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ASU Mid-South Selects NISOD Excellence Award Recipients

Arkansas State University Mid-South is proud to announce its recipients of the annual National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Excellence Awards. 2021 honorees Dr. Michael Lejman and April Holland.

NISOD's Excellence Awards recognize men and women each year who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment and contribution to their students and colleagues. In 1989, in connection with a University of Texas at Austin national study of teaching excellence, NISOD hosted its first ceremony honoring NISOD Excellence Award recipients. The response to that ceremony was so positive that NISOD began what has become the largest and most inspiring gathering that recognizes the contributions and achievements of community and technical college faculty, administrators, and staff.

Dr. Michael Lejman, Associate Vice Chancellor for Institutional Research and Assessment, was selected to receive the Excellence Award among staff members and April Holland, English faculty, was chosen for the faculty Excellence Award. Winners were nominated by colleagues and the full-time faculty and staff voted to select the recipients.

While Dr. Michael Lejman has always gone above and beyond what was required of any position he holds, Dr. Lejman has truly been a stand out leader this year. He has voluntarily taken on 'The Project Manager' role in the college's Banner implementation, as well as the role of Campus Point of Contact (POC) for the college's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the POC role, he works days, nights, and weekends helping to drive the College's pandemic response in light of ever-evolving state and federal guidance, while simultaneously serving as the contact tracing liaison for faculty, staff, and students.

If that weren't enough, Michael's regular job requires him to keep the College focused on its strategic planning, accreditation and assessment responsibilities during these particularly challenging times. As one of his nominators noted, Michael's "...dedication to this institution along with his integrity and his teamwork are just a few highlights to consider him a top contender for this year's nomination for NISOD."

"I'm honored by the recognition from my colleagues. It is clearer now than ever that, whether students or staff, ASU Mid-South is a family and we take care of each other. I am just happy to help and proud to be a part of this community," said Lejman.

A nominator for Ms. Holland shared, “During this pandemic, everyone has had to change their game plan. No one has done this better than April Holland.” April was one of the first to dig deep with creativity, restructuring her courses to make them more accessible and engaging for students in the virtual world. As a faculty member, April’s door is open to all students, not just her own. She is an encourager, mentor, teacher, and friend.

She is lovingly called the Greyhound Godmother by the college’s basketball players, attending their games and serving as that constant voice reminding them to focus and work hard, both on and off the court. She even worked with the College’s Foundation to set up the Greyhound Godmother Athletic Scholarship for a student athlete who demonstrates success on the court and in the classroom.

If this weren’t enough, April also serves as the College’s On Course Coordinator. In this role, she helps faculty implement On Course principals that help turn struggling students into successful students.

Holland commented, “I am truly honored that my ASU Mid-South family felt that my contributions to the institution were worthy of this recognition. Serving students is at the heart of everything I do, and I am blessed to have that opportunity on a daily basis.

Excellence Award recipients are recognized during NISOD’s annual International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence, to be held virtually April 28-30, 2021. Excellence Awards recipients receive a specially cast, pewter medallion hung on a burnt-orange ribbon. The names, titles, and colleges of all Excellence Award recipients are included in a special booklet that features congratulatory ads from many of the recipients’ colleges. In addition, presentations at the conference involving Excellence Award recipients are indicated in the Conference Program with a special icon

“Recognizing those individuals who have contributed to student success and our college’s mission is something we look forward to doing each year. As challenging as this past year has been, this year’s recognition seems even more special,” said Dr. Debra West, Chancellor of ASU Mid-South. “Michael and April’s extraordinary achievements reflect not only what they do for colleagues and students, but demonstrates their commitment to student success and support for the college’s programs. We’re truly honored to celebrate their achievements.”

About NISOD

The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) is a membership organization committed to promoting and celebrating excellence in teaching, learning, and leadership at community and technical colleges. NISOD provides budget-friendly, high-quality, and faculty-focused programs and resources for community and technical colleges that want to make the most of their professional development dollars. For over 40 years, NISOD has aligned a wide array of benefits with the needs of our members, which explains why the American Association of Community Colleges named NISOD, “The country’s leading provider of professional development for community college faculty, staff, and administrators.” For more information about NISOD, visit www.nisod.org.

About Arkansas State University Mid-South

Arkansas State University Mid-South is a public two-year institution of higher education with an open-door admission policy, serving Crittenden County, Arkansas, and the surrounding areas with a comprehensive educational program. The College is committed to economic development in the Arkansas Delta through the provision of quality, affordable, and convenient learning opportunities and services consistent with identified student, community, and regional needs. To meet these needs, the College provides quality academic and support programs, personnel, technology, administrative services, and facilities necessary to respond in a timely and effective manner.

For more information about ASU Mid-South, visit <https://www.asumidsouth.edu>.

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