This award citation was read during Davidson College's 177th commencement ceremony on Sunday, May 18, 2014.

For decades students have praised this professor's impressive erudition, irrepressible good humor, keen intelligence, and seemingly inexhaustible "energy and enthusiasm." An accomplished scholar, this teacher nonetheless is "available for office hours or discussion, even [for students who are] not enrolled in [that professor's classes]." As one recommender writes, this professor "teaches far more than facts or theories," but strives to "teach us how to live in the world." Enthuses yet another student, this instructor tirelessly "challenges," "motivates," and "inspires."

This teacher accomplishes these feats by "developing [students'] personal inquisitiveness regardless of the topic...[this professor] discovers and explores the text alongside the students rather than presupposing [ownership of] the best understanding." In this instructor's classes, one grateful alumna recollects, "students read, they reflect, they discus, they argue, they challenge, and they learn." From the very first class students are astonished by how deeply and well this professor knows and loves the great writers, ancient and modern, whose teachings they eagerly make their own.

Another alumna describes the first of her many classroom encounters with this teacher by noting how this professor "brought to life these men of the past, made us laugh, took us seriously, and left us feeling like this class was going to be important to our lives. He will never know how important it was to mine." Indeed, another student describes his teacher's classes as a veritable "Wonderland" in which there is "always a new thing to discover and a new question to ask." In his hands, the writings of Augustine, Origen, Calvin and Kierkegaard become, like his own discourses upon them, the prized teachings of wise and generous intimates.

Yet just as much as students laud this professor's erudition and energetic classroom presence, they express gratitude for the personal attention he extends them outside class. In one student's words, this professor "makes an effort to know each student as an individual"; he constantly acknowledges "that each of us has our own unique perspective." Recalls another student with genuine "pleasure, fondness and gratitude," this professor's office was "something of a sanctuary" amid the hustle and bustle of campus life, for there "we talked [not only] about the courses I was taking" and "my plans for after graduation," but also about "the things in my life that made me frustrated or anxious" – or, on other days, especially happy and fulfilled.

Other students enthusiastically concur. One writes, this teacher is "graciously dedicated and patient." Another writes, he's "insightful without being stuffy," never "condescending nor aloof," but instead unfailingly "inspiring" and "encouraging." Yet another student recollects that this teacher tirelessly "pushes students to believe in their own capabilities." One marvels, "All of the time that he spent with me forcing me to push my thinking and to sharpen my writing and to craft my speech, he was developing in me the very tools I would need to figure myself out and make good choices for my life." As another alumnus writes, this teacher's "energy, enthusiasm, intelligence, wit and sensitivity" animate not only his "love of teaching, but his passion for Davidson's mission to nurture young men and women."
For his willingness so generously to share his enthusiasm and knowledge, for "ask[ing] the best of his students and himself," and for his genuine concern for students' personal and intellectual welfare, we award the 2014 Hunter-Hamilton Love of Teaching Award to Professor Trent Foley.