

For Immediate Release
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Heck, McCullough named as Ferris' Distinguished Teachers

BIG RAPIDS – Two College of Arts and Sciences faculty members have been chosen to receive the 2004-2005 Distinguished Teacher Awards at Ferris State University.

The honorees are Fred Heck, professor of geology, and Robert McCullough, professor of mathematics. They were selected by the Academic Senate's Distinguished Teacher Award Committee and will receive their awards during the University's Service Awards reception on April 26.

The award symbolizes the appreciation of faculty for dedication to and excellence in teaching. Criteria for nomination and selection are teaching excellence, participation in professional development activities, interest in students outside the classroom/laboratory and exhibiting distinction as a member of the University community.

Chaired by Abdollah Ferdowsi, the committee spent the last academic year making classroom visits, administering and evaluating student surveys, interviewing finalists and reading and evaluating essays and curriculum vitae from nominees.

Dr. Heck has been a Ferris faculty member since 1988 and is the resident geologist at the University. He is an advisor for the Pre-Pharmacy program and teaches non-geology majors about Earth's wonders through courses in physical and historical geology, hydrogeology and earth systems science.

Heck's teaching philosophy assumes students will learn better if they are more actively involved in their learning, so his classes work together in cooperative learning groups and make frequent excursions to the local countryside. He has led students on two-week geology field trips to the Canyon Country of the southwest United States, the northern Rocky Mountains, the Upper Peninsula and to Martinique.

He received a baccalaureate degree in geology from Western Michigan University, a master's in geology from Northwestern University and a doctorate in structural geology from Northwestern. Heck chairs the Arts and Sciences' Promotion/Merit Committee, is a member of its Nature Preserve Committee, serves on the University's Faculty Research Committee and is a member of the Academic Senate.

Heck developed a new Integrated Science Teaching major in 2003 and last summer attended a five-day workshop on designing courses in the Geosciences at Central Michigan University that was sponsored by the National Association of Geology Teachers and the National Science Foundation.

McCullough, who holds his bachelor's and master's degrees from Michigan State University, joined the Ferris faculty in 1981. He previously was an assistant professor of mathematics at West Virginia State University and an assistant professor of computer science at WVSU's College of Graduate Studies.

McCullough teaches algebra, trigonometry, calculus, operations research, discrete structures and numerous computer science classes. His special interest lies in the mathematics needed for space exploration, and he regularly reviews publications for science books and films.



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As a regional resource person for the National Air and Space Museum, he has given more than 100 presentations on space exploration.

He has written a textbook, "Mathematics for Data Processing," which is now in its third edition. He has also written and presented several papers on the mathematics used by the Wright Brothers to prove that flight was possible, and in January was an invited participant for the Calculus Teaching Focus Group at the American Mathematical Society/Mathematical Association of America's annual meeting in Atlanta.

McCullough advises Applied Mathematics students, coordinates the Applied Mathematics and Mathematics programs and chairs the Program Review Panel for Applied Mathematics. In addition, he advises Ferris' MATH Challenge teams and mentors students in the University's Math/Science/Technology Center.

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