

2022 Blackwell Award

The **Association of Legal Writing Directors** and the **Legal Writing Institute**
are proud to announce the winner of the

2022 Thomas F. Blackwell Memorial Award
for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Legal Writing

Craig T. Smith



Craig is a Clinical Professor of Law and serves as both Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Assistant Dean for the Writing and Learning Resource Center at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Law. He is a past president of ALWD, a longtime member of LWI, and a tireless advocate for improved status of legal research and writing professionals, in part through his extensive work as a liaison to the ABA Section on Legal Education & Admissions to the Bar.

Craig is an innovator in the classroom, and many of us have observed his giftedness as a teacher through his numerous presentations at regional and national legal writing conferences. Craig's scholarship is voluminous and wide-ranging, and much of it is focused on advancing our discipline within the legal academy. A prime example is his 2020 *Oregon Law Review* article, *Treating Professionals Professionally: Requiring Security of Position for All Skills-Focused Faculty Under ABA Accreditation Standards 405(c) and Eliminating 405 (d)*. And Craig has served as a mentor for countless members of the legal research and writing community, many of whom joined in nominating Craig for the Blackwell Award.

The Thomas F. Blackwell Award is presented annually to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to improve the field of legal writing by demonstrating (1) an ability to nurture and motivate students to excellence; (2) a willingness to help other legal writing educators improve their teaching skills or their legal writing programs; and (3) an ability to create and integrate new ideas for teaching and motivating legal writing educators and

students. Without a doubt, Craig exemplifies these qualities in many ways. Here are three illustrative excerpts from Craig's nomination letters:

During my time at UNC Law, Professor Smith stood out as a professor because of his enthusiasm and sincerity. . . . From the first day of class, it was clear that Professor Smith had a passion for legal writing. He thoughtfully structured our class so we developed new skills and reinforced existing ones. Professor Smith guided our RRWA class into the sweet spot of learning, where tasks were not demoralizingly challenging but not mindlessly easy. . . . Professor Smith was quick to celebrate successes and eager to offer advice when we faced challenging situations.

Thomas S. Walker, UNC Law Class of '19

To say that I didn't know anything about how to teach writing when I started out is an understatement. . . . I had literally never met an expert in legal writing pedagogy before I met Craig. And . . . I had very little time to educate myself about what I was about to do. Craig was the ideal supervisor under these circumstances. Not only did he spend hours talking me through teaching techniques, strategies for classroom management, and grading, but he also encouraged his—and now my—colleagues to do the same. He set a tone of professional generosity and mentorship for the whole department.

Professor Rachel Gurvich, UNC Law

Since our first meeting in 2010, I've been privileged to serve with Craig on various committees and initiatives One of the qualities I noticed during our service was Craig's consistent and remarkable ability to truly listen. He rarely jumps into conversations without first listening to others' ideas and contributions. And when he does contribute, he enriches the conversation with (i) a big-picture perspective that gently but firmly reminds us of our focus and mission; (ii) a willingness to implement ideas that others have put forth and to do the work himself; and (iii) words that amplify others' ideas.

Professor Rosario Lozada, FIU Law

If you would like to offer your congratulations to Craig, you can contact him off-list at crgsmith@email.unc.edu. Meanwhile, the Blackwell Reception Committee will begin planning a virtual celebration that will occur shortly after we ring in 2022. You won't want to miss the opportunity to gather with legal research and writing friends across the country to toast Craig and let him know what he means to all of us.

Craig's colleagues at UNC Law helped us surprise Craig with the news! We will share the video of that event as soon as we can!

Laura Graham
ALWD President

Kim Holst
LWI President