THREE ENGINEERS RECEIVED the top annual faculty awards at the University of Maine. Professor of Chemical Engineering Joseph Genco is the 2012 Distinguished Maine Professor, an award presented by the University of Maine Alumni Association to recognize outstanding achievement in UMaine’s tripartite mission of teaching, research and service. Karen Horton, associate professor of mechanical engineering technology, is the recipient of the Presidential Public Service Achievement Award. The 2012 Presidential Research and Creative Achievement Award recipient is Professor of Chemical Engineering Hemant Pendse. Excerpts from their citations follow:

Joe Genco is one of the University of Maine’s truly outstanding professors. As the heart and soul of the university’s internationally recognized pulp and paper program for nearly four decades, he has inspired hundreds of students. As a new faculty member, Genco worked with colleagues to reestablish the Ph.D. program in chemical engineering. He also received a National Science Foundation CAUSE grant to revise, strengthen and update the pulp and paper curriculum. He teaches many of the undergraduate core chemical engineering courses, and all of the core pulp and paper technology courses. He established the pilot plant that became the UMaine Process Development Center, and served a decade as its director. His expertise on high-pressure oxygen delignification and ozone bleaching has led to advances in the industry, and his research has improved the cost and environmental position of paper mills throughout the world.

Karen Horton has compiled an extraordinary record of service locally, regionally and nationally. She revitalized the UMaine chapter of the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and received the national 2010 Outstanding Counselor Award. She also chairs SWE’s Government Relations and Public Policy Committee, which has taken her to Capitol Hill and the White House. Since joining UMaine in 1997, Horton helped start a program to interest middle-school girls in engineering; developed a service-learning, applied-research project on the virtual preservation of ruins in the Virgin Islands; and created activities involving professionalism for students in mechanical engineering technology. In addition, Horton was instrumental in securing UMaine’s $3.3 million, five-year ADVANCE grant from the National Science Foundation to effect institutional transformation to advance, retain and recruit women faculty in the sciences and engineering.

Hemant Pendse has consistently applied creativity and innovation in research initiatives that have led to significant economic development opportunities for Maine and for industry. He is the founding director of the Forest Bioproducts Research Institute and chair of the Chemical and Biological Engineering Department. He also is one of the world’s leading scholars in the fields of colloid instrumentation and forest bioproducts. His research and creative achievements rely on the boundary-spanning interdisciplinary teams he assembles. Colleagues enthusiastically cite Pendse’s pioneering work for its quality and profound insights. Equally important, he has been recognized for turning scientific discoveries into innovative economic opportunities. Through his leadership, especially in the area of forest bioproduct research, Pendse has also inspired innovative research and creativity in UMaine faculty and in industry.