News
University News & Information

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

May 3, 2011
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Instructor to Receive Presidential Award for Science Teaching Excellence

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly Biology Teacher in Residence and alumna Anne Marie Bergen will be flying to Washington D.C. in May to receive the prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

Bergen was among 85 math and science teachers from across the nation named by President Obama as award recipients April 28.

It's not the first recognition for Bergen, who was named California's Teacher of the Year in 2003, and Stanislaus County Teacher of the Year in 2002. In 2006 she received the Amgen Award for Science Teaching Excellence. She is a 1985 graduate of Cal Poly with a degree in biological sciences and was named an Honored Alumna in 2008. Bergen earned her master's degree in educational leadership from St. Mary's College in Moraga.

Bergen has taught for 24 year in Oakdale, California, east of Modesto, where she was most recently the leader of the Oakdale Joint Unified School District science program. She also coached competitive science teams and coordinated special projects linking students there with professional scientists.

Last fall, she came to Cal Poly to serve as a Teacher in Residence in the Biological Sciences Department, instructing science classes and labs required for the university's Liberal Studies students – the undergraduates seeking to become K-12 teachers. Bergen is helping the university reshape the curriculum in several courses targeted to future classroom teachers.

The Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching is given annually to outstanding K-12 science and mathematics teachers from across the country. The winners are selected by a panel of distinguished scientists, mathematicians, and educators following an initial selection process done at the state level. The honor includes a $10,000 award from the National Science Foundation for each recipient.

"This is an incredible honor for Anne Marie, and it brings pride and honor to all of us at Cal Poly," said Cal Poly College of Science and Mathematics dean Phil Bailey.

Bergen said Cal Poly's Learn by Doing philosophy set her on the road to earning her career honors. "Learn by Doing really planted the seeds for my teaching philosophy: 'Active Learning, Meaningful Experiences, Compassionate Teaching.' " she explained. Bergen says

it was her Cal Poly internship as a naturalist at the Foothill Horizons Outdoor School that ignited her passion for teaching. “Experiencing hikes, nature, and the outside world with students really demonstrated to me the power of active, experiential learning supported by Cal Poly.”

The instructor said she is most looking forward to the chance to tour the White House and possibly meet President Obama, as well as exchanging ideas with fellow award winners from across the nation. “It’s really going to be a gift to be in that scientific community,” she said.

For more details Bergen’s Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, visit:
http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/04/28/president-honors-outstanding-math-and-science-teachers

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