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Excellent Teaching by an Early Career Faculty Member Award Citation for Brigid Vance

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2020 AWARD FOR EXCELLENT TEACHING
BY AN EARLY CAREER FACULTY MEMBER

Brigid Vance

In the five years since you joined the History department, you have established a reputation as one of our most consistently creative and dynamic professors. And you hit the ground running, if end-of-term course evaluations can be taken as a guide: “I LOVE this class,” wrote a student in your Fall 2015 edition of *Western Encounters with China*, one of the first courses you taught at Lawrence. “I have learned so much, and I have seen myself growing and improving by doing all these readings and writing all these papers ... the professor is someone I would love to take more classes with.”

From that auspicious start we have seen a steady increase in the number of students who have discovered your courses and concluded that you are, indeed, exactly the kind of professor they would love to take more classes with. Impartial faculty observers describe your almost magical effect on History 105, the department’s entry-level course. “Since Professor Vance began to teach that course,” one colleague observed, “department enrollments and majors have climbed noticeably.” Students describe your *Comparative History of*

Dreams class as proceeding like, well, something out of a dream: “This is one of the best classes I’ve taken, from ... one of my favorite teachers!”

A specialist in late imperial China, your courses on *Western Encounters with China*, *Sustainable China*, *Interactions Along the Silk Road*, and *Traditional East Asian Civilizations* are regularly described by students as “inspiring,” “purposeful,” and—most frequently—“fun.” Students appreciate your ability to balance rigor with flexibility, your skill in cultivating energetic classroom discussion, your detailed attention to their writing, and—above all—the warmth and respect with which you approach each and every one of them. In the words of one of those students, “she has all the moral faculties of an ideal liberal arts college professor.” I am delighted to acknowledge and affirm the esteem of your students and colleagues by presenting you with the 2020 Award for Excellent Teaching by an Early Career Faculty Member.

June 2020