

2008 Awards

The following people have been recognized by their peers for their outstanding contributions and service to science. The SSR is proud to honor these people.

2008 Awards Committee: *Robert A. Cushman, Chair; Charlie Chaffin, Andrea Cupp, Michelle Garcia, Steve Hammes, Fred Karsch, Kwan Hee Kim, Carolyn Komar, P. Prabhakara Reddi, Cheryl Rosenfeld, and Xiangzhong (Jerry) Yang.*

Trainee Mentoring Award

Dr. Michael F. Smith



The SSR Awards Committee and the Trainee Affairs Committee (TAC) are delighted to announce Dr. Michael F. Smith as the recipient of the 2008 SSR Trainee Mentoring Award. Dr. Smith joined the faculty at the University of Missouri, Columbia, in the Department of Animal Sciences in 1980, where he currently holds the rank of Professor. He successfully balances his teaching, research, and service appointments while mentoring undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows. Dr. Smith selflessly gives of himself for the betterment of his laboratory and the community at large.

He took on the added task as serving as Interim Director of Animal Sciences (2001 to 2005) while maintaining his mentorship in the classroom and laboratory. Over the years more than 3,600 students have enrolled in his classes. He has officially mentored 17 graduate students, 5 postdoctoral fellows and has been instrumental in the lives of numerous other students.

During his tenure at Missouri, Dr. Smith has received many awards highlighting his excellence in research. In addition to his research citations, Dr. Smith has received numerous awards for his excellence in teaching in the areas of reproductive physiology and reproductive management at the undergraduate and graduate level. The Gamma Sigma Delta organization first recognized Dr. Smith with the Graduate Teaching Award in 1987. The College of Agriculture honored him with the Green Chalk Undergraduate Teaching Award in 1991 and the Undergraduate Teaching Award in 1993. Also in 1993, Dr. Smith was honored with the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Teaching Award of Merit. In 1995, he received a William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching

Excellence from the University of Missouri. In 2005, he was inducted into the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Teaching Academy. Dr. Smith possesses a unique ability to ignite a passion for learning in his students.

The profound impact that Dr. Smith makes on trainees extends far beyond the classroom. Regardless of class size, he learns the name of each student. He listens to their interests and helps them to define and achieve their goals. At any given time you can walk into his laboratory and see graduate students, undergraduates, and (or) postdoctoral fellows working together. It would not be uncommon to also find Dr. Smith benchside talking about the science and working with his students. He claims that “excellence in teaching and research are not mutually exclusive . . . both take hard work and dedication, but excellence in teaching will enhance your skills as a researcher and excellence in research will make you a better teacher,” and he instills that mantra in his graduate students. Dr. Smith’s background in the field of reproductive biology is diverse: from basic physiology to applied applications of technologies. Those who have been mentored by Dr. Smith have noted that while the overall goals of his laboratory remain constant, he is highly flexible in allowing fluidity in scope or navigation of his program to meet the specific desires and goals of his students.

Dr. Smith’s students have gone on to become highly successful in both industry and academia. During his mentorship his students are encouraged to become involved in their field, and he often has both undergraduates and graduate students presenting original research at the annual SSR meeting. He has also mentored several students who have served our society on the TAC including trainee representatives. He instills an eagerness to learn, to think, and to serve. Dr. Smith is described by previous students as an excellent mentor and role model who gives selflessly of his time and efforts for the benefit and professional development of his students. He is regarded by his students, both past and present, as a mentor and a friend whom they can and do call upon for advice at any time. Dr. Smith embodies every quality described in the description of the award and beyond.