

Subject: [Staff] 2012 Dissertation Advisor/Mentor Award Winners

Dear Campus Community:

Each year the Graduate Council and Graduate Division present the Doctoral Dissertation Advisor/Mentor Award to one or two UCR faculty members who have made outstanding contributions to the training of advanced graduate students. It is my pleasure to announce that this year's winners are **Rajiv Gupta** and **Michel Lapidus**.

Dr. Gupta is a Professor in the Department of Computer Science and Engineering. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Pittsburgh and held faculty positions at the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Arizona before joining UCR in 2007. He is the recipient of numerous professional awards, including an NSF Presidential Young Investigator Award, and has been named a fellow of the IEEE, ACM, and AAAS. Dr. Gupta's students emphasize his "admirable patience" and "unshakeable belief" in their potential. They uniformly praise his ability to guide students to find and pursue their own ideas rather than assigning and directing specific research tasks. One writes: "The kind of attention that he provides his students is second to none." They describe Dr. Gupta as kind, honest, incredibly dedicated to his students, and extraordinarily generous with his time, with several anecdotes about receiving middle-of-the-night phone calls to work through technical details or offer encouragement shortly before a deadline. Dr. Gupta's investment in his students has paid off in spades: his students have moved on to successful careers in both academia and industry, two of them have won national dissertation awards, five have won NSF CAREER awards, and several co-authored papers also have received national recognition. As one student writes: "Great advisors help to foster the growth of great people, who in turn do the same for others. Dr. Gupta is a great advisor."

Dr. Lapidus is a Professor in the Department of Mathematics. He received both a Ph.D. and Doctorat d'Etat es Sciences (both Summa Cum Laude) from the Universite Pierre et Marie Curie in Paris, and held faculty positions at USC and the University of Georgia before joining UCR in 1990. Among a long list of professional honors and awards, Dr. Lapidus has held temporary positions at UC Berkeley, Oxford, and Yale, is a fellow of the AMS and AAAS, and has been funded by NSF for 24 of the past 25 years. Dr. Lapidus' students positively gush about his breadth and depth of knowledge, his generosity towards his students, and his character. They describe him as a "role model," an "extraordinary mentor," a "superlative teacher," an "inspiration figure," and a "true leader." They praise his welcoming demeanor and his ability to connect with them and understand their individual needs, both professionally and personally. One writes: "Michel manages to be concerned about each and every one of his students. It really matters to him that they do well in class and that they do well in life." Several express gratitude for the professional training they received from Dr. Lapidus, which they believe gave them an early advantage in their careers. Others are thankful for the strong and lasting sense of community that Dr. Lapidus fosters among his students, many of whom are from diverse backgrounds. One summarizes what many seem to feel: "Inspired by his immense generosity, I have made it a personal and professional goal to model my own career after his and to share everything I can with students who are willing to work hard to earn their success."

Please join me in congratulating Professors Gupta and Lapidus for their extraordinary service as graduate student mentors at UCR.

Joseph W. Childers

Graduate Dean