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Recipients of UGA Russell Awards for excellence in undergraduate teaching announced

Athens, Ga. - Three University of Georgia faculty have been named recipients of the Richard B. Russell Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.

The 2012 Russell Award winners are:

James (Jeb) Byers, an associate professor in the Odum School of Ecology

Joseph Goetz, an assistant professor in the department of housing and consumer economics in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences

Gary Green, an associate professor in the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

The announcement was made by Jere Morehead, senior vice president for academic affairs and provost, whose office administers the awards program.

The Russell Awards recognize excellence in undergraduate instruction by faculty members in their early academic careers. Three awards are made each year, with each awardee receiving \$5,000 from the Richard B. Russell Foundation.

"These three faculty members have received awards from their schools and colleges for their innovative teaching and ability to connect with and engage students," Morehead said. "We are pleased to now recognize their contributions at the institutional level."

Byers joined the UGA faculty in 2008 and currently teaches undergraduate courses in Ecology and Ecosystems of the World (an Honors course he co-developed), as well as a cross-disciplinary graduate seminar in Population and Community Ecology. He taught a First-Year Odyssey course on invasive species in the fall, and this summer, he will teach a Maymester course in experimental marine biology at UGA's Marine Institute on Sapelo Island. He also has supervised undergraduates in directed research and helped several publish their work in top scientific journals.

Goetz came to UGA in 2006, and since 2009, he has served as the director of the Family Financial Planning program, developing undergraduate and graduate programs in that field. Graduates of the program meet a critical national need for qualified professionals who adhere to a high ethical standard in the expanding profession of personal and family financial planning. He co-founded the ASPIRE Clinic and collaborated with various community agencies to create experiential learning opportunities

for students to provide financial planning education and counseling to financially vulnerable individuals and families.

Green regularly teaches Natural Resource Conservation, a high-enrollment introductory course that fulfills UGA's Core Curriculum Life Sciences requirement, as well as three required courses within Warnell's professional program. He also has participated in senior project and senior thesis capstone courses, advised numerous undergraduates, and served as co-adviser for two student clubs. His courses often include field trips to local parks and wilderness areas or service-learning projects that give students real-world experiences.

The Russell Awards, named for Richard Russell, the long-serving senator from Georgia, were established by the Russell Foundation and first presented in 1991.

To be eligible for the award, faculty must have been at UGA for at least three years and in a tenure-track position for no more than 10 years. A committee of senior faculty members and undergraduate students makes the selections from nominations submitted by the deans.

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