

BBS faculty awards – Celebrating Excellence Awards 2024

Nathaniel V. Nucci

Gary J. Hunter Excellence in Mentoring Award

Nathaniel V. Nucci is a trusted friend to students in the classroom, lab and beyond. As associate professor of biological and biomedical sciences in the College of Science & Mathematics, he has trained more than 70 students in the last 10 years. In addition to instructing students at the bench or computer, he brings them to conferences, assists them with their presentations and supports them as they apply to graduate and professional programs. Students have flourished under his mentorship, gaining acceptance to prominent Ivy League doctoral, medical school and other academic programs and landing corporate and academic positions. As graduate coordinator of his department, he worked diligently to form a community of scholars for the new M.S. and Ph.D. program in Complex Biological Systems, responded to concerns, organized a boot camp to train teaching assistants and held a review to ascertain their experience. These efforts extend above and beyond his responsibilities as graduate coordinator, his colleagues note. “He did it simply to help the students,” says a colleague, who describes him as an “outstanding scholar and caring mentor.”



Sara Wright

Frances S. Johnson Junior Faculty Innovative Teaching Award

Sara Wright, lecturer in biological and biomedical sciences in the College of Science & Mathematics, passionately involves students in the Rowan Arboretum Project as part of the upper-level “Plant Diversity” elective. The arboretum is believed to be the first built by students for students and the public. A plant evolutionary geneticist, Wright emphasizes the importance of plant diversity for sustainable ecosystems and human health. Wright’s work helps students experience their surroundings at Rowan as a “living learning landscape”. Students deepen their connection to trees and local plant life through research about tree specimens and instruction. They also create educational materials that were used for the arboretum website and to support the work towards arboretum accreditation. Since fall 2021, 53 students have contributed materials to the website, and more have engaged with the project inside and outside the course. A student says “One of my favorite projects was the tree tour project. We could leave a ‘footprint’ at Rowan because the project will eventually be published for the public eye with our names on it.”



2024 Celebrating Excellence Awards – Rowan website:

<https://sites.rowan.edu/celebratingexcellence/>