



## STANLEY J. DRAZEK TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENT

### RAYMOND E. KOMAR

With more than 25 years of experience teaching English and creative writing, Collegiate Professor Raymond E. Komar sees education as a continual journey of exploration and discovery. In his classroom, he has woven a tapestry of academics and personal interest into an intricate teaching style—a style that captivates his students.

“Should this remain only an academic experience,” he begins in one of his class introductions, “then it falls far short of its potential. This is meant to impact our imagination and emotions, our world view, and our understanding of ourselves and others.”

A seasoned faculty member, Dr. Komar is accustomed to working with adult learners, an experience that has taught him both respect and acceptance. He worked with students from varied backgrounds, including immigrants and individuals from correctional facilities. He admits being deeply humbled by the stories of adult learners, and admires their effort and commitment—particularly

when they have made other sacrifices in order to return to the classroom.

Advocating that it is never too late to begin or continue one’s education, Dr. Komar chose to lead by example, pursuing his PhD after turning 50—an experience “well worth the effort.”

An avid contributor to the arts, Dr. Komar has published writings in *Under the Sun*, a journal devoted to creative, non-fiction essays. He also frequently presents his own work at poetry and prose readings. Recently, he and two students from his introductory theater class participated in an Army community play, earning Dr. Komar a nomination for best debut performance.

Dr. Komar received a BA in philosophy from La Salette Seminary and a BA in English from the University of Houston. He also earned an MA in English from the University of Texas and a PhD in English and creative writing from the University of Houston. ❖



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### WILLIAM R. MOOD

Collegiate Associate Professor William R. Mood doesn't just teach history to his students, he urges them to become critical observers of society and active participants in the community.

"History teaches us the complexity of the collective human experience, tying the present to the past," he explains. "It leads to an understanding of multiple perspectives and provides tools with which to critically analyze the world around us."

Mr. Mood's teaching philosophy is built around what he calls a "learner-centered approach" to education, helping students relate the course material to their own lives. His own passion for history led him to several countries, including England, France, and Germany. There, he studied history and comparative literature, personally witnessing both the challenges and triumphs in European society.

Before joining UMUC in 1994, Mr. Mood taught for Big Bend Community College and the Goethe Institute, serving as a German language instructor

and a math curriculum specialist. In this role, he worked on the DoD's functional academic skills (FAST) program, where he co-authored instructional materials for the U.S. Army basic skills plan, which has been implemented worldwide.

Mr. Mood has continued his quest to improve adult education, both by teaching and contributing to curriculum development with UMUC. He is grateful for the opportunity to work with UMUC-Europe students, a unique group with whom he has shared dramatic historical experiences in Europe.

"During the last decade, my remarkable students and I were fortunate enough to witness an important period in European history, including the reshaping of European politics," he says.

Mr. Mood has a BA in history from the University of Massachusetts and is a doctoral candidate at Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. His dissertation is titled *German-American Trade and Economic Relations in the Bismarck Era*. ❖