

**2008-2009
Ithaca College
Faculty Excellence Award**

Cynthia Scheibe

**Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
School of Humanities and Sciences**

Ithaca College is proud to honor Cynthia Scheibe with the Faculty Excellence Award for 2008-2009. Employing the terms of the guidelines for the awards, nominator Stephen Sweet wrote, "Dr. Scheibe's 23 years of service is a rich history of *enduring* contributions to her students, her department, the College, and her profession. What is perhaps most unique are the ways these efforts have, from the start, emphasized *interdisciplinary* and *experiential* learning, as well as created products that have strong *applicability* to important real world concerns."

Professor Scheibe has taught at Ithaca College since 1986, primarily in the Department of Psychology and also within the Division of Interdisciplinary and International Studies where she teaches courses in media literacy. Her Ph.D. degree from Cornell University is in Human Development and Family Studies and in addition she obtained a master's degree in Communication Arts from the same university. Linking teaching, scholarship, and service is her long history as the founder and Executive Director of Ithaca College's media literacy organization Project Look Sharp, for which she has obtained national recognition and substantial external grant funding.

Each nominee for a Faculty Excellence Award was asked to identify teaching, scholarship, or service as an area of distinction. Since in her work they are so intertwined it is hard to differentiate, but it is clear that Professor Scheibe is truly an exceptional teacher. Her colleague Carla Golden writes, "Cyndy's excellence in teaching expresses itself in four noteworthy features: 1) the innovation, high quality, and range of the different courses she teaches both within and beyond the psychology department; 2) the particular attention she pays to students' different learning styles, and her consistent use of assessment measures that speak to those differences; 3) her intensive mentoring of students in the research process; and 4) her supervision of *additional* independent research projects and internships that flow from her work with Project Look Sharp."

Her student Steven Lowery writes that she "goes above and beyond to ensure that students learn the material and are fully engaged throughout the process as a true scholar should." Teaching in the area of developmental psychology, she consistently brings to both the very large survey course and the research seminars the expertise, creativity, and hard work that build student success in meeting challenging learning objectives. During the discussion of nominees faculty colleagues admired the fact that she "uses inquiry-based pedagogies even in large classes" and that she "has students create videos and other multimedia and incorporated e-portfolios." In her letter accepting the nomination, Professor Scheibe says, "Quite frankly, I just love teaching at Ithaca College, with the many opportunities that it provides for me to integrate my work on media effects with my commitment to developing critical thinking and media literacy skills for all students."

It is that integration that animated the discussion of her nomination, where one faculty member said her work is a “prime example of the integration of teaching, scholarship, and service.” The Center for Research on the Effects of Television (CRETV) and Project Look Sharp are themselves interdisciplinary efforts to bring psychological analysis to the study of mass media. Stephen Sweet writes that CRETV “resulted in an enduring initiative that provides hands-on research opportunities for our students, enabling them to analyze data concerning over 16,000 hours of televised broadcasts.” Faith Rogow of the National Association for Media Literacy Education says, “Cyndy’s ability to integrate new thinking is beginning to produce research results that will have lasting impact on both education and psychology,” including evidence that media literacy can be taught even to very young children. Dr. Rogow also writes that “Project Look Sharp ...enjoys a well-deserved reputation as one of the best media literacy education initiatives in the world. Not only is it a model of cooperation between higher education and K-12 schools, but its grounding in curriculum makes its methods as practical as they are innovative and theoretically sound.”

Recipients of the five Faculty Excellence Awards were nominated by colleagues and selected by the faculty members of the Ithaca College Faculty Development Committee and recipients of the Excellence Awards from the previous year. Selection was based on excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service as described in the Faculty Handbook. The guidelines also stated:

Candidates should be excellent in all areas and be able to demonstrate distinction in at least one. Examples could include, but are not limited to, the following: innovations in teaching, diversity initiatives, a commitment to sustainability, significant scholarly achievements, experiential and service learning initiatives, effectively incorporating one’s scholarship in the classroom, bringing national/international recognition to Ithaca College, and exemplary service commitment to the College community, the larger community, and/or the discipline.

The Ithaca College community extends its congratulations and appreciation to Professor Cynthia Scheibe for her strong commitment to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service.