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## **Defelice awarded C.I. Noll Award for Excellence in Teaching**

Meredith Defelice, senior lecturer in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Penn State University, has been honored with the 2015 C.I. Noll Award for Excellence in Teaching by the Eberly College of Science Alumni Society. Instituted in 1972 and named in honor of Clarence I. Noll, dean of the college from 1965 to 1971, the award is the highest honor for undergraduate teaching in the college. Students, faculty members, and alumni nominate outstanding faculty members who best exemplify the key characteristics of a Penn State educator, and a committee of students selects the award winners from the group of nominees.

To increase the number of active learning opportunities in the courses she teaches, Defelice has incorporated a number of innovations. In her large General Biochemistry I class, she has introduced undergraduate learning assistants and trained them to facilitate deeper discussions among small groups of students. The discussions in these small groups focus on worksheet problems and the “clicker questions” asked during the class’s large-group format -- a classroom-response system in which each student’s answer is electronically tallied and analyzed for instantaneous display. For her laboratory class in Molecular Genetics I, Defelice has rewritten the laboratory manual incorporating new experiments and techniques, thus creating a more “real world” applications-oriented experience. To update her Molecular Medicine class and enhance student engagement, Defelice has written a series of new case studies.

A member of the Center for Excellence in Science Education at Penn State, Defelice is involved in efforts to collaborate with other scientists as well as students interested in promoting excellence in science teaching and learning. As a Faculty Fellow at the Center, she is working to enhance the Science Pedagogy course offered for learning assistants to help prepare them to become skilled facilitators in classroom discussions.

Defelice has been recognized with several other Penn State teaching honors. In 2014, she received the George W. Atherton Award for Excellence in Teaching, in 2013, she received the Penn State Center for Excellence in Science Education Fellowship, and in 2012 she received the Paul M. Althouse Teaching Award.

Before joining the Penn State faculty, Defelice served as a research assistant professor from 2008 to 2009 in the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. From 2003 to 2007 she was a postdoctoral fellow in the SPIRE program at UNC-Chapel Hill, where she received training and experience in both research and teaching. She earned a doctoral degree in cell biology at Duke University in 2002 and a bachelor's degree in biochemistry, magna cum laude with departmental honors, at Occidental College in 1997.

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