

Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer *JM*
Gloria Waters, Vice President and Associate Provost for Research *G.W.*

DATE: May 11, 2021

SUBJECT: Celebrating BU's Award-Winning Faculty; Recipients of the 2021 Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology and the University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award

Each spring, we have the pleasure of honoring BU faculty whose work has been recognized through an impressive roster of national and international distinctions. While the formal event we host for this occasion, the annual Celebration of Teaching, Research & Scholarship, has been temporarily sidelined due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we do want to take this opportunity to spotlight the outstanding scholarly accomplishments of our faculty and to announce the recipients of two University-wide teaching awards traditionally presented at this ceremony: the **Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology** and the **Boston University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award**.

First, we want to congratulate the nearly 100 faculty members who this past year were recognized nationally and globally with major honors. In diverse fields that span the arts and humanities, sciences, business, mathematics, the health fields, and engineering, these faculty have been honored for their pursuit of foundational new knowledge and solutions to societal challenges. They have been awarded with Guggenheim, Fulbright, and Sloan research fellowships; elected by their peers to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences and National Academy of Inventors among a host of prestigious scholarly and industrial societies; and received National Science Foundation CAREER Awards, US Department of Energy Early Career Research Awards, and many other significant grants from federal and private funding agencies. We invite you to visit [our website](#) for a full list of this year's honorees, as well as those we recognized for honors in 2018 and 2019.

Next, we are delighted to announce the recipients of the 2020-2021 Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology and University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award. Each year, these awards give us a chance to recognize some of the most innovative and creative members of our academic community and the outstanding work they are doing to advance the practice of teaching.

2021 Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology

Supported through the generosity of BU alumnus Gerald Gitner (CAS '68), his wife Deanne, and their family, the Gitner Award recognizes the faculty member or team that best exemplifies innovation in teaching by use, development, or adaptation of technology. The award celebrates innovation that results in positive learning outcomes for undergraduate students and that is recognized or adopted by faculty colleagues within or outside Boston University. The recipient of this year's Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology is [Dr. Binyomin Abrams](#), **Master Lecturer of Chemistry in the College of Arts & Sciences**.

Dr. Abrams has been cited for his efforts to make courses accessible for students at all levels of chemistry knowledge and to leverage technology – including the production of over 80 instructional videos – to help ensure their preparedness. Specifically, he's being recognized for two important advances:

1. The development of OrgoPrep 2.0, a free, hybrid, six-week program designed to strengthen skills and logically bridge information between General Chemistry 2 and Organic Chemistry 1. The program, which blends self-paced learning using question-embedded video modules and live interactive Zoom webinars, has been extremely effective, with students who take it four times more likely to successfully complete Organic Chemistry 1 and not drop the course.
2. Leadership in the transition to *Learn from Anywhere*. When social distancing requirements this past year made in-person labs all but impossible, Dr. Abrams organized a revamping of lab areas, outfitting them with high-definition webcams, wireless headsets, and computers that could be used as digital whiteboards to allow for remote participation.

For Dr. Abrams' ongoing commitment to advancing student learning through the integration of exciting new technology, particularly in a year of significant challenge, it is our great pleasure to confer to him the 2021 Gerald and Deanne Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology.

2021 Boston University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award

The University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award recognizes outstanding scholars who excel as teachers inside and outside the classroom and who contribute to the art and science of teaching and learning. The embrace of this dual role – scholar and teacher – is at the heart of Boston University's mission, and this year it is our pleasure to recognize [Dr. Pamela Templer](#), **Professor of Biology in the College of Arts & Sciences**, as our Scholar-Teacher of the Year.

Professor Templer has been cited for thoughtfully integrating her original climate and pollution research into her curricula to teach students how to analyze data and examine the impact of human activity on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. An internationally recognized scholar, she is a Fellow and Vice President for Education in the Ecological Society of America and directs the NSF-supported BU URBAN program, leading faculty from over a half dozen fields in training graduate students to address urban environmental challenges.

Professor Templer's devotion to interdisciplinary learning can be seen especially through her development of Biology of Change, now one of the department's most popular courses, which draws students from diverse majors to investigate the impacts of environmental change in Boston; and through her Forest Ecology course, where students write grant proposals to study the questions that most interest them – many of which have resulted in federal research funding.

For this dedication to interactive interdisciplinary learning and the incorporation of her own highly relevant research into her teaching practices, we are delighted to present Professor Pamela Templer with the 2021 Boston University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year Award.

If the award winners we salute today demonstrate anything, it is the caliber of talent we have at Boston University and the imagination, diversity of approach, and commitment to excellence they bring to their craft. Please join us in congratulating these members of our community for their outstanding efforts and accomplishments over the last year. We'd also like to give special thanks to the Provost's Faculty Teaching Awards Committee, whose membership is listed below, for their many hours of work helping to evaluate and identify this year's Gitner and Scholar-Teacher of the Year winners.

We look forward to conferring these awards and toasting our talented colleagues in person a year from now. In the meantime, we want to wish everyone a safe and successful close to the semester and a restorative summer ahead.

Provost's Faculty Teaching Awards Committee

Chair:

Suzanne Kennedy, Associate Provost *ad interim* for Undergraduate Affairs

Members:

Abbas Attarwala, Lecturer of Computer Science, College of Arts & Sciences (2020 Gitner Family Award for Innovation in Teaching with Technology recipient)

Seth Blumenthal, Senior Lecturer, Arts & Sciences Writing Program, College of Arts & Sciences (2020 Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching recipient)

Deb Breen, Director, Center for Teaching & Learning

Matthew Fox, Professor of Epidemiology and Global Health, School of Public Health (2020 University Provost's Scholar-Teacher of the Year recipient)

Courtney Goto, Associate Professor of Religious Education; Co-Director, Center for Practical Theology, School of Theology (2020 Metcalf Award for Excellence in Teaching recipient)

Kesha Perkins, Undergraduate Student, College of Arts & Sciences (2020 Dean Elsbeth Melville Scholarship winner)

Surya Pulukuri, Undergraduate Student, College of Arts & Sciences and College of Health & Rehabilitation Sciences: Sargent College (2020 Harold C. Case Scholarship winner)

Sarah Sherman-Stokes, Clinical Associate Professor of Law, School of Law (2020 Metcalf Cup and Prize Recipient)

Mounika Vutukuru, PhD Candidate in Electrical Engineering, College of Engineering

Staff:

Morgan Danna, Administrative Coordinator for Undergraduate Affairs, Office of the Provost