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UAF professors to receive Usibelli awards

by Staff Report

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FAIRBANKS - University of Alaska Fairbanks professors Rich Boone, Tom Weingartner and Kara Nance are the 2010 recipients of the Usibelli awards, considered one of the university's most prestigious honors.

The Emil Usibelli Distinguished Teaching, Research and Public Service Awards are given to outstanding faculty members each year. Each of the winners receives a cash award of \$10,000, funded through a \$600,000 endowment established by Usibelli Coal Mine in 1992.

Boone, a professor and the biology and wildlife chairman, will receive the teaching award; Weingartner, a professor of marine science in the School of Fisheries and Ocean Science, will receive the research award; and Nance, a computer science professor and head of the Advanced System Security Education, Research and Training Center, will receive the service award.

Boone, who joined the UAF faculty in 1995, was credited for interactive, exploratory techniques in the undergraduate courses he teaches and consistently receiving high marks from his students, according to a press release from UAF.

Tanana Valley Campus associate director Marsha Sousa, who nominated Boone for the award, said he "exemplifies the best in classroom teaching."

Weingartner, a former UAF student and postdoctoral fellow, joined the faculty as a research associate in 1991, accepting a position as assistant professor two years later.

Weingartner's research focuses on understanding the processes that control ocean circulation and temperature and salinity changes in Alaska's continental shelves.

"Whereas many physical oceanographers spend entire careers working on one system, Dr. Weingartner is a major contributor to our understanding of physical oceanography in four large marine ecosystems: Gulf of Alaska, eastern Bering Sea, Chukchi Sea and Beaufort Sea," his colleagues wrote in their nomination letter.

Nance grew up in Fairbanks and attended UAF, earning associate and bachelor's degrees in the 1980s. She was a staff member at UAF and in 1993 joined the computer science faculty.

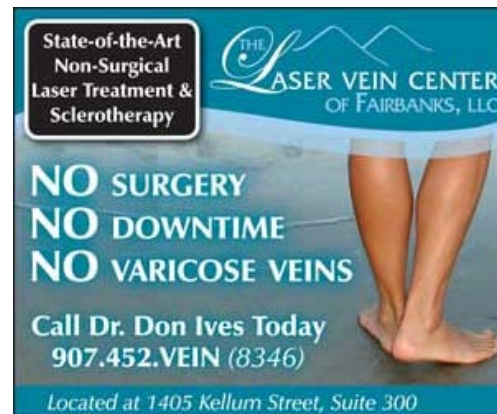
Her service work includes a project that pairs UAF students with K-12 teachers and faculty mentors to bring science to school classrooms. She also serves as the leader of the ASSERT center, which provides computer security instruction, research opportunities and technical assistance. A third project, funded through the National Science Foundation, aims to boost Alaska Native participation in computing.

"As the leader and motivating presence behind these important projects, Dr. Nance has demonstrated that her dedication to providing educational opportunities extends far beyond the university classroom, encompassing a much wider community at the local and statewide levels," said nominator Karina Possenti.

The three will be honored at a 3:30 p.m. reception today at the Wood Center.

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