

Chemistry professor honored by Obama

By Mike Hricik
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Stephen Benkovic, an Evan Pugh professor and Eberly Chairman chemistry professor, was selected to receive the 2010 National Medal of Science by President Barack Obama last week.

The White House awards the National Medal of Science to researchers in engineering and science yearly. National Science Foundation Spokeswoman Lisa-

Joy Zgorski said. Benkovic wrote in an e-mail that the award humbles him but will not take his focus away from what is most important in his work.

"One does not do science for awards. I do science because I am continually seduced by the challenge and its mysteries," Benkovic wrote in an e-mail.

A committee of presidential appointees chooses award recipients based upon their contributions to sciences, engineering, computing and mathematics.

The National Science Foundation administers the award that was established in 1959, Zgorski said.

Benkovic leads the Benkovic Laboratory at Penn State that specializes in enzyme catalysis at various levels. He is considered one of the world's most prominent mechanistic enzymologists. Chemistry Department Head Barbara Garrison said.

Benkovic wrote that he holds membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of

Sciences and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Garrison said the award is a testament to the Eberly College of Science.

"We all work really, really hard. It's nice to see our colleague rewarded for what they've accomplished," Garrison said.

Benkovic has studied the chemical sequence and structure of enzyme activity as well as enzymes instrumental in the development of cancer drugs and

antibiotics, Garrison said.

Benkovic wrote that he thanks his dedicated graduate and post-doctoral students as well as his mentors for their help in shaping his approach to science.

He wrote that he shares the award with his wife Patricia who has carried out many of the experiments for which his laboratory is known.

The award ceremony will occur at the White House.

To e-mail reporter: mjh5507@psu.edu

Police Chief: 'NEAT' project effective in reducing crime

By Nelson Oliveira
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

A new law enforcement project has proven effective in reducing crime in the Highlands neighborhood, according to preliminary data from the State College Police Department.

The most noteworthy statistic was a 56 percent decrease in thefts from Aug. 15 to Oct. 10, decreasing from 55 last year to 24 this year.

The number of fights and criminal mischief has decreased as well. There were five fewer fights this semester and four fewer criminal mischief viola-

tions. But public urination and noise violations increased in this time period.

State College Police Chief Tom King credits the change to the Neighborhood Enforcement and Alcohol Team, the borough's latest effort to reduce crime in the Highlands neighborhood. The NEAT program is different from other police efforts in that the same officers consistently patrol the area, he said.

The team consists of three police officers and six Penn State student auxiliary officers, King said. Since August, two police officers and two student officers have patrolled the Highlands neighbor-

hood every Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m.

"There's much more consistency now since the same officers are assigned to the same neighborhood," said King, who presented the preliminary data at last week's State College Borough Council meeting.

Another aspect of the program is making "pre-party contacts," King said if the assigned officers see signs of a large party developing, they can identify the people in charge of the event and give them a flyer on how to host a party while staying responsible.

"It's a very positive interaction with the person in advance of

everybody showing up and all the alcohol getting consumed," King said. "Also, more relationships can be built, for better or worse."

To supplement the work of the borough police, the student auxiliary officers are encouraged to report actual or developing crimes, King said. When they see a possible crime in the works, they can call the police to come and attend to it.

"They're the eyes and ears for our officers," King said.

The difference between this new project and the Highlands Neighborhood Watch Program, which enlists local residents to patrol the streets with students, is

that NEAT does not include any residents. In fact, King explained at the meeting, the goal of NEAT is to prevent a violation from occurring before residents are affected.

Of the 112 noise calls made last year within the reported timeframe, only five were officer-initiated, according to the report. Out of the 142 noise calls this semester, 36 have been officer-initiated, showing that law enforcement officials have been more effective, King said.

If NEAT continues to prove successful, the project will be expanded to the Holmes-Foster neighborhood, King said.

Computer Store promotes services during 20th year celebration

By Mary Schultz
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

In between classes on Wednesday, students walking through the HUB-Robeson Center enjoyed free cookies, played Rock Band and stood in front of a green screen — all while learning about four free services offered to them through the Information Technology Services department.

As part of its 20th year celebration, Penn State's Computer Store hosted the event in the HUB.

Services featured included the Media Commons, the Educational Commons, the ITS Help Desk and ITS Training Services. "This event is to show students what is here for them," said JJ Murphy, IT manager and the event's organizer.

Representatives from each service were standing at tables, answering questions and giving tips to students.

At the ITS Help Desk table, students could get help setting up wireless or fixing general computer issues.

"Often students ask, 'What do we get for our money?'" Murphy said. "I don't think a lot of students know what's available to them for free."

Dakota Hahn (junior-energy, business and finance) said she was unaware of most of the services that were featured.

By speaking to a representative at the Media Commons table, she was able to make a connection to a video research project she has to complete next semester.

"I have to interview people on

tape and then edit the video," she said. "I didn't know they had sound booths and could help me with editing."

The Media Commons offers free instruction and help with audio and video projects, as well as weekly workshops that teach students to use different video editing software.

The Educational Gaming Commons had Lego Rock Band set up for students to use. This service seeks to fuse teaching, learning, research and virtual games by developing games, working with faculty and providing gaming areas such as the one in Findlay Commons.

The ITS Training Services table showcased lynda.com, a web site that offers tutorial videos for software, such as PhotoShop.



Christine Reckner, Collegian

The Computer Store displayed services provided to students during its 20th anniversary event in the HUB on Wednesday.

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