

Great Happenings in Academics

June 2016



UNIVERSITY OF
**CENTRAL
ARKANSAS™**

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

A Word from our Provost

Dear Colleagues,

One of the most rewarding benefits of serving as Provost is the opportunity to recognize the outstanding work of our faculty and staff. This year we had an excellent slate of faculty members nominated for awards in the areas of teaching, research, and service, and it is my pleasure to dedicate this month's newsletter to them.

As we move through the summer, many of you will be teaching in one or more of our summer sessions, and many others will be pursuing research interests or creative activities. I hope that all will have the opportunities to enjoy some well-deserved time off with family and friends.

I have shared a photograph I took on the back page, one of many pictures I have taken over the years of sunsets and clouds. My appreciation of sunsets is long-lived; when I finally got a room to myself as a teen, I wallpapered one wall with a reproduction of a sunset. I hope you enjoy this photo of "Cotton Balls" taken right here in Conway.

Please let us know of key happenings in your area that you would like to be featured in a future edition by calling or emailing Suzanne Massey at 450-3126 or SMassey@uca.edu.

Sincerely,



Steven W. Runge
Executive Vice President and Provost





Teaching Excellence Award

UCA celebrated the 63rd Annual Service Awards this past spring by honoring outstanding faculty and staff. Among the awards presented to faculty were the Public Service Award, the Research, Scholarship and Creative Activity Award, and the Teaching Excellence Award. Each of these awards are designed to encourage and reward excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. The awards provide recognition of the importance the university places on these three fundamental areas, they publicize the vitality of faculty efforts in these areas, and they reward faculty who have excelled in their contributions to the university, to their disciplines, and to the world community.

The Teaching Excellence Award is given to faculty who have consistently demonstrated exceptional performance in teaching. Recipients of this award strive to enhance student learning as they continually seek ways to improve their teaching. They must demonstrate a command of the discipline, exceptional communication skills, appropriate teaching methodologies, concern for student performance, and superior human relation skills.

This year's Teaching Excellence Award was presented to Dr. Kristine Hicks, Lecturer II in the Department of Biology. Dr. Hicks shares her amazement at the complexity and sensitivity of the human body function with her students and is passionate in her desire to see all students grow in their appreciation of science. She is driven by a strong sense of responsibility for providing each student not only with the opportunity to succeed academically, but to see themselves as inquisitive scholars. Students find Dr. Hicks' courses challenging and rigorous but note that her ability to guide them through the material is invaluable.



Pictured with President Courtway and Provost Runge are the three finalists for the 2016 Teaching Excellence Award: Dr. Kristine Hicks (winner), Dr. Melissa Kelley and Dr. Twala Maresh.

Research, Scholarship & Creative Activity Award

The Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award recognizes individuals whose contributions have been exemplary. Through original work in research, scholarship or creative activities they have expanded human knowledge, interpreted the human experience, or enhanced the quality of our lives.

This year's Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award was presented to Dr. Jacob Held, Associate Professor of Philosophy, for his contributions to the field of popular culture and philosophy. Since his arrival at UCA in 2006, Dr. Held has established himself as an outstanding, energetic, and creative scholar. His prolific accomplishments have included seven edited books and 34 published articles. His sphere of influence has extended beyond academic publications to include mainstream news outlets, including *The Huffington Post*, *Newstalk*, and the *Guardian*. Dr. Held's work has ranged from scholarly essays in the philosophy of law and politics to many areas of philosophy in popular culture and most recently to issues on obscenity, censorship, and pornography. His book, *Philosophy and Terry Pratchett*, was ranked briefly on Amazon as the number one selling new release in philosophy and English literature. In addition, Dr. Held has recently been appointed series editor of the *Great Authors and Philosophy* series with Rowman and Littlefield.



Pictured with President Courtway and Provost Runge are the three finalists for the 2016 Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award: Dr. Jacob Held (winner), Ms. Donna Pinckley, and Dr. Ginny Adams



Public Service Award

The Public Service Award recognizes individuals whose service contributions to the UCA community, professional community, and other communities outside the university have been outstanding. Through service work such as volunteering for charitable organizations, serving on advisory boards, donating professional expertise, serving on committees, and conducting outreach programs, these individuals have improved conditions within the community and enhanced the quality of life for all citizens.

The recipient of this year's Public Service Award was presented to Dr. John Parrack, Associate Professor of Spanish in the Department of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures. Dr. Parrack has a trend of excellence in past and current service on and off campus in a variety of membership and leadership positions. He was chair of the Faculty Handbook Committee, past president of the Faculty Senate, and executive committee member of the American Association of University Professors. Professionally, he has worked for ADE, ADHE, and the Arkansas Foreign Language Teachers' Association. He has made and continues to make unique contributions to the Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre as a Board of Directors member, treasurer, and now as president. Dr. Parrack has used his passion for cycling to serve the community. After completing his roles as a member and treasurer of the Conway Advocates for Bicycling Board, he continues to volunteer and was instrumental in making Conway a safer and more "bicycle friendly" community. Dr. Parrack has worked for the last eight years to increase awareness of diabetes locally and to contribute to funding nationally for diabetes-related programs. He organized "Team UCA" to participate in the American Diabetes Association's Tour de Cure bicycling event. He volunteers with the Blackbird Academy of the Arts and is an active member and volunteer with the First United Methodist Church. Dr. Parrack's longevity, strength, and high impact has made him a change agent at UCA, within his profession, and in the greater community.



Pictured with President Courtway and Provost Runge are the three finalists for the 2016 Public Service Award: Dr. Doug Voss, Dr. John Parrack (winner), and Dr. Taine Duncan.

Photography by Steve Runge



Cotton Balls (2015)