

## CELT Selects Teaching Award Winners

The Committee to Enhance Learning and Teaching (CELT) has selected Professors Jeff Doebler, Sara Gundersen, and Carlos Miguel-Pueyo as the 2020-2021 Valparaiso University Excellence in Teaching Award recipients.

The award recognizes a few outstanding undergraduate faculty and/or units each year for general teaching excellence, with particular attention to excellence in any of three areas: course development, pedagogy, and mentoring/advising.

**Jeff Doebler, Ph.D.**, professor of music in the College of Arts and Sciences, received the honor for his work in the mentoring category. Professor Aimee Tomasek, chair of the Department of Art, nominated her colleague. “Jeff Doebler is an amazing mentor to his students in and out of the classroom. These students witness his commitment to excellence while he acts with kindness and generosity; a powerful combination of traits that prove effective and are revealed in the many accomplishments associated with Professor Doebler.”



According to Dennis Friesen-Carper, the Reddel Professor of Music, “For over twenty-eight years, he has revolutionized the music education and band programs at Valparaiso University, creating one of the premier music education programs in the state. As clinician, collaborator, extraordinary field placement mentor, and guiding force in the Indiana Music Education Association and Indiana Bandmasters Association, he has created a rapport of trust and respect with the music educators of Indiana, especially the Northwest Region, really for the first time in the history of the Valparaiso University Department of Music. Perhaps the greatest testimony to his work is the fact that among music education graduates who seek employment in the field, our placement rate since 1993 is 100%, and the vast majority of them are still teaching music.”

**Sara Gundersen, Ph.D.**, associate professor of economics in the College of Arts and Sciences, received recognition for her work in curriculum/course development. In his nomination letter to CELT, Brett Calland, academic advisor and lecturer, highlighted Professor Gundersen’s work in developing two specific courses: *Economics of Race and Gender* and *Economics and the Arts*. “By incorporating larger overarching topics of Race, Gender, and the Arts, like fine art, music, and similar creative commodities, her classes have helped students think about an area of particular interest to them as an economist would think about the subject. These courses of broader appeal are an important entry point into the field of study in economics for interested students and particularly for students traditionally underrepresented in the field of economics.”



Professor Niru Devaraj, chair of the Department of Economics, says Gundersen’s courses “embrace the fact that economics is a social science involving the study of people’s choices and how they interact with one another in markets and other settings. This makes the curriculum interesting to students who are motivated to help society and understand behavior and not merely those interested in economics from a finance perspective or as a path to running a business.”

**Carlos Miguel-Pueyo, Ph.D.**, professor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages and Cultures in the College of Arts and Sciences, received the honor for his pedagogy work. Nominator Timothy Tomasik, chair of the Department of World Languages and Cultures, emphasized Professor Miguel-Pueyo’s personal approach to teaching, which Miguel-Pueyo himself describes as a “humanistic communicative approach.”



Tomasik cited three specific courses developed and taught by Professor Miguel-Pueyo. For Spanish 204, Miguel-Pueyo re-developed the course using thematic units around historical moments or artifacts from the Spanish-speaking world, such as Mayan cities and the Renaissance in Spain. For Spanish 230, he partnered with Professor Jeff Will of the College of Engineering to bring Spain to the classroom by offering student access to a virtual reality Gothic cathedral. In the third example, Professor Miguel-Pueyo developed a course dedicated to the needs of Spanish speakers living in the U.S., known as heritage speakers. “Carlos aims to meet his students where they are, ensuring that they will make progress in his Spanish courses no matter what their previous experiences have been.”

Please join me in congratulating Professors Doebler, Gundersen, and Miguel-Pueyo on their outstanding work!

Rick Gillman  
Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs