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THE ALFRED & SHIRLEY WAMPLER CAUDILL RISING STAR AWARD

The Alfred & Shirley Wampler Caudill 'Rising Star' Award is presented to a full-time faculty member in their first two-to-five years of service at Gardner-Webb University. Criteria for the award include overall excellence in teaching, service, scholarship, advising, or mentoring.

WINNERS

- 2019: Dr. Morgan Soja
- 2018: Dr. Jennifer Putnam
- 2017: Dr. Elizabeth Amato
- 2016: Dr. Bruce Moser

DR. MORGAN SOJA

Dr. Morgan Soja was nominated for her passion, dedication, as well as her assessment expertise. Her commitment to student success rises far above and beyond the call of duty. In the context of her teaching she has (1) created online tutorials and lectures, even for face-to-face classes, (2) created Blackboard courses that contain audio/video recordings and web links, (3) created a new course designed to help students succeed in their placement and employment after leaving Gardner-Webb, (4) engages students outside of her teaching or office hours to help them improve, and (5) has arranged mock interviews with leaders from the community to provide her students with valuable experience that will help them secure employment. Dr. Soja is especially blessed by participating in the Concert for a Cause series which visits area churches each semester and supports their food pantry or hot meal ministries. Above all, she is loved and admired by her students, colleagues and in the community for her exemplary creative activities, scholarship and service.



Pictured: Donor Dr. Donald W. Caudill with the Rising Star winner, Dr. Morgan Soja at the annual Faculty Retreat in August 2019.

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DR. JENNIFER PUTNAM

Dr. Jennifer Putnam, Assistant Professor of Education, embodies the very essence of the phrase "Rising Star," particularly in the context of a Christian university. Her portfolio of scholarship, teaching, and service not only check all the right boxes for this award, but she herself is an exemplar of what and who we hope our students and ourselves will become. One of her students recently shared the following: "You taught me to be an advocate for teachers . . . your course in Leadership and Advocacy was not only the best in the program, but the best I have ever had in my life." Dr. Putnam is making a difference not only in that student's life, but also in many others whose voices are unheard. Locally, she has worked with Cleveland County Schools' Aspiring Administrators Retreat and the statewide Collaborative Advisory Board for Curriculum and Development. She is committed to improving the teaching of peers both here and beyond, serving as a member of the North Carolina Academically/Intellectually Gifted Institute of Higher Education Consortium and as an internal and external reviewer for Quality Matters.



Pictured: Presenter Dr. Ben Leslie and Donor Dr. Donald W. Caudill with the Rising Star winner, Dr. Jennifer Putnam at the annual Faculty Retreat in August 2018.

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DR. ELIZABETH AMATO

Dr. Elizabeth Amato has demonstrated a commitment to excellence in all she does whether in the classroom, through collaborative work with colleagues, or in her engagement with the community. In her second year as an Assistant Professor of Political Science, she stepped up to accept the role of Program Coordinator at a time of unexpected departmental need. She is credited by her colleagues with saving the political science program at a time when it was endangered by budgetary constraints and the lack of a faculty champion. Her sharp intellect and drive to improve student writing have been powerful assets for the Department of Social Sciences. She appeared with a panel of political science experts on the local NPR affiliate WFAE in Charlotte where she distinguished herself as both a scholar and a commentator on the current landscape of Washington, D.C.



Pictured: Donor Dr. Donald W. Caudill with the Rising Star winner, Dr. Elizabeth Amato at the annual Faculty Retreat in August 2017.

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DR. BRUCE MOSER

Dr. Bruce Moser is consistently lauded by students and faculty for his service. As a member of the School of Performing and Visual Arts faculty, he has served GWU by playing for the Faculty Retreat and in the orchestra, singing in musicals, serving as a judge, helping to organize the Life-of-the-Scholar Multidisciplinary Conference, and providing support to Alpha Chi. Additionally, he has demonstrated his proficiency as a scholar through writing and premiering his own compositions and arrangements which he has shared with the University through too many performances to count. The most notable of his accomplishments is perhaps the personal trip he undertook to Vienna that he subsequently organized into an informative musical arrangement and presentation including student and faculty musical performances which was shared as a recital for the entire campus.



If the record of service and scholarship isn't enough, GWU students offered ample evidence of effectiveness in the classroom. One student wrote, "If there is one word I could use to describe his teaching style, it's 'inspiring.' Never in my twenty years have I met an educator so dedicated and enthusiastic about his students as Dr. Moser is." Another student wrote, "Every day I walk into class excited to learn because I know that he's excited to teach us. He delves deeply into the material. As much as this course is supposed to be an overview, he takes certain moments and really breaks a concept down so that we truly understand and appreciate it better."

Pictured: Dr. Bruce Moser, recipient of the 2016 Rising Star Award.

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