TEACHING CAREER ENHANCEMENT AWARDS: AN OPPORTUNITY NOT TO MISS

In 1999, the American Physiological Society presented the first of its Teaching Career Enhancement Awards. These awards were designed to parallel the Society’s Research Career Enhancement Awards and provide financial support for individuals to obtain special training, develop new skills, or create educational materials or programs. The Awards announcement says:

The APS Teaching Career Enhancement Award is designed to enhance the career potential of regular APS members. The award provides up to $4,000 to allow an individual to develop innovative and potentially widely applicable programs for teaching and learning physiology. The award can be used to support short-term visits to other schools to consult with experts who can assist with the development project. It can also be used to support attendance at special courses devoted to methodologies appropriate for the educational development project.

Unfortunately, the response of the membership to this award has been lukewarm. The program was launched in 1997 but did not even receive an application until 1999. Since 1999, only ten people have applied for the award and only seven awards have been granted (Table 1). As the program enters its fifth year, it will be reviewed for its effectiveness and impact, and there is some concern that the award is in danger of being discontinued for lack of interest.

Why haven’t more people applied for a Teaching Career Enhancement Award? In Education Committee discussions, the question was raised whether people were not interested in this education-focused faculty development opportunity or whether they were simply unaware of the range of activities that could be supported by the program. In the interest of increasing applications for the award, here is a summary of award reports from the past five awardees.

1999

Whitney M. Reilly, Indiana University School of Medicine, Bloomington IN

Dr. Reilly attended a two-week Molecular Biology Summer Workshop hosted at Smith College with the intent of applying the techniques and concepts she learned to her own physiology course. She found that an unexpected benefit of the experience was the opportunity to observe how the organizers managed to keep a diverse group of adult students occupied, entertained, and enthusiastic from 8 AM until 10 PM each day, and she hopes to be able to apply this pedagogical component to her teaching as well.

2000

Sherell Byrd, Fort Lewis College, Durango CO

Dr. Byrd’s project was to design some Web-based interactive laboratory tutorials. As part of the project, she visited the University of Texas at Austin for a week and attended a variety of student-centered lectures and inquiry-based laboratories. The opportunity to observe faculty using a variety of active learning techniques prompted Dr. Byrd to reflect on her own teaching.

John D. Griffin, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg VA

Dr. Griffin’s project was to develop a neurophysiology course with educational technology integrated in the curriculum design. He attended the Syllabus 2001 Summer Conference on educational technology and applied what he learned there to the design of his course website and CD-ROM tutorials. He also pre-

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sent a seminar on his innovations for other faculty at William and Mary.

Swen Kurbel, Osijek Medical Faculty, Osijek, Croatia

Dr. Kurbel used his award to travel to the University of Kentucky, where he observed physiology teaching in the medical school. From his experience, he created a comparison of medical physiology teaching in Croatia and the United States. Upon his return home, he presented his findings at a roundtable on teaching at the Second Croatian Congress of Physiology.

2001

Daniel E. Lemons, City College of New York, New York, NY

Dr. Lemons’ project, which is still in progress, is to develop a teaching module in cardiovascular physiological genomics. As part of his career development in this field, he attended the APS Physiological Genomics of Cardiovascular Disease Conference in San Francisco in February 2002 and the Experimental Biology ’02 meeting.

As you can see from these descriptions, the awards that were funded cover a variety of projects.

If you are interested in applying for a Teaching Career Enhancement Award, the application form is available online at http://www.the-aps.org/awards/awd_tcapp.htm or through the Awards link on the APS home page. An application should include the following elements:

1) Description of the proposed project (not to exceed two pages)
2) Justification for Requested Funds (not to exceed $4000)
3) Letter of support from the applicant’s department chair or other appropriate individual
4) Letters of agreement from appropriate individual or department hosts of schools to be visited
5) Description or outline of courses to be attended
6) Curriculum vitae focused on activities and achievements related to education

The next deadline is April 15, 2003, and there is a second round of applications due October 15. Please consider applying for this Teaching Career Enhancement Award.

Dee U. Silverthorn, Editor-in-Chief
Advances in Physiology Education
Volume 27: no. 1, March 2003
10.1152/advan.00099.2002