

Kudos for Teaching Excellence Nominations
Spring 2018

Nominated by students:

Ilene Benz, Visual and Performing Arts

Professor Benz is highly organized and professional. Classroom expectations are clear. She cultivates the perfect learning environment by controlling the classroom and yet encouraging student participation. Professor Benz has carefully and strategically created curriculum to support the goals of what she is teaching. The classroom climate Professor Benz initiates is one of cooperation and comradery. With her help, students develop positive relationships and concern for each other's success. Professor Benz taps into each person's individual potential. The work done in class is interesting, challenging and purposeful. She teaches by example and provides students with the right tools, encouragement and motivation to succeed.

Maria Brandt, English/Philosophy

She has made me fall in love with writing again. She encourages the class and me to be better writers and to reach outside of our comfort zone to achieve success in writing projects. During workshops, she balances criticism with kindness and compassion. You can tell she is passionate about the work she does.

Christy Fogal, Mathematics

If you don't understand how to read or create graphs or if you find yourself frustrated by looking at them, take Professor Fogal's class! She is amazing when it comes to knowing the ways of Statistics! She makes everything clearer and easier to understand. She is very willing to meet you before or after class to address your questions or concerns! Thank you Professor Fogal!

Joanna Tsai, Biology

Professor Tsai is a remarkable teacher! She brings life to the labs that we do in class and she makes sure that you understand everything before moving on. She is very helpful when it comes to any concerns or questions presented in class or email. Thank you Professor Tsai!

Nominated by faculty and staff:

Jason Anderson, Chemistry/Geosciences

For the past several years Jason Anderson has demonstrated considerable commitment to enhancing the success of his students. For example, Jason took the initiative to poll his organic students and found that a large majority were not utilizing the costly required text. Consequently, he led an effort to find alternative and affordable instructional materials that would allow students to actively and independently engage with the material. Another noteworthy area, which supports Jason's dedication to student success, is his involvement as a co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) on two three-year collaborative NSF grants between organic chemistry faculty at RIT and MCC. As a result, fifteen novel organic chemistry laboratory

activities have been designed and implemented at MCC. These guided-inquiry labs more closely resemble authentic research and are more student-centered than traditional expository labs. Jason also serves as a faculty mentor and visiting scientist as part of a five-year NSF grant led by Professor Michael Neidig at the University of Rochester. A portion of this grant provides funding for Jason and other MCC chemistry faculty to advise one MCC student per summer to participate in ten weeks of high-level research in the Neidig lab. Participating students develop research skills, and improve their communication competence through a variety of methods including presenting an informative poster and giving a Scholars' Day talk.

Kathleen Borbee, Business

I would like to nominate Professor Borbee for the "Kudos for Teaching Excellence" award. Professor Borbee teaches Marketing, Sales and Applied Business Applications in the Business Department. In addition, she serves as the Vice Chair for a new initiative at MCC - Launch Your Business! She implemented a "Feet on the Street" campaign in the fall of 2017, which not only served to promote the program across campus, but gave her students the opportunity to use their marketing and selling skills as they developed their promotional campaigns!

She also serves as the Service Learning Faculty Liaison for MCC and this campaign was structured as a Service Learning project. Students had the benefit of applying concepts from their courses to craft programs that directly benefited the Launch Your Business! initiative as well as MCC as a whole. This incorporated real world experiences into the curriculum where students worked together in teams to develop ideas that created value for the program, while they became more invested in their college community and were able to see their hard work have tangible significance. Several of the students working on the campaign last fall are presenters at Scholars' Day this year for Launch Your Business! Pitch Your Idea. Professor Borbee is an asset to our students and MCC!

Colleen Caruana, Nursing and Sherri Kurtz, Dental Studies

Colleen and Sherri developed an interprofessional collaboration project between Nursing and Dental students. Working together on detailed case studies, the students formulated and presented plans for improving health outcomes across the life span. Through this activity students learned how to function more effectively within an inter-professional team using the skills of open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making.

Tokeya Graham, English/Philosophy

Professor Tokeya Graham is a vibrant, intuitive, and personable classroom instructor who imbues her curriculum with genuine meaning for her students. Hers is a student-centered, multi-modal pedagogy that works to demystify complex ideas and processes while engaging her students critically--thus effecting earnest participation. Such is brought about by a number of factors, including (but not limited to) her warm and funny demeanor, passion and reverence for the subject matter, and thoughtfully structured approach to the day's lesson. Consequently, I believe her students are quite fortunate to have her as their professor.

Rebecca Griffin, Hospitality

Prof. Griffin consistently puts in extra time and goes above and beyond for her students. She also takes great pride in making the department a supportive place to work for all full-time, adjunct, and professional staff.

