

Congratulations to Dr. Heather Laube, the 2021 SWS Feminist Mentoring Award Winner!

The SWS Feminist Mentoring Award was established in 1990 to honor an SWS Member who is an outstanding feminist mentor. While the word “mentoring” is commonly used to describe a faculty-student relationship, this award has shown the breadth of ways that feminists do mentoring. In establishing the award, SWS recognized that feminist mentoring is an important and concrete way to encourage feminist scholarship.

This year’s Feminist Mentoring Award Subcommittee included Corinne Castro (Subcommittee Chair,) Manisha Desai, Rebecca P, Rhacel Salazar Parreñas, Bandana Purkayastha, and Ashley Kim. The Subcommittee selected Heather Laube as the SWS 2021 Feminist Mentoring Award Winner.



Heather is an associate professor of sociology and core faculty in the Women’s and Gender Studies program at the University of Michigan-Flint. She served as the UM-Flint Thompson Center for Learning and Teaching Faculty Fellow for Mentoring and continues to work with a team of people on her campus to build and strengthen mentoring programs for faculty and staff. In 2015, she taught and researched at Karl-Franzens University in Graz, Austria, as a Fulbright scholar. Heather has long been interested in how feminist academics find ways to remain true to their feminist ideals while also attending to the reality and goals of their professional lives. Her work explores how scholars’ feminist and sociological identities intersect with their institutional locations to offer opportunities to transform the academy. She has explored how innovative faculty mentoring programs might contribute to institutional change in higher education. Heather has served in a number of leadership roles in SWS. The organization and its members have been central to her development as a feminist sociologist, teacher, scholar, and colleague.

The nominators for Heather Laube were Jennifer Alvey, Sharon Bird, Tristan Bridges, Krista Brumley, Kris De Welde, Sasha Drummond-Lewis, Angie Hattery, and Sarah Sobieraj. In the collectively penned nomination letter, the writers enthusiastically describe how Professor Laube “takes feminist mentoring to an entirely other level.” Her work with individuals as well as organizations, such as SWS and the University of Michigan-Flint, to transform mentoring highlights Laube’s personal and scholarly commitments to this work. Speaking as her colleague at UM-Flint, Jennifer Alvey states the following: “her sustained and highly successful work revitalizing and re-envisioning the Faculty Mentor Program is a direct result of her research driven approach to identifying and solving problems, as well as to her ability to think creatively

and foster the implementation of evidenced based best practices tailored to our unique circumstances. Heather's mentoring in the department constitutes what I can only call a sea change." The nominators also highlight Laube's transformational work in re-envisioning the SWS Professional Needs Mentoring Program through adopting cutting edge best practices such as Mutual Mentoring models. Nominators also consider Laube a "holistic mentor" that "upends traditional expectations of mentoring as a senior-to-junior activity and instead approaches mentoring as a way of being, a way of caring, of advancing others regardless of their career stage." Laube is also described as a "scout" for new feminist leaders on her campus and across SWS who need just a little bit of encouragement. However, the nominators make clear that "Professor Laube doesn't just scout people. She also mentors by preparing organizations for the leadership they sometimes don't know they need. While she is simultaneously mentoring a novice to take on their first leadership position, she is also preparing the organization for a leader who may be unconventional, someone who may not look like previous leaders, or who may work at an institution that is not typically at the table." Sarah Sobieraj clearly conveys one of the many reasons why Heather Laube has been selected as the winner of the 2021 Feminist Mentoring Award: "Over decades of SWS summer and winter meetings, Heather has made a point of finding those who are at the literal margins -- of the conversation, of the table, of the dancefloor-- and working to welcome them in."

We hope you will join us in congratulating Heather and that you will make plans to join us for the 2021 Winter SWS Awards Reception to be held on Saturday, January 30, 2021. Please register [here](#) for the 2021 SWS Winter Meeting where we will celebrate with Heather.