UC SANTA BARBARA

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Jim Logan

A Distinct Honor

Sharon Tettegah has been named a fellow of the IAspire Leadership Academy, a program aimed at helping science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) faculty from underrepresented backgrounds ascend to leadership roles at colleges and universities.

Director of the campus's Center for Black Studies Research and a professor in the Department of Black Studies, Tettegah joins a distinguished group of faculty and staff members at universities across the country to be so honored. She is among the second cohort of IAspire fellows.

"I am very excited about being chosen as an IAspire Leadership Fellow," said Tettegah. "Having the ability to provide opportunities and institutional transformation at the local and national level, using an interdisciplinary approach to STEM, is important in leveraging environmental and social justice."

Tettegah's extensive experience in STEM and her work on behalf of underrepresented students over the course of her career makes her an ideal choice as an IAspire fellow, said Christopher McCauley, professor and chair in the Department of Black Studies.

"The Department of Black Studies takes great pride in the NSF's naming of Professor Sharon Tettegah as a fellow of its IAspire Leadership Academy," he said. "The nomination is a tribute to Professor Tettegah's career-long commitment to making the academy more representative of the various populations of the United States

and to making it more accessible to those communities that have been historically excluded from it.

“As a fellow of IAspire Leadership Academy,” McCauley added, “Professor Tettegah will put UCSB into further dialogue with the scholars, institutions and strategies from around the country and the world that seek to tackle some of the most pressing educational issues of our time.”

An affiliate of the University’s Center for Responsible Machine Learning and the Center for Information, Technology and Society, Tettegah brings deep experience and insight to the IAspire cohort.

Before joining UCSB Tettegah was an associate dean for research and sponsored programs at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She was the program chair of Digital Environments for Learning, Teaching and Agency in the College of Education at the University of Illinois, at Urbana Champaign. She also held an appointment in cognitive neuroscience in bio-intelligence at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. In addition, she was a research scientist and affiliate at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications.

Her research centers on the intersection of STEM learning, Emotions, Equity and Social justice. She was also a program director from 2010 to 2012 at the National Science Foundation, where she managed multiple programs. She is the series editor for emotions and technology with academic publisher Elsevier.

“I believe that for underrepresented groups to bring about change in STEM, our voices must be heard,” Tettegah said. “How can our voices be heard if we are not in the conversation? Innovation occurs when diverse perspectives are involved. Currently people of color, particularly Black people, are not at the table in many STEM fields. Our epistemologies have historically been invalidated. It is time to include and validate our voices across STEM fields; particularly engineering, physics and materials science.”

The IAspire Leadership Academy is part of the Aspire Alliance (formally known as the National Alliance for Inclusive & Diverse STEM Faculty). The National Science Foundation-backed alliance is working across post-secondary institutions to develop more inclusive institutional cultures supporting the access and success of all undergraduate STEM students, especially those from underrepresented groups.

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.