

# UB REPORTER

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## NEWS

### Three receive faculty mentoring awards



“Bringing high school teachers into the mentoring process is critical,” says Satpal Singh, associate professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology. “Teachers can excite students to pursue a course of study, particularly in science and math.” Photo: DOUGLAS LEVERE

By BERT GAMBINI

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Three UB faculty members received mentoring awards during the Celebration of Student Academic Excellence held earlier this month.

A. Scott Weber, vice provost and dean of Undergraduate Education, presented UB Faculty Awards for Excellence in Mentoring Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity to Maria Horne, associate professor, Department of Theatre and Dance; Satpal Singh, associate professor, Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology; and Jun Zhuang, assistant professor, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering.

Maria Horne is founder and director of the International Artistic and Cultural Exchange (IACE) program’s Creative Research Lab.

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Three receive faculty  
mentoring awards

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Since the lab's inception, Horne has sponsored more than 100 students to conduct international, interdisciplinary investigations in the performing arts.

For Horne, mentoring is a mutually gratifying and beneficial experience.

"Mentoring makes me a better teacher, a better researcher and a better human being," says Horne. "To take on the challenge, to give to someone, to open a window of knowledge is such a rewarding experience."

Her dedicated involvement is seen in the artistic, professional and academic achievements of her students, many of whom have gone on to earn advanced degrees, prestigious awards, placements in academic institutions and success in artistic jobs.

"Students and teachers bring their academic passions to mentoring in a process that allows our separate but shared enthusiasms to become a new mutual enthusiasm," she says.

Satpal Singh is a mentor known as much for his reach as his enthusiasm. Singh is committed to the idea of building mentoring platforms that begin in high school.

"The foundation is one of the most important aspects of the mentoring experience," Singh says. "Countless research has been published showing that the students who excel later in life are often those who were introduced to and engaged in a field of study at a younger age than their peers."

Singh's commitment, however, extends to classroom teachers as well, fostering the development of mentors before students even get to college.

"Bringing high school teachers into the mentoring process is critical. Teachers can excite students to pursue a course of study, particularly in science and math," he says.

During his time at UB, Singh has mentored more than 90 undergraduate and 22 high school students in his lab. He teaches scientific research principles and cutting-edge techniques in the area of neurobiology.

Since August of 2008, Jun Zhuang has mentored 10 UB undergraduate students and



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**Maria Horne**  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Theatre  
and Dance



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**Jun Zhuang**  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Industrial  
and Systems Engineering

two high school students. His undergraduate mentees have published two peer-reviewed journal articles and two peer-reviewed conference proceedings, along with 10 conference presentations.

Zhuang says mentoring adds a dimension to classroom instruction that helps students realize their unique goals.

“Mentoring compliments the regular courses and is perfect for students who would like to know more,” Zhuang says. “Mentoring is an excellent opportunity for the students to work closely with the professors and graduate students to get personalized instruction and guidance on their academic and career paths.”

Zhuang says mentoring is as rewarding to the faculty as it is for the students.

“I really love observing the undergraduate students grow and mature over time, accumulating knowledge, developing an understanding and contributing to the scientific literature,” he says.

Zhuang has mentored students through the UB School of Engineering’s Senior Scholar program, departmental undergraduate research/independent study courses, Collegiate Science and Technology Entry program, the Buffalo-area Engineering Awareness for Minorities program, and the SUNY Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority program.