

# Teaching Excellence Awards

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2018

VISION  

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INNOVATION  

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PRACTICE



**I am proud to present this year's edition of Vision, Innovation, Practice, featuring the 2018 winners of the University of South Carolina's most prestigious teaching awards.** Although the leaders profiled here come from a wide range of disciplines and differ broadly in their individual styles and classroom methods, they all share a genuine commitment to their students and the ability to find creative, successful ways to convey their passion and expertise in the classroom.

Innovative teaching is the particular focus of the Garnet Apple Awards program, now in its third year. Sponsored by the Office of the Provost and the Center for Teaching Excellence, these awards showcase faculty members who consistently and successfully incorporate the latest developments in teaching into their practice. The 2018 Garnet Apple winners have applied innovation to create transformative impact across a broad range of pedagogies. Accordingly, these faculty members are building the university's national and global reputation for teaching innovation, demonstrating that there are no limits when you work hard to help make a difference in the lives of others.

Congratulations to all of our 2018 Garnet Apple, Mungo, Clinical Teaching, John J. Duffy and USC Education Foundation Graduate Teaching Assistant award winners. Our entire Carolina community stands in appreciation of these distinguished faculty members.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Gabel'.

**Joan T.A. Gabel**

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost



# GARNET APPLE AWARD

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The Garnet Apple Award honors exceptional faculty members who demonstrate a commitment to best teaching practices and an ongoing record of developing innovative strategies to enhance student learning in their courses.



# J. Daniel Jenkins

**GARNET APPLE AWARD**

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**

**SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

J. Daniel Jenkins has flipped his classroom to get students better engaged with what he calls “the vegetables” of music education — music theory. “Music theory is like eating your vegetables — nobody wants to eat their vegetables, but you have to,” he says. The way music theory has typically been taught is about as exciting as steamed broccoli with no butter or salt. So Jenkins takes his class to the Music Technology Center every week to give music theory a dash of flavor. Access to keyboards and online databases of musical scores is key to making his classroom experiment work. “Our students are actually playing and in contact with the material,” he says. “It gives them a level of practical knowledge.” Jenkins says the big payoff is that he can cover more material in class because students are learning at a faster pace and are better able to monitor their own progress. “They are grasping it more profoundly as they go along,” he says. “I am very interested in trying to create the best experiences for my students.”



# Steven Rodney

## **GARNET APPLE AWARD**

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS AND ASTRONOMY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

As a doctoral student, Steven Rodney was confident in his knowledge of astronomy. But the prospect of teaching the material to students seemed more like a black hole — Rodney didn't know if he had the right stuff. So Rodney got involved with the Institute for Scientist and Engineer Educators, which exposed him to different theories of learning and the neuroscience and psychology of how people learn.

Rodney continues to tap into that experience. Using a Center for Teaching Excellence grant, Rodney revamped Astronomy 101 with the help of department colleague David Tedeschi. Rodney's version of the new course centers around a provocative question — “Are we alone?” — to get students thinking about the search for intelligent alien life in the universe. Many of the same textbook topics are covered but with a focus that makes the material read more like a mystery than, well, a textbook. “I want undergraduates to learn how to wrestle with complex data — to make informed decisions,” Rodney says. “That's a skill they can take with them into other disciplines.”



# Lisa Sisk

## **GARNET APPLE AWARD**

SENIOR INSTRUCTOR

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

COLLEGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Lisa Sisk had a successful career in nonprofit, agency and corporate public relations, but is now a senior instructor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications — and has never looked back. Instead, she looks forward — to her next class and her next batch of students, each of whom she tries to get to know personally (even in a 70-person class) and even tries to greet them at commencement ceremonies. “I draw energy from the students,” she says. “If they’re excited, then I’m excited.” Sisk took “Getting Ready to Teach Online,” a course offered through the Center for Teaching Excellence, in spring 2017, prior to teaching her first online course last summer. And the class went better than she ever expected. This past year she was one of seven instructors to teach in the university’s new three-week winter session, which consists entirely of online courses. “I came kicking and screaming into online teaching,” she says, “and now I think it is just so cool.”



