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UNH Faculty Awarded Cogswell Professorships

By *Michelle Gregoire*
UNH News Bureau

DURHAM, N.H. -- Two University of New Hampshire faculty members have been awarded Cogswell Professorships for outstanding contributions to the Honors Program. John Burger, professor of zoology, and Carol Williams-Barnard, associate professor of nursing, were recently named to the one-year appointment.

The UNH Honors Program provides additional academic challenge to highly motivated students, who attend small classes and receive individualized instruction. Honors students research and present a senior thesis in their major course of study.

The Cogswell Foundation, a New Hampshire-based organization, initiated the professorship with a challenge grant in 1991; the university matched the grant and established an endowment. The professorship includes a \$5,000 stipend, which can be used to pay for research expenses, equipment and other purposes. Past recipients are Art Borrer, professor of zoology, and Barbara Cooper, professor of French.

"The Cogswell Professorship recognizes tenured faculty who have taught in the Honors Program," said Robert Mennel, professor of history and director of the Honors Program. "Their dedication to our most accomplished undergraduate students, their efforts both as teachers and as mentors, inspire these young people to pursue further research and many go on to graduate school."

John Burger, an entomologist, is presently working in Costa Rica where he is participating in a project to survey and describe insect biodiversity. He will also work at the Instituto de Biodiversidad in Santo Domingo on its collection of horse flies, his area of expertise.

Burger's work on blood-sucking flies such as mosquitoes, black flies and horse flies, has taken him to Mexico, India and the former USSR. In New Hampshire, he is recognized as the black-fly expert instrumental in launching a program at the Balsams Grand Resort Hotel in Dixville Notch, which uses a bacteria that invades the insect larvae's digestive system and causes it to die.

At UNH, Burger teaches a "superb" course in introductory biology at the honors level, according to Mennel. Burger credits the success of the course to "a combination of enthusiastic and highly motivated students and the opportunity for me to design a course that I think will give students not only factual biological knowledge but also acquaint them with current issues in biology."

He continued, "It is also gratifying to see my former students as they develop into professional biologists and develop exciting careers." Burger has served as thesis director for 13 master's students, and as dissertation director for five doctoral candidates.

Burger came to UNH in 1975 as a research entomologist, and was named assistant professor in 1977. Prior to that, he worked in medical entomology at the Water Reed Army Institute of Research and the Smithsonian Institution. He earned a Ph.D. in entomology from the University of Arizona, and a bachelor's degree in biology from Grinnell College in Iowa.

Associate Professor Carol Williams-Barnard is a founding member of the nursing department's Honors-in-Major Program and has sponsored 50 undergraduates for senior research projects. She has been involved with the annual Mary Louise Fernald Research Symposium, at which students present their theses, and she organized a chapter of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. She has also been involved in the transitions course for seniors, which prepares students for clinical practice.

Williams-Barnard said the Honors Program gives students the skills they need to succeed in a clinical setting. Most senior projects examine the effects of a health-care issue on the lives of the patient, their family and the nurses who provide their care. By working together and by working so closely with a mentor, the seniors improve their skills in critical thinking and analysis.

They also gain confidence, and a sense of empowerment, said Williams-Barnard. "They become advocates for themselves as well as for their clients. They learn how to be assertive."

Williams-Barnard teaches classes in psychiatric nursing and conducts clinical work at the New Hampshire Hospital in Concord, the state psychiatric facility. She joined the UNH faculty in 1978. She holds a doctor of nursing science degree from Catholic University and is a registered nurse.

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