

2021 ITLS Awards | ITLS

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Faculty Awards

Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year (also in CEHS and the University) - Breanne Litts

For an outstanding undergraduate research mentor

From her first very day at USU in January 2016, Dr. Litts recognized the need to support undergraduates in research and began forging connections to them. As a result of these combined efforts, Dr. Litts has personally mentored undergraduate students from across colleges at the university, engaging them in her Learn Explore Design Lab where together they investigate how people learn through making, designing, and producing at the intersection of physical and digital worlds.

Strong Human Services Award (also in CEHS) - Kristin Searle

For significant and sustained leadership in human services and applied research

Kristin Searle's research has tremendously impacted communities throughout rural Utah, Arizona, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana, with particular impact in communities with large numbers of Native American students. Her work has reached hundreds if not thousands of students over the past 6 years of her time at USU, and she has brought rural communities from many different states into deeper STEM-based learning that is also culturally responsive to the interests and identities of different groups, thus supporting broader participation in STEM.

Faculty Researcher of the year (also in CEHS) - Mimi Recker

For outstanding research and scholarly contributions within the last five years

Mimi Recker's research has been groundbreaking from her first entry into academia and continues to be at the

cutting edge of establishing new fields in education: AI for educational environments, educational data mining (or "learning analytics"), and computer science education. She is an exceptional research mentor of undergraduate and graduate students as well as both junior and tenured faculty.

Graduate Mentor of the Year (also in CEHS) - Jody Clarke-Midura

For excellence in mentoring graduate students to prepare them for productive careers

Jody Clarke-Midura is an educational designer and researcher who studies how people learn with digital media, toys, and games in the context of science, technology, engineering, math, and computer science. Her research has an outstanding reputation, examining classroom and district-level challenges in developing and adopting Computer Science resources, particularly in K-5 computing education, as well as challenges in assessment. Jody's students speak highly of how she mentors them in research too!

Faculty University Service - David Feldon

For outstanding leadership and excellent service to the university

David Feldon is well known amongst junior faculty for his support and mentorship, helping them work through the tenure process. He also uses his research on expertise, specifically in STEM disciplines, to connect with the broader university and in the local community. Dr. Feldon consistently goes above and beyond in service.

Faculty Teacher of the Year - Nathan Smith

For outstanding performance in the areas of teaching and learning

Nathan Smith is an Emeritus Senior Lecturer in ITLS, where he teaches courses in teaching technology and Photoshop and graphic design. He recently retired after leading for many years as Director of The Adele & Dale Young Education Technology Center (The YETC). Nathan has influenced hundreds of ITLS and CEHS students during his career and his students speak of him with great admiration.

Graduate Awards

Doctoral Students of the Year - Chongning (Vincent) Sun & Joana Franco

For valuable contributions by a doctoral student in the area of research

Chongning Sun has a background in language acquisition and quantitative methods. His current research focuses on strategies for broadening participation in Computer Science, in particular, ways to increase youths' self-efficacy in programming. During his time in ITLS, Chongning has co-authored five peer-reviewed journal articles, two peer reviewed conference proceedings, and six conference presentations. He has one manuscript under review and is currently working on two other manuscripts, one of which focuses on his dissertation study.

Joana Franco conducts research in the field of Transformative Learning Design. She developed a theoretical framework and applied it in the design of an online mindfulness introductory course to investigate the extent to which the learning experience was transformative and triggered interest in students. She has presented her research in conferences and published her framework in the Proceedings of the XIII International Transformative Learning Conference.

Legacy of Utah State - Lili Yan

Lili is an incredible member in our community, especially with all the time and effort she has put in serving international students in our department and more broadly. She has gone above and beyond in serving our USU and ITLS community during the past year of the pandemic. Her publication record is stunning for a third year doc student, and her ability to collaborate across multiple teams and with multiple faculty is admirable. She is talented, works hard, and is patient with others.

Graduate Student Teachers of the Year- Roxie Christensen & Aubrey Rogowski

For valuable contributions by a graduate student in the area of teaching

Roxie Christensen has a reputation as an excellent teacher in ITLS. She has taught multiple design courses and her teaching has reached many ITLS students. Her students enthusiastically report her care and her approachability.

Aubrey Rogowski is known for caring about her students and modifying classes to accommodate their personal and career interests. She constantly seeks to grow in depth and breadth of expertise in order to be a better teacher.

Masters Student Researcher of the Year - Kendan Quayle

For valuable contributions by a master's student in the area of research

Kenden has worked on two externally funded grant projects is currently the project manager for a major grant. She jumped into research with enthusiasm and astuteness that has been noticed by her entire team. In addition, she's also a dedicated member of ITSA.

Staff and Alumni Awards

Outstanding Staff of the Year - Annalee Hall

For carrying out responsibilities in an exceptional manner

Annalee is known for her willingness to help with solving any issues relevant to finance. She spent much of the past year helping to manage a seriously more than \$7.1 million in new grant awards to ITLS faculty, and they could not be more grateful!

Alumni Achievement award - Mark Lemon

In his role as Director of Learning at Intermountain Healthcare -- Utah's largest private employer -- Mark Lemon has overseen life-saving curricula that has been distributed to more than 40,000 caregivers and thousands more community members.