

## UC San Diego Scholars Honored with Faculty Excellence Awards

### March 21 event fetes outstanding faculty members

They represent diverse fields ranging from biology to political science and family medicine to literature, but six University of California, San Diego professors now share something in common: They are all recipients of Chancellor's Associates Faculty Excellence Awards. The prestigious awards are presented annually by the UC San Diego Chancellor's Associates donor group for excellence in teaching, research, community service and performing and visual arts. The recognition ceremony will be held Thursday, March 21 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Atkinson Hall, located at the California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) on the UC San Diego campus.

The event, now in its 39th year, honors UC San Diego faculty as a whole, while highlighting the important contributions of the university's most exemplary teachers and researchers via brief video presentations. Chancellor's Associates, a program for donors who give an annual leadership gift of \$2,500 or more to the university, will recognize the outstanding accomplishments of university faculty members with a citation and \$2,500 award.

The recipients of the 2013 Chancellor's Associates Faculty Excellence Awards include: **Tracy Johnson**, a UC San Diego undergraduate alumna and associate professor of molecular biology, for excellence in undergraduate teaching; **Clark Gibson**, professor of political science, for excellence in graduate teaching; **David Lake**, distinguished professor of political science, for excellence in research in humanities and social sciences; **Nicholas Spitzer**, distinguished professor of neurobiology, for excellence in research in science and engineering; **Dr. Marianne McKennett**, a UC San Diego undergraduate alumna and professor of family and preventive medicine for excellence in community service; and **Anna Joy Springer**, associate professor of literature for excellence in performing and visual arts.

"Each of the Faculty Excellence Award honorees is a truly remarkable faculty member," said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "They are exceptional teachers, researchers, community leaders and campus citizens. I congratulate them on this much-deserved recognition and applaud their dedication to the university."

Award candidates are nominated by their academic peers, with final selection by a committee comprising Chancellor's Associates donors. Criteria for selection are based on faculty member achievements, reputation and impact on students and the academic community. Since 1974, UC San Diego has recognized more than 100 extraordinary faculty members with Chancellor's Associates Faculty Excellence Awards.

## **About the 2013 Chancellor's Associates Faculty Excellence Awards recipients:**

### **Tracy Johnson '91, Associate Professor of Molecular Biology**

#### ***Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching***



*Tracy Johnson*

Tracy Johnson is considered an exemplary teacher with student evaluations consistently placing her among the highest-rated faculty lecturers in the Division of Biological Sciences. Though her classes are demanding, Johnson strives to engage each individual in an active learning environment that inspires critical thinking. She is regarded as an outstanding instructor and mentor whose enthusiasm and knowledge leave a lasting impression on students. In addition to her teaching, she has also shown award-winning leadership in the development of innovative curriculum and outreach to young people underrepresented in science.

“Professor Johnson embodies the characteristics of the most outstanding educators,” said Lorraine Pillus, chair of the section of molecular biology in the Division of Biological Sciences. “Throughout her tenure, she has become one of our most respected and beloved instructors, and she has made remarkable contributions to the division’s educational programs and to the university at large.”

### **Clark Gibson, Professor of Political Science**

#### ***Excellence in Graduate Teaching***



*Clark Gibson*

Known as a tireless instructor and mentor, Clark Gibson inspires his students and provides them with countless opportunities to learn through participation in research both here and abroad. He has built one of the top graduate programs in African politics in the country and leads a vibrant intellectual community of students and faculty interested in Africa. The work he is doing with his students, which includes innovative research using smartphones and citizen volunteers to detect and deter electoral fraud, has earned UC San Diego the reputation of being the leader in the the politics of emerging democracies.

“Professor Gibson is a gifted and talented teacher—truly one of our best,” said Philip Roeder, chair of the department of political science in the Division of Social Sciences. “His contributions to graduate education have had significant impact on students, faculty and a wider community that includes governments and citizens around the world.”

## **David Lake, Distinguished Professor of Political Science**

### ***Excellence in Research in Humanities and Social Sciences***



*David Lake*

David Lake is one of the most highly respected and visible intellectual leaders in the field of international relations. His recent ground-breaking book, *Hierarchy in International Relations*, challenges the foundations of contemporary theory in international relations and outlines and tests an alternative view of world politics. He has made many contributions to top journals and is a highly cited author who has successfully and actively shaped the research agenda in international relations. Additionally, Lake is also recognized as a dedicated advisor and mentor who has served in many valuable administrative roles.

“Professor Lake is a superb scholar with tremendous breadth and impact,” said Philip Roeder, chair of the department of political science in the Division of Social Sciences. “Over the course of his career, he has compiled a record of accomplishments that has earned accolades and honors, and distinguished him as one of the most influential researchers in the field of international relations.”

## **Nicholas Spitzer, Distinguished Professor of Neurobiology**

### ***Excellence in Research in Science and Engineering***



*Nicholas Spitzer*

Over the past 40 years, Nicholas Spitzer has repeatedly broken new ground in neuroscience. He has revolutionized our understanding of neuronal plasticity—the way the brain changes in response to changes in the environment in order to generate appropriate behaviors—which has led to insights into the origins of neurological and psychiatric disorders. He currently serves as director of the Kavli Institute for Brain and Mind at UC San Diego, and works to support and enhance the field of neuroscience on campus and in the community.

“Professor Spitzer’s findings have dramatically altered our understanding of the capability of the nervous system to change and rewire itself,” said Darwin Berg, chair of the section of neurobiology in the Division of Biological Sciences. “We are fortunate to have such a brilliant scientist sharing his passion for research and discovery with so many and providing inspiring leadership at UC San Diego.”

## **Marianne McKennett '76, Professor of Family and Preventive Medicine**

### ***Excellence in Community Service***



*Marianne McKennett*

Marianne McKennett has spent two decades developing and directing programs to support underserved populations, most notably the Scripps Chula Vista Family Medicine Residency Program, which was established to serve low-income populations in

Southern San Diego. Her programs focus on attracting and maintaining medical students from underrepresented groups and include high school mentorships designed to encourage local youth to pursue careers in healthcare. Her impact is felt at all levels, and students frequently praise her level of engagement throughout their careers, from pre-enrollment to graduation.

“Dr. McKennett is an extraordinary teacher, role model, physician, program developer and community servant,” said Dr. Gene Kallenberg, chief of the Division of Family Medicine in the department of family and preventive medicine. “Though she is most humble about her work, she is one of our top faculty and we are extremely proud of her and her accomplishments.”

## **Anna Joy Springer, Associate Professor of Literature**

### ***Excellence in Performing and Visual Arts***



*Anna Joy Springer*

Highly esteemed by many members of the American creative writing avant-garde, Anna Joy Springer’s experimental work draws both critical acclaim and crowds of students to her classes. Bridging the gap between literature, visual art, performance and graphic art, Springer expresses her work in ever-changing, multi-disciplinary ways. She seeks to restructure cultural paradigms and present a new reality delivered in a form that is emotional and transformative. As a professor, she is charismatic and untiring, pushing students to new levels and causing them to expand their minds and creative practice.

“Professor Springer is one of those important figures who has already fostered collaborations between artists, writers and neuroscientists and whose multimedia and performance works will continue to inspire and make vibrant the cross-disciplinary conversations and research we all treasure,” said Stephanie Jed, chair of the department of literature in the Division of Arts and Humanities.

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