**Wilkes University Recognizes Faculty and Staff**

**With 2018 President’s Awards for Excellence**

Five Wilkes University faculty and staff members were honored with the 2018 President’s Awards for Excellence. The awards, which were presented by Wilkes President Patrick F. Leahy at the University’s fall convocation, recognize individuals who reflect excellence in their work based on the University’s core values. This is the third year for the awards program.

**Zbigniew J. Witczak, professor and chair of pharmaceutical sciences,** was the recipient of the President’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship for his efforts in advancing knowledge through discovery and research to better educate Wilkes constituents. Witczak was also recognized for his collaboration with junior colleagues and students.

**Kathleen Hirthler, associate professor and chair of graduate nursing programs,** received the President’s Award for Excellence in Innovation for her efforts in promoting programs, ideas, and sustainable practices. Hirthler has developed five new graduate nursing programs at Wilkes including the University’s first Ph.D.

**Melissa Howells, director of student development,** was honored with the President’s Award for Excellence in Community for her efforts in collaborating with others on campus with mutual respect to foster a sense of belonging. Howells interacts with students on their co-curricular and leadership activities and aids in their transition to college life.

**Deborah Tindell, professor of psychology,** received the President’s Award for Excellence in Mentoring for her efforts in nurturing individuals to understand and act on their abilities while challenging them to achieve great things. In addition to her work with students, Tindell is also credited with mentoring new faculty members.

**Evene Estwick, associate professor of communication studies,** was honored with President’s Award for Excellence in Diversity for her efforts in embracing differences and uniqueness through sincerity, awareness, inclusion, and sensitivity. Estwick was recognized for advancing equality and inclusivity in every aspect of the student experience.

University faculty or staff members can nominate anyone in the Wilkes community for the awards. The nominations are shared with senior administration for feedback, with the final recipients determined by the president.

**Pictured from left to right are Kathleen Hirthler, recipient of the President’s Award for Excellence in Innovation; Evene Estwick, recipient of the President’s Award for Excellence in Diversity; Zbigniew J. Witczak, recipient of the President’s Award for Excellence in Scholarship; Wilkes President Patrick F. Leahy; Melissa Howells, recipient of the President’s Award for Excellence in Community; and Deborah Tindell, recipient of the President’s Award for Excellence in Mentoring.**

**About Wilkes University**:
Wilkes University is an independent institution of higher education dedicated to academic and intellectual excellence through mentoring in the liberal arts, sciences and professional programs. Founded in 1933, the university is on a mission to create one of the great small universities, offering all of the programs, activities and opportunities of a large, research university in the intimate, caring and mentoring environment of a small, liberal arts college, at a cost that is increasingly competitive with public universities. *The Economist* named Wilkes 25th in the nation for the value of its education for graduates. In addition to 47 bachelor’s degree programs, Wilkes offers 25 master’s degree programs and five doctoral/terminal degree programs, including the doctor of philosophy in nursing, doctor of nursing practice, doctor of education, doctor of pharmacy, and master of fine arts in creative writing. Learn more at [www.wilkes.edu](http://www.wilkes.edu).

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