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Edith Inta

Professor Will Get Insider View of National Science Foundation

Deborah Olster, professor of psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has been awarded a fellowship from the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the National Science Foundation to learn about the inner workings of one of the nation's prominent scientific research funding agency.

Beginning in September, Olster will travel to Washington, D.C. to undergo a comprehensive two-week orientation program before beginning a one-year assignment at NSF's Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences, where she will learn how NSF oversees research projects on human behavior, interaction, and social and economic systems, organizations and institutions.

Throughout the year, the professor will take part in AAAS-organized seminars featuring noted speakers on science, technology and public policy.

The agency will learn from Olster as well. The professor is expected to provide valuable feedback on issues relating to NSF's mission and possibly shape the way the agency funds science. Based in Arlington, VA,

NSF provides more than \$3.3 billion per year to almost 20,000 research and education projects in science and engineering, according to agency officials.

A number of those grants have gone to UC Santa Barbara researchers, including Olster who was awarded a three-year \$228,000 grant in 1998.

The

professor is exploring the possible link between obesity and reproductive disorders in Zucker rats. The research could yield new clues on how obesity influences human reproduction.

A faculty member since 1991, Olster holds a Ph.D. in physiology from the University of Michigan.

Founded in 1848, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is the world's largest general science organization and publisher of the prestigious, peer-reviewed journal, "Science." With more than 138,000 members and 275 affiliated societies, AAAS serves as an authoritative source for information on the latest developments in science and bridges gaps among scientists, policy-makers and the public to advance science and science education.

The AAAS/NSF fellowship is one of eight public policy fellowship programs for scientists and engineers offered by the organization. The fellowships allow accomplished and societally-aware post-doctoral to mid-career scientists and engineers to participate and contribute to the public policymaking process of the federal government.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.