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Young Teacher Award Citation for Jeffrey Clark

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Young Teacher Award

Jeffrey Clark, Assistant Professor of Geology

"Jeff Clark, you came to Lawrence during a time of transition in one program--Geology--and a time of creation of another--Environmental Studies--and you have been a central and important participant in both processes. Within only three years, you have co-authored a revised curriculum within your department, contributed significantly to the shaping of a new, interdisciplinary major, and helped to coordinate the move to the new-and-improved Youngchild Hall, which is, as all can see, still taking shape off to my right.

It is as a teacher, however, that your contributions to Lawrence have been most noteworthy. You are by training a fluvial geomorphologist with a particular interest in the anthropogenic influence on river systems. For those of you who, like me, have almost no idea what this means, let me explain by saying that, as far as I can tell, Mr. Clark studies what water does to land, and vice versa. Your courses are well known for integrating theory with application, abstract concepts with tangible observation, and for involving undergraduates at all levels in meaningful, field-based research. During your second year of teaching, you led a field course in Puerto Rico that looked at the impact of agriculture on accelerated erosion. In an introductory Environmental Science course, you organized students into research teams that examined the important and controversial topic of PCBs in the Fox River. Thus your students are being prepared to address as both scientists and citizens some of the most challenging issues facing our society in the years ahead.

Students recognize and appreciate your efforts. One has written that you 'challenge every one of your students to challenge themselves,' another that you encourage students 'to *experience* science rather than merely memorize its elements.' Still another professes to be 'constantly amazed at your dedication and availability.' It is no surprise that many students view you as among the most inspiring teachers they have ever encountered at Lawrence.

As always, I leave a recitation of your most illustrious accomplishments for last. As many know, you are the beloved coach of Lawrence's Ultimate Frisbee Team--indeed, given your early start, you are well on your way toward becoming a virtual Vince Lombardi among Frisbee coaches; you were an enthusiastic and moderately skilled participant in the recent Iron Chef competition among Lawrence faculty; you are a noted home-brewer of specialty beers; and this year you successfully completed the 58 kilometer Birkebeiner ski race--which may have something to do with the fact that you are a noted home-brewer of specialty beers.

Jeff, I am delighted to name you the 2001 winner of Lawrence's Young Teacher Award."

Citation read by President Richard Warch at Commencement, 2001