ON THE CUTTING EDGE WINS SPORE PRIZE

The On the Cutting Edge website (http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/index.html) has been awarded the Science Prize for Online Resources in Education (SPORE) from Science. The prize honors the work of On the Cutting Edge principal investigators Heather Macdonald (College of William and Mary, Virginia), Dave Mogk (Montana State University, Montana), Barb Tewksbury (Hamilton College, New York), and Cathy Manduca (Carleton College, Minnesota); the contributions of hundreds of geoscience faculty to the site content; and the efforts of the Science Education Resource Center staff at Carleton College, Sean Fox, Karin Kirk, John McDaris, Carol Ormand, Monica Bruckner, and Ellen Iverson, in developing and evaluating the site.

SPORE was designed to honor and promote the originators of the best online materials available to science educators. The contest bears the acronym SPORE—meaning a reproductive element adapted to develop, often in inhospitable conditions, into something new—with the idea that these winning projects may be the seed for valuable progress, despite widespread challenges to educational innovation. This year, there were 12 winners from nearly 100 entries. An essay in the February 26 issue of Science outlines how On the Cutting Edge is transforming the culture of geoscience education by promoting the sharing of scientific content and teaching methods (www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/327/5969/1095).

On the Cutting Edge was launched in 2002 and provides an important mechanism for geoscience faculty to learn from one another and from other experts in teaching and learning. In 2009, visitors numbered more than 700,000. They visited the site’s 3000 pages a total of 850,000 times. The site contains more than 1200 classroom activities contributed by the teaching community and includes step-by-step instructions for putting new techniques into place. The website also includes a wide variety of visual tools for use in the classroom, such as artistic renderings, visually represented data, and videos and models of Earth processes.

The On the Cutting Edge professional development project for geoscience faculty is sponsored by the National Association of Geoscience Teachers, is funded by the National Science Foundation Course Improvement Program, and contributes to the National Science Digital Library.

A Teaching Geochemistry workshop will be held in conjunction with the Goldschmidt Conference in Knoxville, Tennessee (http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/geochemistry10/index.html), one of the many workshops held every year for geoscience faculty across the United States (http://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/workshops. html). David Mogk was guest editor of a thematic issue of Elements on the topic of teaching mineralogy, petrology, and geochemistry (volume 3, number 2, April 2007).

3M NATIONAL TEACHING FELLOWSHIP TO ALAN MORGAN

Alan V. Morgan, professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the University of Waterloo, Canada, since 1971, has received a 3M National Teaching Fellowship, considered Canada’s most prestigious award for excellence in teaching. The award is given by the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in partnership with 3M Canada. His research interests lie in Quaternary stratigraphy and climate change.

Alan Morgan has taught Earth 121, an introductory course at Waterloo, over nearly four decades. He has also energetically promoted public awareness of science, especially geology, outside the university. Morgan previously received Waterloo’s Distinguished Teacher Award in 1991; the Royal Society of Canada’s Bancroft Award in 1994 for promoting public awareness of science; the National Association of Geology Teachers John H. Moss Award for Excellence in Geology Teaching in 1995; and the Royal Society of Canada’s McNeil Medal in 2008, recognizing his outstanding ability to communicate science to students and the public.