Saddleback College Recognizes Professors of the Year

Mission Viejo, CA – Saddleback College named Dr. Kris Leppien-Christensen, a professor of psychology, and Teresa Bear, a chemistry instructor, as the 2011 Professors of the Year. Professors Leppien-Christensen and Bear will be nominated for the county-wide Teacher of the Year award, selected by the Orange County Department of Education.

“Saddleback College has so many exceptional professors that it is always difficult to narrow it down to two winners. The student feedback spoke volumes for Professors Leppien-Christensen and Bear,” said Dr. Tod A. Burnett, President of Saddleback College. “Students sang their praises and it’s clear that they have very positively influenced many lives during their time at Saddleback College.”

Dr. Leppien-Christensen, a San Marcos resident, has been a full-time psychology professor at Saddleback College since 2005. Prior to joining Saddleback College, he was a tenured psychology professor at Imperial Valley College and was an adjunct professor at San Diego State University. Before he began teaching, Dr. Leppien-Christensen worked as a protective services social worker. In his spare time, Dr. Leppien-Christensen enjoys traveling with his wife, computer gaming, and science fiction writing.

“I was completely shocked to find out that I was nominated and selected for the honor. I am also humbled by the honor given those great professors who have been selected previously,” said Dr. Leppien-Christensen. “I am fortunate that I love what I do and can't imagine doing anything else and I know that Saddleback is the college where I was meant to be.”

“True teaching touches both the hearts and minds of our students,” said Dr. Patricia Flanigan Chapin, Dean of Social and Behavioral Sciences. “Dr. Leppien-Christensen challenges his students to pursue their passions, explore their intellectual growth, and embrace a new future.”

Teresa Bear, who lives in Oceanside, became a Saddleback College chemistry instructor in 2007 and is an alumna of the college. Bear has been a community college instructor for 10 years and served as a pharmaceutical drug discovery researcher for four years.

“I have a passion for teaching and a heart for the students of Saddleback College,” said Bear. “I was one of those students 18 years ago, and my experience at Saddleback College with a couple of pivotal professors changed the course of my life, for which I am so grateful.”

“Teresa Bear is an absolutely superb teacher of Chemistry,” Dr. Jim Wright, Dean Mathematics, Science, and Engineering, stated. “She is most dedicated and has an exemplary compassion for all
students in this difficult discipline.”

Located in Mission Viejo, Saddleback College provides quality higher education and training to the greater south Orange County community. Having served more than 500,000 students since 1968, Saddleback College offers more than 300 degree and certificate programs to help students reach their personal, career, and educational goals. For more information, please visit www.saddleback.edu.

###