2018 Withrow Awards

March 16, 2018

Eleven receive top honors during 28th Annual Engineering Awards Luncheon

The Michigan State University College of Engineering celebrated teaching, scholarship, and service during the 28th Annual Engineering Awards Luncheon in the University Club on Thursday, March 15. Eleven faculty and staff members were honored.

Tom Voice, associate dean for administrative affairs for the College of Engineering, welcomed the more than 100 guests during the annual spring ceremony and served as emcee.

The Withrow Endowed Teacher/Scholar/Service Award program was established through a gift from MSU alumni Jack Withrow (BS, MECH EGR, ’54; MBA ’71) and Dottie Withrow (BA, speech therapy and elementary education, ’55) to recognize faculty of the MSU College of Engineering who have demonstrated excellence in instructional and scholarly activities and rendered distinguished service to the university and the student body.

The 2018 awards and recipients are:

Gloria Stragier Award for Dedicated and Creative Service – Patte Hahn
This award is presented annually to a staff member in the College of Engineering to recognize exceptional and creative job performance and/or concerned and creative leadership.
Patte Hahn, an educational program coordinator in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, has been administrative manager for the National Center for Pavement Preservation (NCPP) since its inception in 2002. She was cited for contributions that contributed greatly to the Center’s growth over the years by effectively managing day-to-day business operations, developing an understanding of the business of the industry that she serves, and acting as mentor to the staff she oversees.

Withrow Student Service Award
This award is presented to an advisor, academic specialist, or non-tenure-track instructor for outstanding service to students in the college.

Amanda G. Idema, assistant dean for Undergraduate Student Affairs, was cited for her leadership and compassion throughout her career assisting and guiding students in their academic careers. She is currently responsible for all College of Engineering advising functions and the advising staff. She is personally responsible for taking action with regards to University policies concerning withdrawals, late drops, probation, recess, readmission, student appeals and other special circumstances.

Global Leadership Award – Ajit Srivastava
This new award recognizes faculty and staff members who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in advancing global scholarship through research, teaching and outreach.

Ajit Srivastava, a professor in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering (BAE), was cited for career contributions that have made a significant impact in advancing global engagement and strategic programs in international scholarship and student experiences. In addition to serving as BAE department chair for nearly 18 years, Dr. Srivastava was a founding codirector of the Global Center for Food Systems Innovation (GCFSI) funded by a $25 million grant from the USAID Global Innovation Lab.
2018 Withrow Teaching Excellence Awards

Each year, students in the College of Engineering nominate faculty members for this prestigious honor, which is based on excellence in teaching and mentorship.

Bradley Marks, a professor and associate chair of the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering, and a professor of Food Science and Human Nutrition, is a gifted educator who makes difficult concepts easy to comprehend and apply outside the classroom. His student evaluations are consistently among the highest on campus, with a mean overall rating of more than 3.9 (on a 4.0 scale) over 40 courses and 18 years at MSU.

Maddalena Fanelli, a teaching specialist within the Department of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science, is a passionate educator who is dedicated to student learning, inside and outside of the classroom. A common thread among student comments is that she goes above and beyond to make herself available to students.

Susan J. Masten, a professor and associate chair for Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, has been a member of the MSU College of Engineering faculty for more than 28 years, she has taught both civil and environmental engineering courses at both introductory and advanced levels, and has been the faculty advisor for the MSU chapter of Engineers Without Borders USA since the chapter’s founding in 2004.

Laura K. Dillon, a professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, is committed to improving the education of all students, especially underrepresented minorities. In recognition of the difficulties many early-career students face in their initial computing class, she pioneered a supplemental course (CSE 291: Computational Thinking Lab) to provide support for students most at risk of doing poorly in their first programming course, helping many students succeed in pursuing their chosen field of computer science.

Tongtong Li, an associate professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, has demonstrated exemplary dedication to student education throughout her 16-year tenure at MSU. She developed a new course, Wireless Communications and Networking (ECE 869), and redeveloped the undergraduate communication course ECE 457 by absorbing recent advances in digital communications into the curriculum.

Tamara Reid Bush, an associate professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, takes genuine interest in the success of her students and that of the department in educating the future of engineering. While she maintains a
robust research program, she also has a passion for excellence in teaching, which is critical to providing students a solid foundation for life-long learning.

**Distinguished Scholar - Junior Award – Xiaoming Liu**
This award recognizes a faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in scholarship and not been at MSU for more than seven years.

**Xiaoming Liu** is an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering who has made many notable contributions in the areas of computer vision, biometrics, pattern recognition, and machine learning. He has established the Computer Vision Laboratory as a top research lab in the field. Since joining MSU just five and a half years ago, Professor Liu has been extremely productive, has had a significant positive impact in the research community, and has become a leader in his field. The central theme of his research is to enhance visual intelligence by designing robust, efficient, and self-aware computer vision algorithms. His work has significantly advanced the state of the art in image alignment, video-based recognition, and computer vision systems and applications. He has been issued six patents for his work.

**Distinguished Scholar - Senior Award – Xiaobo Tan**
This award recognizes the scholarship contributions of a faculty member who has been at MSU for more than five years, and holds the rank of professor.

**Xiaobo Tan**, is an MSU Foundation Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, and director of the MSU Smart Microsystems Laboratory. An expert in automatic control systems, he has made significant contributions to modeling and control of smart materials, and is internationally recognized for his seminal work in developing fish-like robots for underwater sensing. He has successfully blended deep theoretical concepts into his research with practical approaches to provide innovative solutions to complex problems. His research is interdisciplinary, spanning controls, dynamics, materials, fabrication, and robotics. He has established extensive collaborations at MSU and beyond with electrical and mechanical engineers, computer scientists, environmental scientists, and ecologists.

**Read more on the 2018 award winners**

**Related Website:** [Communications contact: Patricia Mroczek](https://www.egr.msu.edu/news/2018/03/16/2018-withrow-awards)