

2008 Dean's Awards for Excellence in Mentoring

Leading by Example

Krishnendu Chakrabarty received the Bachelor of Technology degree from the Indian Institute of Technology, in Kharagpur, India and the M.S.E. and Ph.D. degrees in computer science and engineering from the University of Michigan. He joined the Duke faculty in 1998 after serving as

Krishnendu Chakrabarty

assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering at Boston University. Krish, as he is widely known, pioneered research on the testing and

design-for-testability of core-based system-on-chip (SOC) integrated circuits. Acknowledged by his peers as a “leading influence” in the emergence of this research area, Professor Chakrabarty was recently elevated to the grade of Fellow by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE).

What Krish’s students find especially endearing “is his willingness to lead by example and get his hands dirty trying to solve their problems.” Krish builds leadership qualities in his students by teaching them how to supervise the research progress of younger students, set agendas for meetings, and develop and stick to work schedules for the semester, resulting in a highly effective graduate school experience that has armed them with the ability to lead a team of researchers successfully. His readiness to focus completely on his students’ progress has been extremely beneficial to their success. One student observed that “most of his Ph.D. students finished their study in a period of three to four years and landed decent first-entry jobs. Some of them, including me, continue to do research together with him after graduation.”

Krish’s mentoring commitment extends to identifying promising young scientists in their pre-college years.

“Krish believes strongly in early mentoring programs that pick out promising high-school students and bring them into a sophisticated research environment ... This is not only highly beneficial to the high-schoolers (one of whom has gone on to gain admission to MIT), but also infuses our research group with tremendous diversity in terms of academic and research skills ... As a result, everyone in the group gains.”



Professor Chakrabarty captures the minds and hearts of his students by encouraging independent, critical thinking and building a strong personal rapport with every student he meets.

“What makes Krish such a good mentor, especially to young students, many of whom have never worked or studied in a research environment before, is his highly approachable nature and ability to immediately grasp the problems his students may be experiencing, from the student’s point of view.”

Professor Chakrabarty’s students add that “comfortable personal relationships are the cornerstone of effective mentoring, since students are encouraged to bring their problems to Krish and are also encouraged to gain the ability of solving problems on their own.” Professor Chakrabarty strikes a balance between being actively involved in his students’ research and giving them room to grow. “He shares with us his zest for research, excellent analytical skills, eye for detail and insistence on ethics as well as quality research.”

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Preparing the Professoriate

Toril Moi, James B. Duke Professor of literature and romance studies and professor of theater studies and English, made her way to Duke in 1989, following faculty appointments at the University of Bergen in Norway, where she also completed her Doctor of Arts and Magister Artium degrees in comparative literature. Having just finished her critically acclaimed text, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*, Toril is immersed in two major projects: *The Emergence of European Modernism 1870-1914* and *Feminist Theory and Women Writers*. In March 2008, Oxford University Press released the second edition of Dr. Moi's pioneering literary work *Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman*.

Toril Moi

Toril takes an early, active interest in getting her students to think seriously about their career plans. She extends this support throughout and beyond her students' years at Duke, offering them a comprehensive set of resources she has developed, including writing, dissertation, and job search guides.

"She is always aware of how my thought is developing and is able to steer me in the right direction by offering new ideas, new texts to read, or by questioning certain weaknesses in my arguments. Both in the classroom and at the mentoring stage, Dr. Moi has shown that she is interested in my development as a future professor."

"She was tireless in her assistance and support: proofreading letters of applications and CVs, assisting in mock interviews, consulting on how to negotiate for salaries and research moneys. It was thus also thanks to her efforts and help, that I was able to secure a tenure-track position during my very first year on the job market. Two years later, my current colleagues confirmed that what had apparently distinguished me from other candidates was 'how professional' I appeared. This professionalism I certainly owe to my wonderful teacher and mentor, Toril Moi."

