

# BC3 business prof up for international excellence award

Regional winner “the best teacher I have ever had,” microcomputing student says

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(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College associate professor of business Sherri Mack is one of five finalists for the International Teaching Excellence Award to be presented June 26 by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs in Anaheim, Calif.

Mack was chosen April 20 as the Teaching Excellence Award winner from nominees representing associate degree member institutions in Region 2, which encompasses Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

There are 10 national regions for the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, each divided between associate degree institutions and those conferring baccalaureate degrees or higher.

Mack, who will be honored at the organization’s June 24-27 conference in Anaheim, says the external recognition is the most prestigious of her 22-year career at BC3.

A record 50-plus educators were nominated across both divisions, according to Carmen Hayes, member services manager for the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs.

“I believe I have been blessed by God with the gift of teaching. It’s rewarding to know that I can articulate to students and my peers the technology behind what runs the world today,” says Mack, who this semester is teaching courses on introduction to microcomputing, visual programming and database systems at BC3’s main campus.



Sherri Mack, associate professor of business at Butler County Community College, assist a student in her introduction to microcomputing class on BC3’s main campus. Mack has been chosen as a Teaching Excellence Award winner by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs in Region 2, which encompasses five states and the District of Columbia.

“When I am able to go to a first-year student and be able to explain a database to him, and he or she is doing well in their assignments, I’ve done what I have been called to do.”

## “Our name is going to be out there”

The recognition for BC3, she adds, “is really what makes me most happy. With this being a more national-level award, now with all the online courses, this is going to bump us up in that online market. We are going to be recognized and our name is going to be out there.”

BC3 in February received permission to advertise and offer its online courses in Washington, D.C., and in all states except California, Florida and Massachusetts – which have yet to join the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements.

Mack, a Butler resident, previously won the 2013 United Way of Butler County’s Red Apple Award for exemplifying leadership and for outstanding dedication to students and the community; and BC3’s 2016 Above and Beyond Award for her work on the school’s Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self Study.

“Sherri gives so much to this college,” said Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3 president. “First and foremost is her excellence in the classroom. As this award indicates, she is exceptional. Her service to the college is something I also admire. Her work as a co-chair of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Self Study last year, along with former BC3 @ Cranberry Director Alex Gladis, could never be recognized enough.

“Travel, countless meetings, writing, countless meetings, visits, countless meetings. I think you get the picture of what being a co-chair meant. And her teaching never slipped. Amazing.”

The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs award, Hayes said, is based on five criteria – teaching and learning, weighted heaviest; professional development; institutional versatility; curriculum development; and community commitment.

Mack holds an associate degree in computer information systems from BC3, a bachelor’s degree in information technology from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, and a master’s degree in information technology from Regis University in Boulder, Colo. She is also pursuing a master of business administration degree in marketing from Regis University.

## “She is so helpful,” student says

Mack “embodies what it means to be an instructor – particularly at a community college,” Christian Ola, BC3’s dean of business, wrote in his nomination letter. “Sherri sets the bar high and her students learn what it takes to become a professional working adult while maintaining a sense of fairness, openness, and willingness to go the extra mile to get the job done correctly, not just quickly.”

Twenty-one-year-old Abigail McCurdy, of Butler, is among 20 students in Mack's introduction to microcomputing class.

"Professor Mack is the best teacher I have ever had," says McCurdy, who is majoring in hospitality management. "She is so helpful and really knows a lot about computers and the programs. She will stop to help you if you are having trouble with what she is teaching in class and will help you get to the step she is on at the time."

Kelsey Dunbar, 22, of Butler, who is pursuing a certificate as a medical coding and billing specialist, says Mack is a "great" teacher. "She explains the material really well and makes it easy to understand. I had never worked with Microsoft Excel or Access, and now I feel like I have a strong understanding of both."

Mitchell E. Parks, 19, of Eau Claire, compliments Mack on her unique method of "teaching students in-depth information without overwhelming them. She breaks down the information into chunks and uses smart examples to cement the concepts."

Parks is seeking a degree in computer-information systems-computer support specialist.

## "You are doing a great job"

Ola said he was overjoyed to learn Mack had won the Region 2 Teaching Excellence Award for associate degree granting institutions.

"Sherri," he says, "is one of those tireless soldiers. We all know people in our lives who show up every single day, do their jobs so very well, and they often fly under the radar. They fly under the radar because they do what they do not in their own self-interest, but in the interest of the student.

"To see someone so humble, so selfless, be recognized is really outstanding. It does make sense for us to stop, look around, and say, 'Hey, 'You are doing a great job.'"

Winners of the Teaching Excellence Award were not selected in each of the 10 regions among associate-degree member institutions. Regional winners in addition to Mack are Laura Angerame, SUNY Orange County Community College, Middletown, N.Y.; Karen Lynden, Rowan-Cabarrus Community College, Concord, N.C.; Janet Velazquez, Kansas City Kansas Community College, Kansas City, Kan.; and Jill Harmon, Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa, Okla.

## "If you love what you do, it's going to show"

Like the other four regional winners, Mack will be considered for the international award based on the same materials from her regional nomination.

“If you love what you do, it’s going to show,” Mack says. “And I always hope that I lead by example. I feel like there is always something to be done here at BC3. If someone needs help or direction, that’s what makes this the best place.”

The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs’ Associate Degree Commission established the International Teaching Excellence Award in 1995 to recognize outstanding classroom teachers. In 2002, the Baccalaureate Degree Commission created a similar award to recognize excellence in teaching at the baccalaureate/graduate degree level. ACBSP is the only specialized body for business schools that presents an award recognizing excellence in teaching, open to application by the entire membership.

The organization’s mission is to promote continuous improvement and recognize excellence in the accreditation of business education programs around the world. The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation as a specialized accreditation agency for business education. The organization is the only global accrediting body to accredit business, accounting, and business-related programs at all degree levels. Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs has 1,200-plus member campuses in 60 countries. Of those campuses, 956 have achieved accreditation and more than 157 are in candidacy for accreditation. Individual members on the campuses exceeds 13,000.

– *The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Program contributed to this report.*