

[Weiss Awards honor best teachers of undergrads](#)

May 13, 2016 11:00 AM New Wave staff
newwave@tulane.edu



At the [Tulane University Unified Commencement Ceremony](#) on Saturday (May 14), two faculty members who inspire and mentor their students will receive the most prestigious award for teaching undergraduates.

This year's recipients of the Suzanne and Stephen Weiss Presidential Fellowships are [Michael P. Kuczynski](#), associate professor and chair of the Department of English, and [Toni Weiss](#), the Lawrence M.v.D. Schloss Professor of Practice in the Department of Economics.

[The awards](#), given in recognition of the importance of undergraduate teaching, were established with a generous gift from Suzanne and Stephen Weiss. Each fellowship honors a faculty member who has a sustained record of effective, inspiring and distinguished teaching. Recipients receive a special medal, \$5,000 a year for four years and permanent designation as a Weiss Fellow.



Michael Kuczynski of the English department will receive a Weiss Award for undergraduate teaching at the Unified Commencement Ceremony. (Photos by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Michael Kuczynski is a model of an all-around educator. He has been an exceptional instructor and member of the faculty for 27 years, often teaching full course loads even while serving as chair of his department. One colleague writes, "Mike has provided the vision and the energy to apply that [student-centered] ethos to curricular and program development (at all levels in the university) in ways that foster a commitment to improving pedagogy and involving students in productive research activities." Students highlight his knowledge ("Professor Kuczynski is, in a word, brilliant"), passion and humor, along with a caring and positive attitude.



Toni Weiss of the Department of Economics is a recipient of a 2016 Weiss Award.

Responsible for the introductory courses in economics, Toni Weiss teaches many first-year students. Her students remark on her active and engaged teaching style, her fair but challenging courses and her mentoring. One writes, “Professor Weiss has been the single most influential educator and mentor in my life, both in and out of the classroom.” Another writes, “I have never had such a supportive and fulfilling relationship with any professor or teacher.” A colleague writes that Weiss creates “a classroom environment where students actively participate in the learning process.” She also has elevated the discussion of pedagogy across campus through her work at the Tulane Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching. Weiss was also recently named the Lawrence M.v.D. Schloss Professor of Practice in the Department of Economics.

The 2016 Commencement ceremony will be [streamed live online](#). Follow us on social media at [#tulane16](#).