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Amanda Moras, *Sacred Heart University*

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Barbara and Richard Naclerio, along with President John J. Petillo, presented faculty awards to Professors Amanda Moras and Geoffrey Stopper.

Sacred Heart University Professors Geoffrey F. Stopper of Hamden and Amanda Moras of West Hartford are this year's recipients of the Naclerio Faculty Scholars Program awards.

Richard and Barbara Naclerio began the Naclerio Faculty Scholars Program in support of the work of emerging academic leaders among Sacred Heart University's faculty. The Naclerios, who reside in Pelham, N.Y., share the University's vision of cultivating academic excellence through innovative research endeavors.

Stopper, an assistant professor of biology, was welcomed into the program based on his study in the field of evolutionary developmental biology. Through his research and analysis of gene/protein structure, his goal is to better understand how changes in gene expression result in specific differences in the shapes of biological structures. He believes his research can lead to better understanding of both normal and abnormal human development.

"I'm really excited about receiving the Naclerio grant. I am all the more honored that my application was chosen because of the great respect I have for my colleagues who also applied and the high quality work they do," he said. "The grant will allow my students and me to add state-of-the-art genomics technology for analysis, which will push our research to a level of analysis comparable to some of the leading work in our field. I greatly appreciate the Naclerios' commitment to supporting research at Sacred Heart."

The program offers two awards of \$12,500, each over a one-year period. To be eligible for consideration, faculty members were asked to submit a completed application that included a detailed summary of their proposed research project and its potential benefits and significance to the academic community.

Mora, an assistant professor of sociology, conducts research in the prevalence and consequences of sexual assault. She seeks to fill the gap in documenting the experiences of workers in sexual assault crisis programs, who provide free and confidential services to survivors daily. Moras is

specifically focusing on exploring the prevalence, causes and consequences of vicarious trauma for those who provide direct service through sexual assault crisis programs.

“Knowing more about the causes and possible deterrents of vicarious trauma for workers would provide valuable insights for anti-sexual assault coalitions in extending the longevity of their staff. This would also help to ensure that victims have access to experienced and competent advocates. This knowledge fills a large gap in the literature by bringing a sociological lens to the existing research and illuminating the experiences of those positioned most precariously in the system, both as workers and survivors,” she said.

The Naclerio Faculty Scholars Program is open to all current junior, tenure-track faculty who have successfully completed their third year within the University and have demonstrated their interest and capability in conducting scholarly research. The research conducted through this endeavor must result in a significant contribution to each faculty member’s field of study, with the goal of submitting outcomes generated for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

“This program is in its first year at Sacred Heart, and I was proud and honored to introduce it to the president and the rest of the community. These professors teach our children and help them to grow. They are the undaunted heroes,” Richard Naclerio said. “I want our faculty members to be recognized for their hard work and accomplishments. We truly care about what they do for our students and understand that they need assistance in their endeavors to balance both their professional and personal life.”