The Gitner Award
Assistant Professor of Classical Studies James Uden

The Gitner Award for Distinguished Teaching in the College of Arts & Sciences was endowed by CAS alumnus and Trustee Emeritus Gerald Gitner.

Latinist James Uden welcomes students to the world of ancient Rome with true, infectious passion for his subject and with courses whose extraordinary range, bold design, and skillful execution promote active learning at all levels.

Into the formerly chronological Intro to Roman Civ, he has breathed new life by aiming instead for a "street-level view" of the realities of ancient lives, so similar and yet so distant from present-day experience. He helps students create a "vivid mosaic" from a broad array of primary source materials, gets them to question stereotypes and think about the complexity of interpreting Roman social norms, and shows them how to use online resources responsibly. Each class session, clearly mapped out in PowerPoint as a provocative constellation of images and quotations, proceeds to connect those dots and explore them through a mix of interactive lecturing without notes and small-group discussion. Innovative assignments to foster habits of empathy and historical precision include diary-writing in a Roman persona, where each entry must be backed up by an ancient source. Enrollment in the new CL 102 has grown by more than 50 percent.

Likewise broadly and deeply appealing to undergraduates is the course Professor Uden has devised on Ancient Medicine. At the intersection of his own encyclopedic curiosity with contemporary concerns, CL 228 takes up ancient ideas of pathology, psychology, pharmacology, veterinary medicine, and nutrition in conjunction with ancient debates about the ethics of contraception, abortion, vivisection, and medical responsibility. Here, as in his Core humanities seminars, he regularly flips the classroom, and he gives his students freedom to identify focal points and passages for discussion.

In turn, advanced undergraduates and graduate students in staple Latin seminars admire how Professor Uden can "truly make a text come alive." Senior colleagues commend his "cutting edge" approaches, the balance he strikes between close reading and sophisticated exploration of literary and cultural milieus, and his "superb strategies," such as the serious fun of sight-reading in teams, for challenging students of varied abilities.

Any sketch of Professor Uden's versatility and exploits in teaching must also nod to his unstinting involvement beyond the classroom. His office door is always open; "he volunteers for everything"; as a role model and mentor for graduate students, he is simply "indispensable." The "vested interest" he takes in their success runs the gamut from help with developing "nascent ideas" to expert advice on academic publishing. Yet James remains bent on making his stellar teaching ever more creative, dynamic, and effective. He will surely not rest on the laurels of this richly deserved 2016 Gitner Award.

April 27, 2016

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Ann E. Cudd, Dean of Arts & Sciences

The Neu Family Award
Associate Professor of History Sarah T. Phillips

The Neu Family Award for Excellence in Teaching in the College of Arts & Sciences is the gift of Richard Neu (CLA '61) and his daughter Amy (CAS '96).

Sarah Phillips excels in her own teaching and embraces academic leadership roles with one and the same overarching goal of seeking ways to empower students as practicing scholars of history.

Stem-to-stern revisions of the History curriculum bear the unmistakable stamp of Professor Phillips's vision, influence, and effectiveness. As Director of Undergraduate Studies, she led the faculty team that developed a model course to equip freshmen with a historian's toolkit for framing and answering research questions. Rather than survey the whole history of Boston, HI 190 focuses in depth on three defining moments of community and conflict: witchcraft, immigration, and race. Through collaboration with the Massachusetts Historical Society, the course gets students working as hands-on archivists with centuries-old objects and manuscripts. HI 190 begat HI 191, which takes the same approach, bringing students' analysis of material remains to bear not only on the recurring question "What's Europe," but also on the methodological question of how historians use texts and objects as building blocks of narratives and arguments.

Professor Phillips also led her colleagues in establishing "Honors in the History Major" as a "crown jewel" of undergraduate education. She constructed and taught the first two iterations of the honors seminar that guides seniors through the twinned processes of managing large amounts of information and writing a polished 50-page thesis. It is largely thanks to her persistent advocacy that CAS now sponsors Honors Research Travel Grants, which history students have put to excellent advantage, in the U.S. and abroad.

A hallmark of the honors seminar is the responsibility it places on students to engage intensively with each other's work as a community of scholars who care about history but know little about each other's specific topics. In this setting, as in her sought-after supervision and mentoring of graduate students, Professor Phillips sets a shining example of "unbridled intellectual curiosity," "unreserved attention," "incisive" criticism, pinpoint verbal accuracy, and "refreshing" advice to competent writers for writing even better. Students credit her trademark "why" and "so what" questions with motivating "scholars at every level to expand the scope of their thinking and reconsider their preconceptions."

Professor Phillips imparts her own core passions for U.S. and environmental history in highly rated courses where multimedia prompts complement challenging readings and help shape each class meeting around a mystery or puzzle. CAS honors Sarah's teaching in this and its many other dimensions with the 2016 Neu Family Award, and with no less pride than she palpably takes in the earned success of any and all students of history.