"Even five years after my graduation from Duke, my former dissertation advisor, Toril Moi, continues to consult and mentor me with regard to my professional plans — whether by writing letters of recommendation, sharing information on publishing venues, or simply by exchanging ideas on our scholarship. No matter what my predicament or aspirations, Toril continues to be there for me, to support me in a myriad of ways."

Beyond her practical support, students value the intangible aspects of Professor Moi's mentoring, her intellectual humility and the "sincerity and care with which she takes on the role of mentor." Whether it's inviting students to join her for dinner with a prominent visiting scholar, taking a quiet moment over coffee to

discuss a theoretical problem, or providing concrete advice on applying for jobs in a tough academic job market, Professor Moi manages to exhibit these qualities consistently.



"She gives generously, seemingly endlessly, of herself in sharp, rigorous readings of student work that drive students to meet her high expectations. At the same time, Toril couples this rigor with a warm, humane approach to the intellectual life. She herself is a model of scholarly productivity and intellectual reflection and she does not hesitate to help her students master the practical skills — from time management to bibliographic organization — that will bolster their scholarly endeavors."

"Sometimes individual meetings with a faculty member, particularly with scholars of Toril's stature, can be daunting: the preconceived need to 'come across well' can often lead students to recite pre-packaged thoughts that sound erudite. But truly critical thought requires humility and a willingness to acknowledge what one does not know. I have always felt comfortable enough with Toril to assume this humility because it is a quality I've observed in her. The innocent question, the curious observation, the lingering feeling that something is not quite right — these are the subtle sparks that produce any intellectual flame, and they are often smothered in an increasingly competitive environment in which graduate students feel the need to know it all. Toril fosters these sparks; she encourages students to be attentive to them, and gives them space and air to breathe on their own."

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Producing Boundary-Crossing Scholars

Priscilla Wald, Professor of English and Women's Studies, joined the Duke community in 1999 after teaching in the English departments at Columbia University and the University of Washington. Dr. Wald is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate with a B.A. degree in English from Yale University. She continued her advanced study at Columbia University, receiving both the M.A. and Ph.D. in English. Professor Wald's scholarship focuses on U.S. literature and culture of the late-18th to mid-20th centuries and examines the intersections among law, literature, science, and medicine.

Priscilla Wald

A signature element in Wald's character is her affinity for guiding scholars whose academic work is widely varied. As one student summarizes, "It is astonishing that Wald was able to advise so many successful projects that were so different from

each other. Literary History. Anthropology. Psychoanalysis. Urban Studies. Critical Race Studies. Transnational American Studies. Wow." This is one of the most important things that Professor Wald does — authorizing her students to follow leads into interdisciplinary directions. One former student offered this description: "No one I know in my field reaches farther into its many specialties; and no one reveals more in all the possibilities that they offer."

Because she so highly values intellectual exploration, it is not surprising that Wald makes a noted impact through the quality and nature of her questions.

"Priscilla taught me that learning to question is perhaps the most useful skill an academic can have, particularly if one wants to write in a way that's different from the mainstream. Anyone who has attended a presentation with Priscilla knows to listen for her during the question and answer session; she asks excellent, thoughtful questions — not the kind that are calculated to show how smart she is, but the kind that a genuinely intelligent and a curious person wants to know."

What is strikingly clear from students' observations is that Priscilla's support in helping them to navigate through their doctoral programs and challenging them to cross disciplinary boundaries has never flagged. Acknowledging these tireless efforts, Professor Wald's students collectively echo their respect for her philosophy of mentoring and their aspiration to model her scholarship, teaching, and mentoring.

Duke
University



"No one I know conceives of mentoring in the broadest sense that Priscilla Wald enacts — a relationship that extends far beyond a degree, a first job, or even tenure. For Priscilla Wald, mentoring is about the relationships that sustain our intellectual life and that are greater than the titles that we happen to hold."

"I try to do for my students what Priscilla has done for me ... She has made my work better, she has taught me how to be a teacher, and she has continually counseled me in how to have integrity in situations where that seems to no longer be an option."