# Sandy Strick

## **GARNET APPLE AWARD**

**PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY, RETAIL AND SPORT MANAGEMENT**

Sandy Strick is a teacher who teaches teachers. That is, she's one of only two faculty members in the College of Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management who teaches pedagogy to the school's doctoral students. Strick didn't at first want to be a teacher. "I wanted to be a dietician," she says. "But then I got to college and learned that chemistry was a big part of that. Chemistry and I did not get along!" Her award-winning classroom style focuses on active learning, real-world applications and student-centered learning. "Many of us have realized that lectures are not the best way to convey a lot of the things we deliver," she says. Her recipe for success is to complement meaningful learning experiences — reading articles, professional presenters, field trips, tastings, demonstrations, online forums and team-based projects — with brief lecture material and relevant support material. But the renowned wine instructor still draws the line at chemistry. "When we do the formula for fermentation, I tell them this is all the chemistry they're going to get from me!" she quips.



# Gail Wagner

## **GARNET APPLE AWARD**

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

Gail Wagner believes students should leave her classroom with skills they can carry long after the semester ends. “I like to be able to list for students at the start of the course, ‘Here are the things you’re walking away with that are useful for your life — for getting a job or getting into graduate school or just furthering you as a person,’” she says. That’s one of the reasons she began requiring undergraduates in some classes to do original research and have the opportunity to earn a professional-level national certification for the work. “This can make them stand out as an undergraduate,” Wagner says. Wagner chooses projects that might at first appear to have obvious answers. “I particularly like to imagine how I can take something that is common or everyday and throw a spotlight on what we can learn from closer examination,” she says. “I believe these sorts of examples really stick in students’ minds and supply them with conversational fodder with friends and family. While the topics look simple, they introduce students to complex personal and cultural ideas.”

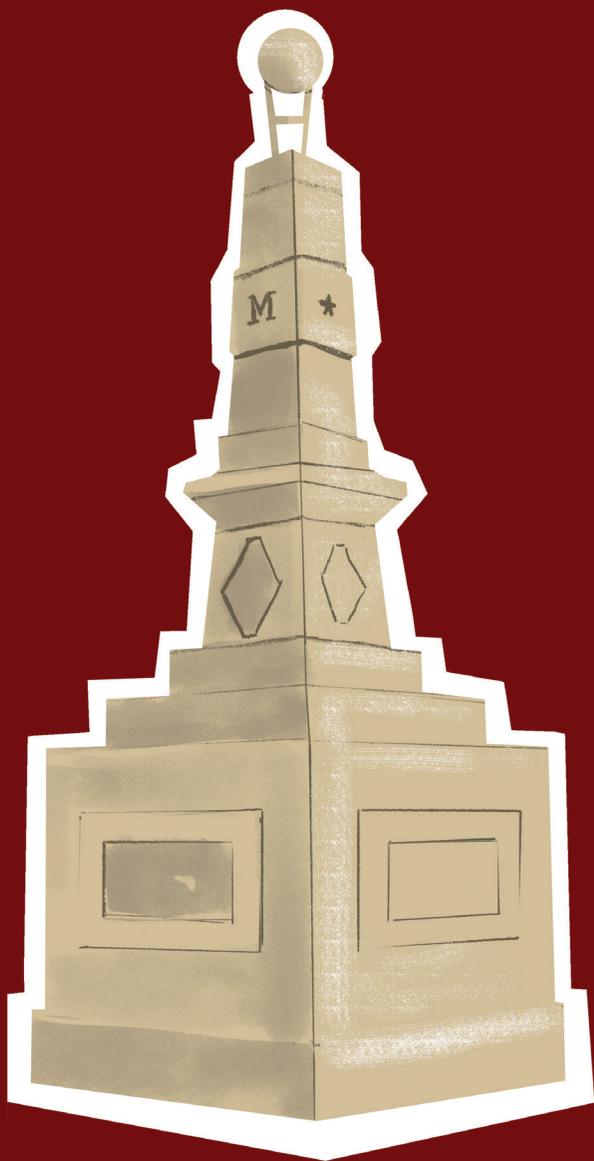


# Beth White

## **GARNET APPLE AWARD**

**CLINICAL INSTRUCTOR, DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTION AND TEACHER EDUCATION  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

When Beth White is in the classroom, the teaching hat never comes off. One minute she's instructing her undergraduate education students about the finer points of literacy methods and reading assessment and in the next she's guiding a room full of elementary students through a reading and writing exercise. White also consults with the classroom's regular teacher to provide the undergrads with an up-close look at how the teaching process really works. "The most important tool in the classroom is the teacher's brain," she says, and to that end she strives to give her students the tools they need to help every student achieve. The cornerstone of White's teaching is location — most of the instruction takes place in an actual elementary school classroom, which provides frequent teachable moments, she says. White devotes much of her time to observing in the moment and providing constant feedback to her students. "I'm trying to teach them to look for patterns in their small students," she says, "and I'm trying to do the same thing with the undergraduates."



