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Students pay tribute to faculty mentors with Inspiration Awards

Jaden Fowler remembers his nervousness as a sophomore nursing student trying to master basic clinical skills, like taking vital signs, in OU's Nursing Therapeutics Lab.

"Like your average new nursing student, I was scared of the unknown," Fowler recalled. "Unlike most of my older colleagues, I had no experience in this area and was terrified of obtaining an inaccurate reading."

In his time of self-doubt, Fowler found a mentor in nursing instructor Diane Noack, whom he credits with teaching him to trust himself. In fact, Fowler was so moved by his interaction with Noack that he nominated her for an Inspiration Award.

Established through OU's Honors College, this annual award allows students to recognize instructors who have contributed to their academic and personal growth.

Noack, who has spent nearly 40 years in the nursing profession, said she was "overwhelmed and very humbled" by the recognition.

"I try my best every day to give each student the skills they need to succeed as a practicing nurse," said Noack. "To know that a student remembers me from their first class and that I had an impact on them is amazing."

This year, 13 faculty members received Inspiration Awards. Each student nominator submitted a 200-word essay in support of a faculty mentor. Fowler's essay was chosen as the best among all of this year's winning submissions.

"If my mother or father was ever sick in the hospital and I could bring one nursing instructor with me to take care of them, Professor Noack would be that nurse," Fowler wrote in his essay.

Now, Fowler works as a nurse extern at Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital, where he is able to put the skills he has learned into practice.

"You take a full patient assignment with an RN and you work together to contribute to the plan of care for each patient," said Fowler. "It really brings those skills you learn in simulation or in clinical to life and gives you a chance to practice and reinforce what you learn in school."

The Farmington Hills native is looking forward to completing his Honors College thesis and graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing later this year.

Faculty members received their Inspiration Awards at a ceremony in Oak View Hall. As the top winner, Noack was presented with a certificate and a medallion.

The following is a complete listing of this year's Inspiration Award honorees and their nominators:

School of Nursing:

Diane Noack / Jaden Fowler
Kathleen Spencer / Byung Keum



Nursing Instructor Diane Noack and student Jaden Fowler take vital signs on a mannequin in OU's Nursing Therapeutics Lab.



When Fowler nominated Noack for an Inspiration Award, his essay was chosen as the best among this year's winning submissions.

School of Health Sciences:

Tamara Hew-Butler / Melissa VanderMeulen

College of Arts and Sciences

Charlene Hayden (Chemistry) / Nicholas Garza

David Hammontree (Writing and Rhetoric) / Brittany Kleinschmidt

Cindy Mooty-Hoffman (Writing and Rhetoric) / Megan Luttinen

Doris Plantus (English) / Aaron Hellender, Alexa Ruhfass and Darian Willett

Tom Raffel (Biological Sciences) / Alex Bageris and Aleena Hajek

Grzegorz Tokarski (Italian) / Michela Manga and Holly Ryan

Jennifer Heisler (Communication and Journalism) / Taylor Kanigowski, Sequoia Campbell and Amanda Lock

Honors College

Paul Kohler (Art) / Delaney Kamm and Hannah Karyakose

Preeti Gulati (Academic Advising) / Arsha Ali