

## Two at UC San Diego Receive White House Science Awards

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Kim McDonald

Brian Keating

Two faculty members at the University of California, San Diego were among 56 scientists and engineers who today received the nation's highest honor awarded by the White House to researchers at the outset of their professional scientific careers.

Brian G. Keating, an assistant professor of physics, and Katerina Akassoglou, an assistant professor of pharmacology, were among this year's recipients of the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers. They were given their awards, which consists of up to five years of research funding, at a White House ceremony today by John H. Marburger III, President Bush's science adviser and director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Established in 1996, the Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers recognizes outstanding scientists and engineers who, early in their careers, show exceptional potential for leadership at the frontiers of knowledge. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on scientists and engineers beginning their independent careers. Nine federal departments and agencies annually nominate scientists and engineers who are at the start of their independent careers and whose work shows exceptional promise.

"These scientists and engineers have not only brought transformational ideas to their fields of study, they have also enriched the educational environment, especially in their roles as mentors," said Kathie L. Olsen, deputy director of the National Science Foundation.

Keating, who was nominated by the science foundation, is an astrophysicist at UCSD's Center for Astrophysics and Space Sciences who is one of the leaders of a collaboration building a telescope and observatory, called POLARBEAR, that will allow physicists for the first time to measure the "gravitational waves" that emanated from the universe during the first moments of its creation.

Katerina Akassoglou

Akassoglou, who was nominated by the National Institutes of Health, is a researcher whose work involves molecular and cellular mechanisms that regulate nervous tissue regeneration. In 2007, her lab identified a receptor that is critical in liver regeneration. Her team also discovered that fibrinogen, a protein found in circulating blood and important in blood clotting, can promote multiple sclerosis when it leaks from the blood into the brain, triggering inflammation that leads to MS-related nerve damage.

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