

Frank O'Malley Undergraduate Teaching Award
Submissions

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Carl Ackermann

Teaching Professor, Finance

Prof. Ackermann is by far the best instructor I have ever had. I knew going into Fundamentals of Finance last semester that he was well regarded, but Prof. Ackermann shattered whatever expectations I may have had. His teaching style, while at times a little unconventional, bolstered my interest in finance and made each concept easy to learn. Prof. Ackermann's greatest attribute, however, is his personability outside the classroom. There have been a number of times that I have had the pleasure of learning from Prof. Ackermann outside of the classroom. Moreover, after speaking to Prof. Ackermann in the spring of my senior year of high school, I decided that I wanted to attend the University of Notre Dame. Thus, if any current faculty member is to be awarded the Frank O'Malley Undergraduate Teaching Award, it has to be Prof. Ackermann. Just speak with any of his current or former students, and it is likely they will share the same sentiment.

He epitomizes Notre Dame education. Regardless of his class size, which is usually rather large, he makes a large effort to get to know every single one of his students, and he very much succeeds at that. On top of this, he does not educate the mind at the expense of the heart. He educates both simultaneously through his finance class, which on face value if you do not know Carl wouldn't seem like to make much sense. But for those who know him it does very much so. He is exemplary in numerous different ways, and I think he deserves to be awarded with the Frank O'Malley Undergraduate Teaching Award.

Martin Barron

Assistant Teaching Professor, IT, Analytics, and Operations

Great profesor in all regards - Made me enjoy ML

Timothy Bohling

Chief Marketing and Graduate Enrollment Officer; Teaching Professor, Marketing

He inspires students daily with his instruction. He creates a collaborative, engaging classroom environment, where learning is seamless. He challenges his students to

think deeply about the conclusions they reach and allows for students to demonstrate their knowledge of a variety of topics.

Rachel Branco

Assistant Teaching Professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry

Dr. Branco is among the best educators I've encountered at Notre Dame. She has created several new classes in her first four years here at Notre Dame, including neuropharmacology, molecular neuroscience, and environmental exposures on the nervous system. As a teaching professor, her classes always draw on best pedagogical practices, and she actively contributes to understanding best practices through her own teaching. Her classes are unique, in that they (a) require independent student research and (b) require students to descend from the ivory tower of academia and think about why the scientific research discussed matters and is (or should be) of public interest. As an example, in her environmental exposures class, each unit ended with a "looking to the future day," where students would have to develop hypothetical grant/research proposals, coming up with (and defending) a course of action and why it is worthy of investment. She has a gifted way of making the science classroom interdisciplinary, incorporating research from history, economics, sociology, and public policy, in conjunction with research in biochemistry and neuroscience that is foundation to the course, making connections across fields and challenging students to consider the social justice implications of the issue. An innovative leader, students are challenged to confront their own assumptions and implicit biases that shape the discourse of science, and in this way, allows her students to see the world in a new light. Her neuropharmacology class offers an example, challenging students to peel back the moral valence surrounding many of the drugs discussed in class, considering how and why these assumptions might have arisen and incorporating lectures on history of drug discovery and research. She goes well beyond what is expected of a professor; after submitting a final paper for her environmental exposures class, she reached out about working together over the next few months (keep in mind, after the semester has ended) to fine tune the paper for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. This is a prime example of how she challenges students in new ways, allowing them to develop new skills, but even more, she is committed to her students' success, working with them outside of the classroom in a way that will contribute to their

career/academic advancement. Dr. Branco sets high expectations for students, requiring mastery of material, but academic rigor aside, she places a particular emphasis on (a) mutual respect for classmates, (b) interdisciplinary thinking, and (c) practical concern, bringing academic research into conversation with public interest and the common good. Dr. Branco is an exemplar of the University's mission in "cultivat[ing] in its students not only an appreciation for the great achievements of human beings, but also a disciplined sensibility to the poverty, injustice, and oppression that burden the lives of so many. The aim is to create a sense of human solidarity and concern for the common good that will bear fruit as learning becomes service to justice."

Eric Bugyis

Director of Undergraduate Studies and Assistant Teaching Professor, Program of Liberal Studies

I took his College Seminar, and his class has impacted my way of thinking and interacting with the world more than any other class. He cares deeply about his students' wellbeing and education. He is so passionate about what he teaches, and takes great care to listen to everyone's opinions. He facilitates open discussions and makes students feel seen and heard.

