

UCSD Biologist Receives Prestigious Presidential Award

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A biologist at the University of California, San Diego was recognized today at a White House ceremony with the highest honor given by the federal government to promising researchers and educators in the early stages of their careers.

Tracy L. Johnson, an assistant professor of biology at UCSD was awarded this year's Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers along with 19 other scientists and engineers nationwide. The award recognizes outstanding scientists and engineers who show exceptional potential for leadership at the frontiers of knowledge early in their careers.

The 20 scientists and engineers were chosen from 350 to 400 assistant professors who received grants from National Science Foundation's Faculty Early Career Program in the same year of their nomination for the President's award. These grants are among the most prestigious given by the NSF, reaching the most promising young researchers in science and engineering who have also emphasized significant education activities. CAREER grants range from \$400,000 to nearly \$1 million over five years to support career research and education.

Johnson was one of only three biologists from this select pool of grant recipients to receive this year's Presidential award, which now totals 200 recipients since the program began in 1996. She was recognized "for her research on how interactions between the molecular machines that synthesize and process RNA modulate gene expression, and for outstanding efforts to increase participation in underrepresented minority students."

Johnson received her Bachelor's degree from UCSD, her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley and was a Jane Coffin Childs postdoctoral fellow at the California Institute of Technology.

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