

UA Fort Smith Announces Faculty Awards

The University of Arkansas - Fort Smith has announced the names of four faculty members who received awards in recognition of their efforts in the classroom, in research and scholarship and in community service.

Recipients are Dr. Linda Tichenor of West Fork, the Lucille Speakman Master Teacher Award; Dr. Ragupathy Kannan of Fort Smith, the Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities Award; Dr. Argie Nell Nichols of Roland, the Faculty Service Award, given in recognition of excellence to UA Fort Smith, to the profession and to the community; and Steven A. Coppinger of Fayetteville, the Luella M. Krehbiel Teaching Excellence Award for Adjunct Faculty.



Linda Tichenor

Tichenor, associate professor of biological sciences, joined the UA Fort Smith faculty in 2002. In addition to teaching in the College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, she is a college science teaching specialist, by doctoral training, research and scholarly work.

Tichenor has made presentations at numerous professional meetings across the country, been published in professional journals and worked with significant grant and research projects. She has also been a reviewer for the National Science Foundation.

She is the secretary-treasurer on the Executive Board of Directors for the Society for College Science Teachers, an affiliate of National Science Teachers Association, and has served in other capacities for the organization.

Tichenor has been involved with Equestrian Bridges in Siloam Springs, a foundation which introduces children with autism to horses. She has also worked with the Black Stallion Literacy Project, which encourages children to read using the horse as a point of encouragement. She also volunteers in the Equine Program at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville during their fund-raising events. She has conducted summer workshops for area science teachers using the inquiry pedagogy. Tichenor is an active faculty participant in UA Fort Smith's Cub Camp, the orientation event for first-time, full-time students, enabling her to engage students in fun, non-academic ways.

Tichenor received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from West Virginia University in Morgantown, W.Va., and a doctorate from Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho. She previously taught at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine, and New England College in Henniker, N.H.

The Speakman Award is named for a longtime teacher, administrator and Board of Trustees member, the late Lucille Speakman. Recipients receive a \$2,500 monetary award. The award is given for demonstrating outstanding classroom teaching; providing a positive learning environment; developing outside-of-classroom relationships and mentoring with students; demonstrating strong modeling, practice and assessment of the university's general education skills; conducting research projects and case studies; and showing an understanding of educational principles and an articulated teaching philosophy.

Ragupathy Kannan

Kannan is a biology professor in the College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. Since joining the UA Fort Smith faculty in 1994, he has won numerous awards and recognitions for his teaching and research, including a six-month stint in India in 2007 as a Fulbright Scholar and a teaching award at UA Fort Smith in 1999.

Kannan serves on the national Environmental Science Peer Review Committee for the Fulbright Specialist Program, participates each year in the annual reading and scoring of the College Board's Advanced Placement Examination in biology and speaks nationally and internationally, often giving lectures about his years in the Indian rainforest researching little-known forest birds.

He has also been involved in obtaining several grants to fund student research projects at UA Fort Smith, was accepted by Cornell University for one of the volunteer search teams tracking the Ivory-billed woodpecker in Arkansas and has published numerous articles in national and international journals.

He received his bachelor's and master's degrees in zoology from Loyola College, Chennai, India, a master of science in biology from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, and a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Kannan will receive \$2,500 as recipient of the Excellence in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activities Award, which recognizes full-time faculty members for the results they have shown in the award areas.

Argie Nell Nichols

Nichols, an associate professor in Computer-Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) in the College of Applied Science and Technology, came to UA Fort Smith in 1994. She was an instructor of CADD at Arkansas State University in Beebe, Ark., prior to coming to UA Fort Smith and also taught 13 years in middle and high schools at Fourche Valley, Ark., and Spiro, Okla.

Nichols has been active in making numerous academic presentations across the United States on distance education and virtual reality. She has written chapters in three books and developed several instructor supplements for engineering graphics textbooks.

Nichols has served on numerous committees at UA Fort Smith, including serving as chair of the Faculty Senate.

Nichols was director of the UA Fort Smith AutoDesk Training Center and received numerous awards for the center during that time. She currently serves on the Executive Board for the professional group, the Association of Technology, Management, and Applied Engineering.

Nichols is active in Partners in Education through the Fort Smith Public School System, with a main focus on the Meals for Kids backpack program. As a cancer survivor, she also actively supports numerous cancer awareness events in the community.

She received a bachelor's degree in Home Economics - Interior Design from the University of Central Arkansas. She has a master's degree in Vocational Education from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Her education doctorate degree, also from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, is in Adult Education with a specialist in Administration Leadership.

Nichols will receive a monetary award of \$2,500 for receiving the Faculty Service Award. Recipients of this award have shown outstanding community service, both in the profession and

in support of community improvement, as well as outstanding service to the university through committees, recruitment, clubs and data-gathering.

Steve Coppinger

Lt. Coppinger, who has taught criminal justice classes part time at UA Fort Smith since 2008, is a 16-year veteran of the Arkansas State Police and currently serves as commander of Company D in the Criminal Investigation Division. He has also served as a special agent in the Executive Protection Detail under former Governors Jim Guy Tucker and Mike Huckabee and in the Family Protection Unit and in other key positions with the state police.

Before joining the ASP, he was as investigator and later chief investigator in the Consumer Protection Division of the Arkansas Attorney General's Office under former Attorney General Winston Bryant and served in regional and national positions with the National Association of Consumer Protection Investigators.

He was previously employed by the Fayetteville Police Department and as a police and fire dispatcher with the Fort Smith Police Department. He is a 1980 graduate of Van Buren High School and grew up in Kibler. He attended UA Fort Smith, then Westark Community College, from 1980 to 1983 and sees his teaching on campus as a "circle of life" — giving back from where he previously received.

Coppinger has a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a major in Criminal Justice, from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and a Master of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of Cincinnati. He is a graduate of the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy (ALETA) Basic Police School 84-A and is a graduate of ASP Recruit School 95-A, where he received a third place award for academics.

Coppinger, with more than 3,000 hours of specialized law enforcement training, possesses a senior certificate from the Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training (CLEST) and has been a certified law enforcement instructor since 1988. He regularly teaches during ASP recruit schools and also has numerous other awards and citations.

The Luella M. Krehbiel Teaching Excellence Award for Adjunct Faculty is named for Luella Krehbiel, who taught English and literature at the university from 1929 until 1958. Coppinger will receive a monetary award of \$2,500.

The four award winners were recognized during a faculty appreciation ceremony held April 15 in conjunction with UA Fort Smith's fourth annual Undergraduate Research Symposium. In addition to these faculty awards, separate award categories recognize the work of non-teaching professionals. The non-faculty awards are scheduled for later announcement.

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