

# Engineering professor wins HOPE

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4/13/95 1A

Marylee Southard says she can tell when her students don't understand a concept, and she's not about to ignore it.

"I look at my students' eyes and if I see confusion, I'm not going to stop or move on," said Southard, associate professor of chemical and petroleum engineering. "I'm going to continue explaining until they understand."

It is that attitude that makes her an outstanding teacher in her students' minds and has earned her a special recognition.

Southard was presented with the 1995 Honor for the Outstanding Progressive Educator award Saturday at halftime of the Kansas-Nebraska football game.

Southard, who began teaching at the University of Kansas in 1989, said that getting a student-based award had been her goal but that she was surprised it came so soon in her career.

"If a teacher is perceived as being good at teaching, that's the ultimate affirmation to us that we're doing a good job," she said. "It says that people believe you're good."

Good is an understatement, said Robin Cox, Norman, Okla., senior. She is taking C&PE 656, Introduction to Biomedical Engineering, from Southard this semester.

"Chemical engineering is a very difficult curriculum, and I think that students would get frustrated and quit if they didn't feel that others thought it was important," Cox said.

When Cox had problems early in her college career, it was Southard, her adviser, who encouraged her to stick with engineering. She even offered to tutor her for free.

Chad Schaffer, Lawrence senior, had Southard for C&PE 121, Introduction to Computers in Engineering, when he was a freshman. He said that Southard was intent on helping students succeed.

"She really tries to get you involved in the problems you're working on," Schaffer said. "She is very instructive and makes you do the extra steps so you understand the process."

Carl Locke, dean of engineering, said that Southard deserved the award.

"We're very pleased that she won the award," Locke said. "She's not only an excellent teacher, she's also an excellent researcher."

It came as no surprise to Cox and Schaffer that three of the five HOPE finalists were from their department, which has about 200 students.

"They like their work and are very enthusiastic about it," Schaffer said. "They want you to do well, whatever it takes."