

The Faculty Excellence Award in Advising recognizes a faculty advisor who embodies the qualities of effective and caring concern for student academic progress. This year we honor Dr. Katrina Hay, Associate Professor of Physics.

A colleague called Dr. Hay “a virtual student magnet,” who is “caring by nature and gracious beyond measure.” Testimonies from students underscore what an apt description this is. Dr. Hay helps students find the resources and opportunities they need, motivates them to dream big, and supports the development of their confidence and positive self-image.

One former student described the struggles they faced with imposter syndrome and feelings of self-doubt. The student wrote, “Thankfully, Dr. Hay always encouraged me to see how bright and intelligent I am. She always knew how to snap me out of my confidence ruts and motivate me to work harder. If it weren’t for her, I wouldn’t have participated in my first summer research experience; she was the one who convinced me to apply regardless of my self-doubt.”

Another former student shared an anecdote about the first time they visited Dr. Hay’s office hours. As a first-year student newly acquainted with college-level physics, the student recalls sharing with Dr. Hay a dream of someday working for NASA. The student shared that, “Dr. Hay did everything she could to help me get there, and at the end of my sophomore year, I was presented with a wonderful opportunity to be a NASA intern. It was a dream come true for me, but it also seemed that it was a dream come true for her as well.”

Dr. Hay advises and provides support for students when the stressors and demands of college life can be overwhelming. A student wrote “Dr. Hay was constantly there for me when I needed someone to keep me grounded. She informed me of all my options and she was honest and upfront with me about the reality of my situation. You see, I am an undocumented student with DACA, and even though Dr. Hay didn’t know too much about my situation at first, she made sure to get informed and she tried her absolute best to find the answers to the questions I had. Without her help I would not be where I am today.”

For her energy, initiative, and commitment to PLU students and their success, we honor Katrina Hay.