

News Release

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UMSL professor earns National Science Foundation grant



Bethany Zolman, assistant professor of biology at UMSL

Bethany Zolman, assistant professor of biology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, received a CAREER Award from the National Science Foundation. This grant is a prestigious national award for junior faculty who exemplify the role of teacher-scholars through outstanding research, excellent education, and the integration of education and research at

their universities.

"I am really excited and honored to receive a CAREER award," said Zolman, a St Charles, Mo. resident. "I know there is a lot of competition for this funding." The first installment of the five-year, \$575,000 grant is set to arrive around June 1.

Zolman's lab studies hormones that control plant growth and development -- similar to the role hormones play in animals. Indole-3-butyric acid, or IBA, is a storage molecule found in plants that influences how roots develop. IBA is often used in horticulture to stimulate root formation. The research supported by this award examines the mechanism of how IBA is converted into the active form of the hormone and the role this conversion is playing in plants. Application of this knowledge may allow the researchers to manipulate these pathways to increase rooting and enhance plant growth.

The grant allows Zolman to support two full-time graduate students and provide additional research opportunities for undergraduate students. The proposal also includes the addition of a new undergraduate laboratory course in 2011 that focuses on open-ended research projects in plant genetics and molecular biology. This will allow more undergraduates the opportunity for hands-on research experience and exposure to real-world science.

The NSF is an independent federal agency created by Congress in 1950 to promote the progress of science, national health, prosperity and welfare in the United States.

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