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Collins earns Nimocks Family Faculty Appreciation Award

PLATTEVILLE, Wis. – Dr. Jennifer Collins, an assistant professor of education at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, received the university's inaugural Nimocks Family Faculty Appreciation Award. She will be recognized at the university's convocation on Thursday, Aug. 31.

Designed to honor and recognize outstanding faculty at UW-Platteville, Dr. Mittie Nimocks Den Herder, former provost and vice chancellor of Academic Affairs, created the award in 2007 and has been quietly contributing to its fund throughout the years.

"I am incredibly humbled to receive this award," Collins said. "It's amazing to have people who you respect on campus acknowledge that your hard work is noticed. It's not necessary, but I'd be lying if I said it didn't feel good."

Collins, who teaches Introduction to Education and Teaching Social Studies Methods, is entering her third year at UW-Platteville. Before joining UW-Platteville, the Eldridge, Iowa native spent 10 years teaching in public school classrooms in North Carolina and five years at the Cato School of Education at Queens University of Charlotte. During her time in North Carolina, Collins discovered the positive impact of making connections with her students.

"I think it's important to form relationships with my students," she said. "I spend the first five minutes of each class catching up with them and asking how they are. I want them to know I'm there for them and that I want them to be successful."

Relationships aren't just formed in Collins' classrooms. In her time at UW-

Platteville, Collins has run a number of programs engaging students outside of the classroom on topics and ideas that they have learned. This include trips to Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Aldine, Texas; and Grantham, England.

“Many of my students have never spent time in a large city, let alone outside of the Midwest,” Collins said. “I want them to know that the world is out there and that there are so many things they can experience.”

The Nimocks Family Faculty Appreciation Award is university-wide, and any faculty member can be nominated. Criteria of the award includes teaching effectiveness, teaching the value of diversity, teaching the ability to argue even a sensitive issue with competence and civility, creating opportunities for students to engage in high-impact practices, and communicating the importance of a liberal arts education.

“Dr. Collins exemplifies all that it means to be an outstanding faculty member at UW-Platteville and she is a very deserving recipient of this award,” Dr. Dominic Barraclough, interim director of the School of Education, said in his nomination letter. “She is a role model for how to continue learning and growing outside of a formal educational environment.”

“I do the things I do because I love doing them,” Collins said. “I would keep doing them regardless of the recognition or awards.”

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