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Gail Gallessich

UCSB Chemist Wins Prestigious German Award

Guillermo C. Bazan, professor of materials and of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and director of the university's Center for Polymers and Organic Solids, has been selected to receive the prestigious Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation of Germany. Only 20 individuals from around the world received the award this year.

This award is conferred in recognition of research achievements to date. With the award, Bazan is invited to carry out research projects of his own choice in cooperation with colleagues in Germany for periods of between six months to one year as a way of promoting international scientific cooperation.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation grants 20 Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel Research Awards annually, in a wide variety of fields, to top-flight scientists and scholars under the age of 45, from abroad, who are already recognized as outstanding researchers in their fields. The research award is endowed by Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Bazan was nominated for the award by Gerhard Erker, a German scientist and professor at the University of Muenster.

In congratulating Bazan, UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang called him a "true pioneer." He said, "The Bessel Award is highly sought after. The fact that it encompasses the sciences, engineering, humanities, and social sciences gives it particular

significance, and makes the selection all the more meaningful. I think this is particularly fitting given the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of Bazan's work."

Bazan and his UCSB research group work in the area of organic semiconductors with a focus on the basic science of how to synthesize them and how their molecular structure influences collective properties. "What's interesting is that the Foundation recognizes the study of organic materials from a fundamental perspective, as scholarship, rather than in terms of applications," said Bazan. "What we do adds to human knowledge, and that is valuable in itself." Potential applications of his work include biosensors, optoelectronic sensors, solar cells, and the synthesis of new semi-conducting plastics. "But what we are studying are the most fundamental processes."

Bazan has already begun collaborative work in Germany and has just returned from a visit to Westfaelische Wilhelms-Universitaet in Muenster.

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.