

# Radford University announces recipients of the 2020-2021 Dalton Eminent Scholar Awards

Radford University has announced the recipients of the prestigious 2020-2021 Dalton Eminent Scholar Awards.

The annual awards provide faculty members opportunities to go above and beyond in their chosen academic fields and for Radford University to recruit and retain the best faculty, as each faculty winner receives a \$10,000 award to fund research travel and materials, along with a \$5,000 award following successful completion of research and scholarly activity from the Radford University Foundation, Inc., through the generosity of the Dalton family and their friends.

The Dalton Eminent Scholars Fund, which provides financial support for the awards, was originally established in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a way to honor United States District Judge Ted Dalton and former Virginia Gov. John Dalton. Through a grassroots fundraising campaign, more than \$700,000 was raised for the endowment, which now has funds exceeding \$2 million.

“The Radford experience is defined by the meaningful connections that develop in the classroom, the laboratory and the field among our talented students and world-class faculty. Our University is honored to serve as the academic home for dedicated and distinguished faculty across many disciplines. These educators, researchers and scholars devote their energy and expertise to cultivate the minds and passions of countless students, right here on our campus. The Dalton Eminent Scholar Award provides an important and unique opportunity for the Radford family to annually recognize outstanding faculty who are continuously pursuing excellence with regard to student engagement and success, as well as their chosen fields. The award winners truly embody the responsive and resilient spirit of being a Highlander by serving with great pride and purpose,” said President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Lyn Lepre, Ph.D., added, “The outstanding faculty who have been selected for the Dalton Eminent Scholar Awards this year represent the strength and breadth of research and scholarship at Radford University. Each has shown a commitment to the pursuit of discovery, and we are pleased to be able to make an investment in this remarkable group. These faculty members are generous with their time and talent, and it is an honor to recognize their accomplishments. We are proud to have them as members of our Highlander family.”



**Matthew Cataldi, Ph.D.**



**Steve Childers, Ph.D.**



**Inessa Plekhanova**



**Jolanta Wawrzyck, Ph.D.**



**Wei-Chi Yang, Ph.D.**

The winners of the 2020-2021 Dalton Eminent Scholar Awards are:

Steve Childers, Ph.D., director of innovation and professor of management in the Davis College of Business and Economics;

Inessa Plekhanova, professor of dance and director of the ballet program in the College of Visual and Performing Arts;

Jolanta Wawrzycka, Ph.D., professor of English in the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences; and Wei-Chi Yang, Ph.D., professor of mathematics and statistics in the Artis College of Science and Technology.

2020-2021 Dalton Eminent Scholar Rising Star Award Winner

Matthew Cataldi, Ph.D., assistant professor of music in the College of Visual and Performing Arts

Childers, a former recipient of an Outstanding Faculty Award, said, “Being recognized as a Dalton Eminent Scholar is truly an honor. To me, the award represents not only recognition of past work, but is a statement of support for our future endeavors and growth. It encourages us to explore and discover so that we can make greater contributions to our field and the world. I am proud to be part of an institution that supports its faculty and the intellectual growth of its members.”

Plekhanova, an internationally recognized artist and educator who joined the Radford family in 2005, said, “This honor means a lot to me. I really appreciate our University and their value of the arts, especially during the pandemic. I was so excited to hear that another faculty member in our College also received this honor. It’s not about me, it’s about art and our College. I’m proud of all of us.”

Wawrzycka, who recently received the 2021 Outstanding Faculty Award given by the State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV), one of the Commonwealth’s highest honors for faculty at Virginia colleges and universities, said, “I was both surprised and delighted to find myself in the company of previous Eminent Scholar winners. This honor is a culmination of years of hard work, so it feels great. But, the honor is not mine alone. Over the years, I’ve had lots of support from our recently retired CHBS chair, Rosemary Guruswamy, Ph.D.; from her successor, Robert Williams, Ph.D.; and from our current CHBS dean, Matthew Smith, Ph.D. Thanks to them, many of my scholarly projects, translations and

editorial work have seen the light of day as books and journal publications. I feel energized by this award.”

Yang, founder of the Asian Technology Conference in Mathematics in 1995 and the Electronic Journal of Mathematics and Technology in 2007, said, “I was ecstatic to learn that I had won this award. It shows that all my efforts toward professional activities, over 30 years at Radford, are being recognized and appreciated by the University.”

Cataldi, the newest member of the Radford family among the recipients, having spent the last several years working in New York City as a conductor, musical director, vocal coach, arranger and collaborative pianist, said, ““What a humbling honor, especially amidst trying times. This award serves as a testament to Radford University's passionate commitment to creative faculty scholarship, and seeing our steadfast support for the arts is both refreshing and inspiring.”

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