



News Release

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WESTERN HONORS FOUR FACULTY MEMBERS

St. Joseph, Mo. —May 10, 2006—Missouri Western State University recognized four faculty members at an award ceremony this month. Three received the Jesse Lee Myers Excellence in Teaching Award, and one received the Dr. James V. Mehl Outstanding Faculty Scholarship Award. Jesse Lee Myers awardees include Dr. Patricia Donaher, assistant professor of English; Deny Staggs, assistant professor of theatre, and Kip Wilson, associate professor of criminal justice. Dr. Reza Hamzaee, professor of economics, received the Dr. James V. Mehl award.

To be eligible for the Dr. James V. Mehl award, the candidate must have evidence of unusually significant and meritorious achievement in professional scholarship.

Dr. Hamzaee's teaching evaluations from students regularly attest to his enthusiasm and commitment, as well as his knowledge of the subject and clarity with which he explains difficult concepts. He has published more than 40 times since 1998, including many articles in refereed professional publications. He has presented more than 80 papers at regional, national and international conferences since 1983. In 2005, he obtained a grant from the state to conduct collaborative research activities with students.

Criteria for the Jesse Lee Myers award include extraordinary teaching ability and outstanding contributions in either scholarly and professional activities, or institutional and community service.

Dr. Donaher's teaching responsibilities include freshman composition, introduction to literature, introductory linguistics, the history of the English language, and popular literature. Last year, she mentored 13 students through the process of proposing, writing and presenting their research as a national refereed conference.

In the past year, Dr. Donaher had four essays accepted for publication, presented two papers at national, refereed conferences, and served as a panelist for three sessions at a national conference.

Staggs has been a faculty member in the communication studies and theatre department since 2002. He has taken a leadership role in promoting the new theatre and video major, and has one of the largest advising loads in the department.

In 2005, Staggs received a commendation award in theatre direction from the Kennedy Center's American College Theatre Festival, Region V. In 2005, he directed *The Rocky Horror Show*, which broke the previous Western box office record set by the 2003 production of *Grease*, which he also directed. He instituted the annual Griffon International Film Festival. Staggs has also worked with several community organizations to help them raise funds.

Wilson is responsible for the creation and continued expansion of the forensics and photography labs in the criminal justice and legal studies department. He receives excellent evaluations from his students, and his students always perform at a high level at regional and national competitions.

Wilson is considered an authority in forensic science, and he frequently serves as a consultant for local and federal law enforcement agencies.

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Missouri Western State University is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The university offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.