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2020 Michigan Distinguished Professors of the Year Announced

Lansing, MI – Professors in geology, chemical engineering, and international business and management who have expanded their programs globally, from Iceland to Ghana to Thailand, are this year’s Distinguished Professor of the Year Award recipients from Michigan’s 15 public universities.

The Michigan Association of State Universities’ Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year Award recognizes the outstanding contributions and dedication exhibited by the faculty from Michigan’s public universities to the education of undergraduate students. Each university was invited to nominate a faculty member who has had a significant impact on undergraduate student learning through various activities, particularly classroom instruction, applied research, experiential learning, innovation, and mentoring.

The 2020 recipients are Stephen R. Mattox of Grand Valley State University; Joseph Ofori-Dankwa of Saginaw Valley State University; and H. Scott Fogler of the University of Michigan.

“Every year, the nominees for this award continue to bring innovative projects to Michigan’s 15 public universities and surrounding communities,” said Dr. Daniel J. Hurley, CEO of the Michigan Association of State Universities. “These professors are truly dedicated to student success, helping them achieve their ambitions, all the while strengthening prosperity in Michigan, the U.S. and – particularly this year -- around the globe.”

The 2020 recipients are:

Stephen R. Mattox, Professor of Geology, Grand Valley State University

Dr. Stephen Mattox is Professor in the Department of Geology at Grand Valley State University. He earned his B.S. from Indiana University, and his M.S. and Ph.D. from Northern Illinois University, all in geology.

He has been a powerful teacher and role model for students and educators in the geoscience and education communities. In more than 21 years at Grand Valley State University, Dr. Stephen Mattox has taught thousands of students, mentored undergraduate and graduate students, obtained four National Science Foundation grants, developed a statewide program for high school students to earn college credit in geology, and much more. He has been recognized by GVSU, the state of Michigan, and nationally, earning state and national teaching awards, including the National Association of Geoscience Teachers’ Neil Miner Award and Michigan Science Teachers Association’s College Teacher of the Year Award. For more than two decades, Dr. Mattox has served as the faculty advisor of the National Science Teachers Association student chapter at GVSU. He has taken his students multiple places around the state, country, and world.

Professor Mattox is a leader in experiential learning. He recently became the director of a new study abroad course in collaboration with Grand Rapids Community College and the University of Iceland

giving underrepresented students a unique chance to participate in the geosciences. Dr. Mattox plans to build a second course in Canada. Dr. Mattox established a unique program for high school students to earn college credit in geology for passing a college-level exam, since there is no AP Geology class. The depth of Dr. Mattox's career demonstrates his dedication to teaching and undergraduate students, earning him Grand Valley's highest faculty honor, the Glenn A. Niemeyer Award.

According to Maria C. Cimitile, GVSU Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, "Professor Stephen Mattox is an exemplary educator, and exactly the sort of teacher-scholar that public higher education wants to present as a face of our work and our dedication to students."

Joseph Ofori-Dankwa, Professor of International Business Studies, Saginaw Valley State University

Dr. Joseph Ofori-Dankwa is the Harvey Randall Wickes Professor of International Business and Professor of Management at Saginaw Valley State University. He received his Bachelor of Law from the University of Ghana, his M.S. in Management and Technology from the University of Wales, and his Master of Labor & Industrial Relations and Ph.D. in Organizational Behavior from Michigan State University.

Dr. Ofori-Dankwa is a leader in expanding programs to Africa. He has led and facilitated 10 trips with students, faculty and Saginaw community leaders to Ghana since 2000. COVID-19 permitting, he plans to lead his students on a study abroad to Ghana in 2021. In addition, he served as a faculty advisor for SVSU electrical & computer engineering students planning to design and install solar panels at a health clinic for the Royal Seed Home Orphanage in Ghana.

He has successfully collaborated and developed a long-standing relationship with Wayne State University's Math Corp Program. Developed over 25 years ago, the Math Corp Program has successfully provided math education for numerous middle school students, initially in the Detroit area and more recently expanded to other cities such as Cleveland and Pittsburgh. In 2012, he initiated and helped co-ordinate the SVSU Summer Math Program that develops undergraduate SVSU students as math tutors and teaches math skills to under-privileged middle schoolers in the Saginaw community.