Peter Bui

Associate Teaching Professor, Computer Science and Engineering

Peter Bui is probably the best Professor at Notre Dame. He teaches with passion and knows everything about the subject matter. He cares so much about his students and supports everyone regardless. Bui deserves recognition for how good he is. ND can't afford to lose him.

Throughout my time at Notre Dame, I've had the privilege to take 3 courses under Professor Bui, and those are the three courses in which I've learned the most useful skills. The first course, Systems Programming, taught me the fundamentals of solving any computer science problem. The second course, Programming Challenges, was a major factor in me getting my dream job. The third course, Open Source Projects, is

teaching me how to collaborate in a real-world environment, and how to use what I've learned at Notre Dame for good.

he's the goat. nuff said

He's the best

Pam Butler

Director of Undergraduate Studies and Associate Director, Gender Studies; Faculty Fellow, Center for Social Concerns

Prof. Butler has been nothing but a tremendous role model for their students this year and every year before. As Director of Undergraduate Studies, they meet with every Gender Studies student regularly to discuss goals, courses to take to achieve them, and where to go after graduation. On top of their responsibilities as Director of Undergraduate Studies, they regularly teach either Gender Studies courses or crafts like crochet at Westville Correctional Center, modelling a commitment to social justice for their students both at Notre Dame and in Westville. Building on that service-scholar tradition, Prof. Butler has worked tirelessly to connect gender non-conforming students to resources at the University to help them find gender neutral bathrooms, alternative housing, etc. When the University was sent online in March 2020, Prof. Butler was a close colleague of mine in linking networks of students, staff, and community members to ensure everyone had access to food, transportation, and housing during the transition. This year, Prof. Butler underwent major surgery in the Fall; this semester, they are right back in the classroom even as they continue recovery, demonstrating their continued exemplary dedication to undergraduate education at Notre Dame. They have been friend, counselor, and teacher to so many students both here and at Westville; their commitment to service and scholarship is unparalleled, and I nominate them without reservation.

David Cortez

Associate Professor, Political Science; Faculty Fellow, Institute for Latino Studies; Faculty Fellow, Klau Center for Civil & Human Rights

As a political science student and Latino Studies minor, I have been a student in two of Dr. David Cortez's courses – the Politics of Borders and Latinos in U.S. Politics. Both

*courses have been extraordinary opportunities for critical contemplation and the pursuit of understanding. Professor Cortez masterfully engages his students with important questions for deep conversation and thoughtful scrutiny. He thoughtfully selects a variety of materials that challenge us to consider the issues we cover (i.e., borders, border security, political representation, etc.) from a multitude of angles. And he assigns projects that inspire intensive contemplation which engages all disciplines and modes of thought. This is, especially, important for the growth of everyone in the room. By allowing students to bring their own perspectives and insights to the table, and selecting multidisciplinary materials, the classrooms that he leads become incredible spaces for critical forums of thought and discourse. The takeaways from this are, of course, incredible. And I have left both of these courses feeling well-versed in the subject matters, and eager to continue the conversation and seek further engagement outside of the classroom. Above all – and I’ve said this before on many occasions – Prof. Cortez exceeds where so many instructors at a rigorous academic institution often fall short. He demonstrates that you can, indeed, teach difficult subjects and challenge your students, while also caring for their well-being and committing to their growth. His courses are not ‘easy-A’ courses. This is especially so, considering the intense amount of thought that he expects from his students. But what is truly remarkable is that he is not a tough professor, solely for the sake of being tough. He treats his students with grace, challenging us with tough conversations during difficult times. He recognizes that the subject matters we cover can be emotionally taxing and, for some, deeply personal. And he has shown incredible care for our mental health and emotional wellness while steering us through the materials and pressing us on these issues. He represents the paragon of the University’s educational mission: to cultivate the mind, not at the expense of the heart. Finally, Professor Cortez’s instruction has been invaluable, as I engage these subject matters beyond the classroom. I have used my knowledge from *Latinos in U.S. Politics* in my current work, as a fellow with Voto Latino in Washington, DC. I have brought my understandings of borders and migration, from *The Politics of Borders*, into my work in immigration advocacy—more recently, as the founder and current director of the incoming UndocuAlly ND initiative. And Prof. Cortez’s leadership and instruction have inspired and engaged my future discernment, as I pursue careers in civil rights law and public service, hoping to leverage my knowledge and skills for the empowerment of immigrant families and*

Latino communities, like the ones that I come from, nationwide. For these reasons, I highly commend Dr. David Cortez for the 2022 Frank O'Malley Undergraduate Teaching Award.

