Kupferle Named ELATE Fellow

By: Ashley Duvelius

Margaret Kupferle, PhD, College of Engineering and Applied Science associate professor and Chair of the Environmental Engineering Program, was recently named as an Executive Leadership in Academic Technology and Engineering (ELATE) Program Fellow.

The Executive Leadership in Academic Technology and Engineering (ELATE) Program has recently named Margaret Kupferle, PhD, College of Engineering and Applied Science (CEAS) associate professor and Chair of the Environmental Engineering Program, as an ELATE Fellow. As ELATE states, she was nominated and selected for “her professional aspiration, achievements and challenges along their pathways to leadership, underrepresented populations in academic fields, and institutional characteristics such as geographic region, private/public status, and mission focus.”

Kupferle is well known and well deserving of her fellowship with her extensive experience of 13+ years in managing UC contract staffs of technically-trained experts working on US EPA grants as well as other outside experience such as serving as a crisis line volunteer for 3 years. She joined UC CEAS’ research staff in 1982, the tenure-track faculty in 2004, and then was promoted to associate professor and tenured in 2011.

After receiving her bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering and her master’s degree in environmental engineering from Purdue University, Kupferle moved home to Cincinnati. She had done co-op work at Cincinnati’s Procter & Gamble throughout her undergraduate career and through this experience, fell in love with environmental engineering. Upon moving to Cincinnati, Kupferle joined UC’s research staff and earned her doctorate in environmental engineering in 2002.

Interestingly, UC Engineering runs in the Kupferle family. Her paternal grandmother, Sarah E. Conover, was in the second class of women who were admitted into the College of Engineering (she was enrolled in commercial engineering) and her father, Arthur T. Kupferle, received his bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from UC and was at one time an adjunct faculty member at UC.

In January 2013, Kupferle was selected to be the Chair of the Environmental Engineering Program in CEAS’ School of Energy, Environmental, Biological and Medical Engineering. She has been the Director of the Center for Sustaining the Urban Environment (SUE) at UC since September 2010. As part of this role, Kupferle serves as the advisor for a campus-wide minor in Sustaining the Urban Environment. She’s the faculty advisor for the UC Student Chapter of Engineers without Borders, an elected representative to the Dean’s Advisory Council, co-
Director of the UC National Science Foundation’s Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) summer program in Sustainable Urban Environments, and an external mentor for a first-year research assistant professor in environmental health participating in the New Faculty Initiative. Kupferle also takes time to mentor students in both graduate level and undergraduate capstone experiences.

Kupferle was awarded an NSF Early CAREER Award in 2008 and performs ongoing research in electrochemistry, biofilms, sustainability, and waste management. She currently teaches courses in Engineering Foundations (college-wide, freshman level), Solid and Hazardous Waste Management (university-wide, dual level), Engineering Infrastructure Abroad (university-wide, primarily undergraduates who are planning to travel to East Africa on an Engineers Without Borders project), and Introduction to Sustainable Urban Environments (university-wide, dual level). Kupferle is also an adjunct faculty member of Environmental Health in the UC College of Medicine where she teaches a course on Hazardous Materials Management for their graduate program.

With her fellowship, Kupferle plans to further her development as a leader and to continue to contribute to the UC community as a member of the faculty.

“As Dean Lim told me when encouraging me to apply to ELATE, ‘Advancement occurs when opportunity and preparation intersect.’ Participation in ELATE will serve me well in the preparation portion of the Dean Lim’s ‘advancement equation.’ I believe it will be a unique opportunity for personal growth and development of leadership skills that will be especially useful to me as I take my first steps into university administration as a program chair. I expect to walk away with concrete strategies for managing diverse and competing priorities and people in an academic setting. I also look forward to having the opportunity to cultivate a nationwide support network of peers and receive external recognition that may enhance how the UC community perceives my capacity for leadership,” reflects Kupferle.

ELATE at Drexel® is a national leadership development program designed to advance senior women faculty in academic engineering, computer science, and related fields into effective institutional leadership roles within their schools and universities.

ELATE is an intensive full-year, part-time fellowship program modeled on the highly successful ELAM® program for women in medicine, dentistry and public health, and tailored to the needs of faculty women in engineering and technology. Three in-residence sessions of 4-6 days each are used to enhance knowledge and skills in business practices of higher education, project management with diverse stakeholders, and effective communication in a variety of leadership platforms.

ELATE Fellows: 1) Improve their personal and professional leadership through professional and peer coaching, personality and leadership style inventories, and 360° evaluations; 2) Learn, through activities, classroom presentations, and interviews of their own institutional leaders, how
to understand and navigate organizational dynamics; and 3) Expand their knowledge of strategic finance and resource management at the institutional level through didactic presentations, case studies, and work at their home institutions.