FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNC Board of Governors Announces University-wide Awards for Excellence in Teaching

CHAPEL HILL – The Board of Governors of the multi-campus University of North Carolina has selected 17 of its most outstanding faculty to receive the 16th Annual Awards for Excellence in Teaching. Each award winner will receive a commemorative bronze medallion and a $7,500 cash prize.

The 17 recipients, representing an array of academic disciplines, were nominated by special committees on their home campuses and selected by the Board of Governors Committee on Personnel and Tenure, chaired by Gladys Ashe Robinson of Greensboro. The awards will be presented by a Board of Governors member during the spring graduation ceremony on each campus.

Winners include Pamela Schram, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Appalachian State University; Thomas D. Raedeke, Department of Exercise and Sport Science, East Carolina University; Christopher W. Palestrant, Department of Music, Elizabeth City State University; Timothy T. Ajani, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Fayetteville State University; Antoine J. Alston, Department of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, NC A&T State University; Bruce dePyssler, Department of English and Mass Communication, NC Central University; and Robert J. Beichner, Department of Physics, NC State University.

Other winners are John William Miller, Jr., Department of Geology, UNC Asheville; Rachel A. Willis, Department of American Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill; Charles A. Burnap, Department of Mathematics, UNC Charlotte; Nancy Hodges, Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies, UNC Greensboro; Elizabeth Maisonpierre, Department of Music, UNC Pembroke; Frank Patrick Trimble, Department of Communication Studies, UNC Wilmington; Sean Sullivan, Department of Dance, University of North Carolina School of the Arts; H. Gibbs Knotts, Department of Political Science and Public Affairs, Western Carolina University; Janice W. Smith, Department of Management and Marketing, Winston-Salem State University; and Myra J. Halpin, Dean of Science, NC School of Science and Mathematics.

Established by the Board of Governors in 1994 to underscore the importance of teaching and to reward good teaching across the University, the awards are given annually to a tenured faculty member from each UNC campus. Winners must have taught at their present institutions at least seven years. No one may receive the award more than once.

For more information contact Joni Worthington at (919) 962-4629 or worthj@northcarolina.edu.

April 16, 2010
Pamela Schram, Appalachian State University
After teaching mathematics at the middle-school level for a decade, Dr. Schram earned her doctorate from Michigan State University. A member of the ASU faculty since 1996, she has now been sharing her expertise and passion for teaching mathematics to future teachers for over 25 years. Dr. Schram is also an accomplished scholar in mathematics education. She has received grants for an array of projects, made numerous national and state presentations, and been published in a variety of educational journals.

Thomas D. Radedeke, East Carolina University
Dr. Radedke joined the ECU exercise and sport science faculty in 1998. He earned his undergraduate degree in psychology from Concordia College, his master’s degree in physical education from the University of Idaho at Moscow, and his doctorate in exercise and movement science from the University of Oregon at Eugene.

Christopher W. Palestrant, Elizabeth City State University
By day, Dr. Palestrant teaches theory and composition in the ECSU Department of Music. By night, he is also a highly visible member the community, performing frequently throughout the region both as a soloist and as a member of the blues band, Uphill. Dr. Palestrant earned his undergraduate degree in music composition and theatre from the College of Wooster. He also holds a master’s degree in educational theatre and music composition from New York University and a doctorate in music composition from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University.

Timothy T. Ajani, Fayetteville State University
A member of the FSU faculty since 2001, Dr. Ajani teaches courses ranging from English composition to African literature, elementary French, and Yoruba. After receiving his undergraduate degree in French from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) in Nigeria, he went on to earn master’s degrees in applied linguistics from the Universite’ de la Sorbonne Nouvelle in France, as well as a doctorate in linguistics and a graduate certificate in teaching English as a second language from the University of Florida. Dr. Ajani taught languages to himself to put himself through school, and believes this experience has helped him become a more understanding and compassionate teacher.

Antoine J. Alston, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
Dr. Alston received undergraduate and master’s degrees in agricultural education from NC A&T before earning a doctoral degree in the field from Iowa State University. He joined the faculty of his alma mater in 2000, where he is praised by students and faculty alike for his mentoring, teaching, and leadership skills.

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Bruce dePyssler, North Carolina Central University
A member of the NCCU faculty since 1998, Dr. dePyssler teaches a wide variety of courses related to print and electronic journalism and public relations. Dr. dePyssler holds an undergraduate degree in history and philosophy from the University of North Texas at Denton. He also holds a master’s degree in radio-TV-film and a doctorate in cultural anthropology from the University of Texas at Austin.

