“We take enormous pride in the caliber of students emerging from this college. Year after year, we send exceptional candidates to professional schools, well-equipped with a solid foundation in physiology. With this fund, we can continue this tradition, providing the best training to the next generation of health professionals.”

– William J. Higgins

“After two years of renewed involvement with the college, I have recognized how significantly my pre-medical education at UMD grounded my burgeoning skills as a clinical endocrinologist. Giving to The Higgins Fund helps secure the legacy of my physiology professor, and allows many more generations of CMNS students to be enriched by his unique mentoring skills, as I was.”

– Jeffrey I. Mechanick, M.D.
B.S., ’81, Zoology

An enduring priority for the University of Maryland is attracting and retaining the best faculty. The William J. Higgins Distinguished Scholar-Teacher Fund was designed for this very purpose, to strategically strengthen the Department of Biology for generations to come.

Alumni donors have chosen to give to this fund in honor of a beloved professor, and to support excellence in undergraduate education. The college is grateful to the generous donors who make this fund possible, and their investment in the education of our future scientists and health professionals.

To learn more about The Higgins Fund or other opportunities to support the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences, please contact:

Cheri Meadows
Associate Director of Development
College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences
University of Maryland
3312 Symons Hall
College Park, MD 20742
301.405.9624
meadows@umd.edu

William J. Higgins Distinguished Scholar-Teacher Fund

To support outstanding scientist-educators in the faculty of the Department of Biology, College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences
The William J. Higgins Distinguished Teacher-Scholar Fund was established in October 2007 to honor the educator who has inspired generations of students to become successful researchers, dentists, physicians, and other health care professionals. During his nearly 40 years as a faculty member in the Department of Biology (formerly Zoology), Dr. Higgins has guided countless students into the next phase of their careers through his teaching, advising, and mentoring.

Founded by alumnus Julius Hyatt, DDS, (B.S., ’80, Zoology), the William J. Higgins Distinguished Teacher-Scholar Fund honors Dr. Higgins’ legacy by establishing the Department of Biology’s first endowed professorship. The fund will support an outstanding faculty member who excels as both scientist and teacher.

Alumni still talk about Dr. Higgins’ legendary eight a.m. “mam-phys” (mammalian physiology) classes—renowned for their rigorous content and engaging format. Getting to class 15 minutes early was a must, and Dr. Higgins’ humor and distinctive teaching style captured students’ attention. The Higgins Plan for Academic Success set high standards and instilled foundational study habits that have served former students well for years to come.

Dr. Higgins has received numerous awards for excellence in teaching, advising, and mentoring over the course of his career. He also holds a distinguished record of administrative service to the University of Maryland. His research interests include neuromodulation, opiate receptors, and intercellular communication among unicellular organisms. More recently his research has grown to encompass teaching and learning strategies.

“Higgins was the best professor of the best class I ever took as an undergrad. I still use the concepts I learned in his class every day in my oral surgery practice. My gift is a simple gesture to honor the professor who took both a personal and professional interest in all of us. He wanted us to succeed and helped us do just that.”

1800 former students have earned PhD, MD, DDS, and DO degrees
100 undergraduates advised per semester

HIGGINS’ MARYLAND TIMELINE

1973 Joins UMD as Assistant Professor of Zoology
1978 Associate Professor of Zoology
1982 Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Zoology
1983 Division of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Excellence Award, Advising and Teaching
1989 Associate Dean, College of Agriculture
1993 Associate Dean, College of Life Sciences
1994 Pan Hellenic Teacher of the Year Award
2005 William Kirwan Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Education
2006 CLFS Teaching Excellence Award

Tenets of The Higgins Plan for Academic Success

- Go to class
- Sit up front in the same seat every day
- Ask questions
- Use faculty office hours
- Documentation, not excuses!