



# UDAILY



## TEACHING WITH IMPACT, ADVISING WITH PURPOSE

Article by Jamie Washington | Photo by Kathy F. Atkinson | Photo illustrations by Jeffrey C. Chase | May 29, 2025

### Faculty Senate recognizes faculty and graduate students for excellence in teaching and advising

Four members of the University of Delaware faculty were recognized for outstanding work in teaching and four for excellence in advising and mentoring. Additionally, two graduate students were also honored for excellence in teaching. The awards were presented at the May 13 Faculty Senate meeting.

The teaching and advising awards are primarily based on nominations from past and current students. Selections are made by the Senate's Committee on Student and Faculty Honors.

This year's Excellence in Teaching Award was presented to:

- **Rajinda Wickrama**, assistant professor of mathematical sciences;
- **Elizabeth Sargent**, assistant professor in the School of Marine Science Policy;
- **Alison Terndrup**, assistant professor of art history; and
- **Jin Yao Kwan**, assistant professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences.

Excellence in Teaching award recipients each receive \$5,000, have their portraits hung in Morris Library for five years and have bricks inscribed with their names installed in Mentors' Circle between Hullahen Hall and Morris Library.

Recipients of this year's Excellence in Undergraduate Advising and Mentoring Award were:

- **Lauren Genova**, assistant professor in chemistry and biochemistry;
- **Elizabeth Bayley**, assistant professor in the Department of Economics;
- **Ardeshir Faghri**, professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering; and
- **Agnes Ly**, associate professor in the psychological and brain sciences.

They each will receive \$5,000 and also will have bricks inscribed with their names added to Mentors' Circle.

Two graduate students received the Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching Award, and each received \$1,500.

This year's awardees were:

- **Candy Frimpong**, a graduate student in art and design; and
- **Alexa Hensen**, a graduate student in fashion.

## Reflections on teaching and advising

This year's honorees were invited to share their thoughts about teaching and advising with *UDaily*. Excerpts from their responses are printed below.

### Excellence in Teaching

**Rajinda Wickrama:** "I am deeply humbled and grateful to receive the Excellence in Teaching Award this year. I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to teach a wide variety of courses to students at all levels, which has helped me grow as an educator and shaped how I approach

teaching. I was also lucky to have had teachers who were extremely patient and detailed, and I strive to bring that same patience and clarity into my own teaching. I focus on breaking down complex ideas into simpler pieces and giving students space to think through problems on their own. I know that every student learns differently, so I try to be as accessible and flexible as I can to support them outside the classroom. I am thankful to my colleagues in Mathematical Sciences for their support, and especially to my students, for their perseverance, engagement, and for making my work so meaningful.”

**Elizabeth Sargent:** “I’m thrilled to receive this award – I’m buoyed by great School of Marine Science Policy colleagues and incredibly touched by what my students wrote in their nominations. My main pedagogical approach is grounded in meeting students where they are and being a part of getting them where they need to be. My topics are static in each course, but the examples we use change every semester based on what students want to learn and what’s relevant to their lives and career paths. That dynamism is at the core of what I think helps make learning happen.”

**Alison Terndrup:** “I’m so very honored to receive this award. It reflects the incredible students I’ve had the privilege to teach and the supportive colleagues who inspire me every day. Being recognized for student-centered teaching is deeply meaningful, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to help guide students as they develop their own research skills, worldviews and critical thinking. The institutional and community support at UD makes this work possible, and I’m especially thankful to everyone who helps make our classrooms places of curiosity, challenge and joy. A special thank you is owed to my colleagues in the Department of Art History and the Department of Art Conservation. Most especially, I thank our chair, Sandy Isenstadt, whose support has been invaluable and whose tireless dedication to the department deserves recognition in its own right. I’m also deeply grateful to Wendy Bellion, associate dean for the humanities, and Debbie Hess Norris, Unidel Henry Francis du Pont Chair and professor of photograph conservation, for their exemplary leadership, encouragement and steadfast support of the humanities at UD.”

**Jin Yao Kwan:** “I teach research methods and program evaluation, courses conventionally perceived as monotonous and challenging at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Rigor is paramount. However, as I communicate to all my students, on the first day, even though my courses are designed to be challenging, the courses are also designed to help them succeed – in the classroom and beyond. To those ends, I use a “flipped” classroom format, involving pre-class, open-access readings and discussion activities, blended lectures with small group discussions, and in-class workshops. Furthermore, my assignments are scaffolded and returned with detailed feedback. I encourage my students to engage with my feedback through revisions and resubmissions. I’ve benefited from the mentorship of my past teachers and professors. I’m also grateful that UD takes the scholarship of

teaching and learning seriously. I've benefited from consultations and events at the Center for Teaching & Assessment of Learning's (CTAL) Course Design Institute and Open Teaching Days, and colleagues at IT Academic Technology Services (IT-ATS). The UD Library, Museums and Press has also been a tremendous asset."



