Advanced Career Biology Mentor Award:
Dr. Lindgren, Professor of Biology, Grinnell College

Dr. Clark Lindgren earned his PhD at the University of Wisconsin, Madison in Physiology before completing post-doctoral training at Duke University. He joined Grinnell College as an Assistant Professor in 1992 and has since mentored 86 students in his neuroscience lab where they have focused on synaptic plasticity at the neuromuscular junction. His student nominators describe Dr. Lindgren as a holistic mentor who taught them as much about undergraduate research methods as he taught them about the importance of community outreach and social justice; they readily credit his support and mentoring for pursuing graduate degrees in STEM. This is not unique to these student nominators; approximately 80% of Dr. Lindgren’s research advisees have gone on to pursue graduate degrees in STEM, with three currently in faculty positions at universities across the country. Dr. Lindgren’s record for success is not surprising considering the exceptional opportunities his undergraduate research students are afforded; all students present their work locally (at Grinnell), most students present regionally (with several awards received for best poster presentation), and over 20 students have presented nationally at conferences such as the Society for Neuroscience, American Society for Cell Biology, and the American Society for Zoologists. This work has resulted in 9 peer-reviewed publications that 20 students have been co-authored on as well. In addition to the mentorship in his lab, Dr. Lindgren has been instrumental in reaching populations that may not have had an opportunity to explore undergraduate research; his redesign of an introductory course at Grinnell has been credited with helping to identify, “…students who have the potential to be excellent researchers but might be overlooked in a more traditional classroom environment”. Likewise, Dr. Lindgren is active in Grinnell’s Liberal Arts in Prison Program, teaching neuroscience courses to incarcerated students, and providing an opportunity for his research mentees to work as teaching assistants in this program. This outreach opportunity has been transformative for his research students with one claiming that it changed her professional outlook and commented, “Not only did he bring his knowledge of neuroscience to an underserved community, but also brought with him his inclusive and passionate teaching.” Evidence of this is the former incarcerated student who is now pursuing a neuroscience degree. Collectively, Dr. Lindgren's impact on the next generation of researchers is evident in not only the students who are now successful faculty/scientists, but the next generation of students currently sitting in his classroom and just starting to find their passion for the unanswered questions.