2014-2015 Electrical Engineering Teaching Awards

The Electrical Engineering Department at USF recognizes and rewards outstanding performance in academic instruction, specifically with two awards that are annually given to a faculty member and a graduate teaching assistant.

The **Keysight Technologies Outstanding Electrical Engineering Educator Award** is given to a faculty member in the USF Department of Electrical Engineering in recognition of significant contributions to the department’s teaching mission during the preceding academic year. Contributions considered include significant innovations in course development and/or course delivery methods, outstanding student evaluations, education-related grant funding or external support, and education-related publications. Significant student interaction in the form of mentoring, project advising and other similar activities is also considered. The 2014-2015 recipient of this prestigious award is Dr. Rudy Schlaf. Dr. Schlaf initiated the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program in the USF College of Engineering and was Director of the program for over a decade. He is also an entrepreneur, and collaborated with a high-tech start-up to successfully commercialize electro-spray technology developed in his USF laboratory. It was during this entrepreneurial experience that he became passionate about making electronic products. Combining this passion with his strong interest in hands-on undergraduate learning, he developed and launched a very innovative and successful new course titled “Make: A Hands-On Introduction to Engineering Design” which is the basis for this award.

In addition to the Faculty Educator award, the department issues an award to outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistants. The **Electrical Engineering Teaching Assistant (TA) Award** was created to provide TAs a visible incentive to develop a commitment to student success and excellence in undergraduate instruction. This award encourages talented TAs to develop electronic teaching portfolios that document and demonstrate their teaching commitment and effectiveness, and allows the department to formally acknowledge them for outstanding instructional accomplishments, publicize the accomplishments of our TAs and to enhance the esteem in which teaching by graduate students is held as an integral component of the professional preparation of graduate students.

The 2014-2015 Electrical Engineering Teaching Assistant Award was earned by Juan Castro, a doctoral student in the Electrical Engineering program at USF. Prior to coming to USF, Juan was in industry, working with Jabil (Sr. Quality Engineer), COVIDIEN (Quality Control Supervisor) and Panasonic (Quality Control Engineer). Juan has TA’d for courses in the department that include the Wireless Circuits and Systems Lab, Integrated Circuit Technology and Advanced Integrated Circuit technology. Juan’s primary objective as a teacher of a laboratory course is that he ensures the students taking his classes receive the best support from him as an instructor to facilitate the learning process, preparing them with a qualified engineering background either for industry or for a research position in academia. His teaching strategy combines approaches based on his personal experience as a Ph.D. student at USF in the RF-MEMS, and experience working as a professional in industry. He combines the theory learned in class and experiments learned in the laboratory, relating them with real problems occurring in the semiconductor and RF/Microwave industries.