

Passionate About Medical Education

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Dr. Richard H. Streiffer, noted for his passion for medical education and advocating primary care, particularly in underserved rural areas, is the 2011 recipient of the Teaching Scholar Award given annually by the Tulane University School of Medicine.



Dr. Benjamin Sachs, left, dean of the medical school, presents the 2011 Teaching Scholar Award to Dr. Richard Streiffer at a ceremony on March 23. (Photo by Christopher Andrews)

Arriving at Tulane in 1998, Streiffer founded the [Department of Family and Community Medicine](#) and was its first chair and professor. His efforts have focused on encouraging students to pursue careers in primary care medicine, particularly in areas of rural Louisiana that urgently need doctors.

Streiffer has led the development of the family medicine clerkship, in which students do rotations in rural Louisiana communities with local physicians serving as their preceptors. He also spearheaded the Tulane Rural Medical Education Program (

[TRuMED](#)), that recruits and finances select rural students to attend Tulane in return for a period of rural service following graduation; and the Tulane Rural Immersion Program ([TRIP](#)), a curriculum in rural medicine for third-year Tulane medical students studying in rural parishes.

Sponsored by the medical school dean, the Office of Medical Education and the Society of Teaching Scholars, the award honors a faculty member for excellence in teaching, unique curriculum development, innovations in educational methods and publishing research to disseminate educational improvements.

But beyond these basic criteria, the quality of passion is essential for winners of the award, said Dr. Benjamin Sachs, dean of the School of Medicine. “Unless you are passionate, you will never be able to convey anything to your students or be a role model for them and achieve the outcome that we all want, which is to generate and encourage the next generation of scientists and clinicians.”

Sachs added, “Today's recipient has that passion. Rick really cares and it comes through to everyone who works with him, to his students and to his colleagues.”