Exceptional Scholars: UB Honors Braverman and Barbas for Excellence in Research

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Exceptional scholars
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Two members of the University at Buffalo School of Law faculty have been chosen for University-wide awards that honor excellence in research.

Professor Irus Braverman, William J. Magavern Faculty Scholar, will receive the Exceptional Scholar Award for Sustained Achievement, and Professor Samantha Barbas will be given the Exceptional Scholar Award for Young Investigators. They were nominated by interim Dean James A. Gardner, vetted by a University-wide faculty committee, and chosen for the honors by University Provost Charles F. Zukoski and President Satish K. Tripathi.

Both honors will be conferred in the fall during UB’s Celebration of Academic Excellence.

“We feel fortunate to have such outstanding researchers in our Law School and are delighted that they are receiving the recognition they so richly deserve,” says interim Dean Gardner.

The Exceptional Scholar Award for Sustained Achievement recognizes “outstanding professional achievement that has been focused on a particular body of work over a number of years. This award was created to recognize an unprecedented accomplishment in a senior scholar’s career, distinguishing a body of work of enduring importance that has gone beyond the norm in a particular field of study.”

Braverman, who joined the law faculty as an associate professor in 2007, is also an adjunct professor of geography at UB. Her major research interests lie in the interdisciplinary study of law, geography, anthropology, and science and technology studies. She has written extensively about legal issues involving animals and nature conservation, including the books Zooland: The Institution of Captivity (Stanford University Press, 2012) and Wild Life: The Institution of Nature (Stanford University Press, 2015).

This work has been supported by fellowships from Cornell University’s Society for the Humanities and the American Council for Learned Societies. Braverman’s latest edited volume, Animals, Biopolitics, Law: Lively Legalities (Routledge, 2016), brings together anthropologists, geographers and legal scholars to contemplate the possibilities of more-than-human law. She is currently writing about coral conservation and about the application of gene editing technologies to nonhumans.

The Exceptional Scholar Award for Young Investigators honors “a recent superior achievement of a scholar in his/her field of study. Such an achievement will have distinguished the recipient as an up-and-coming scholar, as well as earned the individual acclaim for his/her work.”


Among Law School faculty, previous winners of the Exceptional Scholar Award for Sustained Achievement have included SUNY Distinguished Service Professor David M. Engel; Robert J. Steinfeld, the Joseph W. Belluck and Laura L. Aswad Professor of Civil Justice; and interim Dean Gardner, a SUNY Distinguished Professor and holder of the Bridget and Thomas Black Professorship.

Previous winners of the Exceptional Scholar Award for Young Investigators include Professor James A. Wooten, Professor Athena D. Mutua, the Floyd H. and Hilda L. Hurst Faculty Scholar; and Professor David A. Westbrook, the Louis DelCotto Professor.