

Staff members receive Guggenheim Fellowship

By Kaitlyn Knopp
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

With the odds of getting the award a slim 180 out of 3,000, Katherine Freeman said she tried not to get her hopes up for a Guggenheim Fellowship Award.

"My thoughts before were nervous. I was hopeful, but pretty anxious about it," said Freeman, a professor of geosciences and the associate department head of graduate programs.

Freeman's anxieties were eased, though, when she and Penn State art professor Helen O'Leary were chosen to receive a 2010-11 Guggenheim Fellowship.

"My reaction was I was thrilled and grateful," Freeman said. "My mother actually found out by reading my name in The New York

Times, and she was quite happy about that."

The competitive nature of the award has much to do with the grants it awards, as all recipients are expected to use the money to further their research or education, said Richard Hatter, director of development and public relations at the Guggenheim Foundation.

How much money Freeman and O'Leary will receive will be based on the budget of the project to which they will apply the money.

"The grant will help me take a sabbatical next year for a full year

and it allows me to work with collaborators at the Smithsonian," Freeman said. "My kids are excited about that."

O'Leary, who is currently in France for research, was unavailable for comment and representatives from her department declined comment.

The Guggenheim Fellowship Award is intended for individuals who have demonstrated exceptional productivity and/or remarkable artistic ability.

The award process starts with an application, which is given to an expert in the same field as the applicant, who critiques the appli-

cation and forwards all remarks to a selection committee.

The selection committee then sends its recommendations to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Board of Trustees for a final decision.

"There's no pre-screening," Hatter said. "We review every application we receive, and we are need-blind."

Freeman said she thinks she might have won due to her current research. "I think what I'm trying to do is a little off the beaten path scientifically, so it's a little unusual," Freeman said. "I'm interested in how water and plants interact in a hot environment, something that is relevant, I feel."

Both professors are already pursuing their research and though they cannot win another

fellowship, they will always be considered a Guggenheim fellow.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity that Penn State has given me through my time here," Freeman said. "Just a little tip of the hat to Penn State."

Penn State spokeswoman Jill Shockey said the university is proud of the researchers.

"We're pleased when any of our faculty are recognized for their outstanding achievements. Katherine Freeman and Helen O'Leary are certainly no exception," Shockey said. "Their achievements in their field are commendable, and we're grateful the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation has seen fit to recognize their excellent work."

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Freeman



O'Leary

Summit discusses transportation

By Will Schultz
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Penn State professors and students joined industry professionals this week to discuss how to cultivate a new generation of professionals to deal with an overburdened transportation infrastructure.

On Wednesday and Thursday, students mingled with government workers and professionals from the private sector in a small conference room at the Atherton Hotel, 125 S. Atherton St.

Martin Pietrucha, Director of the Larson Transportation Institute, said the Transportation Workforce Development Summit was designed to bring people from all different areas of the transportation industry together to consider how to best bring new individuals into the field.

"Traditionally, we have civil engineers working in this field,"

Pietrucha said. "We're beginning to look for people with a non-traditional education."

The transportation industry of the future, Pietrucha said, will require people well-versed in finance and information technology.

The keynote speaker, Professor Joseph Sussman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was not able to attend, but spoke to the room through a speakerphone and had his presentation slides advanced for him.

Sussman spoke of growing complexity in transportation and how future professionals will have to possess working knowledge of the basic system, the technical aspects of the system and the various institutions that affect it.

He said future professionals will also need to be experts in a general knowledge category and will need to have a "deep understand-

ing of [transportation] sustainability."

Daniel Kwon (graduate-civil engineering) attended the summit to learn what the industry searches for in prospective employees.

Kwon said the format of the summit made sense in terms of defining what is currently valued by employers and laying out what will be valued in the future.

"It was the first time that we were exposed to this kind of information," Kwon said. "We found out what government as well as industry people are looking for."

The second day of the summit broke participants into three groups that discussed the major issues facing workforce development: recruitment, education and training and retention.

When they reconvened, each group gave a small presentation with what it had decided.

In general, the focus on young people was seen as the most use-



Workforce Development Program Manager Jarrett Stoltzfus speaks during the Transportation Workforce Development Summit

ful strategy by the recruitment and education presenters.

Students currently in first grade will enter the workforce around 2026.

The summit attendees concluded the best way to get those children interested during their secondary education was through

niche programs that introduced students to the general idea of transportation as a career.

The retention group shared ideas to make working in transportation a developmental career, in which a young professional is mentored and trained to be a team leader.

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