

School of Natural Sciences' Faculty Awards 2022

Recognizing faculty efforts and achievements is central on all university campuses, and the UC Merced Faculty Senate has a well-established awards program that acknowledges faculty success in many key areas. These campus-wide awards are appropriate and fitting, but they don't speak to some more specific areas that are central to the success of the School of Natural Sciences. Last spring, the Dean collaborated with the School Executive Committee to establish nine faculty awards and implement a new annual award process to recognize these often-unsung efforts.

Winners received a commemorative medal and a modest Amazon gift card.

Developing or Improving Academic Programs and Tracks

This award recognizes a faculty member who has taken the lead in developing academic programming that serves the changing needs of our students and support the growth of our School. This year's award goes to **Roummel Marcia** for his leadership in building the Data Science tracks within the undergraduate and graduate Applied Mathematics programs, and his ongoing contributions to creating a Data Science major for the School.

Building Collaborations for Research or Teaching

This award recognizes a faculty member who reaches across disciplinary boundaries to build collaborations that support innovative research and educational opportunities. This year's award goes to **Ajay Gopinathan** whose ongoing contributions to Center for Cellular and Biomolecular Machines and the G-RISE training program bring together more than 30 faculty from across science and engineering and support at least 20 students per year.

Community Engagement or Scientific Communication

This award recognizes a faculty member who partners with communities to bring scientific solutions to challenges that they face. This year's award goes to **Becca Ryals** whose collaborations bring affordable sanitation to communities in Haiti and bring community leaders and farmers in California together around issues involving wastewater treatment and processing facilities.

Exceptional Service

This award recognizes a faculty member whose unsung service has broadly benefited the School of Natural Sciences. This year's awards goes to **Michael Scheibner** for his leadership of the Committee on Research during the upheaval caused by the pandemic. This included helping to develop procedures for managing the ramp down of campus operations, the implementation of measures to mitigate the spread of COVID on campus, approvals of essential work exceptions and the development of procedures that allowed to ramp-up of research operations.

Contributions to Inclusive Excellence in STEM

This award recognizes a faculty member who not only understands that excellence is an emergent property of the combination of a multitude of diverse voices, but also takes concrete steps to create a culture in which individuals feel included and empowered to participate. This year's award goes to **Arnold Kim**, who continues to be a driving force in building and maintaining gender equity within the Applied Mathematics department.

Innovations in Undergraduate Education

This award recognizes an individual whose efforts extend beyond the walls of their own classroom and propagated across SNS curricula. This year's award goes to **Lei Yue**, who has been instrumental in leading the revision of Math 5 and in piloting the Learning Assistant Program, which is now being deployed in other lower division courses.

Partnership with Staff

This award recognizes a faculty member who has forged a strong working relationship with staff to amplify the research, teaching, or service missions of our School. This year's award goes to **Michelle Leslie** who has taken it upon herself to work closely with instructional lab staff to update and refine Chemistry labs even those for which she is not the Instructor of Record.

Creation of and/or Sustaining Shared Research Infrastructure

This award recognizes a faculty member whose efforts result in the establishment or sustainability of research infrastructure that is shared across multiple research groups. This year's award goes to **Sora Kim** for her leadership of the Stable Isotope Ecosystem Laboratory which enables researchers at UC Merced and other institutions to apply stable isotope analysis across a wide range of environmental and ecological systems.

Undergraduate Research Mentoring

This award recognizes a faculty member who makes exceptional contributions to training undergraduate researchers. This year's the award goes to **Kirk Jensen**, who's undergraduates had summer internships at Johns Hopkins, Metagenomics and on-campus through our Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority and Participation and University of California Leadership Excellence through Advanced Degrees programs.