April 27, 2016

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Ann E. Cudd, Dean of Arts & Sciences

The Frank and Lynne Wisneski Award
Associate Professor of English and in the Core Curriculum
Amy Appleford

The Frank and Lynne Wisneski Award for Excellence in Teaching in the College of Arts & Sciences honors their daughter, Corey Wisneski, a 1999 graduate in Anthropology.

Amy Appleford is a consummate teacher—intellectually capacious, awesomely effective, innovative, inspiring, generous, and beloved.

Colleagues marvel at the variety, originality, and depth of Professor Appleford's offerings. Tasked with covering a thousand years of premodern English literature, she has made speedy work of building a repertoire that extends still further—to the history of the English language, Core Humanities from Antiquity through the Renaissance, and pedagogy workshops for first-time graduate teachers. She enlists methodological approaches from visual studies, religious history, and performance theory in shrewdly organized, digitally supported courses that bring students quickly to the point of engaging the strange and unfamiliar with scholarly caution and unanticipated enthusiasm. She puts a premium on clear writing, but also on helping students develop an effective oral presentation style and persona. It shows: Visitors to her highly participatory classes describe a "brilliant atmosphere of collaborative learning." She knows how to open up a subject for exploration, how to stand back and let students debate each other, and when to step in to clarify points of confusion. "Sensible and efficient to the point of elegance," her teaching generates moments of quietly "luminous" understanding, as well as wondrously uninhibited foot stomping to metrical variations in the poetry of John Donne.

While fully earning her reputation as a "one-woman curriculum," Professor Appleford has also emerged as a community builder and leader in the teaching of the humanities at BU. For, as her chair puts it, "she recognizes that excellence of individual instructors is most valuable when engaged with the common enterprise of programmatic and curricular visions." She has led her department in rethinking the roster and role of 100-level EN courses and taking astute advantage of opportunities for interdepartmental cross-listing. As an associate director of the Core Curriculum, she coordinates all aspects of the third-semester humanities course with aplomb and with the same generosity as an interlocutor for colleagues about teaching that she brings to her participation in the medieval studies minor and the Religion Department's Program in Scripture and the Arts.

Professor Appleford's students benefit twice over from a motivating, challenging teacher and a tirelessly accessible, supportive mentor. They cannot commend her all-purpose office hours too highly or say enough about how she makes students feel like individuals whose concerns and passions matter. Writes one: "I have never had an educator who seemed so dedicated to helping students excel beyond what is necessary for her specific course." Amy's 2016 Wisneski Award echoes those superlatives on behalf of the College.

April 27, 2016

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Ann E. Cudd, Dean of Arts & Sciences

College of Arts & Sciences Award for Distinction in First Year Undergraduate Education Lecturer in Biology Kathryn Spilios

This award recognizes a member of the CAS faculty for excellence in teaching, mentoring and/or other contributions to the undergraduate First Year Experience.

The many interlocking responsibilities, initiatives, and achievements of entomologist Kathryn Spilios's remarkable work to improve the undergraduate first-year experience radiate throughout Biology, CAS, BU, and the national conversation on STEM education.

As director of Biology's instructional labs, Dr. Spilios impeccably manages all aspects of labs for more than 2,600 students each year, while also serving as faculty coordinator of the Introductory Bio sequence. In that latter role, she has introduced the use of clickers and other active learning tools. Another of her pedagogical initiatives, contextualizing each lecture topic with a recent journal article, helps students develop scientific literacy in tandem with understanding of the topic. Most fundamentally, she has reconceived the entire first-year laboratory curriculum, replacing "recipe-based" labs where outcomes are predetermined with an inquiry-based lab experience that approximates the activities of real science and promotes critical thinking. Along these same lines, she has taken the lead for Biology in collaboration with Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Chemistry, and Neuroscience on a new fully integrated lab sequence where first- and second-year students can experience contemporary research science as a cross-disciplinary endeavor. And, positioning BU as a national leader, she and her colleague Angela Seliga co-hosted the 2015 ABLE conference of the Association for Biology Laboratory Education.

New ambitions for undergraduate learning call for new ways of teaching, and, as an enterprising, supportive mentor of teachers, Dr. Spilios has again made all the difference. For biology teaching fellows, many assigned to freshman labs, she leads the weekly pedagogical seminar, BI 697, where the way to inquiry-based instruction is paved by such deceptively simple exercises as turning closed into open-ended questions. This year, she recast parts of BI 697 as an "active learning" module for a MOOC on STEM teaching that BU is developing with three AAU partners. In addition to graduate students, the teaching force for biology labs includes Learning Assistants (LAs), high-performing undergraduates who are selected to assist in courses they have successfully completed. An early implementer of the LA program, Dr. Spilios now serves as director of its campus-wide leadership board. At regional conferences she co-hosts, faculty from other colleges and universities can receive tools and tips for starting their own LA programs. As a co-leader of the School of Education course that informs BU LAs' teaching, she helps guide them in honing their skills and making sense of their weekly experiences.

On the front lines and behind the scenes, Kathryn relates to students, fellow teachers, and the whole web of her educational efforts with deep personal purpose and true distinction.

