

## Faculty Awards

### **Doctoral Dissertation Advisor/Mentoring Award**

The recipient will be recognized at the Commencement Ceremony and receive a prize of \$3000. All UCR ladder-rank faculty members are eligible for the award. Letters of nomination are invited from current and former graduate students, faculty, and advisors. To be considered for the award, a faculty member must receive at least one letter of nomination. Letters should indicate specifically what makes the nominee an outstanding mentor and why he or she should receive the award this year. Nominees of previous years will require re-nomination to be considered by this year's committee.

The nominations will be reviewed by a faculty committee composed of members of the Graduate Council. The committee will take into consideration not only the quality and number of letters of recommendation received but also the number of students the faculty has mentored and whether the nominee has a long history of effective mentoring. If a nominee came to UCR midway through his or her career, the committee will consider the entire career but will emphasize the mentoring of UCR students. If letters of recommendation were received last year for a faculty member who is being re-nominated this year, the committee will consider those letters (on file in the Graduate Division).

### **Commitment to Graduate Diversity Award**

This award celebrates UCR faculty who actively champion efforts to promote and maintain a diverse and inclusive campus climate, with some focus on our graduate student populations. The recipient will be recognized at the Commencement Ceremony and receive a prize of \$3000. All UCR ladder-rank faculty members are eligible for the award.

Letters of nomination are invited from current and former faculty, and students. To be considered, a faculty member must receive at least one letter of nomination. Letters should specifically discuss what makes the nominee an outstanding candidate for the award. The committee will take into consideration how the nominee's efforts have either enhanced the diversity of our graduate students (through outreach, recruitment, mentoring or other efforts), or helped establish our campus as an inclusive environment of belonging for diverse students. Nominees of previous years will require re-nomination to be considered by this year's committee; prior letters will be included in their new file.

## 2023 Awardees

### The 2023 Doctoral Dissertation/Mentoring Awardee

#### **Theodore Garland,**

Distinguished Professor of Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology



Theodore Garland, Jr. is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology at UCR. He is the director and PI of the Garland Laboratory and co-Associate Director of the Network for Experimental Research on Evolution (NERE). With a doctoral degree (1985) from University of California, Irvine, Professor Garland's illustrious career at UCR began in the 1980s. His research focuses on the study of the evolution and adaptation of behavior within neurobiology, physiology and anatomy. He has published 8 books, over 345 individually and co-published journal articles, several videos, editorials and is coeditor of several publications. His work enables insight into the motivation that underlies volunteer exercise in humans.

Professor Garland was nominated for the 2022/23 Doctoral Dissertation Advisor/Mentor Award by his current and former graduate students as well as faculty colleagues. The letters recognize and strongly recommend Professor Garland as a dedicated, effective, compassionate teacher-and-mentor whose enthusiasm for his graduate students' successes illuminate his "long history of effective teaching and mentoring" at UCR. Over the years, he has served as the chair or member of many doctoral dissertation committees. And, students from the Garland Lab have gone on to build prominent careers as teachers and researchers nationally and internationally. His students and faculty colleagues cite him as a generous teacher-scholar-mentor who directs the "most diverse lab." That diversity enhances collaboration in the Garland Lab and continues to reflect his ability to build and maintain research partnerships across nationalities, gender, race and different, enabling and progressive intellectual and research environments. These letters also refer to his deliberate and effective efforts to encourage students' academic and life successes during the pandemic.

The Graduate Division and the Academic Senate would like to join his students and faculty colleagues to recognize and congratulate Professor Theodore Garland on an outstanding accomplishment as doctoral dissertation advisor and mentor and thank him for his continuing passionate and intellectual support of graduate students.

#### **Michael Nelson;**

Associate Professor of Philosophy



Michael Nelson is Associate Professor and the Director of Graduate Admissions in UCR's Department of Philosophy. He earned his doctoral degree from Princeton University (2002). Before joining the UCR faculty 16 years ago, Professor Nelson taught as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Arizona and as an assistant professor at Yale University. His research interests include philosophy of language, metaphysics and agency theory. His research work focuses on issues of philosophy of language and philosophy of the mind within which he examines theories of communication and successful outcomes between speaker and audience(s).

