughlin)

Leadership Skills and Styles
(Gerri Perreault)

Teaching Elementary School Science
(Audrey Rule)

Business Policy and Strategy
(Adele Santana)

Introduction to Sociology
(Marybeth Stalp)

Office of Academic Advising

Supporting academic advisors

By Jean Neibauer

In May 2011 the Undergraduate Advising Council to the Provost administered an advisor survey. Results demonstrated a campus desire for additional advisor support and development and more campus-wide communication about advising matters. Associate Provost for Academic Affairs Michael Licari recently charged the Office of Academic Advising with developing a multi-modal program for addressing these expressed needs. Since then, the Office of Academic Advising has begun regularly emailing its advisor newsletter, “The Advising Express,” to all undergraduate advisors. The newsletter provides a regular reference and resource on advising topics common to all campus advisors. The advising information from the newsletter can be adapted to individual departmental advising programs.

Additionally, the Office of Academic Advising is working with the council’s Advisor Development subcommittee to draft an ongoing plan for advisor support and education using the Vision/Mission/Goals and Objectives outlined by the **2007 Campus Advising Mission Taskforce**.

These efforts build on previous initiatives to provide better support for advisors. Over the past four years the provost’s office and the Undergraduate Advising Council have collaborated with faculty and staff advisors to lay a foundation for quality advising at UNI through the following initiatives:

- Participation in a **National Academic Advising Association Consultation on Campus Advising Services** (2007)
- Development of **advising goals and outcomes by the Advising Mission and Vision Task Force** (2007)
- Establishment of the **Undergraduate Advising Council to the Provost** (2008)
- Administration of the **Advising Council Advisor Survey** (2008)
- Creation of the **Campus Advising Network** (2009)
- Production of an **Online Campus Advisor Handbook** (2009)
- Development of the **Undergraduate Advising Council Website** (2010) and the **Academic Advising Web Page for Faculty and Staff Advisors**.

UNI’s Undergraduate Advising Council, advising committees, the Advising Network, and departmental advising teams, have demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement. As we implement the UNI Strategic Plan, advisors are at the forefront of helping students “transform opportunities into reality.”

– Jean Neibauer is Director of Academic Advising.

Cornerstone's Zeitoun Project

Literature made real for first-year students

By Deirdre Heistad



UNI students Mar Alsuwailem (left), Maiytham Alsultan (lower right) and Jorie Klostermann (upper right) perform with Sam Lilja (middle).

By the end of New Student Summer Orientation, 250 students who had enrolled in one of ten sections of the First-Year Cornerstone pilot course received a copy of the course's common read, "Zeitoun" by Dave Eggers. "Zeitoun" is based on the experience of a Muslim-American family after Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. Zeitoun is a Syrian-American and his wife Kathy is an American who has converted to Islam. During the devastating hurricane and flood, Zeitoun stays behind and is eventually arrested on suspicion of terrorism. The book raises questions about identity, religion and justice and handles issues about stereotyping of Muslims in a sensitive and thoughtful way.

Cornerstone students were not the only ones reading "Zeitoun." During the summer, ten university students under the direction of Professor Richard Glockner were creating an original theatrical adaptation of the book as part of the theatre department's Performance and Dialogue Series. The series utilizes UNI and community resources to provide a theatrical experience for groups of incoming UNI students. The group adopted the Bertha Martin

Theatre and began creating the adaptation by listing all the "moments" in the story that seemed important in communicating Zeitoun's experience. They then improvised scenes based on those story points, bringing the characters in the book to life.

During the second week of classes, the two groups of students came together as the participants of the Zeitoun Project performed their interactive adaptation of the book, "Zeitoun: A Syrian's Journey in Post-Katrina New Orleans", for several Cornerstone classes at a time.

The 28-minute performance explored the journey of the main character, the experience of his family and the breakdown of the legal system that occurred in New Orleans after Katrina. The storm warnings and news broadcasts heard and seen by the residents of New Orleans and the rest of the country were woven into the performances. With an extremely talented and diverse cast, the book came alive through the performance.

