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Former Faculty Member Establishes Faculty Scholar Program

Dec. 20, 2018

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — After nearly two decades of dedicated work at Illinois Wesleyan University, former faculty member and administrator Mona Gardner will continue to support her colleagues by establishing the Gardner Faculty Scholars program to aid IWU professors during sabbatical work.

The most outstanding sabbatical proposals from one tenured and one pre-tenured faculty member will be selected each academic year by the Faculty Development Committee. Recipients will receive an award certificate and \$3,000 to be used as a stipend or to defray costs of supplies, research, travel and data collection.

“Graduates often report that their interaction with Illinois Wesleyan faculty changed their lives in ways that are measurable even decades later,” Gardner said. “Those life-changing experiences are possible, however, only if faculty members remain fully engaged in their own research and creative activity, are committed to nurturing undergraduate students, and are, in turn, truly valued and supported by the institution.”

Establishing the Gardner Faculty Scholars program is just one of the many initiatives Gardner has led at IWU. As an administrator, she served as the first May Term Director, the first Director of the Mellon Center for Faculty and Curriculum Development and the first Associate Dean of the Faculty.

As part of her teaching career, Gardner was also Chair of the Business Administration Department and was the 1993 recipient of the University’s DuPont Award for Teaching, now known as the Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. She retired from the University in 2007.

“During my years at IWU, I was privileged to work among a remarkable group of teacher/scholars who represent the best in the profession,” Gardner said. “I thank them for showing, by their daily example, that a liberal arts education is one of America’s greatest gifts to the world. The Gardner Faculty Scholars program is a small way of emphasizing to current and future colleagues how central they are to continuing the rich academic tradition of Illinois Wesleyan University.”

Gardner’s Scholarship will not only highlight the importance of faculty work, but will also improve the quality of instruction for students.

“Professor Gardner’s gift incentivizes her former and future colleagues to engage deeply in the scholarly and creative work that sustains cutting-edge classroom learning, undergraduate research experiences, and connections to next steps in the workforce or graduate study for our students,” said IWU Provost and Dean of Faculty Mark Brodl. “Our faculty greatly appreciate her generous recognition of their efforts, as evidenced by the sustained applause from the faculty upon the announcement of her gift at a recent faculty meeting.”

Gardner Faculty Scholars will be announced by the President at the first faculty meeting of the spring semester with a press release to accompany the announcement of the awards.

“I had many faculty remark on how important Professor Gardner was to them as an inspirational and supportive colleague,” Brodl said. “That inspiration and support will now continue for many more Illinois Wesleyan colleagues well into the future.”



Mona Gardner