Grant Hewitt, Nursing

Grant is a first year faculty member and a graduate of our program. When a faculty member unexpectedly resigned in early February, he stepped forward and picked up some of the teaching responsibilities of this vacancy. He has also been very active in curriculum redesign in his assigned courses. As a graduate of the program and a minority in the profession, he has been an excellent role model for our students. He is a true asset to the department and the college.

Matthew Koehler, English/Philosophy

“Chickens is just food (sic)— I used to see ‘em run around my Grandma’s yard all the time with their necks broken, then eat ‘em for dinner!”

The comment made by a student in class with nearly any relatively young instructor would lead them to be flustered or at least slightly uncertain. In a class with a less capable instructor it would engender side comments ridiculing the student or the argument. However, in a recent class, Professor Koehler seamlessly converted the comment into a legitimate objection to a philosophical argument on the morality of eating animal flesh. In this split second, Koehler demonstrated his mastery of the three essential ingredients of teaching philosophy in a community college: knowing your discipline and material inside and out, understanding the mechanics of teaching, and persistently trying to reach each and every student. Professor Koehler knew the material so well he could link the student comment to a standard objection in the literature. He understands the dialectic of argument and objection that is central to philosophy. He showed his deep respect for every student and desire to include them in the process of learning.

Beyond his gifts in the classroom, Professor Koehler is an innovator whether teaching online or in a face to face setting. The students in one recent online section of Introduction to Philosophy were treated to an individual semester-long Socratic dialogue one-on-one with their professor. In the Ethics classroom, Professor Koehler often uses flash polls (via a smart phone app) to gage the students’ leaning toward or objecting to the resolution of a dilemma (the trolley problem, for example). This technique allows even the most bashful student to participate and serves as a platform for a much deeper conversation about moral issues.

Professor Koehler’s gifts for technological innovation and dialogues with students that promote learning have become more evident during his time with us at Monroe Community College and we expect them to emerge more completely in the future.

We are fortunate that Professor Koehler has served the students of Monroe Community College

with energy and enthusiasm for many semesters. As colleagues who so much appreciate the vitality he contributes to philosophy committee endeavors and to his students (online, in the classroom, through his service at the SSD Office), we nominate Matthew Koehler for the Kudos for Teaching Excellence.

Eileen Lanzafame, ESOL/Transitional Studies

Eileen is a tireless advocate for our Downtown students. She understands the challenges and hardships faced by many of our students and has the ability to meet students where they are and help them get to where they need to be by honoring and valuing each person's unique contributions to the learning environment. She remains flexible with students as she understands that life often gets in the way of student learning and everyone deserves a second chance. Students want to be in Professor Lanzafame's class because they know that she will encourage and challenge them to be the best that they can be. In addition to her work with students, Eileen is dedicated to supporting and advocating for her Downtown colleagues. It is an honor to work with such a dedicated and caring professional as Eileen Lanzafame.

Mark Sample, Anthropology/History/Political Science/Sociology

I would like to offer “kudos” for teaching excellence to Associate Professor of History Mark Sample. Since Professor Sample began teaching at MCC in 2004, I have heard from many students over the years how much they loved taking history classes from him. I have advised numerous students who, after taking one history class with Professor Sample, requested a second class with him. They did so not because it was required for their degree program but because they loved how Professor Sample teaches. Some of my program advisees commented they did not think they would even like history or that perhaps it would be a boring subject until they took a class with Professor Sample. When asked why they like Professor Sample so much, my advisees have said things similar to “Professor Sample really makes you think about why certain historical events occurred” and “makes you see differing views and perspectives on history.” Their comments can be summarized in two words “critical thinking”. Mark Sample deserves kudos for the way in which he promotes critical thinking in the various history courses he teaches, continually motivating students to want to learn more. In addition, all of Professor Sample’s classes are writing intensive. It is refreshing to see students eagerly express desire to take another writing intensive class, as I usually see students shy away from writing intensive courses in other subjects. Therefore, I say “kudos” to Professor Mark Sample for his effective teaching skills, dedication to writing across the curriculum, and constantly encouraging our students to reflect critically on history.

Mary Seely, Surgical Technology

Mary continues to work tirelessly to get this new program off the ground and attain national accreditation. At the end of its 3rd year, the program has seen the first class of graduates pass their certification exams. Mary has also involved current students in regional conferences and competitions that showcase their education and skills learned. She has started a student club for current students, involving them in community service and professional development. And

personally, Mary has concurrently worked on completion of her Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Mary is a valuable member of the department and college.