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NEWS

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College of Sciences Announces Annual Award Winners

PULLMAN, Wash. -- The Washington State University College of Sciences announced its 2005 outstanding achievement award recipients at its annual recognition reception last week.

This year's award winners include James Green, Distinguished Student Award; Lai-Sheng Wang, Distinguished Faculty Award; Helen Place, Faculty Advising Excellence Award; Brian Weissbart, Tom Lutz Teaching Award; Zhaohui "Sunny" Zhou and Mechthild Tegeder, each for a Young Faculty Performance Award; Mary Guenther, Outstanding Classified Staff Award; and Nancy Lira, Outstanding Administrative/Professional Staff Award.

Green, a senior from Belgrade, Mont., received the Distinguished Student Award. Green, who will graduate summa cum laude in May, will receive two degrees—one in genetics and cell biology and one in biochemistry/molecular biology. He has also completed a biotechnology major, as well as minors in microbiology and molecular biosciences. He will receive his degree through the Honors College. Green has been accepted into the WSU master's degree program in biotechnology and, after completing that program, expects to pursue a Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) degree and a doctoral degree with a research emphasis in molecular neuroscience.

Wang, a faculty member in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, received the Distinguished Faculty Award. Wang's research is done at Pacific Northwest National Laboratories in Richland. He is a world leader in the field of nanoclusters. His research team created the first all-metal aromatic molecules and discovered unexpected properties of extremely small particles of gold and boron. He pioneered the study of multiply-charged anions and created a new field of study, solution molecules in the gas phase. His work is frequently featured in leading science publications, including Science Magazine, Nature and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. The National Science Foundation awarded him a Creativity Award and he is a fellow of the American Physical Society. He was named WSU Westinghouse Distinguished Professor in Materials Science in 1997 and an Alfred Sloan Research Fellow in 1996. Wang has produced more than 170 research papers in the last 13 years.

Place, a senior instructor of chemistry, received the Faculty Advising Excellence Award. She has been director of the general chemistry program since 1993. Her extensive knowledge of sciences courses and curriculum makes her the primary resource on campus for other student advisers. She is a long-time member of the general education committee and has contributed to the development of that program.

Weissbart received the ninth Tom Lutz Teaching Award. He teaches large beginning chemistry classes, including the lectures, labs and

tutorials. He also trains the teaching assistants. His student evaluations are among the highest on campus. Weissbart is a member of the university's Honors College faculty and received the Outstanding Honors Faculty Award. He organizes and presents a popular summer science camp for 8th graders from across the state of Washington.

The Young Faculty Performance Award recognizes achievement in both teaching and research by pretenure faculty. This year there were two recipients—Zhou, assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry, and Tegeder, assistant professor in the School of Biological Sciences.

Zhou has established a very productive research laboratory in the field of bio-organic chemistry. His work has attracted several large competitive grants and international recognition. He makes an effort to include undergraduates on his research team, and his students have won numerous awards. He serves the National Institutes of Health as a grant application reviewer.

Tegeder also brings undergraduates into her research program. She is a leader in the field of nitrogen partitioning and amino acid transporters in plants. Tegeder recently received a National Science Foundation Career Award and has served as a member of a WSU Mission to Washington to meet with granting agencies and also participated on a state of Washington delegation to Cuba.

Guenther, a recruitment specialist in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, received the Outstanding Classified Staff Award. She uses her enthusiasm and sense of humor to attract students to the physics program. This spring she helped organize WSU's first pumpkin drop to celebrate the Galileo's laws of gravity. This year she is coordinating a series of events commemorating the work of Albert Einstein.

Lira received the Outstanding Administrative/Professional Staff Award. She is the assistant director of administrative services for the School of Biological Sciences. Lira was recognized for her high level of professionalism and broad business skills, which she employs to advance the school's mission. She was also recognized for her managerial and mentoring abilities.

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