



### **The Distinguished Scholarship Award**

The Distinguished Scholarship Award is given to a full-time faculty member who has contributed significantly to their academic discipline and the world through scholarly activity or creative work at an exceptional level. There is no question that Dr. Nicole Johnson, professor of religious studies, deserves this award for her dedication to the pursuit of peace and justice worldwide.

This academic year, Dr. Johnson's edited volume, *Engaging the Humanities in Education for Peace*, is forthcoming. Her colleague, Dr. Jaime Capuzza in the Communication Department and a contributor, had this to say about the project: "Perhaps what most impresses me about Dr. Johnson's work is her intellectual generosity." While she could have researched and published the book on her own, Dr. Johnson enlisted colleagues from across the humanities to help her make the case for peace studies, including chapters by Dr. Michelle Collins-Sibley in the English Department, Dr. Grant Cook in the Music Department, Dr. Theresa Davis in the History Department, and Dr. Scott Gravlee in the Religious Studies and Philosophy Department. This volume allows humanities scholars to speak for themselves, while Dr. Johnson's work is the glue pushing the argument for peace forward.

Dr. Johnson's desire to show the widespread pursuit of peace and justice didn't begin with her latest project, though. In 2019, she co-published *Faithful Witness in a Fractured World: Models for an Authentic Christian Life*, which undertakes the cry from undergraduates who have asked why many current Christian figureheads are "crappy Christians." Dr. Johnson and her co-author, Michael Snarr, a political science professor at Wilmington College, examine four common traits among seven young Christian servants who are not crappy Christians. Johnson and Snarr help their lay audience see that there are indeed people who are living humble, Christian lives of service. Johnson and Snarr are donating all book royalties to the non-profits they serve. One bookstore reviewer, Byron Borger, said it is "oddly both scholarly and yet easy to happily read, exciting and restrained, winsome and hard-hitting."

In tandem with both recent book projects, Dr. Johnson has presented regularly at the Peace and Justice Studies Association annual conferences, for which she is also an elected member of the Board of Directors. She also has presented at the Association for Conflict Resolution and numerous colleges and universities' religious studies, peace and justice programs, and divinity schools. She has also travelled to Cuba and Mexico with students to learn from peace and justice workers firsthand.

Dr. Johnson's first book, *Practicing Discipleship: Lived Theologies of Nonviolence in Conversation with the Doctrine of the United Methodist Church*, was published in 2009.

Niki, for your tireless pursuit of scholarship for the masses that matters, congratulations!