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Commending Creativity

UNLV has dominated the Regents' Creative Activities Awards, drawing attention to the varied artistic talents found in several disciplines on campus By Tony Allen

The creative activities of UNLV faculty members have been acknowledged the world over. Their works of art have been displayed in the finest galleries; their performances have graced important stages across the globe. Award-winning authors, composers, and architects are included among their ranks.

When it comes to accolades, however, some say that there is no greater honor than to be acknowledged at home.

For more than a dozen UNLV faculty members, the Regents' Creative Activities Awards are particularly prized for that reason.

UNLV faculty have received 14 of the 16 awards bestowed since the statewide honor was established in 1993 to recognize faculty with distinguished records of creative activity.

The award, which carries a \$5,000 stipend, is presented annually to faculty members at institutions within the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE).*

"UNLV has placed an increased emphasis on the arts in recent years," says Jeff Koep, dean of the College of Fine Arts. "Recognition such as the Regents' Award serves to inform the community that our faculty are not only teaching but are also engaged in the creative process and are making great contributions in their fields."

Faculty members from the School of Architecture and the departments of theatre, film, music, dance, art, and English have all received the Regents' Award for Creative Activities.

"The College of Fine Arts has attracted some remarkable artists," says Mark Hoversten, professor of architecture and winner of the Regents' Award for Creative Activities in 2003. "When I look around at faculty meetings, I have great respect

for the colleagues sitting next to me and for the effort it has taken to recruit and retain them.

"Awards like this bring positive attention to the school of the recipient," he adds. "They also help inform people about the discipline and can help other agencies connect with faculty."

Beyond the recognition the award brings to the university, it also sends a positive message to students – namely, that their professors are leaders in their disciplines.

"Creativity is the core," says Catherine Angel, professor of art and internationally recognized photographer, who won the Regents' Award in 2004. "If I understand the creative process because I'm engaged in it, then I bring that understanding to the classroom, and the students can see it. Research, creative activity, and teaching go hand in hand in that I feel I'm a more effective teacher when I'm doing the work."

The ability to blend creative activity and teaching is one award selection criterion. Selection committee members, who represent the NSHE office and each of the

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From left, Regents' Creative Activities Award recipients Richard Wiley, Mark Hoversten, Catherine Angel, and Dean Gronemeier

participating institutions, also consider student and peer feedback, as well as the significance, volume, and quality of a candidate's body of work.

"It takes an incredible artist and an incredible teacher to even be nominated," says Koep, who has nominated several of UNLV's winners. "I look at who's pushing the envelope, but also who can seamlessly connect what they teach with what they do. Our professors clearly practice what they preach, which keeps them sharp both as artists and as faculty members."

Creative writing is another area the award acknowledges; two creative writing professors, Douglas Unger and Richard Wiley, are among the winners.

"Certainly, creativity is a part of all scholarly activity," says Ed Shoben, dean of the College of Liberal Arts. "It is particularly evident in the works of our award-winning authors."

"Receiving an award like this is very helpful in that it provides a certain cachet," says Wiley, who won the first award in 1993. "It's as it is everywhere: Once an artist is vetted by a prize, people tend to take him or her more seriously."

Dean Gronemeier, associate dean of the College of Fine Arts and the 1998 recipient of the award, agrees, noting that the large number of these honors received by UNLV faculty is an indication of the talent and creativity to be found at the university.

"The Regents' Awards bring attention to the work of the recipients and to the success of the institution," Gronemeier says. "They serve as another form of acknowledgement of UNLV's growing reputation."

**Two awards per year were presented in 1994 and 2000.*

UNLV Regents' Creative Activities Award Recipients

YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
1993	Richard Wiley	English
1994	Jerry Crawford	Theatre
1994	Hart Wegner	Film Studies
1996	Virko Baley	Music
1997	Carol Kimball	Music
1998	Dean Gronemeier	Music
1999	Julie Jensen	Theatre
2000	Louis Kavouros	Dance
2001	David Hickey	English
2002	Stefan Karlsson	Music
2003	Mark Hoversten	Architecture
2004	Catherine Angel	Art
2005	Douglas Unger	English
2006	George Stelluto	Music