

Preuss School Principal and Student are Named To Bezos Scholars Program at the Aspen Institute

May 29, 2009

Pat JaCoby

Scott Barton, principal of the Preuss School at UC San Diego, and Paul Tran, a Preuss School junior, have been selected as 2009 Bezos Scholars, a program which brings together 12 of the nation's top public high school juniors and 12 of the most engaged educators for a weeklong seminar.

The prestigious scholarship program introduces the Bezos Scholars to visionaries from around the globe—international leaders, acclaimed thinkers and creative artists—for seminars, plenary sessions and informal meetings on the Aspen Institute campus in Colorado. This year's gathering will be June 30-July 6.

The annual scholarships are open to high school juniors at eligible public schools nationwide. Student scholars are selected based on academic achievement, demonstrated leadership and community engagement. Upon selection of the student scholars, an educator from each represented school is invited to participate, offering a unique leadership development opportunity for principals or teachers.

"We want to help nurture the leaders of tomorrow. It's our hope that the Bezos Scholars return home from Aspen inspired by creative, big ideas and use the students' senior years to create sustainable local ideas that could transform their schools and communities," said Jackie Bezos, co-founder with her husband, Mike, of the Bezos Family Foundation.

The Preuss School junior has piled up honors on his way to the Bezos Scholars selection, including one of four winners of first place and senior division sweepstakes awards in the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair. He qualified for the Physician Scientist Training Program at Temple University, one of 35 students selected nationwide, and was named one of California's top two youth volunteers for his "First Buddy" project to help students struggling academically. An essay he wrote recounting his mother's battles to survive poverty, rape and war in Vietnam before escaping to the United States won a student contest.

Barton was appointed principal of the Preuss School in May, 2008, following a number of years as dean of students. He holds administrative and teaching credentials from San Diego State University, where he received his bachelor's degree, and a master's degree in computer education from Alliant University.

The Preuss School is a middle and high school dedicated to providing intensive college-prep education for motivated low-income students who will become the first in their families to graduate from college. The school is jointly chartered by UC San Diego and the San Diego Unified School District. Opened in 1999 with 150 students, the school currently has 755 students in grades six through 12. Ninety-six percent of the seniors in the last two graduating classes were admitted to four-year colleges.

Newsweek magazine named the Preuss School the 6th best high school in the nation among 1,300 schools last year, and *U.S. News and World Report* named it as the 10th best school out of 18,000 surveyed for the annual "America's Best High Schools report."

Media Contact: Pat JaCoby, 858-534-7404 or pjacoby@ucsd.edu

