

## 2017 Centennial Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching

**Dr. Amy Pollock**

**Department of Chemistry  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824**



Dr. Amy Pollock obtained her B.S. in Biochemistry from Grove City College, Grove City, PA and Ph.D. in Chemistry from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA. She is presently Director of General Chemistry, Department of Chemistry, Michigan State University.

As Director of General Chemistry, Dr. Pollock oversees the instruction of all freshman lecture and laboratory courses. In addition, she teaches CEM141 and 142 General Chemistry course each semester. These are large enrollment courses serving more than 4,400 students per semester. Beside teaching her own sessions, Dr. Pollock has done a fantastic job in organizing the courses so that there is a common standard and topics coverage across the board, enabling the courses to run very smoothly each semester. Furthermore, to enhance the learning experience, Dr. Pollock led the efforts in transforming the general chemistry curriculum and method of instruction to a NSF-supported general chemistry curriculum (Chemistry, Life, the Universe and Everything, CLUE). This curriculum relies on a very different teaching approach, including an interactive classroom, and homework and examinations that are hand written and drawn (not multiple choice). It was a colossal effort to adopt it for the large size classes at a university like Michigan State.

To hone her ability to be a more effective teacher, Dr. Pollock has attended many professional development seminars and workshops and is a recipient of various teaching awards, including:

STEM Gateway Fellow, Michigan State University: 2014 - 2016

AT&T Faculty-Staff Instructional Technology Award – General Chemistry Award for Excellence: 2015

Michigan State University College of Natural Science Teaching Prize: 2013

Faculty-Professional Women's Association (FPWA), Michigan State University: 2009 Outstanding University Academic Staff Award

Dr. Pollock's nominators were uniformly excited about her nomination:

“She has had a tremendous impact on our general chemistry program. She is a gifted and award winning teacher. It has been our great pleasure having her as our colleague.”

Commenting on a course taught by Dr. Pollock: “I was astonished to see that there were more students in the auditorium than there were seats. Students were sitting in the aisles and on the steps, because word was out that she was a great teacher who would help them learn.”

*“I can think of no other person who would be as deserving of this award.”*

Student support letters commented on Dr. Pollock’s teaching and reiterated how she has gone above and beyond to help them be more effective as teaching assistants and undergraduate learning assistants. Dr. Pollock has been and still is a mentor to students:

“She can explain concepts in so many different ways and devotes herself to her students’ learning. She is one of the most outstanding professors I have ever had.” “She is an idol of guidance and leadership for undergraduate students here at the department.” “Everybody in that room felt Dr. Amy’s unparalleled energy, deep passion and truly caring attitude for undergraduate teaching.” “She offered me one on one teaching training and she shared her experiences and teaching strategies related to chemistry teaching.” “Her unparalleled support, care and love for undergraduate teaching has earned a staggering amount of respect from all her students and I feel that I am writing on behalf of all of those graduate and undergraduate students to express tremendous support she has from all of us.”

The Centennial Award Judges were very impressed:

“I am especially impressed with Dr. Amy Pollock at Michigan State University. Amy has been teaching for 12 years since receiving her Ph.D. and has not lost the initial drive and enthusiasm of a new instructor. This is wonderful! The fact that she has been able to continue developing new, effective teaching techniques attests to her dedication. I am most impressed by her ability to get her colleagues and staff on board with the massive overhaul of General Chemistry at a large institution. That makes a major difference in undergraduate education.”

“The fact that students would attend her classes even if they were not registered (just to learn the material) is strong evidence of her excellence in teaching. That is more meaningful than student evaluation survey scores.”

**Iota Sigma Pi is happy to recognize Dr. Pollock’s teaching achievements with the 2017 Centennial Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching.**