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K-STATE'S COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES HONORS SIX FACULTY WITH STAMEY AWARDS

MANHATTAN — Kansas State University's College of Arts and Sciences is recognizing six faculty members for their common ability to reach students, whether as a teacher or as an adviser.

The college is presenting its William L. Stamey Awards for Excellence in Teaching to Robert Bear, an instructor of biology; Nora Ransom, an instructor of English; Sumanth Reddy, a graduate teaching assistant in geography; Sue Williams, an associate professor of sociology; and Wei Wu, an assistant professor of Chinese.

Laurie Bagby, an associate professor of political science, has won the William L. Stamey Award for Excellence in Advising.

The awards are named for Stamey, who was dean of K-State's College of Arts and Sciences from 1969 to 1987.

Bear teaches Principles of Biology. "Why do I teach? For the moments when students discover that they can succeed," he said, "or that a few new study skills can improve their performance, or that a shift in perspective produces understanding: These are the moments that motivate me as a teacher." Bear earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Cleveland State University. He came to K-State in 2004 after teaching at McCook Community College in Nebraska for five years.

Ransom teaches Honors Expository English and Written Communication for the Sciences. "I hear back from students months and even years later that what they learned in my class has helped them in their careers, and that they continue to use what I teach," Ransom said. "In addition, I learn from my students more than I teach them, not only about writing, but about their fields and the world we live in. Their enthusiasm is infectious." Ransom earned her master's degree from the University of Arkansas. She joined K-State in 1984.

Williams has taught a wide range of courses, including Sociology of Women; Criminology, Diversity and the Workplace; and Social Construction of Serial Murder. "I find teaching introductory students among the most challenging, but an unexpected joy," she said. "There is something good about turning on an 18-year-old mind to sociology." Williams favors such out-of-the-classroom experiences as a scrounging project in 2006 and a simulated bout of homelessness for her fall 2007 students.

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"My mentor once told me, 'Treat every student as though their heart is breaking, because for some of them it is,'" Williams said. "In turn, I hope I inspire the same generosity of spirit in my students. Hearing from them gives me lots of evidence that it works." Williams earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Texas Tech University. Her doctorate is from the University of Connecticut. She joined K-State in 1997.

Wu teaches two sections of Chinese language courses as well as Introduction to Chinese Culture. "As an educator, I regard winning this teaching award as the highest honor in my teaching career at K-State," she said. "I cherish the opportunity K-State offered me to teach and share China's language and culture, and am committed more than ever to help my students and our university community at large learn more about China." Wu earned her bachelor's degree at Peking University and her master's degree in public service from Texas A&M University. She joined K-State in 2005.

Reddy teaches Human Geography and World Regional Geography. "I love making a difference in a student's life, and interacting with students and enhancing my own knowledge helps me stay focused," Reddy said. "I also have enjoyed being part of a professional family in the geography department." Born and raised in Bangalore, India, Reddy came to the United States during his high school years. His bachelor's degree in geography is from the University of Wisconsin at LaCrosse. His master's in geography is from the University of North Texas. He came to K-State to pursue a doctorate in 2005.

Bagby works with students in political science and in the primary texts certificate program, which she directs. For her political science advisees, most of the reward comes in conquering difficulties in schedules or in transferring credit from foreign study. "I also have been able to be of some help to students experiencing personal challenges so that they could stay on track in their course work," Bagby said. "In the primary texts certificate, I have been able to direct students into classes that make their university experience more enjoyable and meaningful, which makes me happy." Bagby has taught Ideologies and Introduction to Political Thought as well as a graduate seminar on that topic. In fall 2008 she will supervise a new team-taught course, The Great Conversation, part of the primary-text certificate. Bagby received her doctorate in political philosophy from Northern Illinois University in 1990 and arrived at K-State in 1992 from Radford University in Virginia. Her bachelor's degree in journalism is from Northern Illinois.

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