# MICHAEL J. MUNGO TEACHING AWARD

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The Michael J. Mungo Distinguished Professor Award, Undergraduate Teaching Award and Graduate Teaching Award recognize faculty members who have a sustained record of excellent teaching. The awards were endowed by the late Michael J. Mungo, a USC graduate and Columbia businessman who served with distinction on the university's Board of Trustees from 1968 until his death in 2010.



# Richard Adams

## **MICHAEL J. MUNGO GRADUATE TEACHING AWARD**

**PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

A graduate student walks up to Richard Adams' office, beaming with excitement. Her experiment has succeeded fabulously, and she and Adams exchange a high five. It's a scene that Adams has been a part of innumerable times in his long career as a chemistry professor. "The thrills are still as exciting today as they were 40 years ago," he says. Many of his students share that sentiment. Gaya Elpitya, now a senior research chemist at W.R. Grace & Co., took Chemistry 711 with Adams seven years ago. "He is more than just a professor," she says. "He is a great teacher, mentor and an inspiration." Adams often tells students that "you can't get a good idea on nothing. I'm constantly sending students stuff from journal alerts that I get. It gives them something they can build on because you've got to have a database in your brain. I even put little blackboards on the exhaust hoods in the lab for them to write down ideas. Then I say, 'Now, let's go check the literature; I don't know everything about this.'"



# Brad Collins

**MICHAEL J. MUNGO DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF THE YEAR AWARD**

SCHOOL OF VISUAL ART AND DESIGN

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Brad Collins loves art history, the subject he has been teaching at Carolina for 30 years, calling it “the queen of the humanities.” And Collins loves teaching his students to appreciate art, to understand it and to realize its importance. He strolls around his classroom, asking questions, pushing students to look at things in a new way. His methods clearly work. Students describe him as “absolutely amazing,” and “the best professor I have ever had.” A sampling of art history majors always finds some who say, “I’m an art history major because of Brad Collins.” For Collins, studying art history is a basic part of being human: “We are the only animal that doesn’t instinctively know how to be. We get to decide who we are, decide how to be. The history of art really is the history of people struggling with that issue of ‘how to be.’ That’s what the students are here for. They are here to figure out what they should be doing with their lives, what they believe. That’s why the history of art is important.”



# Carlina de la Cova

**MICHAEL J. MUNGO UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AWARD**

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Carlina de la Cova has introduced a range of courses in her seven years at Carolina, from introductory biological anthropology and African-American studies to courses that address issues of race and medicine. Her favorite — “The Forensics of Sherlock Holmes” — allows students to learn forensic science methods and history through Sherlock Holmes stories. “It’s the ability to observe and interpret so you understand your environment and understand where people are coming from, but also his sense of justice and his belief system,” she says. “As a forensic anthropologist, I study the dead. I live by that principle of justice and restoring voices to those who have lost their voice.” de la Cova’s classes appeal not only to anthropology majors but also those studying criminal justice, public health and beyond. “One of my goals has been to make students lifelong readers, whether of anthropology or history,” she says. “I tell them, ‘You guys are the future. When you leave the university and go into the world, you have the option to make change and make a difference.’ It’s all about empowering and valuing their perspective.”



# Brad Epperly

**MICHAEL J. MUNGO UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AWARD**

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Communication, exploration and a lot of hard work — those are the hallmarks of Brad Epperly’s political science courses. “There’s no textbook — we read only journal articles or book chapters — and they’re reading stuff that matters,” he says. “I get a lot of comments like, ‘That was the hardest political science class I ever took and it was 101!’” Epperly is hardly the first college professor to be demanding of his students. By the course’s end, they have delved deep into such subjects as interstate war, civil war and dictatorships, and they’ve wrestled with the differences between parliamentary and presidential systems of democracy. They have also been given a very specific set of tools for thinking critically. And the more Epperly learns about his students, the better the odds that he can direct them to appropriate opportunities beyond the classroom. “That’s where you learn what a student is interested in,” he explains. “When someone says to me, ‘I’m also interested in Mandarin,’ I can say, ‘Have you heard about the State Department’s Critical Languages Program?’ That sort of thing.”



