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Three faculty members receive Kaplan Award honors

(Janesville, Wis.) University of Wisconsin-Rock County recently named three Kaplan Fellows: Thomas Hall, John Klinger and Nate Maddux. The three faculty members were nominated for this award by their peers and selected by the campus Steering Committee. The Kaplan Award recognizes the outstanding contributions to students made by UW Colleges' faculty and instructional or non-instructional academic staff.

Computer Science, Engineering, Physics and Astronomy (CSEPA) Department Lecturer **Thomas Hall's** peers identify his enthusiastic commitment to students – along with his connection with fellow CSEPA lecturer and Kaplan Award recipient, John Klinger – as encouraging student growth.

It cannot be ignored that Hall is also recognized for “constant motion and spreading good cheer.” Did his peers also notice he is always singing? This member of the Melody Maker Quartet and former quality engineer/manager shifted to teaching in the collaborative engineering program with UW-Platteville in 2015. UW-Rock County students now enjoy his expertise in courses such as Physics 201, 202 and Astronomy.

Hall had taught decades ago at Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Mississippi and then put 40 years into full-time work with area corporations such as MedPlast, Amerock and Parker Pen. While in industry, Hall conducted many training sessions in quality control systems and industrial statistics, but found his way back to teaching. “UW-Rock County is remarkable because of the concern faculty and staff have for students, even though the time students are here is limited and we don't directly benefit from their success,” he reflects.

Hall's wife, Pat, writes and self-publishes children's books; illustrated by daughter Emmeline. On weekends, Hall can often be found at vendor events helping sell the books - two picture books and a chapter book, with a second chapter book out in May, and a Christmas story due in September.

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Like his CSEPA colleague, **Senior Lecturer John Klinger** is recognized by his peers for his commitment to students. Klinger was specifically identified for his outside-of-class assistance to students as well as his contributions to city government, citing his recruitment of UW-Rock County engineering students to build model ballot boxes for Rock County – two of which were tested during February 2018 elections.

This West Bend, Wisconsin native worked as a mechanical engineer for many years for giants such as IBM and Lexmark and lived in five different states, prior to settling down in Janesville in 2010. Klinger shifted from big industry to teaching at UW-Rock County in 2011 – despite discouragement from his father.

Klinger is one of four sons...both of his parents were teachers; his father taught high school math and his mother was a science teacher. As Klinger family lore goes, his father had been discouraged from going to college and was the only child in his family of eight children to complete high school. “My Dad said, ‘don’t go into teaching!’ He wouldn’t allow it!” Maybe to assuage him, three of the senior Klinger’s four sons went into industry and only later switched to teaching!

Klinger taught at Penn State for three years. He now teaches a number of courses at UW-Rock County: Engineering 105, 110, 201, 203 and 282. Klinger is optimistic that the restructuring of his campus as a branch of UW-Whitewater will offer additional connections in the business community for design projects, like the ballot box project for Rock County, and develop an engineering design cycle for students.

World Languages **Assistant Professor Nate Maddux** is recognized by his peers for a high level of in-class and out-of-class engagement in his Spanish language and culture courses. His peers also note that Maddux’s students engage in field trips in the community for important cultural and social justice work.

This is a reflection of the strategy Maddux implemented upon completion of his PhD and subsequent hire at UW-Rock County in 2016. “We visit the Mexican Consulate and Voces de la Frontera, both in Milwaukee, where students become aware how state and federal policies affect their friends at UW-Rock County and also their families. Our current political climate is not favorable to immigrants in our country, and this experience immerses my students, moving them away from ‘textbook glimpses’ of current issues. They are couched in it now,” Maddux explains.

How did Maddux get here – to teaching, and to UW-Rock County? “My dad worked in the two-year system of colleges in Minnesota for many years...and I came to see the importance of access and the unique role of a college like ours in the community that surrounds it. I entered academia with a passion for teaching, and I truly believe what we do here is in the spirit of the Wisconsin Idea. It is a brilliant fit. I identify with the mission,” Maddux explains.

Maddux currently teaches a course on Cultures and Civilization of Latin America, which surveys a history of Latin America with significant focus on Mexico, and the last hundred years of Mexican history in Wisconsin. He continuously revises course expectations - connecting his courses to current news that is relevant. Maddux also teaches a course for bilingual, heritage speakers of Spanish, and regularly collaborates with his students on undergraduate research projects in Spanish phonology and phonetics, a field in which he conducts his own research outside of the classroom.

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In addition to supervising UW-Rock County student clubs such as Latinos Unidos and Student Alliance, Maddux is an active volunteer in his own community, promoting youth initiatives in the sport of ultimate Frisbee at the middle and high school levels and at community camps and clinics aimed at introducing girls to the sport.

The UW-Rock County award winners are named Kaplan Fellow for the 2017-18 academic year and receive a \$250 stipend to be used for professional development and/or supplies and equipment. The Kaplan Award, established in 1993, honors Arthur M. Kaplan, a former provost of the UW Colleges. Each UW Colleges campus awards between one and four Kaplan Awards annually depending upon the size of the institution. To learn more about the UW-Rock County campus visit rock.uwc.edu.

Photos: Hall, Klinger, Maddux

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