

high standards, high praise

By Lindsay Willis



Dr. Bernice Yates

Her teaching is balanced by her undisputed research expertise and creativity. Which explains why Bernice Yates, Ph.D., associate professor in the College of Nursing Kearney Division, was awarded one of the 1999 UNMC Outstanding

Teaching Awards.

Dr. Yates joined the College of Nursing in 1994 as an assistant professor. Within two years of her appointment she was promoted to associate professor and fellow.

Dr. Yates teaches courses at the undergraduate, graduate and doctorate level.

Her research classes, although essential to nursing, are generally not ones students look forward to taking. However, their predisposition about what the classes will be like are discarded once they discover Dr. Yates is teaching the class.

"Most students don't enjoy research. I try to find interactive ways to introduce students to research without lecturing to them," she said.

Introducing...The Great Cookie Experiment. Just one of the many ways Dr. Yates uses creativity to make her class more appealing to students.

In the experiment, students are asked to sign a consent form, taste and evaluate two cookies (one of which is made without a main ingredient), and correlate the class results.

The hands-on experiment demonstrates many of the key components of a research study.

Her peers support and commend her techniques. "Dr. Yates possesses intellectual creativity and critical thinking in her approach to teaching and learning," a nominator wrote.

Dr. Yates challenges herself each day. "I purposely set high standards in my classroom

to help motivate my students," she said, "and to motivate me to discover new ways to present research."

Her research expertise is undisputed. "Her ability to navigate with ease a process others find daunting attests not only to her research ability, but also to her desire to help others develop and improve their (her students) research skills," a nominator wrote.

Dr. Yates said she recognizes the difficulty of the subject matter she teaches and, therefore, strives to make the material understandable for every student.

One student nominator wrote, "She takes the time to explain the concepts. She goes above and beyond my expectations of an instructor."

Dr. Yates doesn't give up on students.

"I focus on what students can be rather than what they are," she said. "You have to work with students until you see the light bulb go on in their head. That is when you know you are making a difference."

For her efforts to "make a difference," Dr. Yates has received the Provider of Guidance and Emotional Support Award from the Graduate Nurse's Association at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, the Honor a Researcher Award for

Meritorious Achievement in Nursing Research from the Midwest Nursing Research Society, and was nominated for the Regent's Award for Superior Professional and University Service at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. d

IN ADDITION TO
DR. YATES,
THE FOLLOWING
FACULTY MEMBERS
RECEIVED THE
1999 UNMC
OUTSTANDING
TEACHING AWARD.

Joseph Sisson, M.D.,
associate professor,
College of Medicine

J. Bruce Bavitz, D.M.D.,
associate professor,
College of Dentistry