

# Hope Science Divisions Honors

## Two Professors

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HOLLAND - The Division for the Natural and Applied Sciences at Hope College has honored two faculty with awards designed to recognize excellence in teaching or research.

Dr. Miguel Abrahantes, assistant professor of engineering, has received the "Dean's Science Division Faculty Research Award." Dr. Amanda Barton, assistant professor of engineering, has received the "Dean's Science Division Mentoring/Advising/Teaching Award." Both awards were announced during a luncheon at the college on Thursday, March 13.

The "Faculty Research Award" is based on research accomplishments including publications, grant awards, significant presentations at professional meetings and external professional recognition, and the winner is chosen by an anonymous panel of faculty members from among nominees by the division's department chairs and the dean. The "Mentoring/ Advising/ Teaching Award" recognizes a faculty member who has gone beyond the call of duty in being an exceptional mentor, advisor and teacher to students, and the winner is selected by a panel of students.

The awards were created in 2007 as part of the division's strategic plan, "Vision 20/20," which has the goal of reaching an uncharted level of excellence, according to Dr. Moses Lee, who is dean for the natural and applied sciences at Hope. Both awards include financial support for the winners to use in working with students.

The emphasis in choosing recipients this year was on honoring junior members of the faculty to encourage and support them as they develop their scholarship and programs with students, according to Lee. He noted that the focused approach didn't make the selection process any easier.

"The nominees are all excellent faculty members," he said. "I think that both sets of panelists would agree that each of the nominees would have been outstanding recipients of the respective awards."

Abrahantes has been a member of the Hope engineering faculty since 2004. His current research emphasis is on developing control algorithms for tetrahedral walking robots in collaboration with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). NASA is developing the robots, which move by extending and retracting struts rather than by using wheels, for the next generation of planetary exploration within the solar system. Abrahantes's team, which includes Hope engineering students, created the first such robot to move autonomously.

Abrahantes teaches courses in electronics and in dynamic systems and controls. He holds his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the Universidad Central de las Villas in Cuba, and his doctorate in control systems from the Universidad Nacional del Sur in Argentina.