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## Jane Smith and Jennifer Disney Capture Faculty Awards

Winthrop University

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05/02/2007

## Jane Smith and Jennifer Disney Capture Faculty Awards

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### Quick Facts

- Faculty members Jane Smith, English, and Jennifer Disney, political science, were named Distinguished Professor and Outstanding Junior Professor.
- The awards were presented May 5 during spring commencement.



*Jane Bowman Smith*

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Two faculty members who balance exceptional scholarship with student engagement will receive faculty awards during Winthrop University's spring commencement on May 5.

The 2007 recipient of the **Distinguished Professor of the Year** is **Jane Bowman Smith**, who is a professor of English, director of the Writing Center and the Margaret M. Bryant Professor for the Department of English. In addition during the 11 a.m. commencement at the Winthrop Coliseum, **Jennifer Leigh Disney**, assistant professor of political science, will be recognized as the **Outstanding Junior Professor**.



*Jennifer Leigh Disney*

The highest honor Winthrop can bestow upon a faculty member is the title of **Distinguished Professor**. The selection indicates exceptional skill in teaching, significant research or creative effort, high standing among professional colleagues and general service to the university.

"I am so honored and humbled by this award. I have worked at Winthrop for twenty years and have always felt that what we do here is deeply meaningful," **Smith** said. "The close relationships formed between the individual faculty members and their students are particularly valuable to me, and I hope to continue to learn and grow here."

**Smith** joined the Winthrop faculty in 1987 as an assistant professor of English and was promoted to associate professor in 1994 and to professor in 2001. She worked as the Writing Center's acting director in 1992-93 and then took over the job as director in 1998. She conceptualized, implemented and now teaches the course that trains the center's tutors. **Smith** also encourages student scholarship in areas of composition, rhetoric and Writing Center pedagogy, and issues related to Writing Center tutoring. She has mentored student scholars who have given presentations at the Southeastern Writing Association Conference and at national and international conferences.

**Smith's** chair, Gloria Jones, credits **Smith** with having the single greatest impact on recruitment for the English master's degree program because she has established such a respected Writing Center and tutor training program, in addition to being a sought after teacher who gives valuable feedback to her students. "She quietly performs with excellence," Jones said of **Smith**.

Although her major area is composition and rhetoric and most of her scholarship is in this field, **Smith** is a published poet and frequently does poetry readings at local and national venues. **Smith** is currently completing her second scholarly book begun with her late colleague, Dorothy Perry Thompson, on race and writing, entitled "The Elephant in the Classroom: Race and Writing."

She holds a bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from Case Western Reserve University

The **Outstanding Junior Professor Award** recognizes excellence among assistant professors. Her department chair, Karen Kedrowski, praised **Disney** for her scholarship in building a national reputation as the foremost authority on women in Mozambican politics, her enthusiastic teaching and mentoring of students.

**Disney** specializes in comparative politics and political theory, specifically in the areas of development and underdevelopment, Third World feminisms and global women's movements. In addition to her teaching duties, **Disney** started a part-time job last summer as director of Winthrop's Office of Nationally Competitive Awards to assist students and faculty in identifying scholarships, fellowships and other award opportunities.

Since coming to Winthrop in 2002, **Disney** has won a Faculty Service Learning and Community Service award and now serves as the president of the board of A Place for Hope (APFH), a resource center for one of York County's poorest communities. Under her leadership, APFH has secured \$250,000 in financial support for five years, as well as four grants to bring water and sewer, a new playground, a health and wellness clinic, and a case-management social work component to the community.

**Disney** is most proud of her work with students. She has served as faculty advisor of Amnesty International, Winthrop Chapter and the Socialist-Student Union. "The reason we are all here is to engage students. I try to do that both inside and outside the classroom, on campus and in the larger community," she said. "If I can help my students think critically about our world, and their location in our world, with the goal of applying the concepts of comparative politics to make the world a better place for the most marginalized communities, then I have truly done something."

This year, **Disney** received a book contract from Temple University Press on her award-winning Ph.D. dissertation and follow-up research made possible by the Winthrop University Research Council on women's activism and feminist agency in Mozambique and Nicaragua. She completed her Ph.D. with distinction at The Graduate School and University Center of The City University of New York in 2002.

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