John Deak

Associate Professor, History

He is a fantastic teacher. He is brilliant, understanding, inspiring, thoughtful, humorous, and very accomodating. I've learned so much (both about life and academic content) from him.

Brian Hall

Professor, Mathematics

Professor Hall comes to class everyday with a distinct energy and excitement to teach his students the material he has brought with him. Professor Hall loves his subject matter very deeply, and shares this love with his students through thoughtful and deep explanations of the material. Professor Hall is generous with his time and is always willing to take time out of his day to ensure that his students are comprehending the material he is presenting with them. Outside of his professorial excellence, Professor Hall is a fantastic person whose positivity lights up his entire classroom and beyond.

Zachary Kowaleski

Assistant Professor of Accounting, EY Faculty Fellow

In my 4 years at Notre Dame, there isn't a business professor who I learned more from than Professor Kowaleski in his Audit class. Audit covers a large amount of material and is unlike any other required accounting class, so it is very challenging. Professor Kowaleski made this class extremely enjoyable with his personality, his experience/wisdom, his support of his students, and the overall organization of the course. I've never left a course feeling like the material stuck with me more than this one, and I think that he truly prepared us well for the CPA exam. I've already heard from one of my classmates who took and passed the Audit portion of the exam shortly after our class ended.

Shane Leib

Assistant Professor, Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics

Kindest professor ever

Kristin Lewis

Associate Teaching Professor, Biology

Professor Lewis always goes above and beyond in everything she does. She is extremely welcoming to her students. Every single day she comes to class with energy and excitement for the topic, which not only makes the class more fun, but helps me to stay in a positive attitude even early in the morning. Her passion shines through. Additionally, she is extremely available to students and truly wants to help them. Although I am not someone who is an expert in biology, Professor Lewis helps explain the complex topics in a way that is easy to understand. She is extremely available outside of class and is always extremely quick to respond to questions with helpful answers outside of class. Lastly, but definitely not least, Professor Lewis cares about her students. This is extremely evident in the way that she conducts her class; she truly wants the best for her students and will do whatever she can to help them. She even took the time to personally reach out and offer her condolences upon hearing about the death of my grandmother earlier this semester. Overall, Professor Lewis has done an outstanding job. She has created a positive learning experience and environment that has made the class enjoyable, even though biology is not my favorite subject. For these reasons, I think that Professor Lewis would be a great candidate for the Frank O'Malley Undergraduate Teaching Award.

Maria McKenna

Associate Professor of the Practice, Africana Studies and Education, Schooling, and Society; Faculty Co-Director, AnBryce Scholars Program

Dr. McKenna always makes sure her classroom is a safe space for students to discuss their ideas or questions about difficult subjects. She allows her students' voices to guide the direction of the classroom. Dr. McKenna upholds the Catholic values of Notre Dame in her ability to develop an atmosphere of love and acceptance. Outside of the class, Dr. McKenna is available to counsel her students through professional or

academic questions while also being a resource for more difficult or private struggles. She works to make sure students' needs are being met and considered.

Susannah Monta

Glynn Family Honors Associate Professor of English

She is a fantastic teacher. She is brilliant, understanding, inspiring, thoughtful, humorous, and very accomodating. I've learned so much (both about life and academic content) from her.

As a Glynn Family Honors student, it can be daunting taking honors courses that are outside of your major, and Professor Monta has done a wonderful job of uplifting my writing and confidence in writing through constructive teaching and through encouraging me to take risks. She's made writing and reading something I look forward to doing every day, and I come to her class with a new motivation to succeed.

Kathryn Mulholland

Assistant Professor of the Practice, Mathematics

Professor Mulholland goes above and beyond in the classroom and provides an in depth understanding of the topics that are being lectured. She also offers additional help outside of class if the topic at hand is still unclear; she even recommends resources a part from class coursework to aid the student's mastery of the topic. Overall, professor Mulholland ensures that each student concretely grasps what they're learning and can apply them to the real world.

Tonia Murphy

Teaching Professor, Accountancy

Professor Murphy is the best and makes engaging lectures

Kerry Meyers

Assistant Dean for Student Development, College of Engineering

If it weren't for her, I probably would have switched out of the college of engineering. She really puts in the effort to get to know and help each of her students.

