Sac State alumnus is state Teacher of the Year

Timothy Smith will compete for national honor

Sacramento State alumnus Timothy Smith has been named one of five California Teachers of the Year and has been selected as the state’s representative for the National Teacher of the Year competition.

Add to that Smith’s selection as Sacramento County Teacher of the Year and Elk Grove Unified School District Teacher of the Year, and it adds up to a wealth of recognition for his commitment to teaching.

Smith teaches ninth- through 12th-grade Algebra and AP Statistics at Florin High School. He received his bachelor’s degree in mathematics and his teaching credential at Sacramento State in 2001, and is currently in his first semester in the University’s iMET (Internet Masters in Educational Technology) graduate program.

The selection for the statewide honor was announced by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. The other four recipients are Angelo “Ang” Bracco, Vallejo; Michael Hayden, Manhattan Beach; Linda Horist, Anaheim; and Jessica Pack, Palm Springs.

Smith says teaching has just come naturally to him. “Even in high school, I tutored students,” he says.

Teaching opportunities have seemed to arise throughout his life. He worked as a butcher in a supermarket for a time and taught others how to cut meat, and in the military, he taught people how to break down their weapons. “If you work hard at something and become good at it, other people want to know how you do it,” Smith says.

He has received a lot of attention since the announcement – from all the area newspapers as well as radio and television. For a time, well-wishers were swamping him with about 80 emails a day. “Some of the people I haven’t heard from in 20 years, such as former colleagues and people I went to school with,” Smith says.

Nominations for these honors can come from parents, students or co-workers, and Smith has no idea who initially nominated him.
Once nominated, though, the process is a lot of work. The state award required eight essays, and the national honor will be even more comprehensive. The top four national candidates will be announced in January, with the winner decided in early spring.

“It’s nice to be able to get all this attention for our school and district,” Smith says.

“These outstanding teachers have my thanks and admiration for the work they do,” Torlakson said in his announcement. “They bring talent, dedication and more to a job that is as critical as it is challenging – and even more rewarding.”

For more information on the state’s Teacher of the Year program, visit http://bit.ly/1bdLpn4. Smith may be reached through Florin High School at tcsmith@egusd.net. – Craig Koscho

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