Honored with the 2025 Excellence in Teaching Award are (from left) Alison Terndrup, Jin Yao Kwan, Rajinda Wickrama and Elizabeth Sargent.

## Excellence in Undergraduate Advising and Mentoring

**Lauren Genova:** "I am deeply honored to have been named one of this year's recipients of the Excellence in Undergraduate Academic Advising and Mentoring Award. This recognition holds special meaning for me because the nominations come directly from students – the very individuals I feel privileged to support and guide. It's also particularly meaningful because my own advising philosophy was greatly influenced by Susan Groh, associate professor emeritus who served as my academic advisor when I was an undergraduate student at UD. Despite her extremely demanding schedule, Groh always gave her advisees undivided attention and treated us with immense respect. The safe and supportive environment she created, coupled with her meticulous attention to detail, helped us feel comfortable stopping by her office whenever questions arose in our academic,



personal or professional lives. I strive to create that same kind of positive environment in the spaces that I inhabit as an academic advisor and mentor. It is truly a joy to interact with our students and help them navigate their journeys. I am incredibly grateful to all who nominated me."

**Ardeshir Faghri:** "I'm happy and honored to have been nominated by my undergraduate student-advisees and humbled for having won this prestigious award. I care about all of my students and make sure to provide each student with the most relevant and pertinent information for them to achieve success and meet their individual goals. UD also has excellent resources to help students succeed and I make certain that students know about the different resources that they may need for receiving assistance in academic and non-academic matters. This award provides me with an excellent opportunity to thank two individuals from whom I've learned a great deal about the intricacies of undergraduate advising: Sarah Palmer, assistant director of the UD Student Career and Post-Graduate Success Hub, and Joe Hofmann, undergraduate program coordinator for the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering. I'm grateful to both of them for having spent quality time to teach me, and many of my departmental faculty members, all the important matters related to undergraduate student advising."

**Agnes Ly:** "As the Director of Advising for Psychology and Neuroscience majors and minors, I try to create a space for students to articulate their own authentic interests rather than try to pursue paths they believe they "should" follow; I think it's most important for students to be the ones who recognize and own their own path. It's my job to serve as a coach, helping them think about themselves and how they can make good decisions for themselves. I am so grateful and honored to receive this award. I get to have the privilege of playing one small part of my students' entire educational journey. As a teacher and mentor, I hope that I can support my students to grow and become more of who they already are and who they want to be."

**Elizabeth Bayley:** "I am honored to be one of this year's recipients of the Excellence in Undergraduate Advising and Mentoring Award. I view advising as an opportunity to help students make the most of the many opportunities at UD – supporting them as they discover their passions, develop essential skills and prepare for future careers and/or graduate study. It is a privilege to celebrate their successes and support them through challenges. I am truly grateful for this recognition."



Recipients of the 2025 Excellence in Undergraduate Advising and Mentoring Award are (from left) Agnes Ly, Elizabeth Bayley, Lauren Genova and Ardeshir Faghri.

## Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching

**Candy Frimpong:** “This award has become one of my sources of inspiration and motivation in the pursuit of my future career as a professor of art and an interdisciplinary artist. My teaching path began after my BFA degree in Sculpture when I served as a teaching assistant in sculpture at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana. Coming to UD to pursue a master of fine arts (MFA) degree gave me the opportunity to serve in my current role as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. At KNUST, the students I taught were mainly sculpture students. However, at the UD, I taught students from different disciplines such as engineering, biology, political science, law and accounting. The diverse background of the students became a great challenge that required new ways and means of impacting knowledge. I am deeply grateful to receive the Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching Award. Thank you to all the professors in the department of art and design who have supported me during the period of my MFA program. I equally thank all the students who by teaching them, made it possible for me to win this award.”

**Alexa Hansen:** “I’m incredibly honored to receive this award; this recognition has given me the confidence that I’m supporting students in ways that will follow them through their future journeys. It reinforces my belief in the importance of creating a learning environment that is both supportive and

challenging, one that empowers students to think critically, creatively, and with purpose. My teaching and advising style has been shaped by a deep commitment to student-centered learning and by the incredible mentors I've had. I would especially like to thank Sheng Lu, assistant professor of fashion and apparel studies, for welcoming me into the program and giving me the opportunity to work with such inspiring students, and Katya Roelse, instructor in the Department of Fashion and Apparel Studies, for her continued guidance in shaping my approach to ensure every student has meaningful and impactful learning experiences.”



Candy Frimpong and Alexa Hansen are the recipients of the 2025 Excellence in Graduate Student Teaching Award.