Rachel Parroquin

Teaching Professor, Romance Languages and Literature

Learning a foreign language can be really scary. I absolutely love learning languages but always get so scared of talking to people with it in case I mess up and embarrass myself. Prof. Parroquin really helped me get over that fear. Through her class, "Once Upon a Time: Community Based Learning", she taught me that it is perfectly fine to mess up when speaking a foreign language. She told me about her own experiences learning and speaking Spanish and that she still messes up after 35+ years of learning the language. With every meeting I've had with her, she always created a welcoming space. She understood that I was not confident in my Spanish-speaking skills and never pressured me to speak Spanish with her. By the end of the semester, I became a lot more confident in speaking Spanish and eventually carried out these meetings in Spanish. Outside of that, she prioritized our happiness and mental well-being over anything we learned in class. She was the only professor that noticed I was going through a deep depression in the fall. My meetings with her regarding my mental health actually pushed me to start counseling at the UCC. That speaks to how much she is able to read students. Or it might just be that maternal instinct she has inside of her. She remembered the little things I told her about my life and the things I mentioned in my assignments, such as how much I loved to read and write when I was a kid. She would periodically bring it up to me to see if I ever brought it back up. I did. Prof. Parroquin deserves this award because she is an extremely personable person. She taught Spanish through children's books. It was the most engaging way I've ever learned Spanish and I remember the most vocabulary because of it. She really cultivated my mind and my heart, not at the expense of it. She is a true embodiment of what Fr. Sorin wanted Notre Dame professors to be.

Richard Pierce

Associate Professor, History

Dr. Pierce is one of the best professors at the University of Notre Dame and has single-handedly changed the lives of countless students. Pierce is a historian, and his scholarship primarily focuses on African American history and resistance efforts. Pierce's classes feature scholarship that general history has ignored for centuries but is vital to understanding American history and Black liberation efforts. Pierce has

impacted countless undergraduate students both within and outside of the classroom through his dedication to education in history and his commitment to ensuring his students learn and excel. Several examples of Pierce's impact display his unparalleled contributions to the Notre Dame community. Pierce taught Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and ND alumna Nikole Hannah Jones' 98'. He was instrumental to her studies of African American history, which is the subject of her world-renowned journalism. Additionally, Pierce is responsible for the annual Black ND Capital trek to Silicon Valley. In coordination with a former student and managing partner at global alternative investment firm 6th Street partners, Brian D'Arcy '08, Pierce facilitated an annual trek for Black Notre Dame students interested in finance, investing, and business opportunities. Pierce's idea was based on his desire to connect African American students with networks typically unavailable to them. His efforts led to the hiring of several ND students to Fortune 500 companies. Further, Pierce has provided leadership in the Department of Africana Studies and the Department of History for decades. His dedication to Africana studies has led to the development and success of the department and the creation of the new Institute of Race and Resilience. I personally was extremely impacted by Dr. Pierce's class and leadership in the Department of Africana studies. I am certain there is no professor more deserving of the 2022 Frank O'Malley Undergraduate Teaching Award. I think it is essential that the University of Notre Dame honor the work and commitment of such an impactful member of our campus community in Richard Pierce.

Clemens Sedmak

Professor, Social Ethics; Director, Nanovic Institute for European Studies

Professor Sedmak had the most engaging class I have ever been in. His discussions a liveliness are unmatched.

Forrest Spence

Associate Teaching Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies, Economics

He is a great professor teaching especially freshman starting in business and economics an amazing first course towards their majors. He makes everyone feel at home and engages each and every student in the class that he is teaching and to further explore the opportunities economics has to promote the common good.

Rebecca Surman

Professor, Physics

Dr. Surman will provide many opportunities for us to understand physics better. She is willing to meet with students and provide extra services that are not required to help us fully understand content. She gave us amazing advice to help us with testing anxiety, and emphasized our mental health as well. She is an amazing teacher. She goes above and beyond to teach students, and I appreciate all she does.

Jennifer Waddell

Teaching Professor; Assistant Department Chair and Director of Undergraduate Studies, IT, Analytics, and Operations

Professor Waddell is the most kind-hearted, dedicated, and passionate person I have met at this university. She has constantly amazed me in her ability to engaged students, relay difficult material, and maintain a positive attitude at all times. I overwhelmingly recommend that she be rewarded for being the amazing individual she is.

Chengxu Yin

Teaching Professor, East Asian Languages and Culture

She encouraged me to apply for a study abroad grant which would allow me to participate in a language learning program. She genuinely cares about her students and makes an effort to understand us all on a deep level. On top of all that, she makes class fun!