



Jessie Smith Receives Kenan Professorship

Author : Mike Smith

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I learned on Friday afternoon that Jessie Smith will be receiving one of Carolina's most significant scholarly honors—a W.R. Kenan, Jr. Distinguished Professorship. Congratulations to Jessie on this wonderful and well-deserved recognition.

According to the Provost's letter announcing her award, "A distinguished professorship is one of the most prestigious and visible honors that The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill can bestow upon a member of the faculty, and it is a symbol of the value your colleagues have placed on your research and scholarship." It truly represents the pinnacle of scholarly recognition at Carolina. Nominations came from every corner of the University and only nine people were recommended by the Distinguished Chairs Selection Committee for the available distinguished professorships. We have only had two university distinguished professors in our 80-year history (Robert Phay and David Lawrence), and none since David retired in 2009.

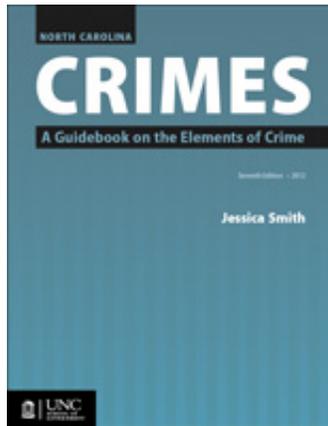
First and foremost this is a terrific honor for Jessie. It also serves as recognition for the School of Government, however, and confirms the University's commitment to our high-quality engaged scholarship focused on North Carolina. The Lambeth Professorship awarded to Aimee Wall similarly reinforces the value of our work for the campus.

The usual measure for scholarly productivity at Carolina is writing in peer-reviewed journals. It is too narrow a measure in my opinion, but it is the only one used most of the time and it almost always is used to identify our most distinguished scholars for Kenan Professorships. If you look at the underlying elements of distinguished scholarship, though, you will also find them in the best of our engaged work. Original analysis and interpretation; high-level insights; creativity; clarity and



coherence; accuracy; recognized leadership in the field; and progressive development of an important body of work. Jessie is a brilliant scholar whose work includes all those elements of distinguished scholarship.

The only difference between Jessie and a more traditional legal scholar is the intended audience for her research and how it is presented. The same could be said for most of the School's work in law as well as our engaged scholarship in other disciplines. I'm happy that the committee was willing to look beyond traditional measures and recognize excellence in work that advances the School's unique mission.



Congratulations again to Jessie for this accomplishment and for shining a light on the excellent work done at the School of Government. Kudos to Michael Crowell and Jim Drennan for putting together a persuasive nomination letter.