



Thereasa (Terry) A. Cronan, Ph.D.

Outstanding Teaching Award

WPA 2015

Dr. Cronan is Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University. Dr. Cronan earned her B.A. and M.A. degrees in psychology at San Diego State University, and completed her doctoral studies at Michigan State University. She returned to San Diego where for five years she directed research projects for several organizations, including the Naval Health Research Center and the Navy Personnel Research and Development Center. During this time she also was a lecturer for San Diego State University, teaching Experimental Psychology, Physiological Psychology, and Statistics. She joined the full-time faculty at SDSU in 1991.

Professor Cronan has received over twelve million dollars in grant funding over the years, published 80 articles in peer-reviewed journals, and authored over 300 conference presentations, almost all of them with student co-authors. She has taken hundreds of students to WPA, where several have won awards.

Over the years Dr. Cronan has sought and secured funding to support several high quality mentoring programs, including a special program for minority students and training Head Start mothers how to teach their children to read. For ten years she was director of the SDSU Career Opportunities in Research (COR) program. COR was a program funded by the NIMH with the goal of providing undergraduates of mainly disadvantaged groups the preparation needed for success in applying to and participating in graduate education in psychology and related fields. The training in COR was demanding and rigorous. In addition to taking classes on research methods, scientific writing, ethics, and advanced statistics, and spending at least 20 hours a week in a research lab, students were expected to submit results of their work to conferences, attend conferences, and participate in special GRE prep classes and tutoring in statistics, all in addition to carrying a normal load of classes. COR was transformative for many students because Dr. Cronan, via instruction as well as example, welcomed them as colleagues and co-workers. Several of her students have gone on to careers as university professors, and one was given an award by the US President.

Dr. Cronan is loved by her students, both from COR and from her research lab, because she focuses not only on their academic pursuits, but also on their lives outside the lab. For example, she makes a cake for every student's birthday, gives the shower if a student is getting married or about to give birth, and generally treats them all as loving family. Every year she hosts a Christmas party for all her students, COR and lab students alike, to which she invites former students and mentees from the San Diego area who have continued on in psychology and are working in the field. As one student noted: "Dr. Cronan is without a doubt the most inspiring, committed teacher and mentor I have ever known."

Professor Cronan has been recognized for her outstanding teaching and mentoring with multiple awards: the National Institute of Mental Health Wayne S. Fenton Undergraduate Research Educator Award, outstanding faculty member in the Psychology Department (seven times), the Mortar Board Award for outstanding scholarship, leadership, and service (seven times), and the SDSU Alumni Distinguished Faculty Award.

In sum, Dr. Thereasa Cronan is a model for what a teacher, researcher, and mentor should be. For all these reasons and more, the Western Psychological Association is pleased to recognize Dr. Thereasa (Terry) A. Cronan with the 2015 WPA Outstanding Teaching Award.