# Camelia Knapp

**MICHAEL J. MUNGO UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AWARD**

**PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF THE EARTH, OCEAN AND ENVIRONMENT  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

For someone who didn't think she ever wanted to teach college students, Camelia Knapp has become pretty good at doing just that. She especially enjoys smaller course sections, but she's learned how to connect with students in very large lecture halls, as well. "I teach Geology 101, which typically has a lot of non-science majors who often are a little apprehensive about taking a science course," says Knapp. "So, I start telling stories about my research, and I ask a lot of questions." She gives extra credit to anyone who ventures a response. "Whether their answers are right or not doesn't matter, it gets them engaged," she says. "It sometimes becomes a competition for who can answer first." Student success has become one of Knapp's primary motivators, she says. "They keep me going. It really is gratifying to work with them and see their accomplishments because when you see students do well, especially in research or scholarly achievement, you know their involvement is going to open opportunities for jobs, graduate school and beyond."

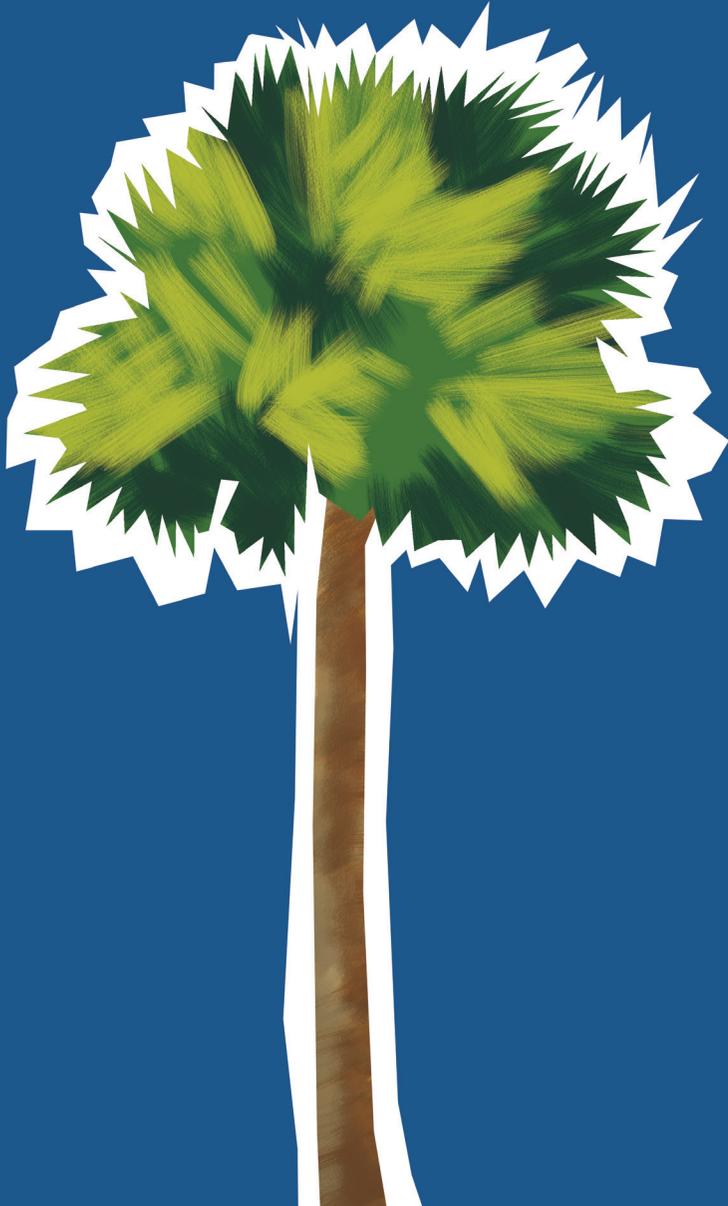


# Evan Meaney

## **MICHAEL J. MUNGO UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING AWARD**

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF VISUAL ART AND DESIGN  
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Evan Meaney's journey from film to digital began the day he visited the Museum of the Moving Image in Astoria, which was featuring one of the first-ever exhibitions of video games as art. "I played a Star Wars arcade machine game there," he recalls. "If you want to know the moment I became me, that was it." After studying film at Ithaca College, Meaney became so interested in video games he learned how to build them. Those early experiments in design are the basis of his highly rated instruction in subjects such as aesthetics and production workflows of new media, gaming, virtual reality