2010 DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms. Myra Daleng, Director of Dance: Myra Daleng has made truly remarkable contributions to teaching and learning at the University of Richmond over the past 25 years. As one former student notes, "The intense heart and soul that she infuses into her interaction with students … is unparalleled." Under Myra’s leadership, Dance has grown from a small extra-curricular activity into a vibrant academic program with a full-fledged major and minor. She also founded and served as Artistic Director for the University Dancers; with Myra’s guidance and vision, the company has drawn internationally-known choreographers to Richmond to create original works for them, including Robert Battle (the new Artistic Director of the Alvin Ailey Company) and Jessica Lang (from the American Ballet Theatre), among others. The company has been repeatedly honored at the American College Dance Festival with invitations to perform at the final Gala, the only undergraduate dance program to be so honored. This tribute comes from an alumna and former Truman Scholar, now in her third year of medical school: "I consider my dance experience at UR as making the single greatest impact on my current educational pursuits. It motivated me to grow as a learner, fostered my ability to communicate, and shaped the discovery of myself." Myra’s former students have been so influenced by her teaching that they have established a scholarship in her name: the Myra Daleng Dance Scholarship. Myra serves as Faculty Advisor to Ngoma, Richmond's African dance company; she serves also on the Scholars Committee; and she has served for several years as Commencement Marshal.

Dr. Jonathan Dattelbaum, Associate Professor of Chemistry: Since his arrival at Richmond in 2004, Dr. Jonathan Dattelbaum has distinguished himself as an exemplary teacher, researcher, and mentor. Students consistently praise him for his enthusiasm, his generous mentoring outside the classroom, and for the rigorous and effective ways that he helps them to learn complicated material. His students consistently score better than the national average on the ACS National Biochemistry exam in spite of the fact that he has to teach them two semesters of biochemistry in one semester. An innovative educator, Jon garnered recognition in the press for the community-based learning projects that he developed as part of his biochemistry course. And he was named one of five Center for Civic Engagement Fellows in 2009-2010. He also is admired for his extraordinary grant activity (including grants from the Jeffress Trust, the Center for Integrated Nanotechnology/Los Alamos Labs, the National Science Foundation, Merck/AAAS, and the Howard Hughes Medical Institute). Consistent with his student-centered focus, this inspiring teacher and scholar diligently involves students in research projects. His student researchers have participated as co-authors on eight published papers and consistently present at the A&S Undergraduate Research Symposium and at regional and national conferences. He fully incorporates undergraduate students as partners in scientific discovery. His generous service to the university furthers this goal; he serves on the Goldwater selection committee, the Scholars steering committee, and the Oldham selection committee.

Joel B. Eisen, Professor of Law: Professor Eisen is known for his consistent record of outstanding contributions to excellence in education. In addition to his law courses, Joel teaches environmental law and policy to undergraduates enrolled in the university’s Environmental Studies Program. He makes the classroom experience rich and rewarding with a dynamic and participatory pedagogy and the effective use of technology. By means of videoconferencing, he has on separate occasions paired classes in Beijing and Richmond on global warming for joint study of the related law and policy in anticipation of the latest conference on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. He stands out for his cutting-edge pedagogy, his
agility in adapting to rapid and dramatic developments in his fields of interest, and his respect for good science as the foundation for good policy. His students applaud him as an innovative and engaging classroom teacher. As one student put it, "Professor Eisen presented environmental law and policy in an exciting, relevant context and in a format that was easily accessible to undergraduates. He was outstanding in his willingness and availability to help students. He was also glad to mentor them, encourage them, and help them plan for their future careers." He is a successful collaborator with other teachers of law and science, both locally and around the world, and a committed participant to interdisciplinary studies on our campus. His record also confirms his leadership in learning, not only in steadily and consistently coaxing others to learn, but also in learning diligently and efficiently himself that he may stay on top of his dynamic fields of study.

Dr. John Donelson R. Forsyth, Professor of Leadership Studies and the Colonel Leo K. and Gaylee Thorsness Chair in Ethical Leadership: Dr. Don Forsyth is held in the highest esteem as a teacher, scholar, and faculty colleague. A past winner of the State Council of Education for Virginia (SCHEV) Award, Dr. Forsyth is author or co-author of over 100 articles and book chapters, as well as six books and edited collections, including the classic Group Dynamics, now in its fifth edition. He brings his seminal research on group behavior to the classroom in courses such as Group Dynamics, Good and Evil, and Theories and Models of Leadership. Don has made invaluable contributions to the leadership curriculum and to student learning, as these student comments attest: "I now notice groups all the time." "I even talk to people outside the class about group dynamics." "We were amazed how much we had learned!" "I had no idea groups were so cool!" Dr. Forsyth also played a key role in the development of the new gateway course to major and minor: Leadership and the Social Sciences. Both the course and instructor have received excellent student reviews, including this one which simply states, "The best teacher I've ever had." In addition to contributions to curriculum development, Don regularly supervises honors theses and independent studies. He also is recognized as an outstanding mentor to junior faculty. He has served on the University Faculty Council and has spent five years working on the University Institutional Review Board.

Dr. Monika Kukar-Kinney, Associate Professor of Marketing: Dr. Monika Kukar-Kinney is the perfect example of a professor who provides high quality contributions in both teaching and scholarship as well as in service. She actively engages students in research across a full spectrum of learning activities starting with data management and carrying on to software applications, research analysis, and the writing and presenting of finished research. She introduced new courses in the Marketing Department to elevate the research competencies of students and to extend those research capabilities through supervised projects. She has co-authored papers with students from these courses and jointly presented many of these papers at academic meetings. Monika represents a strong role model for the type of student-faculty research relationship that can be found at the University of Richmond. The first new course she developed was Database Marketing. The concept was so novel that she had to develop her own course materials. Her work eventually culminated in the requirement of Marketing Research for all students concentrating in Marketing. She currently is working on a new research technology track which will provide a coordinated collection of courses combining research tools and technology to prepare our students for careers emphasizing research and analysis. Dr. Kukar-Kinney is recognized as an expert in the area of pricing, specifically in retail price-matching strategies. Her work has been cited in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Der Spiegel, and Business Week, among others, and has been discussed on CNBC.
Dr. Olenka Pevny, Associate Professor of Art History: Dr. Olenka Pevny has been a model teacher, scholar, and colleague since arriving at Richmond in 2002. Students consistently praise her as an effective, creative, demanding and inspiring professor and mentor. As one student notes, "Although her classes are difficult and she is a difficult grader, I have always found myself wanting to work the hardest for her because she is so passionate about art history and teaching." Her rich background in mounting museum exhibitions, participating in archeological digs, and extensive research abroad animates all of her teaching and benefits majors and non-majors alike. Olenka helped develop a Medieval-Renaissance concentration that also benefited students in Classics and Religion. She currently is working on a Middle Eastern concentration to further extend curricular offerings across departments and schools. A highly respected scholar in Medieval and Byzantine studies, Dr. Pevny has been invited to present at numerous national and international conferences and symposia. She has received prestigious fellowships and awards such as the Shklar Research Fellowship in Ukrainian Studies at Harvard and a Fulbright Teaching and Research Grant. This scholarship enriches her teaching and mentoring. As a teacher and mentor, she is recognized for spending generous hours outside class working with students and for her ability to integrate innovative experiential learning strategies with traditional modes of analysis. This student comment is typical: "After my last semester with her, my projects, presentation skills, writing skills and research skills have greatly improved. She completely transformed my writing style and taught me the value of quality research." Dr. Pevny is an outstanding professor who maintains, in word and practice, the highest ideal of the teacher-scholar.