April 27, 2016

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Ann E. Cudd, Dean of Arts & Sciences

Arts & Sciences
Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Education
John R. Silber Professor of Philosophy Daniel O. Dahlstrom

This award recognizes a member of the CAS faculty whose commitment to excellence in graduate teaching, mentoring, and/or program development has contributed significantly to the quality of education in the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

For two decades, Dan Dahlstrom has been a leading light of BU's graduate program in Philosophy, shining both in the classroom and as a prolific, highly regarded mentor.

Professor Dahlstrom's teaching draws on wide-ranging, expert knowledge of historical and contemporary work across metaphysics, phenomenology, aesthetics, and ethics. His "incomparably rewarding" seminars are typically packed with students from our own and neighboring departments of philosophy, as well as international visitors hanging on his every word; "there are always four tape recorders on in front of him at any given time," says one recent Heidegger student. Praise for the seminars consistently depicts an "ideal environment" where careful textual work and philosophical analysis go hand-in-hand, where elucidation of difficult trajectories of thought occurs with no dumbing down, and where students' contributions are strongly encouraged and highly valued.

Many students who thrive in seminar settings on Professor Dahlstrom's encouragement to excel and careful attention to details of their writing and thinking choose to complete their dissertations under his gifted, legendarily comprehensive, and effective tutelage. One year's annual report notes his having participated as a reader in six defenses, four successfully defended proposals, and five others "in proposal development mode." Not only has his dissertation readership reached an impressive total of 57 and counting; all but one of the graduates for whom he served as first reader went on to teaching positions.

What qualities make having Professor Dahlstrom for a thesis mentor so extraordinary? Lauren Freeman, now on the tenure track at the University of Louisville, recalls how he always made time to meet with her; how "entirely dedicated" he was to each advisee's project; and how she gained "the confidence to present [her] work publicly and succeed in the field" thanks to his urging to get an early start on submitting papers to professional conferences. Karen Gorodeisky, now tenured at Auburn University, cites the "special freshness" of his guiding her "inexperienced self" toward a "pioneering" specialization that he knew to be "marked with professional promise" and, no less importantly, to suit her "intellectual temperament." Like his BU colleagues, she nonetheless remains mystified by how "swiftly" he managed to read "drafts of drafts" of her chapters and return them "with a host of constructive comments, suggestions, questions, and even typo corrections." Indeed, she takes as the ultimate measure of his selfless and durable impact on her professional life that Dan *proof*read the 500-page dissertation of a non-native English speaker "as thoroughly, patiently, and constructively as he does everything else."

April 27, 2016

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Ann E. Cudd, Dean of Arts & Sciences

Arts & Sciences
Dean's Award for Excellence in Graduate Education
William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor and Professor of Physics, Chemistry, Biomedical Engineering, and Physiology
H. Eugene Stanley

This award recognizes a member of the CAS faculty whose commitment to excellence in graduate teaching, mentoring, and/or program development has contributed significantly to the quality of education in the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

Statistical physicist Gene Stanley has graduated more than 100 PhD students, including an impressive 16 women. Many of that staggering number enjoy immensely successful careers around the globe as senior scientists and rising stars: they hold endowed chairs, direct institutes and chair departments, and win prestigious awards; his thesis advisee Sharon Glotzer has the distinction of being the first BU PhD in Physics to gain election to both the National Academy of Science and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Professor Stanley today upholds the same visionary commitment to doctoral education and its inseparability from his path-breaking interdisciplinary research agenda that he brought from MIT to BU nearly 40 years ago. "My sincere wish," he wrote in 1982, is "to create an intellectually stimulating and emotionally supportive home for graduate students who choose Boston University." In 2011, he took the occasion of being named a Warren Distinguished Professor to once again put graduate mentoring front and center: "One of the key features of my teaching and research is to recognize the priceless value of each student and the ability of a student to bring their innate creativity to bear in approaching new problems."

Professor Stanley has adopted the apprenticeship style of mentoring, involving his students in every aspect of his daily work and international collaborations. His door is always open, and his office is usually shared with one or more students. He leads his dynamic group in attempts to solve puzzles of science from the structure of water to the onset of Alzheimer's disease. Decades ago, his then controversial experiment to enhance the training of his graduate students by teaming them with K-12 teachers of underserved populations led to creation of the National Science Foundation's GK-12 program.

In 2004, the American Physical Society awarded Professor Stanley a Nicholson Medal: "*For his extraordinary contributions to human rights, for his initiatives on behalf of female physicists, and for his caring and supportive relationship with those who have worked in his laboratory."* If that weren't enough cause for celebration here, he has recently expanded his sphere of pioneering originality and influence to include classroom teaching of other mentors' advisees. His new signature courses on econophysics and network science have been instant hits, greeted by students with rave reviews: "amazing, teacher," "cutting edge," "great professor, motivates class," "a beautiful job."

April 27, 2016

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Ann E. Cudd, Dean of Arts & Sciences