

## Pastega Awards Ceremony

Monday, May 12, 2025 • 2 p.m. • RVEC 101

2 -2:05 p.m.  
Welcome by President Peters

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2:05- 2:10 p.m.  
**Cara Groshong**  
Presenter: Katie Wojke

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2:10-2:20 p.m.  
Remarks by Cara Groshong

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2:20-2:25 p.m.  
**Dr. Amy Dawson**  
Presenter: Dean Latham-Scott

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2:25-2:35 p.m.  
Presentation by Dr. Amy Dawson

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2:35 - 2:40 p.m.  
**Camila Gabaldón**  
Presenter: Dean Chelle Batchelor

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2:40-2:50 p.m.  
Remarks by Camila Gabaldón

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2:50-2:55 p.m.  
**Dr. Mike LeMaster**  
Presenter: Dean Latham-Scott

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2:55-3:05 p.m.  
Presentation by Dr. Mike LeMaster

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3:05-3:10 p.m.  
**Dr. Jaime Marroquin**  
Presenter: Dean Latham-Scott

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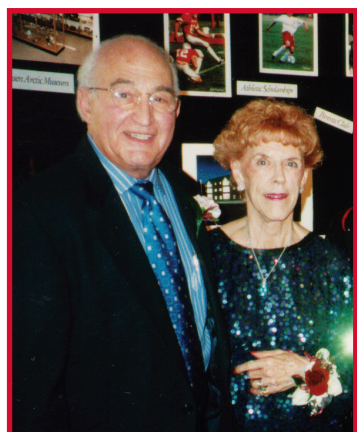
3:10-3:20 p.m.  
Presentation by Dr. Jaime Marroquin

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3:25 p.m.  
Closing Remarks  
Presenter: Provost Coll

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Reception immediately following



Mario & Alma Pastega

Beginning in 1985, three awards for scholarship, teaching and staff excellence were created through generous annual gifts from Mario Pastega (1916-2012), an Oregon soft drink bottler and one the state's leading philanthropists and benefactors of education, serving as a trustee on the foundation boards of both Oregon State University and Western Oregon University. In 2020, a new faculty award was created, for excellence in service, honoring a full-time faculty member who demonstrates exceptional service to the university.

Award recipients are honored at a ceremony in May, during which they present their work. Candidates for all Pastega Awards are considered through nominations by colleagues, students, and coworkers. The faculty award recipients are selected by a committee of past Pastega recipients and one student appointed by student government. Final selections are subject to approval by the university president. The Pastega Staff Excellence Award is coordinated through Human Resources and a committee of past staff award recipients recommend three candidates to the university president for final selection.



## Pastega Awards Ceremony

Monday, May 12, 2025 • 2 p.m.

Richard Woodcock Education Center  
Pastega Room 101



**Western Oregon**  
UNIVERSITY



# 2025 Pastega Award Recipients

## Staff Excellence

**Cara Groshong** • Business Operations & Finance Manager WOU Foundation

Born and raised in Stayton, Oregon, Cara Groshong graduated from Stayton High School, taking every business and accounting class available along the way. From the start, she had a clear intention to pursue a degree in accounting. As the first in her family to attend college, she navigated this journey independently while working. She began at Chemeketa Community College and later transferred to Linn-Benton Community College, earning an associate degree in business administration and accounting.

Groshong’s first accounting position was at Freedom Federal Savings & Loan in Corvallis, where she experienced the savings and loan crisis of the 1980s when the bank was unexpectedly placed under lockdown. Over the next 12 years, she worked for various companies, including managing a bookkeeping business.

Her connection with Western began in 1997 when it was still WOSC, starting as a part-time accountant for the Advancement and Foundation office, which quickly became a full-time role due to the Foundation’s rapid growth. By 2008, she was promoted to Business Operations and Finance Director, providing financial oversight as the Foundation’s assets grew from under \$5 million to over \$33 million.



## Excellence in Teaching

**Amy Dawson** • Assistant Professor of Biology

Dr. Dawson has been a valued member of the Western faculty since 2011 with a distinct record of classroom excellence, teaching over 35 distinct courses in the Biology Department, ranging from advanced human anatomy and ornithology to dinosaurs and vertebrate biology. She has actively contributed to numerous university committees, established student biology volunteer programs, and co-coordinated the Faculty Success Ambassador program, among other initiatives. Dr. Dawson has been nominated for the Pastega Award for Excellence in Teaching twice before, and this year, she proudly received this prestigious honor.

