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UCSB's Kavli Institute Makes Pioneering Physics Accessible to High School Educators

Award-winning classroom science presentations produced by outstanding teachers and selected by one of the country's pre-eminent physics research centers are now available for use by educators everywhere.

The Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics (KITP) at UC Santa Barbara has awarded $7,000 in cash prizes to six science teachers for their exceptional multimedia classroom presentation on particle physics in the age of the Large Hadron Collider.

The teachers' winning presentations can be viewed and downloaded at: http://www.kitp.ucsb.edu/news/2008-raab-contest-winners.

The prize recipients were among 78 educators who recently took part in a popular and important Kavli Institute program that brings high school teachers from around the country to UCSB each year to interact with renowned scientists on the most exciting and current areas of modern physics research.

The annual teachers' conference, like all research and educational activities at the KITP, is supported by the National Science Foundation.

The prizes are funded by a generous gift from local donors.

The conference was held in conjunction with a KITP research program on the Large Hadron Collider.

Conference lecturers were chosen from among the leading international researchers who were invited to the institute to advance research in particle physics.

The Large Hadron Collider at the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) in Geneva, Switzerland, involves scientists from 111 nations who are expected to carry out experiments that will change our understanding of the fundamental makeup of the universe.

Participating teachers were asked to prepare a talk summarizing the conference lectures and accompanying discussions, suitable for presentation during a single science class period.

Entries in the competition were reviewed by a panel of peer teachers and distinguished physicists.

The prizes, which recognize excellence in teaching high school physics, were established by Simon and Diana Raab, of Santa Barbara.

First prize was awarded to Kevin McKone, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Wesson, Miss.

Jon Anderson from Centennial Senior High School, Circle Pines, Minn., won second prize.

Four teachers shared third prize:

Steven Brehmer, Mayo High School, Rochester, Minn.; Cheryl Harper, Greensburg Salem High School, Blairsville, Pa.; Nick Nicastro, Wachusett Regional High School, Holden, Mass.; and Gail Van Ekeren, Gill St. Bernard's School, Gladstone, N.J.

In addition to funding visiting scholars and graduate fellows, the KITP undertakes many outreach activities, including a popular public lecture series, visits by KITP postdoctoral researchers to local high schools to talk about their research, conferences that foster interaction between the humanities and sciences, a journalist-in-residence program to promote excellence in scientific journalism, and an artist-in-residence who fosters exploration of relationships between science and art.

More information about Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics educational programs is available at www.kitp.ucsb.edu.

Related Links

Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics

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.