

UMass Dartmouth professor awarded Manning Prize for teaching excellence

Five University of Massachusetts faculty – one from each UMass campus – have been awarded the 2019 Manning Prize for Excellence in Teaching for their exemplary dedication to students and the university. The winner from UMass Dartmouth is Shannon Jenkins of the Department of Political Science. Since 2004, Jenkins has been a Professor of Political Science, served as chair of the political science department from 2012 to 2018, and currently serves as the Academic Director of Online Learning.

UMass Lowell alumni Rob and Donna Manning established the Manning Prize in 2016 to honor UMass professors who excel in teaching and service. Manning is Chairman and Co-CEO of MFS Investment Management and chairs the Board of Trustees for the University of Massachusetts.

“These incredible faculty members work tirelessly to ensure that UMass students receive a world-class education,” said Rob Manning, a 1984 graduate of UMass Lowell. “Donna and I know from our own experience the power that faculty have to transform their students’ lives, and we’re proud to be able to honor that aspect of their work with this prize.”

Jenkins primary research focuses on decision-making in state legislatures, with a specific focus on the role of political organizations and gender in shaping outputs in these institutions. Jenkins has also researched the effect of engaged learning pedagogies on college students’ political interest and engagement. She is the author/co-author of three books and has received two Fulbright Awards, one in China in 2012 and one in Japan in 2019.

Jenkins' unique pedagogy is born out of an attempt to combat the disengagement of students with the political process. While rooted in the field of political science, Jenkins understands her work as inseparable from the larger mission of higher education. To promote these values to students, Jenkins' teaching blends civic engagement and political engagement in innovative ways.