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BioMolecular Sciences Chair Receives AACP Graduate Education Award

Kristie Willett named inaugural recipient of the honor

JUNE 30, 2020 BY WHITNEY TARPY

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UM professor and chair Kristie Willett is the inaugural recipient of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's Graduate Education Special Interest Group Achievement Award. Photo courtesy School of Pharmacy

OXFORD, Miss. – Kristie Willett, chair of the **Department of BioMolecular Sciences** at the **University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy**, has been named the inaugural recipient of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy's Graduate Education Special Interest Group Achievement Award.

The honoree must exemplify teaching excellence and commitment, and inspirational leadership, and be a valued mentor, which are among the qualities Willett exemplifies.

"I really appreciate the recognition, but I accepted it on behalf of the whole department," Willett said. "Our graduate program successes are a result of the hard work of our faculty, staff and students.

"The award validates that the curriculum and programming that BMS has implemented is consistent with the AACP core competencies."

Willett has earned numerous teaching recognitions since joining the school in 2000, including the 2017 UM Faculty Achievement Award. A professor of pharmacology and environmental toxicology, Willett has worked with more than 20 master's and Ph.D. students and more than 50 high school and undergraduate students in her laboratory.

Willett spoke during her virtual recognition about the BMS Graduate Student Advocates, an organization where students propose initiatives that build community, public service and professional development.

"Graduate students are the foundation of our department's commitment to research that will improve human and environmental health," Willett said. "Our students bring incredibly diverse perspectives to our current research questions, and once they graduate from our program, I am confident they will have the skills to continue to improve our society."

Andrew Coop, professor and associate dean for academic affairs at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, nominated Willett after meeting her during the department's graduate program review a few months ago. Coop noted he was "simply amazed" at her contributions and dedication to graduate education.

"Kristie is held in the highest regard by her current and previous mentees," Coop said. "She is focused on the development of both the individual and graduate education in general.

"She is committed to introducing pre-college students to the field of graduate education, ensuring that all students from all backgrounds have the chance to excel."

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