



ECU Notes: Geographer receives award for excellence in teaching

ECU News Services

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An East Carolina University geographer received the highest teaching award given at the university during the Teaching Awards ceremony held April 28 in the Mendenhall Student Center.

Derek Alderman, associate professor in the Department of Geography, has been selected as the ECU recipient of the annual UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching.

The award was one of several presented during the ceremony. Thirty-seven faculty members from a variety of disciplines were nominated or presented with awards. Several faculty members were recognized in more than one category.

Chancellor Steve Ballard said, while the university provides many important services, teaching is "at the heart and soul of the institution."

"I think what you all are doing makes all the difference in the world for our students and our future," he told the nominees.

Alderman began his career at ECU in 2000 and, in 2005, became a tenured associate professor. He holds an undergraduate degree in history from Georgia Southern College and master's and doctoral degrees in geography from the University of Georgia. He has received the Board of Governors Distinguished Professor for Teaching Award, the Robert L. Jones Award for Outstanding Teaching and the Scholar-Teacher Award, in addition to other honors.

Alderman has authored a book, 12 book chapters and more than 40 journal articles. He has become a nationally known expert on the politics of naming streets and other public places after Martin Luther King Jr., and has been quoted in more than 90 interviews with the media.

"I'm truly honored to be recognized among all of my great colleagues," Alderman said. "One of the reasons I enjoy this institution so much is its commitment to research, teaching and service."

Alderman credited a mentor from his undergraduate days with his successful teaching model, which includes an open door policy, constant communication with students, the involvement of students in research, and the cultivation of a challenging and engaging classroom atmosphere.

"The university is more than just a transfer of information," Alderman said. "Our job as university professors is to create opportunities and environments in which we can put students in places where they can help construct their own knowledge."

A member of the Board of Governors will present Alderman with a commemorative bronze medal and a \$7,500 cash prize during commencement.

Other ECU nominees for the 2009 Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching were Kermit Buckner (Educational Leadership), Robert Carroll (Physiology), Ken MacLeod (Marketing and Supply Chain Management), Janice Neil (Undergraduate Nursing Science), Fred Schadler (Finance) and Douglas Schneider (Accounting).

Several additional awards were presented during the ECU ceremony.