Graves Receives Faculty Award

VIMS Professor Dr. John Graves has received the state’s highest honor for professors. Graves was one of 11 statewide recipients of the 2004 TIAA-CREF Outstanding Faculty Award presented by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Also receiving the honor was Professor Chi-Kwong Li of William and Mary’s mathematics department. William and Mary is the only college or university in the state to have two faculty members recognized. The General Assembly and governor created the award in 1986. Winners must demonstrate a record of “superior accomplishments in teaching, research, and public service.”

Graves and Li were honored January 21 during a ceremony in Richmond and a luncheon at Gov. Mark Warner’s Executive Mansion. The recipients receive a specially designed plaque and a $4,000 award.

“Our faculty members are truly the heart and soul of the College and their commitment to academic excellence is what makes William and Mary a unique educational experience for all our students,” said William and Mary Provost P. Geoffrey Feiss. “Through their tireless efforts in all aspects of higher education, John Graves and Chi-Kwong Li have both gained the ultimate respect from their colleagues and students. William and Mary is extremely proud to have them represent the College in such a prestigious honor.”

Graves came to VIMS in 1990. He serves as both a professor of marine science and chair of VIMS’ Department of Fisheries Science.

An internationally recognized leader and scholar in the field of fisheries genetics and marine science, Graves has received more than $3 million in research grants or contracts, published research findings in major scientific journals, and made presentations on his research around the world.

Since 1995, Graves has also served as chair of the U.S. Advisory Committee to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas. Over the past eight years, Graves has helped the commission establish historic rebuilding plans for stocks of western Atlantic bluefin tuna, North Atlantic swordfish, and blue and white marlin.

Graves’ students compliment him for his challenging courses and dedication to their own professional development. In addition to his work at VIMS, Graves has developed a series of courses in marine science for high school teachers and has also volunteered several times to teach an introductory biology course, “Principles of Biology: Organisms, Ecology & Evolution,” to undergraduates at the College’s main campus.

“My courses are rigorous, but I try to make them fun,” Graves said. “I put a great deal of effort into teaching, and I expect as much back from my students. I believe that learning is a very personal process and that the role of an instructor is to inspire students to learn.”

Graves earned his bachelor’s degree in biology from Revelle College at the University of California, San Diego in 1975. He earned his Ph.D. in marine biology from Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California, San Diego in 1981.