

[Honoring top research, teaching and service](#) [1]

Outstanding faculty honored during annual awards celebration

The University of North Texas recently celebrated four faculty members for their dedication to excellence through research, service and education as part of the eighth annual Salute to Faculty Excellence Awards Dinner and Ceremony on Thursday, April 25 at UNT's Apogee Stadium HUB Club.

The ceremony was supported by the [UNT Foundation](#). [2] which accepts, invests, and manages private gifts, endowed funds and other assets for the benefit of the university, including faculty and students.



[Janice Miner Holden](#) [3]

Holden, professor of counseling, earned the Eminent Faculty Award, which included a \$15,000 check, a commemorative engraved gift and the honor of being an Eminent Faculty Awardee. Holden's research focuses on counseling implications of near-death experiences, after-death communication and other transpersonal experiences – those that transcend the usual personal limits of space, time or identity.

She served as lead editor of the 2009 Handbook of Near-Death Experiences: Thirty Years of Investigation and co-authored the textbook Theoretical Models of Counseling and Psychotherapy. She has served for 10 years as editor-in-chief of the International Association for Near-Death Studies' peer-reviewed Journal of Near-Death Studies. Holden joined the UNT faculty in 1988 and served 12 years as chair of the Department of Counseling and Higher Education. For her career-long research on and advocacy for people who have had transpersonal experiences, Holden earned the 2013 Association for Spiritual, Ethical and Religious Values in Counseling's Research Award and the 2015 American Counseling Association's Gilbert and Kathleen Wrenn Award for a Humanitarian and Caring Person.

[Karen Weiller Abels](#)



[4]
This year's Faculty Leadership Award winner is Karen Weiller Abels, associate professor of kinesiology, health promotion and recreation. She specializes in research on gender issues in media representation of sport activities. Her current projects include working as part of a team examining the role of sport and physical activity in the social integration of refugee communities and working as part of an interdisciplinary research team investigating the media representation of women with disabilities in the 2018 Paralympic Games.

Among her leadership roles at UNT, she has served on 18 university committees including the University Review Committee and Faculty Senate. Weiller Abels is currently completing a year as one of three UNT Academic Affairs Fellows and serves as the university's Academic Integrity Officer. Weiller Abels won the J.H. Shelton Excellence in Teaching Award in 2008 and has been a member of the UNT faculty since 1990.

[Karen H. Weiller-Abels](#) [5]

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