

UM PROFESSOR SCORES SECOND NATIONAL EDUCATION AWARD MISSOULA—

University of Montana Professor Carol Brewer has crossed the country this year to collect two prestigious education awards from national scientific societies. Brewer was presented the Ecological Society of America's 2007 Eugene P. Odum Award at a ceremony in August during the joint meeting of ESA and the Society for Ecological Restoration in San Jose, Calif.

In May she received the 2007 American Institute of Biological Science Education Award at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. Brewer is associate dean of UM's College of Arts and Sciences and teaches plant ecology and science education in the University's Division of Biological Sciences. "Carol's receipt of the ESA education award, coupled with her receipt of the AIBS education award for 2007, places her among a rarified few to be chosen for such honors by two major scientific societies, let alone in the same year," said biological sciences Associate Dean Charles Janson.

The Eugene P. Odum award recognizes Brewer's outstanding work in ecology education. It is presented annually to educators who, through teaching, outreach and mentoring activities, have demonstrated their ability to relate basic ecological principles to human affairs. The AIBS award is presented each year to individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to education in the biological sciences. The two awards highlight Brewer's past and current work and research that focuses on developing collaborations between scientists and teachers, training teachers to conduct ecological investigations with students, exploring new methods for teaching science to undergraduates and using new assessment strategies to connect teaching and learning.

"The core philosophy of my research program and teaching at UM is that acquisition of knowledge alone will not be sufficient for improving scientific literacy unless that knowledge is applied effectively," Brewer said. "I believe that communicating about science in a way that captures the imagination and understanding of the communities in which we live is essential."

Locally, she and her UM students reach out to the community with programs such as Ecologists, Educators and Schools, with the theme "No child left indoors!" Through the program, K-12 students learn to see the playground as an ecological laboratory filled with all kinds of organisms with interesting adaptations and interactions. Brewer

also has been integral in the development of the Integrated Science and Education Plan for the new National Ecological Observatory Network and has led the design of the network's education components.

She served as ESA's vice president of education from 2000 to 2006. "The society's education programs flourished under her care," said ESA Vice President Margaret Lowman, "including recent evaluations and unprecedented growth in the society's diversity programs and overall increased visibility of education in the ESA. "Of all of Dr. Brewer's accomplishments, perhaps the most important is her remarkable, inspiring influence on many other people. She has a great knack for bringing people together, educating them about a problem and motivating them to overcome challenges in order to succeed. "Dr. Brewer has contributed so significantly to ecological education that she is known internationally as 'the' expert. She has been a stellar mentor, instructor and advocate of scientific literacy throughout her career," Lowman said.

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