and creative internet trends. Meaney especially likes to help students turn their passion into a marketable future. It's a commitment his students feel every day in class. In an iterative field like media arts, he says, the best educational tools aren't always tutorials, lectures or projects. "The mistakes we discover in the process are so important to the process. If I could run a class called Mistakes 405, I would," he says.



# JOHN J. DUFFY EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD

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The John J. Duffy Excellence in Teaching Award recognizes outstanding teaching at the Palmetto College campuses. The award is named in honor of the longtime history professor and university administrator.



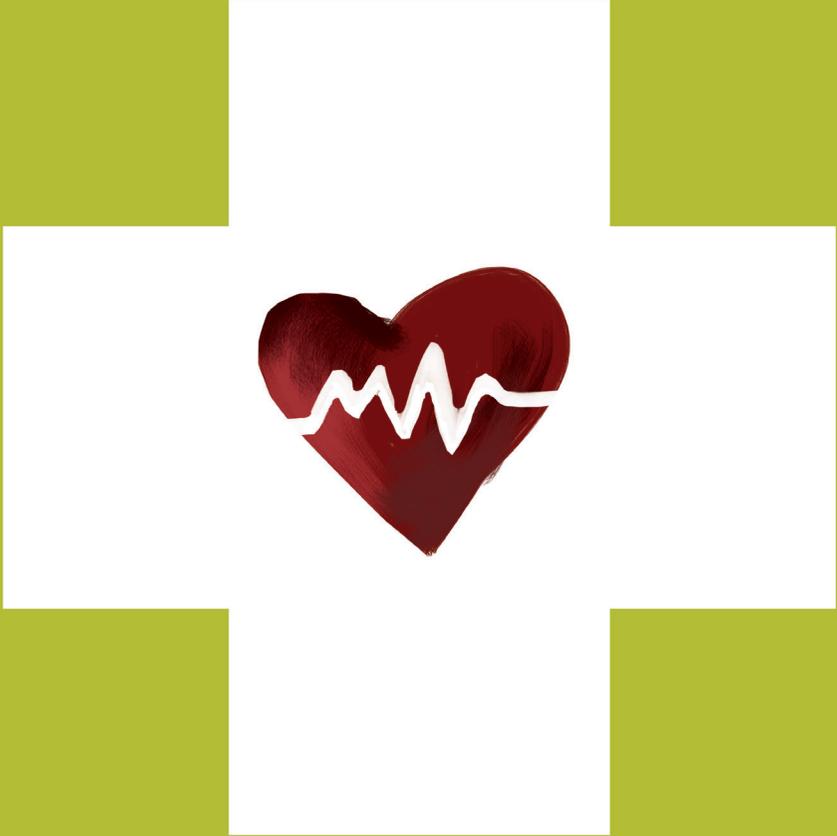
# Shelley Jones

**JOHN J. DUFFY EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD**

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ENGLISH**

**EXTENDED UNIVERSITY AND PALMETTO COLLEGE**

Shelley Jones might be the best friend Palmetto College students have. Recognizing that students returning to college to take classes online differ from more traditional in-classroom students, Jones has developed an extracurricular course that basically teaches those returning students how to be students again — and how to avail themselves of all the digital resources. The online modules cover research basics, information literacy and an introduction to Palmetto College research opportunities. “The modules also help them practice taking a class online in a no-stakes environment,” she adds. She also helps her online students make use of other student resources, including the Career Center, the Writing Center and Study Abroad programs. “I want to make sure our students have a pathway to use these resources at a distance,” she says. Jones also is always looking for ways to hone the online experience for students. “I do try to honor the medium through which I’m teaching to make sure the promises of Palmetto College are being upheld,” she says. “The online teacher-student interaction is as rich as face-to-face if I am honoring the medium.”



