



Communication and Marketing Department  
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso  
Kommunikasie en Bemarkingsdepartement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa  
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

[www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)

**30 November 2015**

## **UCT honours teaching that goes the extra mile**

The University of Cape Town remains committed to recognising and rewarding those academics who go the extra mile when teaching their students. The Distinguished Teacher Awards is the highest accolade awarded throughout the university and a maximum of four recipients may be recognised each year. This year four UCT academics, from various fields, were acknowledged.

In addition, two UCT academics have been selected to receive the National Excellence in Teaching Award for 2015. This is a project of the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) in collaboration with the Council of Higher Education (CHE). Five National Teaching Excellence Awards and Six National Teaching Excellence Commendations have been allocated for 2015.

Please find below summaries of the work of each award recipient as they appeared in a congratulatory campus communication by UCT Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Sandra Klopper.

### **UCT DISTINGUISHED TEACHER AWARDS 2015**

#### **Dr Joanne Hardman - School of Education**

Dr Hardman is a teaching and learning theorist who describes her teaching as inextricably linked to her educational research. She is both an outstanding teacher and an influential and inspiring scholar. Dr Hardman, who teaches in a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, relies heavily on mediation to assist students to achieve their potential. The efficacy of her transformative approach to pedagogy is evident in the testimony of her students, who draw attention to her commitment to assisting them to develop their full potential by engaging them in face-to-face and online environments. She goes far beyond the call of duty in mentoring them and, in doing so, has managed to help some to progress from failing to first-class passes. Her keen interest in the development of her students has in some cases also encouraged them to pursue careers as academics.

Dr Hardman's letters of recommendation highlight her commitment to innovation, her humanism, her capacity to foster independence, and her genuine respect for and individual attention to students. As one referee noted, "she guides her students towards finding the answers, rather than providing these upfront. I believe being able to teach in this way is a rare and distinctive talent."

## **Associate Professor Jacqui Kew - College of Accounting**

Associate Professor Kew is driven by a passion to promote access to financial literacy, particularly by students from disadvantaged backgrounds. She is committed to laying a strong foundation for student learning with the aim of providing long-term benefits for students. She is very sensitive to the diversity of her large, heterogeneous classes. She has responded to the challenge of working with a diverse student body by identifying the individual learning needs of students and by designing and implementing learning tools to meet these needs. The committee commended her for her commitment to transformation.

Associate Professor Kew's teaching innovation includes developing an effective and comprehensive tutorial system that is considered a cornerstone of accounting undergraduate success. In addition to her development of accounting tutorials, her contribution to the conceptual understanding of accountancy through her introductory undergraduate textbook is described as uniquely valuable to accounting education in South Africa. Associate Professor Kew is also the project director and primary driver of the [www.learnaccounting.uct.ac.za](http://www.learnaccounting.uct.ac.za) project. This project has developed a series of concept-based videos, which have been translated into isiXhosa and isiZulu.

## **Dr Azila Reisenberger - School of Languages and Literature**

The sentiment articulated by a student of Dr Reisenberger, who states that "she makes Hebrew more than a language – it is an experience", sums up her teaching philosophy. She strives to ensure that Hebrew becomes a life-long passion for her students. She has been successful in transforming her teaching of the language into a vibrant experience through the vitality of her approach. Her "zest for life" and enthusiasm for her subject permeates into the classroom and it is in her communication with heterogeneous groups of students that she excels, "providing space for creativity and self-reflexivity" as one of her students attests. Her ability to accommodate diverse learning backgrounds takes into consideration the individual strengths of learners.

As Dr Reisenberger's practice of converting learning into individual growth demonstrates, her commitment extends beyond the classroom. Her mentorship of students, encouraging them to become academics, and her humanism are frequently evidenced in the testimonies of her students, who celebrate her ability to pass on her love for her subject to them. There is a clear synergy between her impeccable student evaluations, which frequently cite her enthusiasm and knack for stimulating student learning, and her teaching philosophy.

## **Dr Adam West - Biological Sciences**

Dr West strives "to instil in every one of my students, regardless of level, an excitement in scientific knowledge, a curiosity to learn more, a sense of empowerment through mastering difficult skills, and the desire to use their education to make our world a better place". He has a unique teaching philosophy, using five principles to guide his teaching with the aim of making a lasting difference in how students think, both about themselves and the world around them.

Dr West is renowned for his creativity, and for catering to different learning styles. His Fame Lab and smart phone app are frequently mentioned in his recommendations, and attest to his commitment to innovation and full engagement with the needs of his students. He is described as a passionate and engaging teacher who has the ability to hold his students' attention. Referring to his course evaluations, his colleagues note that he repeatedly stands out above his peers.

In addition to his undergraduate teaching success, his supervision record includes highly successful postgraduate students. Not only does he attract excellent students but he helps to develop them, allowing them to achieve their potential. Many of his postgraduate students have graduated with first-class passes and continue to publish research papers.

### **HELTASA-CHE AWARDS 2015**

#### **Gwamaka Mwalemba, Associate Professor Elsje Scott and Carolyn McGibbon - Faculty of Commerce**

The team received an award for Excellent Team Teaching. The selection committee highlighted the innovative nature of the intervention to integrate carbon footprinting into the Information Systems curriculum with students from the Science Faculty who are studying project management. The trio were recognised for uniting to form the most excellent teaching team in South Africa in 2015. Their project, which inspires students to make a difference by collating UCT's carbon footprint, is in its fifth year. It was noted that the portfolio provides evidence of local and international impact. In addition, it was observed that the project not only provides students with an opportunity to increase awareness of climate change, but also enhances graduate attributes such as intellectual autonomy, problem solving, critical reflection and innovative thinking.

#### **Professor Delawir Kahn - Department of Surgery**

Professor Kahn received a commendation for his contribution to teaching and learning. The selection committee highlighted Professor Kahn's commitment to the teaching of undergraduate medical students and the training of postgraduate surgical registrars. His passion for surgery and the desire to share this with students have been instrumental in promoting the popularity of surgery amongst students. He is the patron of the UCT Student Surgical Society and his leadership has contributed to the success of the society in the university. His portfolio provides evidence of his influence in improving the success rates in the college examinations amongst surgical trainees.

***END***

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

#### **Aamirah Sunday**

Media Liaison Assistant  
Communication and Marketing Department  
University of Cape Town  
Rondebosch  
Tel: (021) 650 4976 Fax: (021) 650 3780  
Cell: 073 650 7743  
Email: [aamirah.sunday@uct.ac.za](mailto:aamirah.sunday@uct.ac.za)  
Website: [www.uct.ac.za](http://www.uct.ac.za)