2011 President’s Distinguished Service Awards

2011 Recipient for the Excellence in Service Award

David Nelles – Earth & Ocean Sciences

Drilling a well on campus or coordinating an international field school in Europe is all in a day’s work for David Nelles. A senior laboratory instructor in the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, David ensures the school’s extensive lab- and field-based programs deliver outstanding learning experiences for students.

David not only oversees earth and ocean sciences field schools, but also instructs and develops labs and lab manuals; schedules, oversees and mentors graduate teaching assistants; and advises on and coordinates student award nominations – among myriad other responsibilities.

“We used to joke that David Nelles was the next step in human evolution, because he could be everywhere at once,” notes one SEOS undergraduate student. On field trips, “Dave walked twice the distance of any student, going back and forth to answer questions and pointing out interesting features in the rock.”

David’s over-and-above style is widely recognized not only by students and faculty, but also by geologists active in the field.

“The BC Geological Survey has stated that our students are preferred over students from all other universities because of their mapping skills and their ability to function out in the field. This reputation is in no small part attributable to the efforts of David Nelles,” says Stephen Johnston, SEOS Director.

Above all, David’s commitment, his efforts and innovations and his genuine enthusiasm for studying and understanding the earth are invaluable to the experiential learning and ultimate success of SEOS students.