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Young Teacher Award Citation for Maria Rosa Tapia Fernandez

Lawrence University

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Young Teacher Award

Maria Rosa Tapia Fernandez, Assistant Professor of Spanish

"Maria Rosa Tapia Fernandez, you came to Lawrence from Spain via Pennsylvania State University and have won the hearts and minds of large numbers of Lawrence students. Many students say that you inspired them to do their best work in your class; they recognize and applaud the high standards you set and express enthusiastic appreciation for the effort you expend to help them reach those goals. One reluctant student of Spanish wrote: 'I originally took Spanish 101 to fulfill a general education requirement, with no intentions to go beyond the requirements. From the first day of class, I felt comfortable and enjoyed Spanish for the first time, even though I had taken Spanish in high school. With Rosa's encouragement and guidance, I added a Spanish major, and she became my advisor. Rosa has challenged me and pushed me more than anyone else, and there have been fantastic results.'

Students praise your ability to guide class discussions, effortlessly covering necessary material without making students feel as if they are being cut off or rushed or even allowed to follow their instincts and sleep at 8:30 in the morning. Your Freshman Studies students praise you for guiding their transition from high school to college and challenging them to work as hard as they are able. Your colleagues, too, express gratitude for your willingness to share teaching strategies, especially those related to uses of instructional technology in the classroom. One colleague wrote, 'This is an indication of Rosa's generosity and of her eagerness to work as a team member in our department.'

Rosa, in recognition of all this, but primarily because, as one student said, you want all of your students not only to learn Spanish but to enjoy and love it, I am pleased to recognize you today as an outstanding young teacher on the Lawrence faculty."

Citation read by President Jill Beck at Commencement, 2005