Auburn University administrators and the Auburn Alumni Association are honoring five faculty members this year for their teaching abilities.

Pamela C. Boyd and Roland Dute will receive the Gerald and Emily Leischuck Endowed Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching. Elizabeth Brestan Knight, Mark Byrne and Phillip Zenor each will receive Alumni Undergraduate Teaching Excellence awards.

Boyd, an associate professor of curriculum and teaching, joined AU 14 years ago and teaches undergraduate students in the College of Education as well as public-school teachers across the region. She coordinated the college's elementary education program from 2002-05 and has been active in partnerships with several Alabama schools. In letters supporting her nomination, several teachers said Boyd was a role model for their teaching styles and philosophy.

Byrne, assistant professor of chemical engineering in the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, and his team of researchers are perfecting a process that enables contact lenses to hold medication in concentrated, renewable doses and release drugs directly into wearers' eyes. His company, OcuMedic, recently won a $100,000 grand prize in the 2007 Alabama Launchpad business plan competition; students said his work has inspired their own research and career ambitions.

Dute, an AU faculty member for 25 years, is a professor of biological sciences in the College of Sciences and Mathematics, where he teaches freshman biology courses for majors and non-majors as well as advanced undergraduate and graduate courses. He also advises undergraduates in zoology and pre-veterinary medicine, mentors graduate students, and has served on 38 graduate student committees. In his nomination letter, Robert Lishak, a 2006 Leischuck teaching award winner, wrote: "Roland's expository speaking style is punctuated with matter-of-fact presentations of complex concepts and a conversational manner that allows students in large classes to think he is having a one-to-one conversation with each of them."

Elizabeth Brestan Knight is an associate professor and Lanier Professor of Psychology in AU's College of Liberal Arts. She once received a standing ovation from a class of 120 students after her final lecture of the semester, reported psychology department chair Barry Burkhart. "Her interest in and excitement about her profession have drawn many undergraduates to become psychology majors. ... Her classes are consistently evaluated as 'excellent.'" Knight's research interests include the behavioral observation of parent-child interactions, the portrayal of child maltreatment in film, and parent-child interaction therapy.

Phillip Zenor is a longtime mathematics professor in the College of Sciences and Mathematics. He was nominated for the teaching excellence award by numerous former students, one of whom wrote, "He was very enthusiastic about the beauty of mathematics, and he imparted that enthusiasm to us. He loved to solve a good problem, and he was even more delighted when we did." Zenor is a textbook author and was an organizer of the math department's online high school math program.