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News Release

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June 27, 2014

Education professor honored for faculty development research

KOKOMO, Ind. — Julie Saam's teaching impacts not only the students in her own classrooms, but those of many of her colleagues.

Saam, associate professor of education at Indiana University Kokomo, devotes herself to research to improve college-level teaching, and readily shares what she discovers through faculty professional development.

In recognition of her contributions, she recently received the P.A. Mack Award from the Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching (FACET). She is the first IU Kokomo faculty member to receive this significant award, given in honor of excellence and distinguished service to teaching.

Saam realized the magnitude of this recognition after reviewing a list of prior honorees.

"These were the people I had looked up to, and aspired to be, throughout my career," she said. "To be a part of this group, and follow in their footsteps, is amazing and humbling."

One of those people she admires is P.A. Mack, a former IU trustee who founded and supports the Mack Center for Inquiry on Teaching and Learning. The center supports research to enhance learning, and offers professional development for IU faculty.

"Receiving this prestigious award was even more meaningful because it was named after P.A. Mack," she said. "He's always been so supportive of all I've done, and he is such a kind-hearted man."

Saam discovered her love of teaching her colleagues early in her career.

"I was teaching high school physics, and found out I enjoyed teaching faculty," she said. "The more I was working and teaching, I discovered I truly loved the work of developing faculty."

Paul Paese, dean of the School of Education, said she sets an excellent example of service to teaching.

"We are fortunate to have a faculty member of Dr. Saam's caliber preparing outstanding future educators," Paese said. "She has been our campus leader for FACET, and for more than a decade has demonstrated excellence and distinguished service to teaching."

Saam was nominated by Jay Howard, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Butler University, who called her "an exemplar of how a FACET member from one of the smaller IU campuses can make significant contributions to teaching and learning that extend far beyond her own classrooms and campus." Howard and Saam work together on the IU Future Faculty Teaching Fellows Summer Institute, which prepares graduate students to be faculty members.

She teaches elementary and secondary science and math methods in the School of Education. In addition to her campus teaching responsibilities, she served as IU Kokomo's adjunct faculty coordinator, worked on team development of full-time faculty, served as a peer reviewer, and has presented at university and campus teaching conferences. She also is author or co-author of 13 professional publications.

FACET was established in 1989 as the service oriented teaching academy of IU. Members are chosen annually through a peer review process. Each year, members are involved in collaborative activities at the campus, university, and national level, promoting inquiry and engagement in teaching and learning.

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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