"Priscilla taught me well about the kinds of support a mentor can give — and the way in which mentoring students is part of a vision of the profession that draws its strength from connection, collegiality and community rather than competition."

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PRODUCER

Jason Marc Cross

Jason Marc Cross received a multiple majors bachelor's degree in anthropology, history, religious studies, and international studies from Pennsylvania State University and a master's degree in history and philosophy of science from the University of Pittsburgh. He now pursues a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology and a J.D. through the Law School at Duke. Jason's nominators echo a sense of the deep commitment he has to the communities in which he lives. His nominations demonstrate how his "indefatigable" commitment to advocacy and service has provided Jason with valuable experience that he shares generously as a mentor in a variety of contexts, including the Public Anthropology initiative, Duke Organizing and Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations, Neighborhoods), and the A.B. Duke Research Fellowship proposal process.

"He served as mentor to his colleagues, encouraging and schooling them in how to take the initiative in developing programs and influencing departmental operations."

"[Jason] has taught me not only about advocacy organizations but about the culture of committees and the ways in which to navigate them to get objectives accomplished."

"Jason possesses a special talent for shepherding students through the proposal process, helping them discern why their proposed projects are important and teaching them to build well-reasoned budgets based on the essential needs of their projects."

Jason enthusiastically invests his intellectual and experiential capital into nurturing fellow "action citizens" and networks that effect practical social change. By engaging others in dialogue about his own work, Jason "brings them to think productively about their own scholarship."



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PROMOTER

Justin W. Jaworski

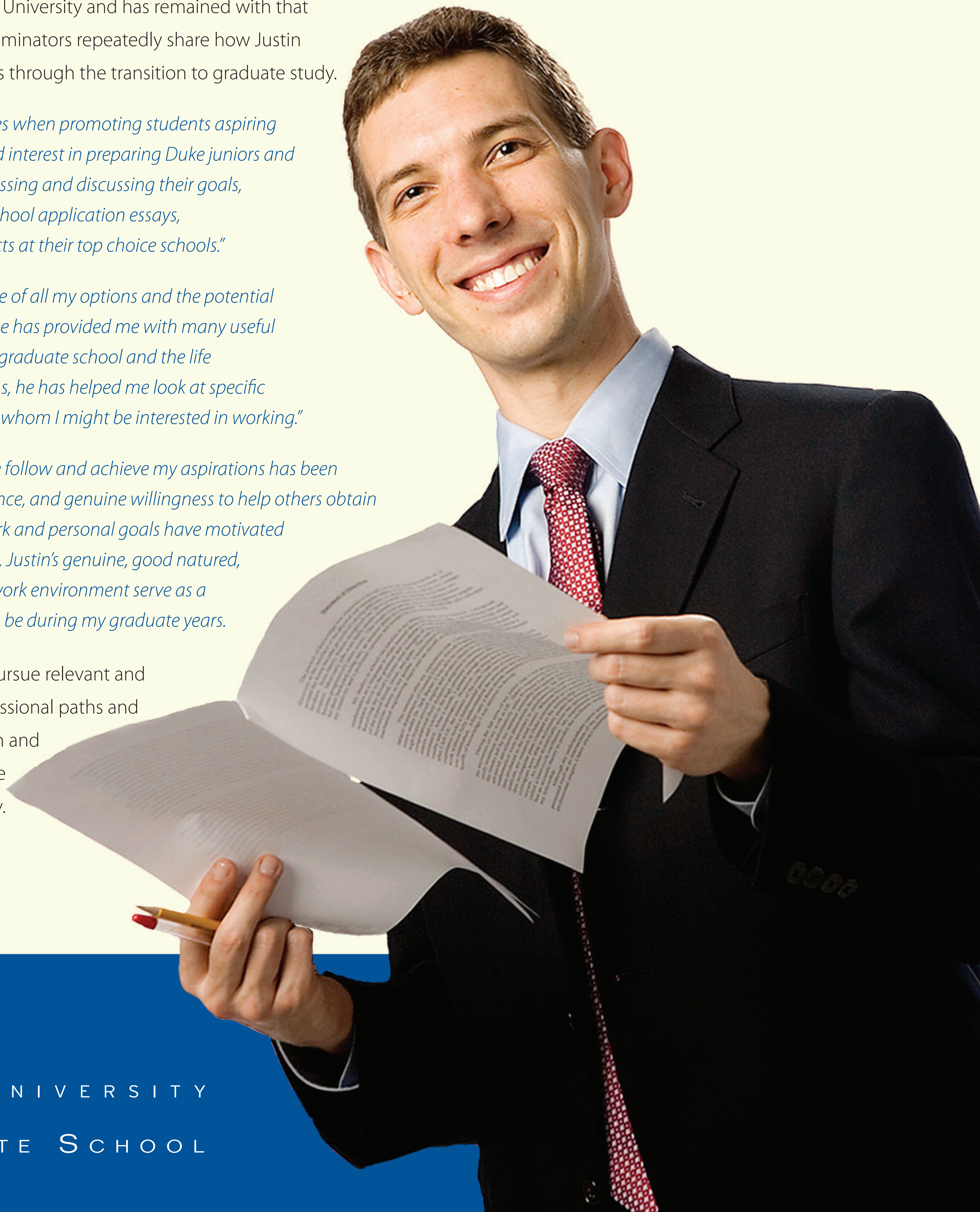
Justin Jaworski received his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and materials science from Duke University and has remained with that department to pursue a Ph.D. Nominators repeatedly share how Justin excels at guiding undergraduates through the transition to graduate study.