Before joining Western, Dr. Dawson taught at Oregon State University in the Department of Integrative Biology, where she also earned her Ph.D. in Zoology. She shares that when she approaches her teaching and her interactions with students, she sees them as individuals, each with their own unique experiences, gifts, talents, preferred learning styles, liabilities, and challenges. She adds that “It is easy to lose sight of the fact that students are often facing huge challenges, often daily. We are all on this journey through life together and in my opinion, sharing experiences in teaching and learning with empathy and compassion, which enriches life deeply.”



## Excellence in Service

**Camila Gabaldón** • Collection Development Librarian/Professor

Gabaldón has served Western for 23 years, starting as Collection Development Librarian, and currently serving in a few different roles as Systems Librarian and Academic Web Applications Developer. She is also a full professor in the library.

Gabaldón holds a Master of Science in Education from Western, a Master of Library Science from Emporia State University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Science from Willamette University. From the moment she started working at Western, she knew this was the place where she wanted to advance her career. She shares that she grew up near Western and used to study at the library during high school, and when a position in the library opened up, she was thrilled to have the opportunity to work here.

Gabaldón has consistently exceeded expectations in her service to the university. Since joining Western, she has actively participated in the Faculty Senate, curriculum committees, the website team, the University Technology Advisory Committee, and the strategic planning committee. Over 23 years, she has dedicated significant effort to supporting colleagues through various initiatives, regularly volunteering for committees, chairing the Curriculum and General Education committees, and serving on the Faculty Senate Executive Committee.



## Excellence in Teaching

**Dr. Mike LeMaster** • Professor of Biology

Dr. LeMaster has dedicated 22 years to educating students at Western in the Zoology and Biology departments. Before joining Western, he taught at Oregon State University, where he earned his Ph.D. in Zoology. Throughout his career, he has received numerous honors, including the Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award from the National Academic Advising Association, Faculty Academic Advisor of the Year from Western, and now the prestigious Pastega Award for Excellence in Teaching.

In addition to these accolades, Dr. LeMaster has secured various teaching and research grants, presented at esteemed national and international conferences, and published influential articles in his field.

One nominator noted that Dr. LeMaster is their favorite professor due to his infectious enthusiasm for teaching, which inspires genuine excitement about the material among his students. His engaging teaching style, commitment to student learning, and availability for meetings outside of class reflect his dedication to effective and thoughtful instruction.



## Excellence in Research

**Jaime Marroquín** • Associate Professor of Modern Languages

Dr. Marroquín has been a professor of Spanish at Western since 2017. He is a leading scholar in his field, and his work has been recognized by his colleagues and selected for prestigious external funding from the NEH and Stanford Humanities Center. He’s authored numerous publications, including single-author monographs and edited volumes. His work on translations of naturalist knowledge is important for histories of science and technology, colonial history, and global history.

Originally from Mexico City, Dr. Marroquín obtained his P.h.D. and master’s degree in Hispanic Literature from the University of Texas at Austin. He then spent seven years as Assistant Professor of Spanish at George Washington University before accepting an Assistant Professor of Spanish position at Western, now a full Professor of Spanish. When applying to Western, Dr. Marroquín thought it could be a good fit, as it would allow him to continue his research and teaching career while learning and participating in the cutting-edge bilingual and multicultural education that was being developed.



Scan to read the full recipient bios at [wou.edu/pastega-award](https://wou.edu/pastega-award)

## A special thank you to the following committee members:

### Faculty Excellence Awards Committee

Earlene Camarillo, Associate Professor of Politics, Policy, and Administration  
Brooke Dolenc Nott, Assistant Professor of Psychological Sciences  
Patricia Goldsworthy, Professor of History  
Melanie Landon-Hays, Professor of Literacy, Director of General Education & Student Transitions  
Isidore Lobnibe, Professor of Anthropology  
Misty Weitzel, Professor of Criminal Justice Sciences

### Staff Excellence Awards Committee

Tina Fuchs, Vice President for Student Affairs  
Anna Hernadez Hunter, Director, Multicultural Student Services & Programs  
Lori Pagel, Library Technician, Hamersly Library  
Sharyne Ryals, Administrative Program Assistant, Social Science Division  
Nathan Sauer, Customer Services and Support Manager, University Computing Solutions  
LouAnn Vickers, Senior Executive Assistant to the President