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## **OUTSTANDING TEACHING, ADVISING, LEADERSHIP EARN SIX FACULTY MEMBERS PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS**

MANHATTAN -- Six Kansas State University faculty members are receiving a 2012 Presidential Award for their compassion, dedication and creativity as educators, advisers and administrators.

Receiving the Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching are: Alisa Garni, assistant professor of sociology; Wendy Matlock, assistant professor of English; Gregory Zolnerowich, associate professor of entomology; and Jacqueline P. Ott, a graduate teaching assistant in biology.

David Thompson, professor of educational leadership, will receive the Presidential Award for Outstanding Department Head. Bente Janda, director of undergraduate student services in the College of Business Administration, will receive the Presidential Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising.

The awards, which include a \$2,500 honorarium and plaque, are sponsored by the K-State president's office and Curtin Property Co., a real estate development firm with offices in Manhattan and Kansas City. The awards are coordinated by the Kansas State University Foundation.

"The Presidential Awards recognize the commitment these faculty have to student success and consequently to the university's success," said K-State President Kirk Schulz. "We greatly appreciate the continued support of Chris Curtin and the Curtin Property Co. to reward these exceptional efforts, which advance K-State's goal of becoming a top 50 public research university by 2025."

"The Curtin Property Co., and its Manhattan associates at Georgetown Apartment Homes and Westchester Park, are please to join with the K-State president's office in recognizing and rewarding these highly talented educators," said Chris Curtin, company president. "Their commitment to their students' success, to professional excellence and to K-State is inspirational to all of us."

Since joining K-State in 2008, Garni has channeled her enthusiasm and passion for her subject matter into her classes. She encourages students to begin honest dialogues through respectful debates in courses on racial and ethical relations, international development and social change -- earning her high praise on teaching evaluations. She is also a mentor in

the Peer Review of Teaching Program and currently serves as its coordinator. She was the first sociologist to receive the student-nominated Making a Difference Award from the Women in Engineering and Science. Garni earned her bachelor's from Santa Clara University, her master's from the University of California in San Diego and her doctorate from the University of California in Los Angeles.

Janda advises approximately 500 undergraduate students each semester and is the principal mentor to international students in the College of Business Administration. Her concern for her advisees extends beyond helping students select classes to helping students enhance their college experience and be successful after graduation. She is the founder of the college's Study Abroad Advocates, a student organization that encourages study abroad experiences. Her efforts have resulted in a steady increase of participants. For her service she has also been recognized with the college's Kansas State Bank Outstanding Advising Award three times. Janda earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in business from the University of Arkansas.

Matlock joined the university in 2008 and teaches courses in medieval and renaissance literature and humanities, British literature, cultural studies, and history of the English language. Since 2009 she has also served as an undergraduate adviser for English and as a faculty adviser for the Student Organization for Cultural Studies. She encourages active learning, often asking students to act out scenes from a medieval play to help express the meaning. Matlock earned her bachelor's degree from Northwestern University, her master's from the University of Wyoming and her doctorate from Ohio State University.

Ott, a doctoral candidate in biology, **Manhattan**, combines an impressive grassland ecology research resume with an equally impressive instructional record. She incorporates active learning in the classes and laboratories she instructs. This encourages open-ended questions for students, who show their understanding of the material and approach the answer on their own -- ensuring knowledge rather than stock answers is retained. One of her former students wrote that Ott's "love of science, teaching and students would be hard to match even by the most seasoned veteran." Ott earned her bachelor's degree from Concordia University in Nebraska and her master's from K-State.

Thompson joined K-State in 1987 and was appointed head of the department of educational leadership in 1993. A specialist in education finance and education law with more than 34 years of experience, he has helped guide the department and embody the College of Education's service mission. His textbooks are used at more than 150 universities across the U.S., with one is in its fifth printing. He was named distinguished fellow of research and practice by the National Education Finance Conference. His research contributions have been recognized with many awards -- including the University Council for Educational Administration's Award for Sustained and Meritorious Service and the college's Outstanding Research Award -- and have benefited public schools in Kansas and throughout the U.S. Thompson earned his bachelor's degree from Friends University, his doctorate from Oklahoma State University and completed postdoctoral work at Harvard University.

For the past 13 years, Zolnerowich has been providing students in his entomology courses with a top-tier education in addition to securing more than \$1.3 million in research funding. He teaches seven courses at the undergraduate and

graduate levels and serves as the curator for the K-State Museum of Entomological and Prairie Arthropod Research. His work in the classroom has been recognized with the Entomological Society of America's North Central Branch Distinguished Achievement Award in Teaching in 2007 and the Commerce Bank Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Teaching in 2005. Zolnerowich earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Midwestern State University and his doctorate from Texas A&M University.