Valley City State University recognizes Hoff, Kuipers for dedication

The Valley City (N.D.) State University Student Senate recently recognized two faculty members for their dedication. Don Hoff was presented with the Teacher of the Year Award. The award is given annually to a professor who shows dedication to the students of VCSU through innovative teaching methods and continued professional development both inside and outside of the classroom.

Professors are nominated by members of the student body and the winner is elected by the Student Senate. The criteria for evaluating nominees include demonstrating a thorough knowledge of the field, communicating that knowledge in an effective manner, establishing a positive learning environment, showing respect and concern for students, inspiring enthusiasm for learning, challenging students academically, being available to students outside the classroom, using innovative teaching methods, and showing evidence of continued professional development.

Hoff is in his ninth year as a professor at VCSU. He has traveled to all 50 states and every continent except Antarctica for research, education and/or leisure. He previously taught at Velva, Mandaree and Minot State University in North Dakota and Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands and worked at NASA. At VCSU, he currently teaches earth science/geology courses, science teaching methods and chemistry and supervises student teachers. Hoff is also the North Dakota state coordinator for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching program.

The VCSU Student Senate also recognized Gilbert Kuipers, associate professor, as the student advocate. This recognition honors any individual or group that supports, sponsors and promotes the actions, beliefs and success of the VCSU student body. In particular, Kuipers’ nomination cited his support for student fundraisers, his school spirit and participation in VCSU bands and activities.

Kuipers has been on the faculty at VCSU since 1981 teaching courses in introductory chemistry, physical chemistry, physics and algebra. Earlier this year, he was presented with the “Fan of the Year” award by the VCSU Century Club. He is also active in planning and organizing the Regional Science Olympiad, a competition held annually on the VCSU campus that attracts hundreds of area high school students.