



The Teaching Excellence Award

Educator-Lecturer

What drives **Michael J. Kern, Ph.D.**, to be the best educator possible is his belief that he is a facilitator of student learning. Toward that end, he remains a life-long learner himself, remaining current on learning styles, new technology, and best practices to encourage critical thinking. He recognizes that providing context and relevance enables students to build a framework that allows them to retrieve the information when treating a patient or devising a treatment plan.

Prior to joining the MUSC faculty as an assistant professor in 1995, Kern earned a Ph.D. in microbiology and immunology from the University of Kentucky and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Cincinnati in a program funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. He is currently the director of the D.M.D./Ph.D. dual degree program.

Kern has a strong rapport with students, and he understands that he must give respect in order to gain it. In their letters of support for this award, students commented on his approachability, organization, and continual improvement based on student feedback. He ensures student voices are heard, fosters a safe learning environment, and encourages students to reach their maximum potential.

Between 2010 and 2015, Kern was invited by the American Dental Association to write National Dental Board questions for Histology and Anatomy. His intimate knowledge of the test enables him to provide students with the critical thinking needed to excel on the NDBE. In addition, Kern has developed thirteen Socratic Learning Modules using audience response systems. These modules allow students to anonymously ascertain their knowledge of material in a group setting. If he notices that a high number of students are missing a concept, he stops to explain in more detail or in a different way. He has also incorporated audience response systems into the end of each lecture so students can provide feedback about his teaching.

Kern is truly a talented educator who demonstrates MUSC's core values. His teaching methods demonstrate innovation and collaboration while his mentorship of students is rooted in compassion, respect, and integrity. Therefore, the Medical University of South Carolina Foundation proudly presents the Teaching Excellence Award in the Educator-Lecturer category to Michael J. Kern, Ph.D., on August 17, 2021.