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Edwin Smith

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## CMSE Founder, Chemical Engineering Professor is 2012 UM Teacher of the Year

APRIL 14, 2012 BY EDWIN SMITH

FaTvLiErCoSMPrSt



OXFORD, Miss. – John O'Haver's vision, drive and enthusiasm inspire University of Mississippi students, faculty and staff in an almost contagious manner.

Colleagues across campus have taken notice of his lively teaching style, and alumni cite him as a major influence on their own successes. Thursday evening, at the university's 69th Honors Day Convocation, Chancellor Dan Jones introduced the professor of chemical engineering as recipient of the 2012 Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher Award.

"For me, teaching is much more than just the content, though it is obviously very important. Teachers shaped my life; I want to be available to help others," said O'Haver, a native Oklahoman who also serves as director of the Center for Math and Science Education. "This award is a recognition that others think I have done my job, and done it well. That I have covered the content, but also influenced lives for the better. That has always been my desire. "

In many ways, O'Haver is exactly the kind of teacher the award was created to honor, Jones said.

"While having the fervor to reach out to public schools, Dr. O'Haver has been a respected researcher, a mentor of undergraduate and graduate researchers, a superior classroom teacher and an innovative administrator," Jones said. O'Haver is the university's only faculty member to have twice been recognized with the Faculty Achievement Award, UM's highest award given to a single faculty member each year who combines excellence in teaching, research and service.

"As a teacher-scholar, Dr. O'Haver is our university's very best," Jones added.

It's the second major award this week for O'Haver, who was named Tuesday as one of the first 12 winners of the Southeastern Conference Faculty Achievement Awards. The winners, one from each SEC institution, are recognized for extraordinary teaching and for records of scholarship that are recognized nationally and/or internationally.

A member of the UM faculty since 1996, O'Haver teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in chemical engineering. Students praise him as a powerful educator, motivator and mentor.

"He engages in life coaching as much as teaching," one student wrote in her nomination letter for the Hood award. Another marveled that, "Dr. O is the best teacher I have known and is undoubtedly an even better mentor."

O'Haver had always wanted to be an educator at the university level.

"When I left teaching high school to go back to grad school, I knew that I wanted to go into academia. I

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

just love working with students,” he said. “I love the ‘light-bulb’ moments. I like being a mentor to those who want me to be one.

“I poke fun at myself. I am very transparent. I do a lot with problem-based learning. We do a lot in teams. I try hard to make the tough concepts very clear and memorable. I try to relate them to life and then ask them to apply the concepts.”

The goal is to let his students know he cares, he said.

“My undergrad days were some of the worst for me, mostly because I didn’t have anyone in my life that I could ask tough questions. So I am available to say to students, ‘I’ve been there. I’ve walked the rough path. I’ve made these bad decisions and I can tell you what happened.’”

O’Haver earned his bachelor’s and his master’s degrees in secondary education and his doctoral degree in chemical engineering, all from the University of Oklahoma. Since joining the UM faculty, he has been ‘the’ leader for outreach efforts that focus on university-level expertise toward improving science, technology, engineering and mathematics teaching in public schools, with special emphasis in the K-6 grade levels.

He was appointed associate dean for academic and student affairs for UM’s School of Engineering. In this role, O’Haver developed new programs, including a set of writing courses for engineering students and a special class to help certain entering engineering majors shore up their fundamental academic skills.

An accomplished researcher with expertise in applied surfactants and surface chemistry, he publishes regularly in the peer-reviewed journals in his field and has directed the theses and dissertations of approximately 20 students, including a number as part of a cooperative arrangement with institutions in Thailand.

O’Haver and his wife, Kevie, have a son, Hudson, and a daughter, Maren, both 14.

Each year since 1966, the university has recognized excellence in teaching by presenting the Elsie M. Hood Outstanding Teacher Award. Based on nominations from both students and faculty, the award includes a personal plaque and a check from the chancellor. Recipients’ names are also engraved on a plaque listing previous winners, which is displayed in the J. D. Williams Library.

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