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Maria Harmon

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Mohan Named 2023 Kemp Award Winner

April 18, 2022

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. — Wendell and Loretta Hess Professor of Chemistry Ram Mohan has been named the 2023 recipient of Illinois Wesleyan University's [Kemp Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence](#).

- Watch: [The Kemp Foundation's Teaching Excellence Award Ceremony](#)
- View: [The Kemp Foundation's Teaching Excellence Award Ceremony Program](#)

The ceremony was held on April 13 in Presser Hall's Westbrook Auditorium. The recipient is selected by the Promotion and Tenure Committee and is based on faculty nominations. The award recognizes spirit, passion and scholarship and is the University's top teaching honor.

Professor Mohan has been a member of IWU's faculty since 1996. He primarily teaches sophomore and advanced level organic [chemistry](#), a subject which he jokes is "universally dreaded by most students."

"I am deeply humbled by this honor. If you look at past recipients it will be easy to see why," said Mohan. "We have so many excellent faculty on our campus. It is also a recognition of my students who make teaching fun and exciting."

Professor Mohan is also grateful to his colleagues who nominated him, noting "it takes a lot of effort and dedication to do so."

In announcing Professor Mohan, Associate Provost Rebecca Roesner said that alumni recognize this colleague as "an exceptional life and career advisor who didn't shy away from asking hard questions and who cared individually about all of us, not just our careers, but also our happiness and sense of peace."

"Ram goes above most of us in our department to prepare his students for careers in post-graduate studies following their time at IWU. He guides his students on scientific writing, oral presentations, data analysis and lab skills," said Associate Professor of Chemistry & Biochemistry Manori Perera.

Other colleagues shared that Mohan "steps up to meet departmental needs and is quick to nominate students and colleagues for awards and opportunities."

Students who have taken Mohan's courses reported that he "intrigued our curiosity of the world beyond the textbook and helped with establishing a positive loop in terms of learning theories and using them in everyday life."

Mohan earned a bachelor's in chemistry from Hansraj College in Delhi, India; a master's in organic chemistry from the University of Delhi, India; and a doctorate in organic chemistry from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Professor of [English](#) Joanne Diaz, the 2022 [Kemp Award recipient](#), was recognized by Toni Jenkins, daughter of emeritus Illinois Wesleyan trustee Parker Kemp, on behalf of the Kemp family and Kemp Foundation.

In her address, "The Trouble with Literature," Diaz made a defense of literature in all of its complexity. Despite its troublesome nature – politically controversial, intertextual, incomplete – literature connects.

"Literature challenges and disturbs us, yes, but it also inspires us to reach out to one another and talk about the most urgent emotions and experiences that we have. Because books – and our critical thinking about those books – are a path to liberation. That's why this is called a 'liberal arts' college. The liberal arts liberate," Diaz said.

Also at the ceremony, retiring members of the IWU faculty were recognized: Professor of Sociology Teddy Amoloza, Miner Linnaeus Endowed Professor of Botany David Bollivar, Professor and Chair of History Tom Lutze, Professor of Anthropology Rebecca Mafazy, Dance Educator/Choreographer Sheri Marley and McFee Professor of Religion and Director of Women's and Gender Studies Carole Myscowski.

A reception to celebrate the Kemp honorees will be held from 2 - 4:30 p.m. Thursday, April 21 in the Atrium of the The Joyce Eichhorn Ames School of Art Building.



Wendell and Loretta Hess Professor of Chemistry Ram Mohan