

# Celebration of 15 Years of WSU Learning Communities



Wright State University celebrated fifteen years of linked-class learning community cohorts on March 12, 2015, at the Learning Community (LC) Awards – also known as “the Elsies.” Learning Community Award recipients from 2000-2013 attended, as well as Wright State’s first Director of Learning Communities, Doug Saul, Dr. Lillie P. Howard, who founded the LC program at Wright State, and WSU graduate Holly Jackson, who was the program’s first Senior Peer Mentor.

Pictured in the top photo: **Seated:** Nav Brar, Patti Roberts, Valerie Felmet Corbet, Holly Jackson. **Standing:** Catherine Queener, Charles Long, Theresa Haghmazarian, Tonya Mathis, Mike Baumer, Brad Pompos, Alex Wenning, Doug Saul, Bobby Rubin, Laura Luehrmann, Amanda Spencer, Edwin Mayes.

# Winners of Fall 2014 WSU Learning Communities Awards

The Learning Communities Awards on March 12, 2015, recognized nine special award recipients honored for their fall 2014 teaching of First-Year Seminars at Wright State. Photos of "Elsie" recipients can be viewed on [wrightstate.smugmug.com](http://wrightstate.smugmug.com). As shown below, Learning Communities Award recipients are:



Seated:

- **Missi McCarthy, Peer Mentor**, Doug Saul Award for Excellence in LC Instruction.
- **Pascale Abadie, Faculty**, Outstanding Collaboration with Jasmine Hunsberger
- **Jasmine Hunsberger, Peer Mentor**, Outstanding Collaboration with Pascale Abadie
- **Emily Simpson, Peer Mentor**, Outstanding Innovation in Teaching

Standing:

- **Kari Simpson, Peer Mentor**, Holly Jackson Award for Outstanding Innovation in Co-Curricular Activities
- **Doug Petkie, Faculty**, Outstanding Faculty Commitment
- **Alex Wenning, Staff**, Holly Jackson Award for Outstanding Innovation in Co-Curricular Activities
- **Craig This, Staff**, Doug Saul Award for Excellence in LC Instruction
- **Amanda Spencer, Staff**, Holly Jackson Award for Outstanding Innovation in Co-Curricular Activities

About recipients and award categories:

## Doug Saul Award for Excellence in Learning Community Instruction

A staff / peer mentor team were the 2014 recipients of the Doug Saul Award for Excellence in Learning Community Instruction. **Craig This** and peer mentor **Missi McCarthy** taught a UVC 1010 themed Disaster History, integrating content from the linked Sociology course into their First-Year Seminar. Focus on the sociology of disasters showed students how disasters can impact individuals differently based on race, gender, and class. Craig This and Missi McCarthy introduced new Raiders into an academic community with an ethic of service, and they balanced magnificent planning with attention to individual student needs.

- This category recognizes our LC seminar instructors who excel in several areas and serve as models of very effective LC instruction including:
  - Strong integration of LC goals into the LC
  - Noteworthy service to LC students
  - Strong connections between the LC seminar and a linked Core Curriculum course
  - Strong academic focus, content, & challenge
  - Fostering a strong sense of community among LC students

Strong ratings on the student course evaluations

### **Holly Jackson Award for Outstanding Innovation in Co-Curricular Activities**

**Alex Wenning and Amanda Spencer** were the winners of this year's Holly Jackson Award for Outstanding Innovation in Co-Curricular Activities. Two staff instructors mirrored classroom activities with powerful co-curricular projects, creating a unique series of opportunities for students to learn from leaders in the Raj Soin College of Business, the WSU campus, and the business community.

Peer mentor **Kari Simpson**, supervised by First-Year Programs, was the third recipient of the Holly Jackson Award this year, for her learning community themed Human Behavior Psychology. Highlights of this class include outstanding field trips, guest speakers, and effective follow-ups to specific challenges and opportunities

- The Holly Jackson Award category includes field trips, class projects that complement linked Core courses, service learning, and similar activities. The category focuses mainly on out-of-class activities and experiences.

### **Outstanding Innovation in Teaching award**

Peer Mentor **Emily Simpson**, with supervision from First-Year Programs, helped teach a UVC 1010 class about working on campus. She enhanced students' First-Year Seminar experience with practical activities for securing jobs on campus now and good career strategies to use throughout their lives.

- This category includes innovations which integrate technology into LCs, including use of multimedia, email discussions, etc. It also includes all other new and/or creative activities and strategies related to enhancing the teaching/learning experience. The category focuses mainly on in-class experiences and related work.

### **Outstanding Collaboration award**

Faculty/peer mentor team **Pascale Abadie and Jasmine Hunsberger** collaborated with the Department of Modern Languages and the LEAP program to teach a splendid Languages and Cultures of the World learning community. This instructional team arranged for the participation of eight different professors from the Modern Languages Department, presenting on: Puerto Rico, Mauritania, Spain, Japan, Germany, Canada, France, and Brazil.

- This category include collaboration between different colleges, between Academic and Student Affairs, between the LC instructor and linked Core Curriculum faculty, between instructors of different LCs, and between the LC instructor and various organizations, both on and off campus. The collaboration may involve development or revision of a learning community and /or planning LC events or projects.

### **Outstanding Faculty Commitment to a First-Year Learning Community**

With the assistance of an able Peer Mentor, **Dr. Doug Petkie** taught a project- and discussion-based class for Physics majors. Engaging projects included measuring the speed of light and measuring the distance travelled by water rockets —made from 2-liter bottles, with cardboard fins duct-taped on, filled with water, pressurized by a bike pump, and launched in a field.

- This award recognizes faculty teaching a university course linked to a first-year LC. Their significant/active role in the LC's experiences exemplifies a commitment to first-year students and LC goals. Examples include class visits, joint field trips, and collaborations & consultations regarding course materials or activities.

Please join us in congratulating these dedicated First-Year Seminar instructors.

Catherine Queener & Jennifer Lobo  
First -Year Programs, University College