Heller 2022 Awards Talking Points

The Heller Awards process involves nominations by members of the Heller community for their contributions. Based on these nominations, members of the award committee chaired by Professor Deborah Garnick and made up of past award winners, select the winners. Earlier this week, we announced the awardees in 7 categories. But I will briefly describe the winners for three: teaching, mentorship, and early career research investigator.

Teaching
2022 Winner: **Brenda Anderson [With us via Zoom]**

The Heller Teaching award this year was given to Professor Brenda Anderson. Brenda is nominated every year and has won past teaching awards both at Heller and at the International Business School. There are two common themes in her nominations.

The first is that she is a wonderful person who cares deeply about her students:

- "She is such an exemplary teacher and all-around human being that it's really hard to put it into words without tearing up a bit. Out of all of my professors this year [writing about remote teaching during covid] she is the only one who consistently showed that she is aware of all the terrible things happening in the world and how these events are affecting everyone."

The second is that students who enter her required accounting and finance classes anxious about the content emerge loving her class:

- "She managed to transform accounting, a class I was dreading into my favorite class."
- "It's a special skill to teach such a dry subject as accounting, and make it engaging, empowering, and just fun!"

Because of her strong connection with her students and her unique ability to convey complex concepts in understandable, relevant, and engaging ways, the Awards Committee was pleased to provide the award to **Professor Brenda Anderson.**

Mentoring

2022 Winner: Professor **Raj Sampath [Not able to join us because he is teaching]**

Along with teaching both Heller and undergraduate students (winning the Heller Teaching Award in the past) – and serving on the Brandeis University Senate, Professor Raj Sampath has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to justice, rights and social change. These values translate into his prowess as a mentor.

For one student, Raj embodies the professorial responsibility of training the next generation of teachers. That student wrote, "He is a successful and inspiring role model for aspirational and emerging faculty, demonstrating intellectual prowess and zeal for progressive pedagogy. He taught me how to create a classroom that values listening, collaboration, accessibility, adaptability, empathy, compassion, and patience. I am a better teacher because of him and entered 2022 confident in my new role as a part-time instructor at (a local) Medical School."

For one doctoral student, this professor's mentorship "was a lifeline during a challenging year. We discussed everything from the benefits of including one theoretical grounding over another to individual word choice. [As a result] "the paper I wrote for his class…grew into portions of my comps and then the framework of my dissertation proposal."

Another nominator wrote "He sincerely invests himself in the research of each student he mentors, helping us to not only become better researchers, but better thinkers."

For his many contributions to mentoring Brandeis undergraduates, graduate and PhD students, the Awards Committee was pleased to provide the Heller Mentorship award to **Professor Raj Sampath**.

Early Career Research Investigator Award
2022 Winner: **Dr. Peter Dixon, Research Scientist**

(Note: based on the nomination of the winner's supervisor chosen by a committee chaired by Associate Dean Cindy Thomas)

Through his research and publications, Dr. Dixon has helped advance research and debates on the role of local experiences and community participation in peacebuilding and transitional justice processes, demonstrating not only that they matter for transitions from conflict to peace, but advancing understanding of how and why the local and everyday matters to peace processes. He has played a leading role with Heller Professor Pamina Firchow on a project to develop Everyday Peace Indicators in Colombia.

Peter's research interests bridge the gap between practice, policy and academia, which makes him what Professor Firchow calls a "pracademic". He not only has an academic curiosity to probe further peace and justice related theoretical questions, he also is dedicated to turning those findings into action. For example, his work on reparations was cited recently in congressional testimony to the House Judiciary Committee on the need for a national study of reparations for Black people in the US.

Peter Dixon is a rigorous researcher who is working on one of the most pressing issues of our time: finding ways to understand and resolve deep social conflict. His research therefore in the view of the Awards Committee embodies the Heller mission statement "Knowledge Advancing Social Justice" and is well deserving of this year's Early Career Research Investigator Award!

AWARD COMMITTEE (past winners from last two years (as available), student representative from each degree programs, alumni representative)

- o Deborah Garnick, Chair
- o Joel Gershenfeld, Associate Dean (Academics)
- o Andres Gomez, Administrative support
- o Teaching Assistant Award 2021 Winner – Julianna Brill
- o Staff Service Award 2021 Winner – Amy DiMattia
- o Mentoring 2020 Winner: Monika Mitra
- o Teaching Assistant 2020 Winner: Muhammed Ali Nebiogullari
- o Mentoring 2019 Winner: Ravi Lakshmikanthan
- o MBA Student Representative - Alden Kennedy
- o MPP -Student Representative - Adam Jones
     SID - Student Representative- Rene Njamnshi

- o COEX -Student Representative - Leopoldino Jeronimo
- o MS -Student Representative - Grace Berchtold
- o PhD -Student Representative - Mike Vetter
- o EMBA -Student Representative - Dr. Roehl
- o Alumni Representative Miriam Rubin