

2010 CAP medal for excellence in teaching undergraduate physics

BY CUPJ STAFF WRITER

CUPJ Staff Writer - The 2010 CAP Medal for Excellence in Teaching Undergraduate Physics will be awarded to Dr. Marina Milner-Bolotin, Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at UBC. The Award will be given to her at the 2010 CAP Congress scheduled for June 7, 2010 - June 11, 2010 at the University of Toronto.

Dr. Milner-Bolotin was chosen from amongst Canadian physics and science instructors for her unceasing enthusiasm in engaging students to discover physics with a masterful integration of an array of successful teaching methods, for her influence on shifting institutional culture toward active learning, for her dedication to Physics Education Research and her commitment to the continual professional development of physics educators across the nation.

Marina was born in Kharkiv, Ukraine (formerly the USSR) in 1970, a city with a population of about 2,000,000. Her mother is a mathematics teacher and her father is an engineer. Her grand-

parents also had higher education diploma and were engineers and doctors. As a child Marina was interested in science and mathematics.

After graduating from Kharkiv State University with a M.S. in theoretical physics Marina emigrated with her husband and younger sister to Israel where she pursued her interest in physics teaching. She graduated from Bar-Illan University with a teaching certification and started working as a middle school mathematics and then high school mathematics and physics teacher. She also worked at the Weizmann Institute of Science where she helped to develop workshops for in-service physics teachers. Many of these workshops were focused on the use of technology in teaching (computers, various sensors, computer simulations).

From 2001-2004, she did a post-doc fellow at Rutgers University in NJ, where she participated in the projects of the Physics Education Research Group and taught undergraduate physics. In 2004, Marina and her family moved to Vancouver, where she taught at the Department of Physics and Astronomy and at the Skylight - Centre

for Science Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Science. In May of 2007 she was offered a faculty tenure track position (Assistant Professor in Physics) at Ryerson University, in Toronto, ON. From July 2007 till December 2009 she worked at Ryerson University. During her time at Ryerson Marina was involved in a several technology-related projects, such as the Hewlett Packard Educational Technology Grant.

In the Fall of 2009 Dr. Milner-Bolotin was offered an Assistant Professor position at the University of British Columbia, at the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, where she is currently employed. She continues to teach science, as well as work with pre-service and in-service middle and high school teachers and explore how educational technology can help them become better educators.

In the November 2007 edition of the CUPJ Dr. Milner-Bolotin contributed a feature article on Physics Education in Canada. Marina's article is available through the CUPJ website

UPPAC 2010

The Undergraduate Pacific Physics and Astronomy Conference

BY ERIC THEWALT

The third annual Undergraduate Pacific Physics and Astronomy Conference took place on the weekend of March 6th, at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC. UPPAC provides an opportunity for students in the Pacific region to participate in an undergraduate conference modelled after the well-known Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference while avoiding often-steep travel and accommodation costs. This year saw UPPAC continue to grow, with approximately 30 participants, including students from Alberta and Washington State.

The conference began on Friday, March 5th, when registrants were invited to a meet and greet session at SFU. Conference organizers and members of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada brought telescopes to give attendees a look into the night sky above Burnaby Mountain.

Saturday, March 6th, was the focal point of the conference. The day's activities included a student talk competition, tours of four of SFU's physics labs, a keynote lecture by SFU professor Michael Thewalt, and an estimation game. After the conference, the students made their way to the Mountain Shadow Pub near SFU. Carolyn Kierans (SFU) won the talk competition, with honourable mentions going to Gwendolyn Eadie (SFU) and Karol Krizka (SFU). On Sunday, interested participants attended a tour of TRIUMF, Canada's national laboratory for particle and nuclear physics.

Simon Fraser University will be hosting UPPAC again next year. Registration is free for all undergraduate students, and we hope to build on this year's success by increasing attendance once again. Keep an eye the SFU Physics Student Association website at <http://www.sfu.ca/psa> for information!



Above: Participants and organizers for UPPAC 2010 at SFU. Special Thanks to Carolyn Kierans (centre) for inviting the CUPJ to make a presentation at the conference.