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SUNY Fredonia trio wins prestigious Chancellor's Awards for Excellence

Friday, June 03, 2011

The Chancellor's Award for Excellence, a statewide honor that recognizes superior professional achievement throughout the State University of New York system, has been awarded to three members of SUNY Fredonia who collectively have served the campus for more than 40 years.

Dr. Stephen Kershner, a member of the Philosophy Department since his arrival on campus in 1999, has received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Creative Activities.

Dr. Kershner has established a reputation as one of the most prolific authors on campus, having published four books and written dozens of articles for highly selective journals and book chapters and also presented in numerous conferences and philosophical forums. His works cover a wide spectrum, including politics, ethics, religion, law and sports. He is known for promoting unpopular or previously ignored positions that often leads those who disagree with him to sharpen their own views when reacting to his reasoning.

This is the fourth major honor bestowed upon Kershner, a past recipient of the Robert W. Kasling Award (2008), William T. Hagan Award (2003), and Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching (2001-2002).

Before joining SUNY Fredonia, Kershner taught at Wayne State University in Detroit, Mich., and Creighton University School of Medicine and College of Arts and Sciences in Omaha, Neb. He also practiced law in Lincoln, Neb. He earned an undergraduate degree in Psychology from Cornell University, studied at Oxford University, and holds a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania School of Law and a doctorate from the University of Nebraska.

Dr. Kathleen Gradel, a member of the Language, Learning & Leadership department within the College of Education since 2002, has received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence for Teaching.

Dr. Gradel utilizes a broad base of knowledge, drawing from her own expertise in various subdisciplines, to develop learning experiences that are unique and creative for undergraduate and graduate students. She designs courses and assignments that are both challenging and meaningful, engaging and exciting, and has co-taught several courses with COE colleagues. She is renowned for her mastery of her subjects and considered highly approachable and accessible by students.

Gradel was instrumental in organizing the highly informative "brown bag" lunch meetings that draw together faculty from the College of Education to foster cross-department interactions. She is also a regular presenter at state, national and international conferences devoted to teaching and learning.

She is the co-investigator and project manager for Collaboration Quality Instructional Outcomes Project, a \$6 million program designed to spur improved teaching and leadership skills in the areas of mathematics and learning within Dunkirk, Fredonia, Jamestown and Southwestern school districts.

Gradel has an undergraduate degree in Special Education, with certification in Mental Retardation K-12; a master's degree in Special Education, with certification in Emotional Disturbance/Behavior Disorders K-12; and a doctorate in Special Education/Severe Disabilities, with minors in Early Childhood; Evaluation; and Developmental Psychology – all from the University of Virginia.

Prior to joining SUNY Fredonia, Gradel taught at Buffalo State College.

Lieutenant Clifton Wheeler, a member of University Police who has earned praise from fellow officers as well as from area law enforcement agencies, is the first Fredonia officer to receive the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Classified Service.

Prior to joining SUNY Fredonia in 1994, Lt. Wheeler served as a police officer at Buffalo State College and an officer at Gowanda Psychiatric Center. He quickly earned the respect of fellow officers on campus due to his high degree of fairness and honesty, and quickly gained a reputation for being meticulous in his patrol work. He was promoted to lieutenant in 2002. He manages and trains University Police officers in the New York State Crime Computer, LIVESCAN electronic fingerprinting system and the Cooper Notification System. He is certified as an instructor in firearms, lawful use of force, counterterrorism and general topics, and is certified in crime scene investigations, level 2 fingerprint specialist and accident investigations.

Local law enforcement agencies, including the New York State Police, also recognize his professionalism, work ethic and knowledge of the criminal justice system, and frequently ask Wheeler to assist in their investigations.

Wheeler is also an excellent marksman, winning one gold and three silver medals in the sharp shooting competition during the 2008 North American Indigenous Games. He remains active in sports.



From left, Lt. Clifton Wheeler, Dr. Kathleen Gradel and Dr. Stephen Kershner have been honored with the 2011 Chancellor's Awards for Excellence.

An advisor to the Criminal Justice Club, Wheeler recognized the need for a scholarship to support Criminal Justice majors and organized a golf tournament to raise the needed funds.

Wheeler attended Niagara University, Haskell Indian Nations University and University of Colorado at Boulder, as well as D'Youville, Buffalo State College and the University of Buffalo.
