

Thursday, January 28, 2010

OU educator chosen as College Science Teacher of the Year.

By **Katie Land**, news editor

The Board of the Michigan Science Teachers Association has recognized Oakland University's own Mary Stein as the 2010 College Science Teacher of the Year.

The science education professor was chosen for using and modeling excellent teaching practices, inspiring her students, demonstrating innovative teaching strategies, being an excellent role model for students and other teachers, demonstrating leadership, and exhibiting a passion for science and for teaching.

"I am deeply honored," Stein said. "This recognition is offered by my science teaching colleagues across the state. The Michigan Science Teachers Association is comprised of a group of highly talented, creative and knowledgeable science educators, so to be recognized for my efforts by my MSTA colleagues is truly humbling."

Since joining Oakland in 1999, Stein has taught science education courses in the teacher education program, specifically targeting pre-service elementary teachers. She also has taught in the International Baccalaureate program.

Her teaching methods are varied and fresh, utilizing the work and insights of others and adding her own creative spin. Recognizing that individuals learn and think in different ways, Stein believes that teaching is a constant learning process in itself.

"I am constantly exploring new ways to help students understand," she said. "These explorations often involve risk-taking on my part as I replace a "tried and true" method with one that has the potential to be more effective. Anyone who has taught others understands that when one engages in teaching, learning occurs at deeper levels."

Stein is particularly proud of Oakland's IB program, which is a quickly growing discipline nationwide. OU is one of only a few institutions worldwide that has been authorized to offer this program by the International Baccalaureate Organization, she said.

"As a teacher, I try to evolve and keep things fresh," Stein continued. "It is important to me that we, as an institution, are also doing the same – evolving and responding to the needs of our profession. I am very proud to work at an institution that strives to do this."

Other teachers and faculty members have served as inspiration for some of Stein's methods.

"So many educators are just so superb and work so hard at providing excellent experiences for their students, but this work can often be unrecognized in any formalized way," she said. "Moreover, many of the activities that I do with students and the teaching approaches I use are built upon the work and insights of others. Teachers share their best practices and I have certainly benefited from the work of others."

Stein will be honored at an Awards Ceremony during a special luncheon at the 2010 MSTA Conference in Lansing, Mich., on Friday, March 5.

For more information about Oakland's School of Education and Human Services, visit oakland.edu/sehs. For more information about the IB program, visit oakland.edu/ib.

SUMMARY

Mary Stein was chosen for modeling excellent teaching practices, demonstrating innovative teaching strategies and being an excellent role model for students and other teachers.

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