

SU Teaching Excellence Awards 2018

The annual Teaching Excellence Awards and Research Excellence Awards ceremony took place at STIAS on 4 December 2018. The awards were presented at the same function for the second year in a row. Prof. Arnold Schoonwinkel, Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching, emphasised the complementary relationship between teaching and learning and research. He referred to teaching as an integral part of SU as a research-led university, commenting that “research on how to teach well is as important as research on what you teach.” In the same context, Prof. Eugene Cloete, Vice-Rector: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies, called SU not only a research-intensive university, but also a teaching-and-learning-intensive university.

Prof. Schoonwinkel, who presented the Teaching Excellence Awards, said that teaching and learning are a “shared endeavour”. With regard to the professionalization of the teaching role at SU, he described the opportunities for lecturers to research their teaching, such as the annual SoTL conference and the FINLO/FIRLT grants. Prof. Schoonwinkel referred to the Teaching Excellence Awards as a “progressive route” which could lead to a Teaching Fellowship and/or an HELTASA national award for teaching excellence.

Prof. Schoonwinkel presented 11 Teaching Excellence Awards. These awards acknowledged lecturers in two categories, ‘Distinguished Teacher’ or ‘Developing Teacher’, based on their experience and leadership in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Applicants had to submit a portfolio that demonstrated their reflection on and evidence of four main components: context, students, knowledge and professional growth. They also had to indicate the lessons they had learnt on their journey to becoming excellent teachers.

The following lecturers received Teaching Excellence Awards in the category ‘Developing Teacher’:

- Dr Elize Archer (Centre for Health Professions Education, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences)
- Dr Lidia Auret (Department of Process Engineering, Faculty of Engineering)
- Dr Eric Decloedt (Division of Clinical Pharmacology, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences)
- Prof. Faadiel Essop (Department of Physiological Sciences, Faculty of Science)
- Ms Zahn Münch (Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences)
- Dr Michael Schmeisser (Department of Horticultural Science, Faculty of AgriSciences)
- Ms Natasha Sexton (School of Accountancy, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences)
- Dr Debra Shepherd (Department of Economics, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences)
- Ms Anria van Zyl (School of Accountancy, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences)
- Dr Bjorn von der Heyden (Department of Earth Sciences, Faculty of Science)

Prof. Deborah Blaine (Department of Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering, Faculty of Engineering) received a Teaching Excellence Award in the category ‘Distinguished Teacher’. Prof. Blaine’s portfolio demonstrated not only in-depth reflection on her approach to teaching and her professional growth, but also the underpinning of her teaching practice by the scholarship of teaching and learning. She

engages in numerous educational leadership activities, research projects and scholarly communities of practice, also beyond SU.

Five SU Teaching Fellows also received certificates of recognition. Profs. Elmarie Costandius, Ian Nell, Dana Niehaus, Nicola Plastow and Geo Quinot completed their fellowships between 2011 and 2017. The fellowship scheme provides the opportunity for excellent teachers and scholars of teaching and learning to spend more consistent periods of time, with various forms of support, to focus on aspects of renewal, exploration and dissemination of good practice in departments and faculties. Current holders of a teaching fellowship are:

- Prof. Ingrid Rewitzky (Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Science)
- Dr Elize Archer (Centre for Health Professions Education, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences)
- Dr Berna Gerber (Division of Speech-Language and Hearing Therapy, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences)
- Ms Marianne McKay (Department of Viticulture and Oenology, Faculty of AgriSciences)
- Dr Michael Schmeisser (Department of Horticultural Science, Faculty of AgriSciences)
- Dr Marianne Unger (Division of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences)

More information about the Teaching Excellence Awards and the Teaching Fellowships is available from Dr Karin Cattell-Holden, kcattell@sun.ac.za or X 3074.