The Academic Senate Committee on Distinguished Teaching recommends Professor Edward Platzer (Nematology) and Professor Steven Ostrow (Art History) as the recipients of the Distinguished Teaching Award for 2004-2005. Both have long records of consistent excellence and dedication that inspire their students.

Professor Edward Platzer:

Professor Platzer has been a member of the UCR faculty since 1971, during which time he has distinguished himself as an extraordinarily effective and committed instructor. For much of the time he has been at UCR, Professor Platzer has been the instructor of Biology/Nematology 159; he has also team taught Biology 157; Biomedical Sciences 225; Biomedical Sciences 167, and in recent years he has taken on responsibility for Biology 110, "Biology of Human Problems." He consistently participates as the organizer of the Nematology seminar series, Nematology 250.

Professor Platzer is praised by both colleagues and students for his no nonsense, yet compassionate approach to teaching. One student writes, "Excellent instructor who is very much down to earth. [His] great sense of humor makes [him] very approachable and easy to talk to." Another comments, "He is patient and concerned with his students learning. He is helpful and available whenever he is needed." A former teaching assistant praises Professor Platzer for his attention to the material as well as to his students, "Over the years he has consistently maintained high expectation in his classes, while going above and beyond to make himself available to individual students."

That attention to the students as individuals has created a lasting impression on many. One former undergraduate writes, "Dr. Platzer was the first faculty member to ask me about my career goals, providing welcomed advice in that area. As a mentor, his advice regarding graduate school proved to be constructive and fruitful. Underneath his modest demeanor, his inspiring approach to research and academia weighed positively on my decision to pursue a Ph.D. in Physiology."

Others comment on his dedication to all aspects of instruction, pointing out his availability during and concern with laboratory as well as classroom instruction. A large number of students comments on how appreciative they are of Professor Platzer's active participation in the labs associated with the courses he teaches. One commentator remarked that his is an "old school, hands on approach" to the
teaching of labs, and clearly it is highly effective and much appreciated by his students.

Colleagues also praise Professor Platzer for his commitment to pedagogy. One points out that while he is the "exemplar of the personal touch," he does "not pander to his students. He does not coddle, and he will not tolerate sloppiness in execution of experiments or in students' thinking. By setting high standards for his students (and himself) he ensures the growth, independence, and creativity of his students." This colleague goes on to say, "I never found his lectures to be flamboyant or theatrical; they were always models of clarity. His goal was not so much to fill the heads of students with minutiae as to make them think critically." Perhaps one student comment puts it most succinctly, "Hell of a teacher, and he sure knows his stuff."

With his long and notable record of challenging students to do their very best, Professor Platzer is indeed a worthy recipient of the 2004-2005 Distinguished Teaching Award.

**Professor Steven Ostrow:**

Steven Ostrow joined the UCR faculty in 1992 as a member of the Department of Art History. He has distinguished himself as an outstanding instructor at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, shining in classes ranging from large general education lecture courses to small graduate seminars. A specialist in Italian art and sculpture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Professor Ostrow is consistently singled out for his dynamic teaching style and his ability to bring the material to life for the students.

Professor Ostrow's numerical scores on his teaching evaluations are excellent, but much more telling is the inordinate number of laudatory comments by students who enrolled in his course dubious of the subject matter, but left excited and, in some cases, intellectually transformed by what they learned. Students typically remark on Ostrow as "inspirational," and "eloquent" and lament the times when they had to miss class. One writes, "Over my three years here at UCR, I have never had such a great instructor as Professor Ostrow. I only missed class once because my car broke down, and I was upset that I was forced to miss. I haven't enjoyed coming to class and learning for a long time. Ostrow keeps me interested and wanting to learn."

Students also comment on his connection to the material he is teaching and his ability to transmit his passion. "He brings the art and the time period to life," writes one student. Another declares, "It's so great to be taught by someone who has such great enthusiasm for what he is teaching." Another writes, "Instructor made me want to go to Rome. TOMORROW."

Professor Ostrow's influence as an instructor and mentor extends to graduate students of his own and other departments. One former teaching assistant writes, "Professor Ostrow is one of the reasons I chose to attend UCR for my
graduate studies. He phoned me personally to inform me of my acceptance, and he remained accessible and friendly during my decision period. I knew that if the graduate advisor was this attentive and welcoming during the application process, then my time as a graduate student would be well supported and positive. I have not been disappointed." Another graduate student, from a different discipline, writes that Professor Ostrow's seminar made such an impact on his thought, and that he found Professor Ostrow so accessible and inspiring, he ultimately incorporated an art historical perspective into his own dissertation research and has continued to rely on Professor Ostrow for constructive criticism and direction.

Nor have Professor Ostrow's abilities gone unnoticed by his colleagues. One states that "the secret to Steven's success as a teacher is not just his fine classroom presentation, but also the more elusive quality of being seen by the vast majority of his students at every level as approachable . . . he is a teacher of rare talent and sincere concern." Another colleague comments, "Professor Ostrow is that rare teacher who combines intellectual rigor and erudite knowledge with human warmth and a lively temperament that transform each classroom performance into an inspiring and never boring learning experience."

Professor Ostrow's unqualified success as an instructor, his ability to inspire students at all levels, his unfailing willingness to make himself approachable and available to students, and the pedagogic model he establishes for colleagues make him a very deserving recipient of the 2004-2005 Distinguished Teaching Award.