



2003 IOTA SIGMA PI CENTENNIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

Professor Esther Gibbs, Goucher College

Professor Esther Gibbs is the **2003 recipient of the Iota Sigma Pi Centennial Award for Excellence in Teaching**. This award is given for excellence in teaching chemistry, biochemistry, or a chemistry-related field at an undergraduate institution that does not offer a graduate program in that field.

Dr. Gibbs has been a member of the Chemistry Department at Goucher College for 21 years. During that time, she has been a leader in chemical education both at Goucher and nationally. She has a strong commitment to and record of excellence in teaching, in the classroom and in the laboratory. At Goucher, she earned the Goucher College Award for Outstanding Research and Teaching outstanding 1985 and 1993 and was awarded Women of the Year in 1986 by the Baltimore Chapter of The Association for Women in Science.

A very active member of several national organizations and initiatives, Dr. Gibbs has also overseen major changes in General Chemistry

offerings at Goucher. She has been a Co-PI on three NSF, HHMI, and Drefyus Grant grants for curricular improvement. Among many other initiatives, she recently implemented the Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) approach. This approach, in which students are guided by peer facilitators in mastering worksheet activities, engages students in more active, inquiry-based learning. This approach has been quite successful, increasing student performance and fostering a more positive attitude about chemistry.

Dr. Gibbs has been extremely active in mentoring undergraduates in research. Numerous undergraduate students performing research under her supervision have been co-authors on a large number of journal articles. Her excellent research productivity has led to 35 peer-reviewed publications or book chapters. In addition, she has been PI or co-PI on a wide range of research initiatives from the NSF and NIH that have benefited undergraduate students by providing them with the opportunity to do research in the summer months and through new, state-of-the art instrumentation.

Dr. Gibbs' interaction with students is extraordinary -- she has a true gift. Her enormous energy and enthusiasm for science and learning are infectious. She has the ability to get the most from students and to instill in them the desire to perform to the best of their ability. She is direct, honest, and upbeat with students, encouraging them, challenging them, and inspiring them. She never gives up on a student. Former students testify to the positive impact that Dr. Gibbs has had on them, both professionally and personally.