Chancellor's Council announces Distinguished Faculty Awards

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Eight faculty members from Texas Tech University, six faculty members from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC), two faculty members from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso and two faculty members from Angelo State University received the honors for a total of 18 recipients.

"We are pleased to present these outstanding awards to such esteemed individuals," Hanca said. "These faculty members represent the best of the best and continue to take our universities to new heights."

For the first time in its history, this year's list of recipients also includes awards honoring faculty members for commercialization efforts. The Chancellor's Council now include Distinguished Research, Distinguished Teaching and Distinguished Commercialization awards.

Each winner receives a commemorative medallion and a $5,000 award. The Chancellor's Council raises funds for student scholarships and recruitment, faculty awards and support, and other programs of excellence.

President Mayloril Vanapalli is an assistant professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at Texas Tech University. His laboratory was the first at TTUHSC to receive an NSF Innovation-Corps grant to explore commercialization of technology discovered in his lab. Vanapalli received his bachelor's degree from the Indian Institute of Technology in India, his master's degree from the University of Arizona and his postdoctoral research was funded by an individual National Research Service Award from the NIH.

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medical honor society Alpha Omega Alpha, serves as councilor for Alpha Omega Alpha and advisor for the Physicians Interest Group; and has co-authored two children’s books with Dr. Marie Lemer on addressing behavioral issues of children through a wellness approach. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Texas at Austin, completed his medical training at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, held an internship at Scott and White Memorial Hospital in Temple and completed his psychiatric residency at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

Claudia C. Coghill, Ph.D.

Claudia C. Coghill is an associate professor in the Area of Management at the Jerry S. Rawls College of Business at Texas Tech University. She was inducted into the Texas Tech Teaching Academy in 2013 and named a Texas Tech Integrated Scholar in 2011. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Miami and previously held faculty positions at the University of Oklahoma and Oregon State University. With more than 35 publications featured in scholarly outlets, her teaching style is inspired by theory and service learning. Her research interests include leader-follower relationships, authentic leadership, entrepreneurial orientation, scale development, and multi-level analysis.

Melaina Hart, Ph.D.

Melaina Hart serves as interim chair of the Department of Health, Exercise & Sport Sciences and associate dean in the College of Arts & Sciences at Texas Tech University, teaching courses in exercise and sport sciences and assisting the university in distance and online education. A member of Phi Kappa Phi, the National Association of Kinesiology in Higher Education and the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity, she was inducted into the Texas Tech Teaching Academy in 2008 and has been commended by students for creating an atmosphere where they are free to express opinions and ask questions. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas Tech University and earned her Ph.D. in motor behavior from Auburn University.

Nikita Minjirli

Nikita Minjirli is an assistant professor in the Department of Biomedical Sciences of the School of Pharmacy at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Amarillo. Joining the university in 2006, his teaching portfolio covers courses at all levels of pharmacy student education, and she has received six student- nominated awards, including multiple "Teacher of the Year" and "Outstanding Faculty" honors. Minjirli earned a bachelor's degree in veterinary sciences and animal husbandry from the Maharashtra Animal & Fishery Sciences University in India and a Ph.D. in veterinary biomedical sciences from Oklahoma State University.

Rabiti Pasupathy

Rabiti Pasupathy is an assistant professor in the School of Allied Health Sciences at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. Joining the university in 2003, she has taught in both undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of Clinical Administration & Rehabilitation Counseling, receiving the "Teacher of the Year" award from the TULASC Student Senate multiple times. A fellow of the American College of Health Care Executives, she has published in the areas of health care policy and delivery, as well as research and clinical self-efficacy among health-care professionals. Pasupathy received her bachelor's degree in sociology, her master's degree in business administration and her Ph.D. in higher education administration from Texas Tech University.

Brian Shrenen, J.D.

Brian Shrenen in the Charles "C" Thornton Professor of Law at Texas Tech University, serving as a professor in the School of Law since 1998, Shrenen serves as the university's Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR) to the NCAA and the Big 12 Conference, where he also serves as president of the national I-A FAR Association. Additionally, he is an appointed board member for StarCare Specialty Health Systems; an elected member of the American Law Institute; a past-president of the Lubbock Area Bar Association; and was appointed by Gov. Rick Perry to four terms on the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. Shrenen received his bachelor's degree from Angelo State University and his law degree from the University of Texas.

Elizabeth Trejos-Castillo, Ph.D.

Elizabeth Trejos-Castillo is an associate professor in the Department of Human Development & Family Studies and director of the Graduate Minor in Cross-Cultural Studies and the online master's in Youth Development Global Minor Interactive Distance Education Alliance programs at Texas Tech University. Among numerous accolades, she was named to the Top 14 Hispanic Professors in Texas in 2013 and received the Texas Tech President's Excellence in Teaching Award in 2012, which is a tribute to her goal of transforming the classroom into a cross-cultural experience. She received a double associate's degree from the Castille Astros Consoratory in Costa Rica, a double bachelor's degree from Iowa State University as a Fulbright Student, and went on to pursue both her master's degree and Ph.D. in human development and family studies from Auburn University.

James J. Womack, D.M.A.

James J. Womack is an associate professor of music in the College of Liberal & Fine Arts at Angelo State University. Specializing in double-reed instruments, the bassoon and oboe, he not only teaches students to lead play their instruments, but also shows them how to make their reeds with a slice of cane. Womack also coaches the university's Woodwind Quintet, is a founding member of the Mesquite Trio and performs with the San Angelo Symphony, Abilene Philharmonic and San Antonio Symphony. Womack earned his bachelor's degree from Berea College in Kentucky, his master's degree from Iowa State University and his doctorate of musical arts from Louisiana State University.

The Distinguished Commercialization Awards went to the following individuals:

Ted W. Reid, Ph.D.

Ted Reid is a professor and vice chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences and serves as the director of Ocular Cell Biology at the Lubbock campus of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. A founding scientist of the company SeLect, Ltd., Reid co-developed a technology called Select that prevents the formation of biofilms and the spread of infectious bacteria when added to polymer surfaces and medical devices. Protected by seven issued patents and multiple U.S. and international patent applications, Select helps save lives, offers cellular control across industries and cuts medical and other expenses. With TTUHSC for more than two decades, Reid received his bachelor's degree from Occidental College in Los Angeles, his master's degree from the University of Arizona and his Ph.D. from the University of California at Los Angeles.

Mingtao Zeng, Ph.D.

Mingtao Zeng is an associate professor of biomedical sciences in the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine and a principal investigator in the Center for Excellence in Infectious Diseases at the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center at El Paso. An accomplished vaccine immunologist, his research, which has been funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) since 2002, is developing new-generation vaccines against respiratory pathogens such as influenza viruses and agents important for biodefense. Zeng holds several patent applications related to new vaccines and therapeutics against anthrax, tularemia and influenza, and has served as a member of numerous grant review committees for the NIH and Department of Defense. Zeng received his bachelor's degree from Sichuan University in China, his master's degree from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and his Ph.D. in biochemistry from Tel Aviv University in Israel.