



Daphne Zepos
Teaching Endowment



The DZTE Annual Scholarships



\$5,500 Scholarship

The Daphne Zepos Teaching Award (DZTA) is an annual scholarship given to food industry professionals to further their learning –and their ability to educate others–about cheese, specifically through traveling.

Application season begins March 1st.
Application deadline May 31st.



\$2,500 Scholarship

The Daphne Zepos Research Award (DZRA) is an annual scholarship given to food industry professionals to conduct cheese-related research and create an educational piece around cheesemaking to enhance public awareness.

Application season begins March 1st.
Application deadline May 1st.



dzte.org

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The Daphne Zepos Teaching Endowment Vision 2022

The Daphne Zepos Teaching Award was started in 2012 as a scholarship to grow a squad of cheese professionals who teach about the history, culture and techniques in making, aging and selling cheese.

It's been a decade since Daphne died. We still miss her presence. Her unique passion and her love for cheese and life, learning and teaching, can never be replicated or replaced. The Daphne Zepos Teaching Award, created and announced just a month after her passing, has carried her legacy forward. It's generated so much energy around cheese learning, cheese handling, cheese selling, cheese studies and cheese sensitivities that Daphne herself would have been taken aback at the positive progress.

On a personal level, while her shoes remain unfilled, her presence in the industry has actually grown. Thousands of cheese educators, cheese sellers, cheese consumers, writers and chefs are now very familiar with her name and her work even though they never had the chance to meet her, or even know of her while she was alive. It's crazy but there are now young kids in some of the classes taught by award winners who were born after Daphne passed away.

Daphne's vision was to create an award that food professionals used to travel and learn about traditional cheesemaking. They came back to America to become cheese teachers.

Here they spread her passion for education, teaching what they've learned, in classroom settings formal and informal.

The DZTA has continued to be a leading force in the cheese world: for learning, for connection, for quality, for education, for the spirit of generosity. There are now often three award winners every year. The scope of their work and research has grown to be global—we've had applications for travel to South America, Africa, and Asia and two of the winners have gone outside Europe.

There is always at least one scholarship of at least \$5,000. There have also been years when we had more than one award and in some cases, we've targeted the additional award for a specific kind of education or video. We've now helped to contribute to the beginnings of a very cool series of learning-focused films that feature the farmers and artisans who make the cheese, the folks who age and ship it, and those who sell it. The films have short clips that are shared across all sorts of media and the long form video has found its way into the ACS conference and a number of archives.

We've had years where the award was greater than \$5,000, too. We have experimented with junior awards (to younger people who have much less experience in the industry), mini-scholarships (where past winners get a stipend to travel and teach), and employer stipends (to help small businesses cope with the temporary loss of a winner who leaves to travel).

Financially the DZTE is super sound. There is \$400,000 in the bank and other investments. Fundraising never stops. We have sought out and found a deep stream of industry donors, legacy donations, and we organize regular fundraising events. The board evaluates the financial health of the endowment each year and uses its judgment to spend money in ways beyond a single scholarship, including loans and grants for education.

The board of directors is a dynamic group of food industry professionals. Many—but not all—are directly involved in cheese. Above all the board seeks to have a balance of perspectives and keep the focus on teaching about traditional cheese. The group has worked together by consensus to define and improve how they operate and the two- or three-year terms that each works under fly by, a queue of great new candidates await each opening.

The board regularly experiments with new ways to apply for the award. From the vision writing we started with, to video presentations to things we never thought of in 2017, we now find teachers who present their ideas in unexpected, compelling ways. That has helped our outreach, to find more amazing applicants than ever from all over the food world and made our group of teachers more diverse than ever.

We've become better at teaching teachers how to teach. True to Daphne's original vision, we commit ourselves to creating teachers, not finding them. We have developed a mentoring group who help winners create compelling content and teach it with panache. There is a defined process to guide the teachers through assembling their material to creating a presentation. Winners find they have a structure to help guide them during research and construction so they have a far more impactful presentation.

The winners have taught more types of students than ever before. There have been DZTA winners teaching with food organizations like Slow Food in Italy, and the Southern Cheese Guild. They've taught at grade schools, middle schools, high schools, trade schools, community colleges and university colloquiums. Daphne's dream is stronger than she'd have ever imagined. Today, there is a squad of cheese teachers, each inspiring in their own way, teaching what they know to make cheese better understood, better made, and enjoyed more.



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