

## Faculty, Students Honored at Pillars of Excellence Ceremony

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The UA's 2015 Regents' Professors, University Distinguished Professors and University Distinguished Outreach Professors were recognized Friday during the annual Pillars of Excellence ceremony, along with the UA's 2016 Distinguished Scholars and several students in the Honors College.

The seven employees and 12 students will have their names added to a blue plaque in the lower level of the main BookStore in the Student Union Memorial Center, joining more than 130 past honorees.

"Our faculty and students honored have made lasting contributions to our community and to the world," said **Andrew Comrie**, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, who spoke at the event. "This display serves as a reminder as people pass through here that hard work and innovation and persistence and bold thinking are vital to our activities here at the University of Arizona."

Regents' Professor is the highest honor a faculty member can receive. The title was established in 1987 by the Arizona Board of Regents. University Distinguished Professors are faculty members who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to undergraduate education. The award was created by former president Manuel Pacheco in 1995. The University Distinguished Outreach Professor title was established in 2003 by then-UA President Peter Likins to recognize those who have demonstrated excellence in the University's outreach mission. And Distinguished Scholars are faculty members who are recognized as leading experts in their fields and are contributing to the mission of the UA.

The employees and students recognized this year are:

**Regents' Professor of Entomology Bruce E. Tabashnik**, in the **College of Agriculture and Life Sciences** <sup>[1]</sup>, focuses on making agriculture safer, more sustainable and more profitable. With his research and collaborators, he used environmentally friendly methods to eliminate an invasive pest, the pink bollworm, which affected cotton farmers in the Southwest for more than a century. In addition to his research, Tabashnik focuses on helping students grow in their professional and personal lives.

"I am deeply grateful that I was recognized at the lovely Pillars of Excellence ceremony," he said. "Sharing the occasion with colleagues, friends and family who have supported me for so many years was especially gratifying. It was wonderful to learn about the remarkable achievements of the other honorees."

**University Distinguished Professor Vicente Talanquer**, who teaches in the **Department of Chemistry** <sup>[2]</sup>, is an advocate for improving chemistry education and preparation for those who

want to become science teachers.

For more than 15 years, he has worked with the UA's Science Teacher Preparation Program in the **College of Science** [3] to prepare undergraduate students to become successful math and science teachers. Talanquer works to ensure that his teaching is meaningful to students, even in lecture classes with more than 200 students.

He says the most rewarding aspect of working with UA students is "the opportunity to work with students who have diverse backgrounds and challenge me every day to think more deeply about educational issues so that I can help them succeed."

"In research intensive universities like the UA, the excellent work done by many instructors sometimes seems overshadowed by major research accomplishments," Talanquer said. "The recognition of the educational work that we are doing brings me great joy because it puts excellence in teaching in the spotlight. I feel honored by the recognition and energized to continue our work on improving teaching practices at the UA using results from educational research on student learning and productive learning environments."

**University Distinguished Outreach Faculty Henrietta Kralovec**, associate professor of teacher education at UA South, focuses on closing the gap in educational opportunities for K-12 students who are living in underserved communities.

She is currently the lead investigator on a five-year **Department of Education** [4] grant, designed to encourage those who are interested in teaching to pursue that career. She has studied the effects of military service on learning to teach and has been a leading expert in healthy homework guidelines. She appreciates the opportunity to continue her academic outreach.

"I appreciate the land-grant mission of the UA, which supports this kind of community engagement," Kralovec said. "I find most rewarding my colleagues at UA South who share a devotion to teaching and a commitment to educational equity. These common commitments shape our work together."

**University Distinguished Outreach Faculty Frans E. Tax**, professor of **molecular and cellular biology** [5], does research focused on cell communication in plant development, with the goal of applying what he learns about stem cells and their differentiation into specialized cells to help plants grow more efficiently. On top of his own research, he also has worked with K-12 students on research and is one of the founders of a program called PREP, the Partnership for Research and Education in Plants, which aims to teach high school students about genetics, genomics and the scientific method.

**Distinguished Scholar Erica Corral**, associate professor of **materials science and engineering** [6], does research on high-temperature materials that are used in extreme environments. She has contributed to mentoring programs and has been involved in outreach programs. Corral has won two awards from the National Science Foundation and Air Force Office of Scientific Research and has published more than 40 articles, chapters and conference proceedings papers. She also won the 2011 YWCA Women on the Move Emerging Leader Award.

**Distinguished Scholar Jon T. Njardarson**, associate professor in the Department of **Chemistry and Biochemistry** [2] has published 66 scientific papers, been invited to give 85

scientific seminars on his science and been awarded numerous patents. With a passion for chemistry, art and design, he has created one of UA's more successful educational products and applications that have received 850,000 visits and more than 150,000 downloads. He also invests his time in mentoring graduate and undergraduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

**Distinguished Scholar Armin Sorooshian**, associate professor of **chemical and environmental engineering** [7] has had a successful research program on aerosol and cloud studies. He has published 67 peer-reviewed papers and is known for his mentoring and outreach activities, paying special attention to underrepresented groups.

"I am truly honored by this recognition," he says. "This award has special meaning to me in that it was at the UA where I was an undergraduate in the College of Engineering, which helped me reach the point I am at now. It is hard to think of any other place where interdisciplinary research is encouraged as much as the UA, and my affiliation with departments in three colleges has helped me to attract great students and strengthen my interdisciplinary research program. I care deeply about our students and they are the heartbeat that drives me in my teaching, research and outreach activities."

The 2015 Honors College Award for Outstanding Students were given to:

**Mario Aubert Vasquez**, senior majoring in Latin American studies

**Alison Gondosch**, senior majoring in political science, French and sociology

**Stephanie Choi**, junior majoring in English and language, learning and literacy

**Harrison Ivie**, senior majoring in political science

**Alison Comrie**, junior majoring in neuroscience and cognitive science

**Trevor Ledbetter**, senior majoring in ecology and evolutionary biology and environmental science

**Jessie Marman**, senior majoring in studio art

**Joelle Roup**, senior majoring in music (harp performance)

**Prithvi Mohan**, junior majoring in classics and physiology

**Jeannie Wilkening**, senior majoring in chemical engineering

**Dieu My Nguyen**, senior majoring in neuroscience and cognitive science, and creative writing

**Jacob Winkelman**, junior majoring in political science and English

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#### Links

[1] <http://cals.arizona.edu/>

[2] <http://cbc.arizona.edu/>

[3] <http://cos.arizona.edu/>

[4] <https://www.coe.arizona.edu/>

[5] <http://www.mcb.arizona.edu/>

[6] <http://www.mse.arizona.edu/>

[7] <http://www.chee.arizona.edu/>