

# MIZZOU

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## Around the Columns

### Honoring excellence

It's not often that the MU chancellor gets to plan a surprise award ceremony. Such goings-on are typically well planned and carefully orchestrated, but once a year formality is thrown to honor a few excellent teachers.

In April 2008, Chancellor Brady J. Deaton and Jim Schatz, chairman of Commerce Bank in Columbia, surprised five faculty members in their classrooms to award them with a William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence.

The fellowship was established in 1991 with a gift from William T. Kemper, BA '25, who was a well-known civic leader in Kansas City. Each year, the honor — and a \$10,000 bonus — goes to five faculty members at MU to recognize their commitment to high-quality education.

“I was so surprised,” says Dorina Kosztin, associate teaching professor in the department of physics and astronomy, and one of this year's fellows. “All of a sudden I saw this blinding light coming down the steps — I keep it somewhat dark in the classroom so students can see the projector — and then I saw a big procession. Up until that point, I had no idea.”

For the past seven years, Kosztin has taught calculus-based physics for engineers and science majors. “I do whatever I think is going to help my students learn,” she says. “Because they're engineering majors, they have to learn the basics, and I have to show them the real-life application.”



Dorina Kosztin keeps it interesting for students in a physics for elementary school teachers course. Photo by Rob Hill.




Academic departments nominate faculty for the award. The application includes teacher evaluations from the past five years and students' letters of recommendation.

Other 2008 fellowship recipients include:

- Wayne Brekhus, associate professor of sociology and director of undergraduate studies for sociology;
- Robert Terry Jr., professor and department chair of agricultural education;
- Anand Chandrasekhar, associate professor of biological sciences; and
- Tony Lupo, associate professor of soil, environmental and atmospheric sciences.

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