Young chemist receives prestigious national award

2009 Cottrell Scholar, Professor Penny Beuning. *Photo by Craig Bailey*

May 29, 2009

Penny J. Beuning, assistant professor of chemistry and chemical biology, has been named a 2009 Cottrell Scholar in recognition of her work in DNA damage tolerance, specifically her proposal, *At the Interface of Chemistry and Biology: Integrating teaching and research on mutagenic DNA polymerases*. Beuning is the first Northeastern University faculty member to receive this honor, which awards early-career scientists $100,000 to further research and teaching.

"This is a highly esteemed award which signifies Professor Beuning's standing in the field," said Graham Jones, professor and chair of Northeastern's department of chemistry and chemical biology. "The Cottrell Scholar fellowship will allow her to develop an internationally renowned chemical biology program."

The award, one of ten in 2009 from Research Corporation for Science Advancement (RCSA) is based in the belief that the best science teachers are actively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge and eager to pass their research skills and knowledge on to others. RCSA, a nearly 100-year-old foundation, supports innovative scientific research and the development of early-career academic scientists.

Entries were subject to peer review, and both research and teaching were considered. Research criteria included originality, feasibility, and the prospect for significant fundamental advances to science. Teaching criteria included contributions to education, especially at the undergraduate level, and proposed strategies to achieve educational objectives.

Frederick Gardner Cottrell, the chemist for whom these awards are named, founded RCSA in 1912, endowing it with patent royalties from his invention, the Cottrell electrostatic precipitator. The award honors his generosity as a benefactor of science through RCSA, and his lifetime devotion to helping young scientists get their first start.

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