

COLSA Faculty Honored with College Awards

Maggie Begis, Kevin Pietro standout contributors to student success

Monday, June 24, 2019

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[Maggie Dylewski Begis](#) and [Kevin Pietro](#), two faculty from UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture's department of agriculture, nutrition and food systems, received the college's top honors this year.

Begis, who is a clinical assistant professor and the director of the didactic program in dietetics at UNH, has won the 2019 Outstanding Advisor Award. She advises all nutrition undergraduates who are pursuing a career in dietetics and provides additional advising help to students who are wondering if dietetics is a career path they'd like to pursue.

"Maggie provides guidance not only for the students' academic courses, but also weaves in suggestions for how students can access additional experiences that will make them more competitive for acceptance into a dietetic internship," says Joanne Burke, clinical professor and director of the UNH Dietetic Internship Program. "While the national undergraduate internship placement rate hovers between approximately 50 to 60 percent, our UNH placement is between an impressive 70 to 80 percent."

Along with praise from several her colleagues, Begis received compelling endorsements from ten of her advisees who lauded her guidance and support and the effort she puts into caring about their success and wellbeing in equal measure. Many made a direct link between their confidence and preparedness for a rewarding future in dietetics to Begis's compassionate, honest and thoughtful advising.

She joined the UNH faculty in January 2013.

Begis is joined in this collegewide honor by Kevin Pietro, a clinical assistant professor and assistant coordinator of the didactic program in dietetics, who received COLSA's 2019 Excellence in Teaching Award.

True to the title of the award, Pietro's students describe him as an exceptional professor. They attest to his commitment to making course material engaging and accessible and creating optimal conditions for learning. These observations are echoed by Pietro's fellow faculty.

"Kevin's long hours and thoughtful planning to offer his students the best possible experience, including deep learning and authentic engagement, separates him from many other teachers," says Jesse Stabile Morrell, principal lecturer and undergraduate program coordinator for the nutrition program. "He is not afraid to try new things and new technologies, and his reputation as an instructor who engages, challenges, and cares is well known to our students."

Since coming to UNH in 2014, Pietro has taught 10 different courses and participated in the development or significant redevelopment of four. This past fall semester, he redesigned Nutrition Education and Counseling, incorporating a technology-enhanced approach that fosters small group work and the development of student's communication skills. Stabile Morrell describes feedback from students as "overwhelmingly positive."

"Our role as teacher is a profoundly important one," says Dave Mortensen, faculty chair of the department of agriculture, nutrition and food systems. "We are charged with preparing the next generation of thinkers and doers. To have Kevin Pietro and Maggie Dylewski Begis recognized for their excellence in teaching and advising speaks volumes to the quality of their teaching and to their unending commitment to our students and their success."

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