

News Release

Rachel McCoppin, Ph.D., Recognized with Horace T. Morse U of M Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education

By Itolles on Monday, April 22, 2013 Listening is a big part of learning. For Rachel McCoppin, Ph.D., associate professor in the Liberal Arts and Education Department at the University of Minnesota Crookston, listening plays just as significant a role in teaching. McCoppin was recognized recently for her teaching when she was named a recipient of the prestigious Horace T. Morse U of M Alumni Association Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education.

McCoppin has been teaching in the area of literature and humanities at the U of M Crookston since 2003. She will be recognized, along with six others, at a ceremony on Tuesday, April 30, 2013, at the Mc Namara Alumni Center in Minneapolis. The annual award recognition honors the University's best teaching professors for their contributions to undergraduate, graduate, and professional education. The ceremony includes comments from recipients, presentations of the awards, and a reception.

"The student voice is as important as any voice in my classroom," McCoppin says. "It is through listening that I grow as an instructor and I witness students in my classes develop." As a college student, McCoppin found she enjoyed classes most where students and the instructor interacted as equals in a discussion. While these kinds of classes are harder to prepare for, McCoppin feels they challenge her as well as build her confidence as an instructor.

Diversity in the classroom is a deeply held value for McCoppin, and she sees teaching as transformative. She welcomes discussions in her classroom that include more than just western ideas, but rather, uses the topics as a path to uncover ideas and perspectives in ancient literature and incorporate them into the study. "It requires intense critical thinking and a search for evidence for my students and me," McCoppin says. "But, it has proven to be a way for me to bring the whole world to the study of humanities."

McCoppin was promoted from assistant professor to associate professor with tenure in August 2009. She earned her doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pa., her master or arts from Northern Michigan University, Marquette, Mich., and her bachelor of arts from the University of Michigan, Flint, in English. Her research interests include mythology, world literature, and the pedagogy of literature and ethics.

In 2010, students recognized her with the Outstanding Educator Award, and in 2005, McCoppin received the Outstanding Service Learning Faculty Award. She was also presented by students with the award for Most Creative Use of Technology in 2006.

Background

Along with McCoppin, other recipients of the Morse-Alumni award include Jennifer Deane, Social Sciences from the U of M Morris; Christopher Dovolis, College of Science and Engineering; Carrie Earthman, College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences; Karen LaBat, College of Design; Susan Staats, College of Education and Human Development; and Susan Wick, College of Biological Sciences, all from the U of M, Twin Cities.

Recipients of the award are chosen by student and faculty members of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, previous award recipients, and a representative of the University of Minnesota Alumni Association. The Distinguished Teaching Awards are sponsored by the Senate Committee on Educational Policy, the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and the University of Minnesota Alumni Association.

Since 1965, the University has recognized exceptional undergraduate faculty for their contributions to student learning through classroom teaching, research, and creative activities; advising; academic program development; and educational leadership. The award is named for the late Horace T. Morse, who served as the first dean of the University's General College from 1946-66 and who was a national leader in the field of undergraduate education. For more information, visit www.minnesotaalumni.org/DTA. Today the University of Minnesota Crookston delivers 27 bachelor's degree programs, 18 minors, and 39 concentrations on campus--as well as 10 degrees online--in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from 25 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.



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