



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

2018 Quantrell and Graduate Teaching Awards

By Andrew Bauld, Louise Lerner, Rob Mitchum and Matt Wood / Photos by Jean Lachat

The Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Awards, believed to be the nation's oldest prize for undergraduate teaching, reflect the College's commitment to honor inspiring teachers. The Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Mentoring recognize tenure-track and tenured faculty in the Biological Sciences, Divinity School, Humanities, Institute for Molecular Engineering, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences.



Rina Foygel Barber, Associate Professor in Statistics and the College

Rina Foygel Barber's statistics work involves finding connections in numbers; and that's her favorite part of teaching and advising, too.

"Advising is wonderful because it's a long-term relationship that really grows and in directions you never would have predicted," she said. "The extent to which their interests develop and grow and they make connections that never would have occurred to me, has just been fantastic."

Teaching, meanwhile, offers an opportunity to think deeply about how to connect theory with applications. Her Multiple Testing course, offered to both undergraduate and graduate students, combines statistical theory with applications in a way that, she says, forces her to think more deeply about the two traditional sides of academia. "I think teaching is a great place to aspire to connect all the theory we do to applications, and then to look at applications and see what else to try by turning to the theory for inspiration, and back and forth," she said.

And over Barber's five years as a professor at the University, she's enjoyed watching many of her students go through a full transformation.

"It has been really incredible to watch advisees go from someone taking a class and saying 'I'd like to do research, but I don't know how to start,' to be at a conference together and watch them strike up a conversation with a highly prominent scientist in the field as a peer," she said. "They've just taken off."