Robert J. Beichner, North Carolina State University
As the founding director of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Education Initiative, Dr. Beichner leads NC State’s education efforts from “K to gray.” The recipient of several campus awards for teaching excellence, he has been named the 2010 North Carolina Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, as well as the National Undergraduate Science Teacher of the Year by the Society of College Science Teachers. He holds undergraduate degrees in mathematics and physics from Pennsylvania State University, a master’s degree in physics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and a doctorate in science education from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

John William Miller, Jr., University of North Carolina at Asheville
A member of the UNCA faculty since 1989, Dr. Miller’s expertise in geology has been pivotal to the development of an earth science concentration in his department. He was named the UNCA Distinguished Teacher of the Year in 2007 and won the Distinguished Teacher in Natural Sciences Award in 2002. Dr. Miller holds undergraduate and master’s degrees from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and a doctorate from the University of Georgia.

Rachel A. Willis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Dr. Willis is the Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Associate Professor of American Studies. She also is a faculty fellow in the Institute for Arts and Humanities, the Center for Urban and Regional Studies, and the Institute for Emerging Issues (NC State). Over the past two decades, she has won numerous awards and honors for undergraduate teaching. She earned undergraduate degrees in political science and economics from the University of California at Riverside, a master’s degree in economics from the University of Notre Dame, and a doctorate in the field from Northwestern University.

Charles Alan Burnap, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
Dr. Burnap has been a member of the UNCC faculty since 1985. In the classroom, he believes that the when it comes to the study of mathematics, high-level goals must be approached in small steps. Dr. Burnap holds an undergraduate degree in physics from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and earned his master’s and doctoral degrees in the field from Harvard University. In 2009 he received UNCC’s Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence.

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Nancy J. Hodges, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Dr. Hodges received her undergraduate degree in design from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and her master’s and doctoral degrees in clothing and textiles from the University of Minnesota. A member of the UNCG faculty since 1998, she currently serves as the director of graduate studies in the Department of Consumer, Apparel, and Retail Studies. In 2008-09, she received the Outstanding Teaching Award from UNCG’s School of Human Environmental Sciences.

Elizabeth Maisonpierre, University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Dr. Maisonpierre joined the UNCP music faculty 1985 after earning her doctorate in piano performance from the University of Maryland. Perseverance in assessing students’ weaknesses and building on their strengths defines her attitude toward teaching. She also holds an undergraduate degree in applied piano from Ohio Wesleyan University and a master’s degree in piano performance from the University of Maryland.

Frank Patrick Trimble, University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Dr. Trimble is the former chair of the Department of Communication Studies and currently serves as interim chair of the Department of Theatre. A teacher, author, director, choreographer, composer, designer and actor, he has received many awards for his teaching and work in film. A member of the UNCW faculty since 1983, he holds undergraduate and master’s degrees in speech communication from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

Sean Sullivan, University of North Carolina School of the Arts
Mr. Sullivan has taught contemporary dance at UNCSA since 1998. He holds an undergraduate degree in dance from California State University at Long Beach and a master’s degree in the discipline from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

H. Gibbs Knotts, Western Carolina University
Dr. Knotts joined the WCU faculty in 2000 and currently serves as head of the Department of Political Science and Public Affairs. He holds an undergraduate degree in political science from UNC-Chapel Hill and earned master’s and doctoral degrees in the field from Emory University.

Janice W. Smith, Winston-Salem State University
As an associate professor of marketing at WSSU, Dr. Smith teaches both undergraduate and graduate students. Both groups describe her as an effective teacher for helps them develop expertise and build confidence in their own abilities and potential. She holds an undergraduate degree in business administration and management from Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, as well as a master’s of business administration and a doctorate in organization studies from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

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Myra J. Halpin, North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics
In her 41 years as a chemistry teacher, mentor, researcher, and role model, Dr. Halpin has brought her enthusiasm for understanding how things work—from the atomic to the macro-scale—to thousands of students from kindergarten through college. A member of the NCSSM faculty since 1989, she holds an undergraduate degree in biology and chemistry from Shorter College in Georgia, a master’s degree in education from Virginia State University, and a doctorate in science education from NC State University.

About the University of North Carolina
The oldest public university in the nation, the University of North Carolina enrolls more than 220,000 students and encompasses all 16 of North Carolina’s public institutions that grant baccalaureate degrees, as well as the NC School of Science and Mathematics, the nation’s first public residential high school for gifted students. UNC campuses support a broad array of distinguished liberal-arts programs, two medical schools and one teaching hospital, two law schools, a veterinary school, a school of pharmacy, 11 nursing programs, 15 schools of education, three schools of engineering, and a specialized school for performing artists. The UNC Center for Public Television, with its 11-station statewide broadcast network, is also under the University umbrella.

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