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Speech teacher wins faculty award

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

Northern Kentucky University has named Karen Slawter the Michael C. C. and Susan S. Adams Outstanding Nontenure-track Faculty Member for 2006. Nontenure-track faculty are those lacking a doctorate and thus are ineligible for tenure.

"Karen Slawter could teach in and run any basic course program in any university," said Steven Weiss, a colleague and former Communications Department chairman at the school. "She walks into class - even after more than a quarter-century as a teacher - as enthusiastic, prepared and fresh as if she were teaching for the first time. She loves teaching, and her students love her as a teacher."

The award is named after Michael C.C. Adams and his wife, Susan S. Adams. Michael Adams is an NKU history professor and author. Susan Adams also is an author and is a professor emeritus in English at NKU.

ADVERTISEMENT Slawter has been with the university for 26 years. After teaching at the high-school level for a few years, including five at Highlands High in Fort Thomas, Slawter decided to stay at home with her young children. She then pursued her master's degree at NKU when a professor asked her to teach a class.

"That one class has brought me a long way," she said. As a lecturer she teaches Speech 101 and also is the class's director. That entails scheduling, hiring, training and supervising the staff that teaches the required freshman-level class.

"Going into the classroom energizes you," Slawter said. "I love students and learn from my students. It's a great department to work in and they treat me very good. So I've never wanted to leave or thought about doing anything else."

Slawter holds a bachelor's degree from Eastern Kentucky University and a master's from NKU.

A competitor in speech since high school and now an instructor and judge for competitions, Slawter is eager to highlight the advantages of NKU's program. The main goal, she says, is to teach students to organize and outline their thoughts.

"We want students to be able to organize their thoughts effectively - especially on the spur of the moment. Supposedly, the number one fear is to speak in public. We feel the class is a



ZOOM

The Enquirer/patrick Reddy

Karen Slawter, a speech instructor at Northern Kentucky University, won the Michael C. C. and Susan S. Adams Outstanding Nontenure-track Faculty Member award this year.

necessity to give our graduates an edge. If our students speak well, that puts them ahead of everybody else," Slawter said.

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