Professor Nelson's work at UCR has garnered extensive recognition and acclaim by his current and former graduate students as well as faculty colleagues whose letters of nomination for the 2022/2023 Doctoral Dissertation Advisor/Mentor Award cite him as a teacher-scholar-mentor whose work and presence 'evoke trust' because he encourages students' individual visibility in ways that render invisible disabilities as actionable, recognizable and addressable 'features' within an academic system that privileges ability in all its forms. Accolades from faculty colleagues cite his untiring and excellent service as chair or member of dissertation and related graduate students' academic advancement committees. Current and former graduate students refer to Professor Nelson as an open-minded, graceful, kind and responsive mentor to the needs and ambitions of mentees. They assert that his work stands apart because he always finds ways to adjust his skills to fit "mentees circumstances and needs." The letters applaud Professor Nelson's mentoring excellence that is evident in the welcoming environment he creates and maintains for new students, his attentiveness to the academic and life needs of graduate students and his successes with job placements of the program's students over the years. Faculty colleagues and graduate students acclaim Nelson's work that continues to create, support and assist with advancing the program's diverse academic student population. And, with students' origins from underrepresented groups, first generation and international students, they recognize his graceful service as "integral to program's successes."

The Graduate Division and the Academic Senate would like to join Professor Michael Nelson's students and faculty colleagues to recognize and congratulate him on his brilliant and superior work as doctoral dissertation advisor and mentor and thank him for his continuing passionate and intellectual support of graduate students.

### **The 2023 Commitment to Graduate Diversity Awardees**

**Eddie Comeaux,**  
Professor, School of Education



Eddie Comeaux is a Professor and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in the School of Education. He is the founding Director of the Center for Athletes' Rights and Equity (CARE); Director of the Education Minor in Athletic leadership; former Chair of Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS); and, co-founder and former Chair of the Special Interest Group, Research Focus on Education & Sports for the American Educational Research Association. His research focuses on racial equity and justice, campus and racial climates and policy issues in Higher Education, intercollegiate athletics, and college choice and access. His research interrogates interactions between personal characteristics, campus environments and their influences on educational outcomes on diverse student populations. Comeaux received his doctoral degree from the University of California at Los Angeles. Winner of numerous awards in education, mentoring and outreach, he has published 5 books, 75 journal articles, book chapters, reports and essays.

Comeaux has served for 6 years as Associate Dean of Graduate Education. Before that, he was the Graduate Students' Advisor in the School of Education. This year, his faculty colleagues, staff and graduate students nominated Professor Eddie Comeaux for the 2022/2023 Commitment to Graduate Diversity Award for his focused and successful commitment and attention to equity and diversity. These letters acclaim Comeaux's affirmation of students' identities, worldviews, and scholarly agendas in ways that subvert "raced, classed, and gendered campus climate", citing him as "a fierce advocate of graduate students' rights...and needs for positive change" at UCR. Their praise and recognition of his intentional engagement in different

aspects of graduate students' academic work and life highlight and support their testimonials of his "personable and approachable" demeanor. These faculty, staff and graduate students' nomination letters laud his "unwavering dedication to establishing and maintaining an inclusive environment for all his students" and emphasize his effective leadership focus that continues to facilitate positive changes in policies about "racial diversity, recruitment, admission and matriculation" as well as his focus on the mental and physical health support for students. They affirm that his efforts to create a diverse environment for graduate students on campus enhance the program, school and institution; his advocacy continues to promote and maintain a diverse and inclusive campus climate at UCR

The Graduate Division would like to join Professor Eddie Comeaux's faculty colleagues and students, and the staff at SOE to recognize and congratulate his outstanding accomplishments as an active, effective mentor and champion of equity and diversity for graduate students on campus.

*Questions and comments please email*

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