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NKU instructors honored for teaching Department heads nominated faculty for awards

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

Northern Kentucky University's Nancy Jentsch and Patricia Kappesser have been named outstanding instructors for 2007.

Jentsch was named Outstanding Non-Tenure Track Faculty Member and Kappesser won the Outstanding Part-Time Faculty Excellence in Instruction Award.

"I always go into class very enthusiastic," said Kappesser, who teaches general biology, anatomy and physiology. "I love what I do. Students see that and respond to it. So I always get good student evaluations."

Jentsch, a German language instructor in the Department of Literature and Language, likes to engage students in non-traditional ways.

She does this in her class "Harry Potter Goes Global" for honors and advanced German students.

"We look at the global impact and appeal of the Harry Potter books and read about them in addition to reading two of the novels," Jentsch said. "We look at examples from the German, Spanish, French, Czech and some Asian-language translations of the books."

Jentsch and Kappesser were nominated for the award by their department heads. Each was then required to put together a portfolio of their teaching philosophy and their contributions to their department. This was then reviewed by a selection committee.

"Having to put together the whole book for this made me think about where I am in life and reflect on being a teacher," Kappesser said. "I always try to apply the material we're discussing. I can talk about something that is a complex subject and then I will refer to the environment and health issues and they see the relevance of it. I want them to take something home with them at the end of every class so they can see why it's important and the application for it."

Department Chairwoman Debra K. Pearce said she nominated Kappesser because "she is exceedingly caring about the students."

"It's not the pay, it's not the glory, it's watching the students respond to science in a positive way," Pearce said.

Professor Danny Miller is the chairman of the Literature and Language Department. He has known Jentsch for more than 25 years and has authored several academic papers with her.

"Nancy Jentsch is simply a model teacher, scholar and community citizen," Miller said. "She also has a lovely personality and has a calming effect on those around her."

Jentsch has taught at NKU since 1986 and Kappesser since 1996.

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