Pat Walton honored with MSU Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor Award

S. Patrick Walton, associate professor of chemical engineering and materials science, and Amber Pearson, assistant professor of geography, environment and spatial sciences, are the 2017 recipients of the annual Undergraduate Research Faculty Mentor of the Year Award.

Two awards are given each year – one to a faculty member representing science and engineering, which was given to Walton, and one to a faculty member representing the social sciences and humanities, which was given to Pearson.

Rebecca Carlson, an undergraduate student studying chemical engineering in the College of Engineering, and one of Walton’s mentees, nominated him for the award.

“Dr. Walton is, without a doubt, the best mentor I have ever had,” Carlson said. “He has been instrumental in my decision to attend graduate school next year, and I doubt that I would have decided to pursue a career in research without his mentorship. He has offered his support, both in my research and academic endeavors, at every step of my undergraduate education. He never fails to surprise me with his generosity in spending time mentoring me and other undergraduates and knowing how to challenge us to become the best students and researchers that we can be.”

The award recognizes MSU faculty members who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to mentoring undergraduate researchers. The award is completely student-driven. Only undergraduate researchers can submit nominations. The university’s undergraduate research ambassadors review and select the finalists.

The awards were presented during the annual University Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum on April 8. Read more on MSU undergraduate research.

• It is the second year in a row that the universitywide, student-nominated award went to a faculty member in the College of Engineering. In 2016, Evangelyn Alocilja, professor of biosystems and agricultural engineering, received the honor.