NOTE: Photos of the award winners are available at http://photolab.etsu.edu/images/FacultyAwardWinners2012/.

ETSU presents Distinguished Faculty Awards

JOHNSON CITY – East Tennessee State University bestowed its highest honors upon three professors today with the presentation of the 2012 Distinguished Faculty Awards for Teaching, Research and Service.

The winners were nominated and selected by their faculty peers. Each received a medallion, a plaque and a $5,000 check provided by the ETSU Foundation during the annual Faculty Convocation, which marks the beginning of the new academic year and fall semester.

Dr. Allan Forsman, an associate professor in the Department of Health Science, is the recipient of the 2012 Distinguished Faculty Award in Teaching.

Forsman earned his baccalaureate degree in biological science at the University of North Dakota (UND) and his graduate and doctoral degrees at the UND School of Medicine. Prior to his arrival at ETSU, Forsman held a teaching position at Utica (N.Y.) College and served as a laboratory manager/radiation officer in BioServe Space Technologies at the University of Colorado. He previously held a faculty appointment at the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific in California, and was a post-doctoral fellow at the NASA Specialized Center of Research and Training in Gravitational Biology, located at Kansas State University.

He joined the ETSU faculty in 1998 and was promoted to associate professor in 2004.

In nominating Forsman for the teaching award, the College of Public Health’s Faculty Awards Committee remarked on his passion for teaching and that he teaches — among other courses — introduction classes in very large sections. The committee noted that he “has been in the vanguard of professors [who] have integrated technology into their existing courses.”

According to the committee, Forsman has devoted several years to creating an extensive catalog of audiovisual teaching aids for his courses to complement and enhance the textbook and lab models.

In addition, Forsman has achieved international notoriety for his contributions to the iTunes educational platform. He has posted hundreds of anatomy lecture podcasts and videocasts on the ETSU-iTunes website that have been downloaded “hundreds of thousands of times.” According to an ETSU employee who manages the ETSU-iTunes site, more than 100,000 downloads of Forsman’s lectures were made in one two-week period, resulting in Forsman being “one of the most ‘downloaded’ professors on iTunes.”

A student wrote, “Dr. Forsman has always demonstrated a great passion toward teaching…. His positive attitude about learning and gaining knowledge inspired me to continue my education on the subject
matter and become a lifelong learner…. He went above his requirements as a teacher and spent his personal
time posting recorded lectures and managing his own website built to help students learn. To me, these
actions demonstrated what it means to truly love teaching.”

Another nominator added that Forsman has received numerous letters of appreciation from students
around the world, including as far away as Australia, London, Africa and Canada.

As winner of the 2012 Distinguished Teaching Award, Forsman will serve as Mace Bearer for
ETSU’s fall 2012 and spring 2013 commencement ceremonies.

The 2012 ETSU Distinguished Faculty Award in Research went to Dr. Zhi Q. “John” Yao, an
associate professor of Internal Medicine in ETSU’s James H. Quillen College of Medicine.

Yao’s research focuses on innate immune responses to chronic hepatitis C infection. Through his
work on the immunobiology of viral hepatitis, he has become influential in his field and has garnered
significant attention for the university.

Yao’s expertise in both the clinical and research aspects of hepatic viral infection also led to his
appointment as the Hepatology program director at the Quillen VA Medical Center. In that position, he has
developed a clinical training site for Quillen College of Medicine medical residents and fellows.

Yao joined the ETSU faculty in 2008. He has received both intramural and extramural funding support
for his research at ETSU, including three National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants. His most recent NIH
grant, awarded through NIH’s National Institute of Digestive and Diabetes and Kidney Diseases, totals
approximately $2 million.

“Dr. Yao is simply a brilliant researcher,” wrote one colleague. “He has had outstanding training, but
perhaps more importantly he has the ability to recognize and respond to fundamental gaps in our
understanding of infectious diseases. His successes are in great part a recognition that physician scientists
such as Dr. Yao are extremely important to our society’s research programs.

“I am extremely proud of his accomplishments but expect that his career will continue to flourish, and
he will continue to elevate the university through his pursuit of research excellence.”

This supporter noted that Yao has been significant in building bridges that strengthen ETSU’s research
agenda. He has forged collaborations with Wake Forest University’s Translational Science Institute, and has
also developed promising international research ties with investigators in China.

Another colleague added: “Dr. Yao is well-known for being a role model as a clinician scientist. This
excellent reputation in patient-oriented scientific research, in teaching clinic and research fellows, and fine
personality with very good personal relationships with his colleagues and friends is consistently demonstrated
through his interactions with people in the past years.”

Yao has been prolific in his academic writing, with approximately 15 peer-reviewed publications in
the past three years alone. His most recent publication was selected for the cover of Journal of Leukocyte
Biology. The paper was published as the journal’s “Leading Edge Article” with an accompanying editorial.

Yao earned his medical and doctoral degrees from the Fourth Military Medical University in China.
Following distinguished academic service in China, his career path led him to noted academic institutions in
Europe and the United States. He was a visiting scholar in the Department of Hepatology at Katholic
University of Leuven in Belgium; served as a senior fellow in the Department of Virology at the City of Hope
National Medical Center in Los Angeles; and was a research associate and assistant professor at the
University of Virginia’s Beirne Carter Center for Immunology Research.

The 2012 ETSU Distinguished Faculty Award in Service was presented to Dr. Rosalind Raymond
Gann, an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction within the Claudius G.
Clemmer College of Education.
A specialist in literacy issues, Gann earned a bachelor’s degree in English at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, followed by a Master of Social Work degree in clinical social work at Smith College and a doctorate in education at the University of Cincinnati.

After graduating from college, Gann was a social worker with the Brooklyn Bureau of Child Welfare. Most of her clients were of African American or Hispanic heritage. Later, during her time in Cincinnati, she served as a classroom teacher and reading specialist who designed materials for at-risk populations.

By the time she came to ETSU in 2002, Gann had taught at Sabanci University in Istanbul, stirring her interest in international literacy issues. She then taught a course in Morristown that introduced her to the growing Hispanic population there, and she developed three consecutively-funded Tennessee Higher Education Commission grants to support the teachers and students who had captured her attention.

According to one nominator, Gann realized that the students’ problems grew not only from English as a second language, but from the fact that native dialects posed issues with their native language as well. In an effort to learn more about native Mexican culture, Gann obtained travel support from the university to spend time in Mexico over one summer.

Gann’s focus on internationalism and literacy led her to accept an invitation to work in Nanjing, China, in 2006 as part of an English language training grant. In 2007, she served as project director for an English language immersion summer experience for faculty from North China University of Technology. Next came a faculty exchange in China as a summer lecturer over the last few years. Her China blog allows her to help ETSU’s students better understand Chinese language, culture and education through service.

“Dr. Gann’s focus on internationalizing ETSU opportunities for students and faculty through work both on campus and abroad is further supported by the service that she provides through the International Friendship Host Family program, her work on the International Advisory Committee, and as college coordinator for undergraduate Fulbright programs,” a nominator wrote.

Gann’s current project involves development of a simulcast English as a Second Language education program for teachers in the United States and China.

One College of Education colleague described Gann as “an extraordinary ambassador of goodwill for East Tennessee State University.”

Another nominator noted, “What I believe to be the single most distinguishing aspect of Dr. Gann’s service is her commitment to engagement with other cultures and her leadership in supporting ETSU’s desire to internationalize.”

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