

Rainmakers

LSU's status as a top-tier research institution means that our faculty are leaders in their fields, performing at truly outstanding levels every day. Once a year, LSU's Office of Research & Economic Development, with the support of Campus Federal Credit Union, takes the opportunity to acknowledge some of our many outstanding faculty with the Rainmaker Awards for Research and Creative Activity.

Rainmakers are those faculty members who balance their many responsibilities, which extend far beyond the classroom, with external expectations, such as securing funding for their research and establishing the impact of their findings to the scholarly community and society as a whole. These exemplary representatives of LSU garner national and international recognition for innovative research and creative scholarship, compete for external funding at the highest levels, and attract and mentor exceptional graduate students.

"We are excited to acknowledge the incredible and impressive achievements of the 2013 Rainmakers," said LSU Vice Chancellor of Research & Economic Development Kalliat T. Valsaraj, who presented the awards in a ceremony held at the Club in Union Square. "These researchers and creative scholars represent our university's excellence and are standard-bearers within their own respective fields. We couldn't do this without the support of Campus Federal Credit Union, and we thank them for their support of our commitment to academic and research excellence."

Ron Moreau, chief development officer at Campus Federal, was also on hand to congratulate the recipients.

"We [Campus Federal] understand the important role research plays not only in LSU's long-term success, but also in the economic and social stability of Louisiana," said Moreau. "We appreciate the opportunity to support these innovative faculty members who represent not only academic accomplishments, but also support and mentorship for LSU students. Campus Federal was founded by seven distinguished LSU faculty members in 1934, so it is a fitting legacy for us to continue supporting distinguished faculty for their accomplishments in research today."

Each of the following award-winning faculty members has met one or more of the criteria for high-quality research or creative activities

and scholarship, which include publication in high-impact journals; highly cited works; external awards; invited presentations at national and international meetings; high journal publication productivity; critically acclaimed book publications, performances, exhibits, or theatrical productions; high grant productivity; and, for more senior candidates, outstanding citation records and high-impact invited presentations at national and international meetings.

Emerging Scholar Award Arts, Humanities, or Social or Behavioral Sciences

Michael Pasquier, associate professor of religious studies and history, is a native of Rayne, Louisiana, and a 2002 graduate of LSU. Before returning to LSU in 2008, Pasquier received his PhD in American Religious History from Florida State University in 2007 and served as a Visiting Scholar at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2008-2009. He specializes in the history of religion, culture, and the environment in the United States. His first book, *Fathers on the Frontier: French Missionaries and the Roman Catholic Priesthood in the United States, 1789-1870* (Oxford University Press 2010), profiles the lives of French missionary priests in the early American republic.

He is the editor of the book *Gods of the Mississippi* (Indiana University Press 2013), which explores the history of religion in the Mississippi River Valley from the colonial period to the present. He also partnered with Zack Godshall, assistant professor of screenwriting at LSU, to produce the documentary *Water Like Stone* (2013), which is a film about the people who live in Louisiana's vanishing wetlands.

With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Pasquier is currently working on a book about the cultural impact of engineering the Mississippi River in the 20th and 21st centuries. With support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the LSU Coastal Sustainability

Studio, Pasquier is in the final stages of developing an exhibit entitled "On Land / With Water: Tracking Change in a Coastal Community," which showcases the past, present, and future of life along Bayou Lafourche in ways that provide audiences with a deeper understanding of the social and environmental forces at play in Louisiana's ever-changing landscape.

Most recently, Pasquier has been asked by Routledge to write a textbook on the history of religion in the United States.

Brian Shaw is an LSU associate professor of trumpet and jazz studies and co-principal trumpet of the Dallas Wind Symphony. In addition to his work at LSU, he is active as an international performing and recording musician on modern and valveless trumpets. His diverse research interests include 18th century German and Austrian trumpet repertoire, modern trumpet pedagogy, and the music of jazz trumpeter and composer Kenny Wheeler.

Shaw has been a prizewinner in several international competitions and is the dedicatee of numerous new compositions. His upcoming CD recording, *redshift*, accompanied by the Dallas Wind Symphony, was made possible by an ATLAS grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents, and will be released in fall 2014 on Klavier records. His 2008 debut album, titled *Virtuoso Concertos for Clarino*, includes some of the most difficult pieces ever written for the Baroque trumpet and is accompanied by an orchestra composed of New York's finest period musicians.

As a jazz musician and scholar, Shaw directs the LSU Jazz Ensemble, which has hosted such luminaries as Wayne Bergeron, Wycliffe Gordon, and Rufus Reid during his leadership. His jazz books and transcriptions have been published by Advance Music, Presser, Schott, and Universal Edition. Over the past two years, Shaw has served as a consultant to the newly established Kenny Wheeler Archive and Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Music in

London. Shaw also performs regularly on the popular LSU concert series “Hot Summer Nights and Cool Jazz” alongside pianist Willis Delony and bassist Bill Grimes.

Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics

Hongchao Zhang is an assistant professor in the Department of Mathematics and the Center for Computation & Technology (CCT). Zhang earned his BS degree in computational mathematics from Shandong University, China, in 1998; his MS degree in applied mathematics from the Chinese Academy of Sciences in 2001; and his PhD in applied mathematics from the University of Florida in 2006. From September 2006 to July 2008, he was an industrial postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Mathematics and Its Applications associated with the IBM T. J. Watson Research Center. Since August 2008, Zhang has been an assistant professor in LSU’s Department of Mathematics and CCT. His research mainly focuses on nonlinear optimization theory, algorithms and their applications to sparse matrix computing, graph partitioning, inverse problems in medical imaging, and petrophysics and derivative-free optimization.

Mid-Career Scholar Award Arts, Humanities, or Social or Behavioral Sciences

Troy Blanchard is a professor of sociology at LSU. He joined the department as an associate professor in 2007 after serving on the faculty at Mississippi State University from 2001 to 2007. His primary research interests include demography, health, socioeconomic inequality, and social impact assessment. His research agenda focuses on the interconnections between community organizations (such as local businesses, voluntary associations, and churches), social inequality, and demographic outcomes within U.S. communities.

His research projects are designed to speak to both academic and policy-related audiences and address



At the recent event honoring LSU Rainmakers were, front row left to right, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Stuart Bell, President and Chancellor F. King Alexander, Assistant Professor of Mathematics Hongchao Zhang, Professor of English Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, President and CEO of Campus Federal Credit Union Dawn Harris, Roy Paul Daniels Professor Michael Malisoff, and Vice Chancellor of Research and Economic Development Kalliat T. Vasaraj; and back row left to right, Associate Professor of Religious Studies Michael Pasquier, Associate Professor of Trumpet and Jazz Studies Brian Shaw, and Professor of Sociology Troy Blanchard.

key social problems facing communities. He has received competitive grants from a variety of federal agencies, including the National Science Foundation, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management. Blanchard also directs the Louisiana Population Estimates Program that is tasked with developing parish and municipal population estimates. His research has been featured in national, statewide, and local media outlets (such as *Time* magazine, *USA Today* and the *Baton Rouge Advocate*) and he is a regular contributor to media coverage of social policy issues related to demography and social inequality.

Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics

Michael Malisoff received his PhD in 2000 from the Department of Mathematics at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey. His doctoral research was in optimal control and Hamilton-Jacobi theory. He was a Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Research Associate in the Department of Systems Science and Mathematics at Washington University in St. Louis as part of the Joint Forces Air Component Commander Project.

In 2001, he joined the LSU Department of Mathematics, where he is now the Roy Paul Daniels Professor #3 in the College of Science. His main research has been on controller

design and analysis for nonlinear control systems with time delays and uncertainty and their applications in engineering.

One of his projects is with the Georgia Tech Savannah Robotics team. This joint project has as its goal to develop marine robotic methods to help understand the environmental impacts of hazards such as oil spills. His more than 80 publications include a monograph on constructive Lyapunov methods in the Springer Communications and Control Engineering Series. His other awards include the First Place Student Best Paper Award at the 1999 Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) Conference on Decision and Control, two three-year National Science Foundation Mathematical Sciences Priority Area grants, and six Best Presentation awards in American Control Conference sessions. He is an associate editor for *SIAM Journal on Control and Optimization* and for *IEEE Transactions on Automatic Control*.

Senior Scholar Award Arts, Humanities, or Social or Behavioral Sciences

Sharon Aronofsky Weltman is a professor of English at LSU. She is the author of two books, *Performing the Victorian: John Ruskin and Identity in Theater, Science and Education* (2007) and *Ruskin’s Mythic Queen: Gender Subversion in Victorian Culture* (1999), named

Outstanding Academic Book by *Choice* magazine. She also put together a scholarly edition of the original Sweeney Todd melodrama published in 2012 as a special issue of *Nineteenth-Century Theatre and Film*. She has, in addition, approximately 50 essays and reviews on Charles Dickens, Christina Rossetti, Charlotte Brontë, and other topics either in print or under contract. In July, she directed a National Endowment for Humanities Summer Seminar for College and University Teachers called “Performing Dickens: *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations* on Page, Stage, and Screen” at the University of California—Santa Cruz. Weltman serves on many international boards and committees, including the Modern Language Association program committee. She has presented more than 40 conference papers, including multiple keynotes. Universities regularly bring her in to speak, including (in the U.K.) Oxford, Lancaster, and Birmingham, and (in the U.S.) Berkeley, Notre Dame, and the University of Tennessee—Knoxville. Her current book project is *Victorians on Broadway: The Afterlife of Nineteenth-Century British Literature on the American Musical Stage*.

All Rainmaker recipients receive a one-time stipend of \$1,000 and a plaque in recognition of their achievements.

For more information about the Rainmakers Awards, visit www.lsu.edu/research.

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