



NEWS

The S.C. Commission on Higher Education
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The distinguished winners of the 2010 Governor's Professor of the Year award were announced today at a press conference held in the Rotunda of the Capitol.

Selected from a total of 37 candidates nominated by their respective institutions, the recipients of this prestigious award exemplify excellence in teaching and student advising.

Dr. Becky J. Boone, of Horry-Georgetown Technical College has been selected as 2010 Governor's Professor of the Year for two-year colleges.

As a child, **Becky Boone**, would sit in the back of the Biology lecture hall at Georgia College, in Milledgeville and watch her father lecture to a group of students. She knew then she wanted to do the same. Born in South Carolina, she spent her early years moving around the country with her family, but ultimately returned to South Carolina and received her Bachelor of Science degree with a Major in Biology and a Minor in Chemistry from the University of South Carolina. She moved to Clemson to pursue a Ph.D. in Animal Physiology. In 2002, Dr. Boone joined the faculty of Horry Georgetown Technical College (HGTC), in Myrtle Beach, SC as a professor of Anatomy and Physiology and Microbiology.

Dr. Boone became Chair of the Natural and Physical Science Department at HGTC in 2006, and had has been instrumental in doubling the size of the department over the past 5 years. In 2007 she led the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Compliance Report committee for the College during their reaffirmation process. Over the past few years, Dr. Boone has found time to volunteer with local schools on various science projects, work with a non-profit organization on American Black Bear research and help with different lecture series held at the College.

She enjoys spending time with her two children, Stephen a junior at Socastee High School in Myrtle Beach, and Danielle, a freshman Music Education major at Newberry College. Dr. Boone also likes to paint, attend concerts and mine gems in the mountains.

Dr. Juanita Villena-Alvarez and Dr. Chad L. Leverette have been named the 2010 Governor's Professor of the Year for four-year institutions of higher education.

Dr. Villena-Alvarez was born in the Philippines and received her education from three different continents. She completed her baccalaureate degree from the University of the Philippines Diliman, magna cum laude, completed a Spanish graduate program at the *Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana* in Madrid, Spain, a *Magistère de langue et civilisation française* from the *Université de Paris IV Sorbonne*, a Masters in French Literature and a doctorate in Romance Languages and Literatures (French major, Spanish minor) from the University of Cincinnati.

Dr. Villena-Alvarez started teaching French and Spanish at USCB in 1994 and immediately started the first ever USCB Study Abroad Program in France and Costa Rica for the summer of 1995. Over the years she has created various programs and projects for USCB, most notably the Spanish proficiency certificates, the two track Spanish major (general major and heritage track major), the federally funded globalization of the USCB curriculum, and is currently reworking a proposal for an Asian studies curricular improvement project. She has published a book, edited a journal and created the Instructor's and Student's Resource book for the text *Exito commercial*. She has nine (9) peer-reviewed published articles, two (2) invited articles published, twenty (20) peer-reviewed international and national conference presentations, conducted eight (8) workshops to train faculty members and completed nine (9) seminars for faculty development. In the past 12 years, she has been awarded 4 grants, the largest one from the U.S. Department of Education (2003-2006 total project budget: \$356,000). In 1998, Dr. Villena-Alvarez was distinguished with the *USCB Professor of the Year Award* and in 2004, with the *USCB Vince P. Mesaric Award*. She credits her mother, husband, two daughters, and four sisters as her role models and pillars of support. She also recognizes and acknowledges that without the full support from her USCB family, her teaching, research, projects and activities would not have flourished: the students, the faculty, the staff and the administration. Her USCB family describes her as stellar, passionate about her discipline, superior, outstanding, exemplary, remarkably productive, a builder, a team-player, and a leader. The students' perspective can be summed-up by these words: "The professor is an amazing one . . . genuinely cares . . . and values each of their (the students') experiences;" "I considered changing my major just because of the commitment she shows her students;" "very passionate and it shows in every class period a very enjoyable class;" "my only complaint is that the class period was too short."

Dr. Chad L. Leverette is an associate professor in Analytical Chemistry at University of South Carolina Aiken. He holds his Bachelor of Science degree from Erskine College (1996) and Ph.D. from University of Georgia (2000).

Most recently, Dr. Leverette was the principal investigator in securing a three-year \$264,821 grant from the National Science Foundation to purchase a state-of-the-art Raman microscope that will be the only instrument of its kind at any university or college in South Carolina. The microscope will be used for spectroscopy and imaging applications of novel materials and biological samples, with the following research goals: the development of

novel nanotechnology-based sensors that are to be used for low-level uranium detection, the study and investigation of the diseased state of coral sea fans, and to analyze and characterize novel hydrogen storage materials developed by the Toyota Corporation.

Dr. Leverette has also been selected as the recipient of the 2010 USCA Scholarly Activity Award. This award follows Dr. Leverette's selection as the 2009 recipient of the USCA Excellence in Teaching Award. Dr. Leverette's post-doc/professional experience includes being a Senior Research Scientist II at Cargill, Incorporated from 2003-2004 and a Senior Research Scientist I at Cargill, Inc. from 2001 to 2003.

He teaches General Chemistry I and II, Quantitative Analysis and Instrumental Analysis, and his areas of research include: Nanostructure Fabrication, Nanofilms, Vibrational Spectroscopy, Surface-Enhanced Vibrational Spectroscopy.

A luncheon in honor of the Governor's Professors of the Year and the Distinguished Professors who were nominated for the award by their respective institutions was held today at the Campus Room of the Capstone Building at the University South Carolina-Columbia. The luncheon was hosted by the South Carolina Higher Education Foundation, which also sponsors the SC Commission on Higher Education Governor's Professor of the Year program. President Craig Garner presided over the luncheon where the awards were presented to the Professors of the Year and distinguished finalists.

Finalists for Professor of the Year are:

Dr. Pearl Ramola Fernandes – University of South Carolina Sumter

Dr. Joseph E. Flaherty – Coker College

Dr. Janice Jake – Midlands Technical College

Dr. Robert Jesselson – University of South Carolina

Dr. Christopher A. Korey – The College of Charleston

David B. Martin – Piedmont Technical College

Sarah E. Miller – University of South Carolina Salkehatchie

For additional information on the Governor's Professor of the Year Award, please go to: www.che.sc.gov and click on "Professor of the Year" for a picture and a bio of each winner.



Dr. Becky J. Boone



Dr. Juanita Villena-Alvarez



Dr. Chad L. Leverette