Dr. Ofori-Dankwa has founded or coordinated programs including the Makola Institute, which is a training and advocacy center for market women and small-scale business operators in markets in Ghana; and the Makola Foundation which provides funding for entrepreneurs and students. He has also provided a curriculum on leadership and ethics for the U.S. State Department's Young African Leadership Institute, initiated by former President Obama and located at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration.

Since joining SVSU in 1987, Dr. Ofori-Dankwa has earned several awards throughout a distinguished career at SVSU, including the House Family Award for Teacher Impact, the Rush Distinguished Lectureship, the Braun Fellowship, and the Thomson Award for Community Engagement. He has helped develop and teach courses for SVSU's Vitito Fellows Global Leadership Institute, including experiential leadership projects for Vitito students. Among the cross-disciplinary teaching initiatives he has helped to co-ordinate is the B.A.T.S. (Business, Art, Theatre and Sociology) program.

"Professor Ofori-Dankwa's encouraging and caring nature are qualities that attract students to the classroom, and his commitment of time and mind makes Dr. Ofori-Dankwa a most deserving candidate for Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year," said Dr. Deborah R. Huntley, SVSU Provost and Vice

President for Academic Affairs.

H. Scott Fogler, Professor of Chemical Engineering, University of Michigan

Dr. H. Scott Fogler just completed 55 years of exemplary service at the University of Michigan, where he is currently the Ame and Catherine Vennema Chair in Chemical Engineering and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor. He received his B.S. from the University of Illinois and his M.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Colorado, all in chemical engineering.

During his career he has developed collaborative exchanges with educators in South Africa and Thailand and promoted links between U.S.-based American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) student chapters and “sister” chapters abroad. He founded an annual AIChE Chem-E-Car competition that challenges thousands of students all over the world to design and construct shoe box sized cars powered by chemical energy; the contest’s top award was named the H. Scott Fogler First Place Prize in 2017. In 2010, he took over as faculty advisor to the University of Michigan’s AIChE student chapter. Under his oversight, the AIChE student chapter has been awarded with the Outstanding Student Chapter Award, an award given to the top 10 percent of the approximately 150 student chapters in the U.S., for 10 consecutive years.

He has been recognized on multiple occasions at college, university, and national levels, receiving the American Society for Engineering Educations Lifetime Achievement Award in Chemical Engineering Pedagogy, the AIChE’s Warren K. Lewis Award for Chemical Engineering Education, and the Arthur F. Thurnau Professorship, the university’s highest honor for career contributions to undergraduate education. He was elected President of AIChE in 2008. Professor Fogler has positively influenced generations of chemical engineers worldwide as the author of one of the most used textbooks in his field, *The Elements of Chemical Reaction Engineering*, now in its sixth edition. He has made safety a larger part of the UM chemical engineering curriculum and is working with students to develop a free online safety course for chemical engineering students to use around the world.

“Professor Fogler’s vision for rich undergraduate education that incorporates the complexity of real-world conditions has sustained a career of innovations that enable and encourage creative problem solving is the reason he is deserving of the Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year Award,” said Susan M. Collins, UM Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The other nominees for Michigan Distinguished Professor of the Year were: Jodi Brookins-Fisher, Central Michigan University; Ethan Lowenstein, Eastern Michigan University; Tracy Nichols Busch, Ferris State University; Jason Garvon, Lake Superior State University; Melanie Cooper, Michigan State University; Gary Brunswick, Northern Michigan University; Karen Sheridan, Oakland University; Nilay Chakraborty, University of Michigan-Dearborn; Thomas Hemphill, University of Michigan-Flint; Mariane Fahlman, Wayne State University; and Megan Grunert Kowalske, Western Michigan University.

The Academic Affairs Officers of the Michigan Association of State Universities will recognize the nominees and recipients in Spring of 2021. This is the 14th year of the program.

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The Michigan Association of State Universities serves as the coordinating board for Michigan’s 15 public universities, providing advocacy and fostering policy to maximize the collective value these institutions provide in serving the public interest and the State of Michigan.