# CLINICAL PRACTICE TEACHING AWARD

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The Clinical Practice Teaching Award recognizes faculty members for outstanding teaching in clinical practice settings in the health professions, including nursing, pharmacy and medicine.



# Karen Worthy

## **CLINICAL TEACHING AWARD**

**CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR**

**COLLEGE OF NURSING**

If you're an upper division nursing student at Carolina, Karen Worthy might well have committed your file to memory. Worthy teaches a range of upper division nursing courses, including the intense, eight credit-hour senior capstone practicum. She gets to know her students well as they progress in the program. "I know their names, I know their abilities, I learn their strengths and weaknesses so that I can intervene when necessary," says Worthy. "We have high expectations in all our courses, especially in capstone where we focus more intensively on critical thinking, deductive reasoning and clinical judgment." For all her commitment to cultivating those abilities, Worthy hasn't lost sight of the relational and mentoring aspect of teaching — or of nursing. She encourages her students to stop by her office and just sit and talk. "My door is always open, and often times the challenges aren't as insurmountable as students imagine. They simply may not know the resources we have put in place to assist them," says Worthy. "Student success is the essence of my job as an educator, mentor and coach to our future nurse leaders."



# Brian Keisler

## **CLINICAL TEACHING AWARD**

**CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR**

**DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PREVENTIVE MEDICINE**

**SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

You could say Brian Keisler was born to be a doctor and a teacher. At the very least, having a doctor and a teacher as parents made that destiny more likely. “As I went through med school, I saw teaching as a way to repay my debt for all that I had received,” he says. As a doctor, teacher and head of the family medicine clerkship program, Keisler’s time is evenly divided among seeing patients, supervising residents and students and performing administrative duties. Keisler says he had several great teachers while he was in medical school and never compares himself with them but does try to incorporate the things they did well in his methods. Keisler says he has learned to keep a positive attitude when interacting with students who are dealing with a variety of life issues as well as coursework and the pressures of learning to take care of people. “I think I do have an ability to connect with my students,” he says. “Even when I was a resident, I always had students around. I really enjoyed bringing them along.”



# USC EDUCATION FOUNDATION OUTSTANDING GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT AWARD

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USC's Education Foundation considers nominations each year for two outstanding teaching/instructional graduate assistants: one in humanities, social sciences, education and related professional programs and one in science, math and related programs.



# Jennifer Mandelbaum and Anna Rogers

## USC EDUCATION FOUNDATION OUTSTANDING GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT AWARD

**Jennifer Mandelbaum**, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Health Promotion, Education and Behavior in the Arnold School of Public Health, has taught “Introduction to Health Promotion, Education and Behavior” and “Health Problems in a Changing Society.” “Although I rely on a lecture format for most classes, I try to avoid static slides and stoic presentations. I encourage discussion through open-ended questions that probe students’ understanding and application of the material. This allows students to demonstrate that they understand the material, can interpret it and draw upon prior knowledge to support their explanations.”

**Anna Rogers**, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology in the College of Arts and Sciences, has taught “Sociology 101” and “Society Through the Lens” “In both classes, I strive to make connections with students that will enable me to help them learn as much as possible. My technique in all of my courses is to incorporate various forms of popular culture — music, movies, television shows, art, photography, memes, etc. — that my students enjoy from their free time. I find that teaching theories, perspectives and concepts are easier and more fun for students if the examples come from things they enjoy outside of the classroom.”

The teachers honored with these teaching awards represent the entire USC faculty and our commitment to the highest-quality education for our students. These honorees stand out for their commitment to innovation in the classroom and their passion for teaching, benefiting their students and providing models that their colleagues can follow.

The Center for Teaching Excellence is dedicated to sharing both the spirit of innovation and the practical lessons in pedagogy offered by these honorees. They have earned a special respect from their peers and from the entire Gamecock Family. You can visit our website, [sc.edu/CTE](http://sc.edu/CTE), to learn more about these honorees, as well as grant programs, learning communities, workshops, short courses, webinars and instructional design services that can help you attain the same level of excellence in the classroom.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Augie Grant". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Augie Grant**

Director, Center for Teaching Excellence



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