Zoran Kuzmanovich
2004 Hunter-Hamilton Love of Teaching Award Citation

The larger than life enthusiasm of this professor is contagious; the remarkable challenge of this teacher is transforming; and the bluff act that hides from no one a mind and a heart deeply sensitive to the tenderness inscribed in humane letters, arts, and learning is life affirming and unforgettable.

His courses teach his students not only to appreciate texts, as one admiring colleague wrote, but to make connections among those texts, their own projects, and their own lives. His courses, like the interests of the man himself, have extraordinary diversity and range; he teaches film and film theory, literature and the visual arts, the British novel, English and American literature, comparative literature, the history of literary criticism. His courses are also famously passionate. His Joyce-Nabokov seminar includes a 26-hour, non-stop, group reading aloud of Ulysses. (One grateful former student from the Joyce-Nabokov seminar of 1996 wrote that he still has and still wears proudly the commemorative t-shirt.)

And this professor's courses are notoriously demanding. His Literary Criticism class, wrote a former student, was like a literary theory boot camp Plato to Derrida in one semester and we loved it. It was exactly what we had come to Davidson for: a true intellectual community, challenging but supportive, exciting, fun. Instead of foisting his own ideas upon us, another student wrote, "He forced us to make the connections, discern the objectives, create our own theories, and fuel our own debate...He taught us to revel in the complexities and to seek out our own answers to the most oblique questions...He would never tell us what to think or do, but he would always help us to find the answers within and for ourselves as individuals."
This professor's refusal to accept pat or boring answers, as still another student wrote, "...does not impede his willingness to help those same answers get better. As the dozens of students and advisees who visit his office every week for conversation, debate, engagement, patient encouragement, and searching questions can attest, the real boon won by working with [him] is the moment when you're sitting or slumping, rather in his office, and he's been trying to coax some recalcitrant epiphany out of you for an hour, and you're tired, and you want to be done with that interview, and suddenly he helps you produce an idea, or a metaphor, or a new way of looking at a question that gives you the tools, the confidence, and the desire to surpass what you thought were your limits."

A former Center for Interdisciplinary Studies major called his weekly senior thesis meetings with this man "the most sustained intellectual experience of my life."

And this professor understands his role as teacher and advisor to be something that endures far beyond the student's four years at Davidson. He is in regular communication with many former students, students who continue to contact him about their career plans and the challenges they face in post-collegiate life, but also and especially because they continue to find in him a reservoir of learning, wisdom, and abiding belief in the humanity that truly liberates the minds of young men and women for useful lives of leadership and service as well as for self discovery and exploration beyond the known horizon.

For this dedication and zest, for this unswerving commitment to nothing less than excellence, for tirelessly reminding us all that the best learning is motivated by a thirst for understanding, Davidson College honors "Dr. K," Professor Zoran Kuzmanovich, with the Hunter Hamilton Love of Teaching Award.