"Justin's maturity as a mentor shines when promoting students aspiring to academia. He has taken a vested interest in preparing Duke juniors and seniors for graduate school by assessing and discussing their goals, providing feedback on graduate school application essays, and connecting students to contacts at their top choice schools."

"To make sure that I was fully aware of all my options and the potential problems that I might encounter, he has provided me with many useful books and links about applying to graduate school and the life that follows. In the past few months, he has helped me look at specific schools and faculty members with whom I might be interested in working."

"Justin's contribution to helping me follow and achieve my aspirations has been invaluable. His knowledge, experience, and genuine willingness to help others obtain a better understanding of their work and personal goals have motivated me to nominate him for this honor. Justin's genuine, good natured, and thoughtful comments in the work environment serve as a model for the person that I want to be during my graduate years."

Justin's ability to help students pursue relevant and rewarding educational and professional paths and the connections he fosters within and beyond Duke have been valuable assets to the campus community.



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ENABLER

Julianne M. Yost

Julianne Yost received her bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Cedar Crest College. She now pursues a Ph.D. from Duke's Department of Chemistry. Nominators consistently applaud Julianne's passion for chemistry and her dedication to creating a supportive environment for the development of research skills in the lab.

"Mentoring students and helping them develop and pursue their respective goals is incredibly important to her. Indeed, she views it as a critical and essential aspect of her own academic development... There is absolutely no denying that the environment that exists in our group and the very positive experiences that students have has an enormous amount to do with Julianne."

"Julianne has taught me by example how to be a better mentor and leader in our department... Her efforts over time have permeated the research group from top to bottom, influencing activity at all levels. Her work with undergraduates has allowed them to develop into significant contributors on their respective projects."

"It was the manner in which she helped that separated her from other mentors. She was always kind and supportive. Instead of pointing to the computer and telling me to do a literature search, she would walk me through the search while teaching me the process. Instead of simply pointing to the wall where my missing chemical was stored, Julianne would walk me to the shelf explaining the organizational system in the lab. While these may seem like trivial examples, they illustrate a caring and helpful disposition that was characteristic of Julianne."

Students and faculty appreciate Julianne's diligent efforts to intentionally guide the development of future researchers and scholars.

