

Two Win Coveted Honors College Faculty Awards

This Award was established in cooperation with the Honors College Student Advisory Committee and the Honors College Alumni Association to recognize exceptional contributions to Honors College students through teaching, advising, or mentoring. The Award was presented at the University Undergraduate Scholarship Recognition Dinner on May 4. In addition to a certificate, the Award recipients received an honorarium of \$1,000, and all the recipients of this Award are identified on a permanent display located at the Honors College in Eustace-Cole Hall.

Elizabeth Booth, professor of practice in the Department of Finance, and **Sandi Smith**, professor in the Department of Communication, were selected as the 2006 recipients of the Honors College Award for Distinguished Contributions to Honors Students. A number of current Honors College business students (including Joshua Pierce and Kevin Smith, working with Broad College of Business Corporate Academic Relations Director Helen Dashney) nominated Professor Booth for the Award; Professor Smith was nominated by Honors College sophomore Samantha Munday, with the support of a number of student colleagues.

Professor Booth serves as an Honors Adviser for students in the Department of Finance and regularly teaches the honors section of Finance 311, Financial Management. Many students comment on the value of the challenging case studies that she incorporates into the Finance 311 class, which helps make complex financial theories more understandable and relevant. Extremely student oriented, she is a much respected and appreciated mentor to a number of Honors business students, challenging students to reach their full potential. One student nominator noted of Professor Booth, “her most compelling attribute is the interest she takes in the futures of her students. She has pushed me to explore options I would not have pursued, and I have grown immensely from the experience.”

Professor Smith is the Honors Adviser for students in communication and also coordinates numerous honors options by students in Communication 325, Interpersonal Influence and Conflict. Professor Smith is particularly appreciated by her students as an especially dedicated and passionate adviser and mentor. As one student nominator wrote, “Sandi works so hard for her students that it is flat out impossible not to be encouraged and believe you are capable of so much more.”

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Elizabeth Booth

“Helping [Honors College students] clarify their goals, facilitating their progress toward reaching those goals, and interacting with them as they learn, explore, and play with ideas is personally rewarding . . . students have noted that these relationships with me and other faculty members, built upon communication, create a smaller community within MSU where they feel a sense of family and camaraderie.”

Sandi Smith

Reflections from the winners...

Elizabeth Booth

As a member of the Honors College faculty, I have had the great privilege of working with the best and the brightest students not only at MSU but also in the world. I am convinced that many of our students are actually better than those attending Ivy League schools. As a case in point, one of my students graduated in May and accepted a position at a Wall Street investment firm. Most of his fellow trainees were from the best East Coast schools. He called at the end of his training period to tell me that on the final exam, he was the only person to achieve a perfect score on the exit exam. He was surprised; I was not!



One of the nicest aspects of teaching at MSU is that the students are genuine and unpretentious. The only attitude you see in the classroom is one of respect and enthusiasm. During the past seven years, I have watched many students discover a passion for the discipline of finance. It is incredibly rewarding to nurture and develop that spark for learning and to watch the human growth and development of these students. I feel at the end of each semester that I have learned as much, if not more from my students, as they have from me.

Many of my former students have achieved high levels of success in business, giving me a sense of pride and accomplishment. However, it is the personal connection with the students that is most important to me. I keep in touch with most of my former students and many have become personal friends. I know from speaking with many of my colleagues in the Honors College that they have developed similar bonds with their students.

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Sandi Smith

My scholarship and work with Honors College students, two of the loves of my life, share many commonalities. Communication scholars share an interest in messages at the core of their endeavors. We are concerned with the production and interpretation of messages and the ways that transactions between people, as they share messages, drive the formation of relationships and creation of communities in many different contexts.

Whether in the context of Fireside Chat dinners, advising appointments, classrooms, or grant research teams, the messages exchanged and relationships that I have developed with members of the Honors College have brightened and enriched my life. Advising Honors College students is a privilege. Helping them to clarify their goals, facilitating their progress toward reaching those goals, and interacting with them as they learn, explore, and play with ideas is personally rewarding. Honors College students have noted that these relationships with me and other faculty members, built upon communication, create a smaller community within MSU where they feel a sense of family and camaraderie.



Over the years some of the goals and dreams that honors students in my department have successfully pursued include being good communicators, family members, and community citizens, as well as professionals attaining careers such as screen writers, attorneys, human resource specialists, public relations practitioners, faculty members, museum specialists, and media producers. They have had films at the Sundance Festival, worked for companies such as the Discovery Channel, and pursued graduate careers at schools such as the University of Southern California, Northwestern University, and Michigan State University, among others.

When I found out that I received this award, and that I was both nominated and chosen by students, I was honored and happily surprised. Honestly, I was unsure whether or not I was worthy of this honor. After reflection, one lesson that comes to me from this experience is that others perceive excellence in the performance of small everyday interchanges, such as genuinely desiring to know and help the other, answering questions with respect and encouragement in a timely fashion, helping others find information and make connections, and challenging them but making yourself available for help each step of the way. Not ironically, each of these small acts is based on communication. In closing, I want to thank all of the Honors College students with whom I have formed rewarding relationships, my fellow faculty members in the Department of Communication who value education and scholarship so highly, and the personnel at the Honors College who facilitate the development of honors students in all of their endeavors.