2021 USU Cazier Lifetime Achievement Award Nominee

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Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services Nominee for the Cazier Lifetime Achievement Award

At the beginning of his USU career in the early 90’s, Dr. Hawks enthusiastically embraced the opportunity to become a USU ‘flying professor,’ journeying weekly (with a fair share of white-knuckle moments) to the Uintah Basin to deliver in-person courses to students in Roosevelt, Vernal, and Ft. Duchesne.

“My peak career moments have often involved meaningful engagement with non-traditional, diverse, often struggling students,” Hawks says.

These early experiences gave him direct insight into the power of the land-grant mission of USU to profoundly impact the lives of those who had access to few other resources, and fueled a career-long passion for participating in and enhancing the scope of USU’s outreach efforts.

“All of my teaching, research, service, and administrative efforts at USU,” Hawks explains, “have been united by the land grant mission of USU.”

A teaching philosophy grounded in the principles of accessibility, meaningfulness, engagement, and real-world applicability grew from these early experiences and continue to guide his current teaching efforts in the rapidly expanding HEP MPH program.

Hawks says that, “even though the HEP MPH program is fully online, it is still deeply gratifying to engage with students from the far reaches of the state as they pursue academic and career goals in the midst of challenging life circumstances.”

Participating in the development of the HEP MPH program has further led to scholarship efforts that focus on pedagogy, including the design and development of online public health programs, and best practices in online health education.

“It is especially meaningful when scholarship efforts are collaborative, involving students and colleagues,” Hawks explains.

As a regional campus administrator for over 13 years, Dr. Hawks participated in the hiring and evaluation of faculty across the statewide system, helped develop ongoing funding streams to create new programs, and facilitated the growth and development of the statewide system through deep levels of community engagement.

Hawks notes, however, that “after serving as a statewide administrator, it has been amazing to come full circle and return to the faculty as a member of the HEP MPH team and once again work directly with students in the context of a high quality, professional program.”

“In looking back over my career,” he adds, “I mostly feel grateful for the opportunity I’ve had, in all of my roles, to work alongside committed colleagues and teammates to advance the land-grant mission of USU on behalf of students across the state.”