

5-6-2004

05/06/2004 - John Best Named Recipient Of EIU Distinguished Faculty Award.pdf

University Marketing and Communications

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2004

Recommended Citation

University Marketing and Communications, "05/06/2004 - John Best Named Recipient Of EIU Distinguished Faculty Award.pdf" (2004). 2004. 27.

http://thekeep.eiu.edu/press_releases_2004/27

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Press Releases at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in 2004 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

John Best Named Recipient of EIU's 2004 Distinguished Faculty Award

May-06-2004



A true scholar . . . exceptionally conscientious . . . demanding and fair as a popular instructor . . . a model for colleagues and students alike.

With accolades such as these, it is of no wonder that John Best, professor of psychology at Eastern Illinois University, was chosen as this year's recipient of the Distinguished Faculty Award.

He will formally receive his award, consisting of a plaque and small monetary gift, during the 9 a.m. commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 8, in Lantz Arena. Several of his peers will be on hand to offer their congratulations and Best, no doubt, will graciously accept their kind words with gratitude, for it was their efforts and writings which nominated him.

"It's wonderful to receive accolades, but for me, the accolades are simply a reflection of all the great people at Eastern -- students, faculty, administration and staff, who have helped me attain my potential as a professor, and with whom it's been an honor to work," Best said. "My gratitude goes out to all of them."

Criteria for the award mandate that nominees excel in the areas of teaching/performance of primary duties, research/creative activity and service.

"(A) manner of describing John Best is that of a Renaissance Professor," wrote William Kirk, professor emeritus. "Somehow he does it all and does so with efficiency, energy, enthusiasm, vigor, good humor and professional commitment."

Kirk said Best "prizes his teaching above all other professional activities," and considered it noteworthy that his "student evaluations are among the highest of (the psychology) faculty, yet (Best) is probably the most demanding and difficult teacher within our ranks."

Darby L. Miller, a psychology student, acknowledged that Best's classes were sometimes difficult, but that "the way Dr. Best treats his students is something special.

"His methods of teaching, (his) relationship with his students and (his) refusal to leave any student behind" were just a few of the reasons as to why Best was a deserving candidate for the Distinguished Faculty Award, she added.

William Addison, professor and chair of Eastern's Department of Psychology, addressed Best's role as a scholar.

"John is recognized on a national level for his research on reasoning and problem solving," Addison wrote. "In addition to his numerous publications and presentations, John wrote a widely respected textbook in cognitive psychology - his area of expertise. It was adopted for psychology courses at some of the most renowned colleges and universities in the country (e.g. Harvard University , Yale University , Indiana University).

"Having thoroughly read his textbook myself, I can understand why it was considered one of the most widely respected textbooks in the field," Addison added.

He noted, too, that Best developed and implemented a new course, "Psychology of Problem Solving and Reasoning," which was supported by a National Science Foundation grant in excess of \$70,000.

"As one of the faculty members who teaches our undergraduate statistics course, I can attest to the positive impact this grant has had on the department's ability to help our students develop their computer-based analytical skills," Addison wrote. "Thanks to John's efforts, our students are much better prepared to seek meaningful employment or enter a graduate program in psychology upon graduation."

Mike Havey, professor of psychology at EIU, described Best as one who was "widely regarded as one of the leaders of the department.

"John is viewed as a voice of wisdom, experience and balance in departmental meetings and discussion," Havey wrote. "His leadership is also evident in the wider university community and beyond."

Best is the 2000 recipient of the university's prestigious Ringenberg Award, presented by the College of Science in recognition of "exceptional performance during their academic career at Eastern," and served one year as interim chair of the Department of Psychology.

"The faculty literally begged him to apply for the permanent position as chair, but John felt strongly that his primary mission of teaching was compromised by the distractions of full-time administration," Kirk said.

Best, who resides in Tuscola, has also been active in his community, and was recently elected to the Tuscola School Board.