The performance provided a wealth of possibilities for follow-up discussions. While some classes discussed the role of the media in the chaotic events in post-Katrina New Orleans and whether the country learned anything from the experience, others focused on whether Zeitoun's experience was an isolated event and how we might try to prevent fear and anger from motivating our behaviors.

The Cornerstone students will continue their exploration of the book through some of the course's common assignments. For example, in one writing assignment the students were asked to analyze the ways people in the book used or failed to use skills and knowledge we identify with a liberal arts education.

The collaboration with UNI's theater department has been a promising catalyst for ideas, discussion and critical thinking for Cornerstone students,

The Zeitoun Project – Continued from p.8

providing a powerful launching pad for Cornerstone students and faculty as they continue discussions on diversity, community and civil discourse throughout the school year.

Planning for next year’s Reaching for Higher Ground theme is currently underway. Adoption of a Common Read related to the theme and a performance by the Department of Theatre will continue to link these three aspects of UNI’s programs with the hope of engaging more of the campus community in these thought-provoking educational experiences.



Cornerstone students listen to faculty at the Cornerstone picnic on August 23.

– Deirdre Heistad is Director of the Liberal Arts Core and a member of the Cornerstone faculty.

Student Assessment Pilot

The pilot of a new student assessment instrument continues this fall, and faculty members are encouraged to participate. The Student Assessment of Learning Gains (SALG) is an online assessment tool that focuses on what the students *gained* from specific aspects of the course rather than a general evaluation of the instructor. Robert Dise, associate professor of history, used the assessment this summer and found that, “I learned more from this one SALG assessment than I’ve learned from all of the student course evaluations I’ve undergone in the last dozen years.”

Faculty are encouraged to pilot the tool this semester either in addition to the standard assessment or as their sole assessment; they should discuss their participation with their department heads before making a final decision. Campus-wide participation is critical to determine whether the SALG will be an effective and informative tool for instructors, department heads and deans.

Piloting the SALG involves the following steps: 1) talk with your department head about your participation; 2) inform the **provost’s office** you will be using the SALG; 3) visit the **SALG website** and create an account; 4) create your assessment; 5) email the assessment link to your students; 6) share the results with your department head; 7) **fill out a feedback form** and send it to the provost’s office. The SALG allows users to select questions from templates as well as write questions based on their course objectives. Departments and colleges can also create a standard set of questions to be used in all classes. The Academic Affairs Council is also considering a set of campus-wide questions.

For more information, see the **directions** and other SALG documents posted on the **provost’s webpage** or attend one of the **SALG workshops** offered with Robert Dise on November 14 at 2:00 pm, November 15 at 12:00 pm, or November 30 at 4:00 pm. All workshops will be held in the ITTC 134. For more information contact alisa.weeks@uni.edu.

The Provost's Diversity Initiative

Listening to the stories of others changes hearts, attitudes, and behavior

By Victoria DeFrancisco

This is the first in a series of personal narratives from the campus community, sponsored by the Provost's Diversity Initiative to "Promote Inclusive Academic Excellence."



Susan Hill and Reygan Freaney are the newest members of the Campus Coalition Builders team.

Reygan Freaney has recently become a certified NCBI trainer and is one of the newest members of UNI's Campus Coalition Builders (CCB). She is an instructor in chemistry at UNI and is currently finishing her dissertation at the University of Iowa. Previously, she attended Roosevelt Elementary and Waterloo East High School and earned her B.S. and M.S. degrees at UNI.

Here is Reygan Freaney's story: *My life changed in high school when I became a member of the Classic Upward Bound program. I am who I am because of Upward Bound. I was raised by a single mom; she didn't know the first thing about college. Upward Bound gave me insight of life outside of my low-income socio-economic world. We visited campuses, lived in dorms; the experience was profound. It gave me the chance to look at things through a different lens. All through high school Inez Murtha and Mickey [Wilfred] Johnson [UNI administrators]*

saw something in me I didn't know I had. It is because of their encouragement that I am where I am.

