

## Citation

### Dr. Robert Puhak

The New Jersey Section of the Mathematical Association of America is pleased to present its 2018 sectional award for Distinguished College or University Teaching of Mathematics to Dr. Robert Puhak of Rutgers University Newark.



Dr. Puhak has an impressive track record not only in providing an outstanding experience for students who are fortunate to take his mathematics classes at Rutgers University Newark, but in a consistent commitment to mentoring students outside of class. Dr. Puhak received the Chancellor's Excellence Award in Teaching in 2013 at Rutgers, and he is described by his students and colleagues as an incredibly dedicated instructor who regularly makes the effort to go above and beyond to ensure the success of the students in his classes.

Dr. Puhak has served as the Director of College Algebra and Basic Math at Rutgers Newark and in this capacity he has worked to revamp the curriculum and improve the learning experience for all students. His responsibilities have included mentoring new instructors and graduate assistants to implement technology in course sequences, and improve alignment of curricula for students. Dr. Puhak's colleagues point to the demonstrated improvement in student success, with an impact on graduation and retention in particular for students from underrepresented minority groups.

Dr. Puhak's commitment to students extends to other departments and programs at his institution. He has developed course materials and served as instructor and mentor for the Rutgers University Business school summer Scholars Training and Enrichment Program. His availability and support outside of class time earned him a reputation as a genuinely caring teacher who goes the extra mile to help students succeed.

Dr. Puhak has extended his mentoring efforts to the surrounding community, and in 2015 implemented a math curriculum for a residential summer program for academically talented high school students with financial need. Dr. Puhak's involvement in this program and demonstrated passion for mentoring first-generation students as they transition from high school to the rigors of college has led to a demonstrated improvement in academic success and retention.

Dr. Puhak has received accolades from students who say that he has changed their lives. One indicates that "You taught me more than just Calculus, you helped me find confidence in not only my academic abilities, but in myself. After another successful semester at Rutgers University I need to thank you. In high school I was told that I wasn't cut out for college but after taking your course and gaining that confidence I know I made the right choice by pursuing a college career".

The MAA New Jersey section is fortunate to have Dr. Puhak as an example of one of our outstanding faculty.

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Professor Li Guo of the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Rutgers University Newark, nominated Dr. Robert Puhak for this Distinguished Teaching Award.



## RECIPIENTS OF MAA-NJ DISTINGUISHED TEACHING AWARD

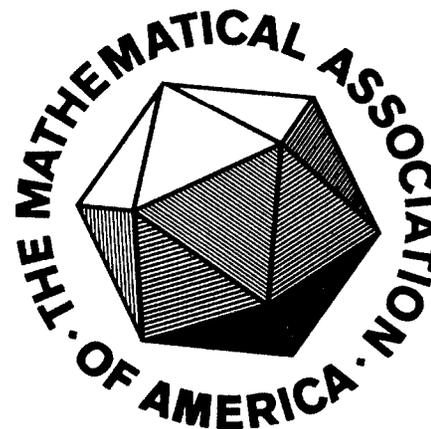
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|---|------|
| Sr. M. Stephanie Sloyan, Georgian Court College         | 1992 |
| Eileen Polani, St. Peter's College                      | 1993 |
| Richard Bronson, Fairleigh Dickinson University         | 1994 |
| Siegfried Haenisch, The College of New Jersey           | 1995 |
| Andrew Demetropoulos, Montclair State University        | 1996 |
| Roger Pinkham, Stevens Institute of Technology          | 1997 |
| Virginia Lee, Brookdale Community College               | 1998 |
| Amy Cohen, Rutgers University-New Brunswick             | 1999 |
| Janet H. Caldwell, Rowan University                     | 2000 |
| Evan Maletsky, Montclair State University               | 2002 |
| Stephen J. Greenfield, Rutgers University-New Brunswick | 2003 |

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| Arthur Schwartz, Mercer County Community College    | 2004 |
| Bonnie Gold, Monmouth University                    | 2006 |
| Bruce G. Bukiet, New Jersey Institute of Technology | 2008 |
| Thomas Osler, Rowan University                      | 2009 |
| Robert L. Wilson, Rutgers University                | 2010 |
| Brian P. Hopkins, Saint Peter's College             | 2011 |
| Diana M. Thomas, Montclair State University         | 2012 |
| Sarita Nemani, Georgian Court University            | 2013 |
| Karen Clark, The College of New Jersey              | 2014 |
| Denis Blackmore, New Jersey Institute of Technology | 2015 |
| Jana Gevertz, The College of New Jersey             | 2016 |
| Cynthia Curtis, The College of New Jersey           | 2017 |

## MEMBERS OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

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## MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA NEW JERSEY SECTION



**Award for Distinguished College or  
University Teaching of Mathematics**

**Spring Meeting**

**Saturday, April 7, 2018  
Rowan College at  
Burlington County  
Mount Laurel, New Jersey**