Martin selected as Outstanding Teacher at Southeastern Illinois College

Kim Martin, mathematics instructor, was recently selected by the Southeastern Illinois College faculty as this year’s recipient of the Loren P. and Velma Dallas Outstanding Teacher award. She has also been nominated for the Illinois Community College Trustee Association’s Outstanding Faculty Member award.

Martin has taught for nine years at the college and, during that time, has developed new courses, improved other courses, introduced new teaching methods, and designed and taught the Math and Science Division’s first online mathematics course.

Additionally, Martin developed the innovative Family Math Program which brings area second and third grade school children and their parents together to learn fun mathematics activities that develop problem solving skills. She also developed the Math-A-Rama project in which students from her elementary education mathematics classes share mathematics activities with practicing elementary teachers from area grade schools. Plus, she has been the Math and Science Division’s first online mathematics course.

As club sponsor, Martin planned numerous field trips where math and science majors got behind-the-scenes tours from several of SIC’s distinguished alumni who are scientists and engineers. Tours have included Argonne National Laboratory, Monsanto, Danforth Plant Science Center, Olmsted Dam Project, and several others.

“We want to expose our students to the scientific world awaiting them after graduation in hopes this will help them make informed career choices,” Martin said. “So many of our graduates are nearby working in many different scientific fields.”

Martin’s preservice elementary teachers regularly accompany her to mathematics conferences. Some even co-present with her. “They always come back energized and excited about their future teaching career!”

Dr. Mary Jo Oldham, president of SIC, said making Martin’s nomination for the ICCTA award was “an easy task and a pleasure because Kim sets a positive example for excellence in teaching, working with student groups, and all other work that she does. She is organized and self-directed and repeatedly demonstrates her commitment to establishing priorities and achieving them.”

Martin also garners high praise from her students. Their comments on Martin’s annual evaluations include: “This is my absolute favorite class….One of the things that I love about this class is that Kim Martin is very enthusiastic when it comes to math and that motivates me to try harder…..She really understands mathematics and is a great communicator.”

Parents are also appreciative of Martin. One wrote: “You are an inspiration to your students because of the time that your spend making your classes interesting and informative. We are so happy that Carrie has had the good fortune to be a student in your classes.”

One former student, now teacher, shared: “Mrs. Martin taught me to allow students to think, reason, draw their own conclusions, and encourage exploration. My students are learning things no one expected from fifth graders. I attribute all these wonderful successes to the vision and energy of one math teacher.”

Martin has been listed in Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers, has been recognized by the Association for Childhood Education International, and received an Excellence Award from the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development.

She is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Mathematical Association of Community Colleges as well as serving on a number of professional committees. She has spoken at regional, state, and national conferences. In November, Martin heads to Florida to speak on Applied Calculus teaching.

Martin challenges herself, as well as her students. “My greatest challenge is to enable all my students to develop techniques of thought, empowering them to deal with real-life problems beyond mathematics. I want them to view mathematics as a network of intriguing ideas and to be excited about it—like I am! It’s so enjoyable to strive for fifty minutes of non-stop student engagement, and to see an ‘I get it!’ expression on their faces.”

Martin, daughter of Charles and Patricia Naas, grew up near Ridgway, and is an SIC alumn herself. She is married to Derek Martin and they have two daughters, Annie Rose and Jade.

“I am so thankful that my parents provided me with a ‘world is my oyster’ childhood,” Martin said. “My hometown environment was also very nurturing. As kids, we always knew that we could do anything we wanted in life and I am glad I’m right here. I am so proud of our mission of enabling people of this small community to advance to higher degrees, exciting careers, and making a real contribution to the world!”

The Loren P. and Velma Dallas Outstanding Teacher award was established by the family of the late Loren P. Dallas of Carrier Mills, and is bestowed each year upon an SIC instructor who has established an outstanding record. Dallas served as a member of the SIC Board of Trustees and was a staunch advocate of formal education.