My first chemistry professor at UNI, Russ Wiley (now retired), also helped me determine what direction I wanted to pursue. He had this abundant amount of energy and he was very charismatic about chemistry. He told me I was one of the best students he'd had in a long time. To hear that statement as a freshman was life altering. I decided to major in chemistry. He would sit me down and ask what I was going to do after college. "Do you know how many African American women graduate in the US each year with a Ph.D. in chemistry? A handful. You have the talent to be one."

Reygan Freaney began her Ph.D. program at Iowa in 2005. Reflecting back, she said, "I knew this time it would be different with a research one institution. But the tools and training I received from UNI helped me to succeed." In addition to her dissertation work, she commutes to UNI to teach General Chemistry and co-teach Nano-science and Nano-technology with Cliff Chancey in physics.

When asked about her advice to other first generation students and students of color, she said: *Get to know your professors. They are a valuable asset. Also, find people you can have a sense of identity with. It is easier to feel you belong if you have a connection – clubs, friends, etc. Get to know the other students in your major. These are the people you will be taking classes with for a long time. Have someone you can turn to when you have a question or things get tough. Don't work in isolation. Try to extend yourself to connect with others.*

The Provost's Diversity Initiative – Continued from p.10

When asked what UNI staff can do to assist first generation students and students of color, she said: *Sometimes the UNI culture is not inclusive. I felt isolated because I was the only person of color in many of my classes. Often times the other students would have in mind a person they wanted to have as a lab partner. It would be a person they considered a friend or had known in some capacity. So I felt like an outsider, not an integral member.*

Just providing the diversity workshop opportunities for people to think about how someone else may feel who is not a member of the predominant group is important. I see the Campus Coalition Builders as an instrument of change. This is not just a top-down or bottom-up initiative. It is about building a more welcoming community.

– Victoria DeFrancisco is a Diversity Fellow and a Professor of Communication Studies.

Diversity Fellow Update

By Laura Kaplan

Campus Coalition Builders (CCB), UNI's leadership team of trained facilitators, continue to provide National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) diversity workshops to the UNI community. Since last spring, the CCB has delivered the 3-hour introductory workshop "Welcoming Diversity: Building an Inclusive Campus" to several groups including faculty and staff, students working with Summer Orientation and Cornerstone faculty.

A full-day workshop "Welcoming Diversity: Building Awareness and Skills" is scheduled for November, and there will be additional full-day and 3-hour workshops during spring semester. With Dean Watson and the College of Education, CCB will be offering workshop sessions to COE faculty, staff and teacher education students. The workshop for teacher education students will be offered in conjunction with the UNI Museum's spring 2012 exhibit "RACE: Are we so different?"



Members of the Campus Coalition Builders leadership team.

CCB welcomed two new members this fall. Susan Hill, associate professor of philosophy and world religions, and Reygan Freeney, instructor in chemistry and biochemistry, completed NCBI training this summer.

In addition, Gloria Sumpter, a Women's & Gender Studies M.A. student, is working with the diversity fellows Laura Kaplan and Victoria DeFrancisco to develop strategies to promote a more positive climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer students. Sumpter received the first ever Agathon Fellowship funded by alumna Dr. Edra C. Bogle and administered by the Women's and Gender Studies program.

– Laura Kaplan is a Diversity Fellow and an Associate Professor of Social Work.

Congratulations Faculty!

Award winners honored at the Faculty Recognition Reception on September 7.



◀ Award winners Lawrence Escalada (Nielsen award), Shoshanna Coon (MidWestOne), Marybeth Stalp (LAC) and Kristen Mack (Class of 1943) with Provost Gibson and President Allen.

▶ New faculty were also honored at the reception and introduced themselves during the program. Pictured are some of the new faculty hired this year.



▶ Provost Gloria Gibson and President Ben Allen with Regents Award winners.
L to R: Sam Lankford, Michael Roth, Bill Downs, John Johnson, April Chatham-Carpenter and Tim Lindquist.

Academic Affairs was pleased to honor the winners of the Regents Award for Faculty Excellence, the Class of 1943 Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, the Ross Nielsen Professional Service Award, the Excellence in Liberal Arts Teaching Award and the MidWestOne UNIque Academic Advising Award. Congratulations to these outstanding faculty members!