

NEWS RELEASE

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Mathematics Professor Earns Top Teaching Honor at University of Saint Mary

(Leavenworth, Kan.) — The University of Saint Mary has awarded assistant professor of mathematics Dr. Rick Silvey the 2004 Sullivan Award for Teaching Excellence. Silvey, who lives in Smithville, Mo., has been a mathematics instructor for ten years. He joined USM in 2000 and teaches courses ranging from beginning algebra to advanced mathematics. From 1994 to 1996, Silvey taught as an adjunct at Maple Woods Community College, Johnson County Community College, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He was full-time instructor at Allen County Community College from 1996 to 2000. Silvey is a member of a consortium of mathematics instructors, who standardized college algebra outcomes statewide. In addition, Silvey is a sponsor for two USM student organizations; Young Democrats and Science and Math Club.

The Sullivan Award goes to the faculty member who demonstrates excellence in teaching, creativity in course development, ability to motivate students, concern for students and leadership, and service to the University. "The University of Saint Mary believes that excellence in teaching is the most important contribution at faculty member can make to its students. In order to recognize, reward, and encourage such excellence, the University of Saint Mary initiated The Sullivan Award for Teaching Excellence and University Leadership/Service in spring 1990," said Dr. Sandra Van Hoose, vice president and dean of academic affairs. "The award of \$1,000 is given to a full-time faculty member nominated by students, faculty and staff as a person who has made a distinct difference in the teaching climate at the University of Saint Mary."

The Sullivan Award is named after Sister Mary Louise Sullivan who served for years as the academic dean at Saint Mary. She was highly respected and beloved and personified dignity in academia and concern for upholding academic standards. She had previously been a professor in science before she became academic dean.

The following quotes are from students who nominated Dr. Silvey for the Sullivan Award:
"Math is not fun, it's not funny, and it is definitely not exciting...until Dr. Silvey teaches the subject," writes Bridget Flynn, incoming president of the Student Government Association, Class of 2005.

"Dr. Silvey has excellent teaching methods in the classroom--bringing in real-world examples for application problems and manipulatives when appropriate. He constantly encourages students to be better students, stretches their 'limitations' in mathematics, and genuinely shows his compassion for his students --staying after class and arriving early to help with math problems or to listen to the other needs of students," said Jean Thompson, a mathematics major who just graduated with a 4.0 cumulative GPA.

Soon after he received the Sullivan Award for Teaching Excellence, Dr. Silvey was appointed chair of the USM Sciences and Mathematics Department.

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