

# Program introduces science to young students

■ **TOURS:** The Science Outreach Program makes UO teaching resources available to area schools

By Laura Kepshire  
Higher Education Reporter

Five seventh grade girls from Pleasant Hill Junior High stood around a University biology professor who was holding a week-old tobacco horn worm.

The girls shrieked in disgust as they caught a glimpse of the fat, blue caterpillar. Rosy Banks courageously asked Professor Nathan Tublitz, "Can I hold one?"

Following her lead, the four other girls held out their hands expectantly and giggled, maintaining wary glances as caterpillars were placed in the palms of their hands.

"Oh, they feel weird — so soft!" exclaimed Nicole Ash as she cautiously touched the caterpillar.

This is just one of many tours that University professors have given this year as part of the Science Outreach Program, which was started by Tublitz and six other professors.

Tublitz created the Science Outreach Program this year to give elementary and middle school students a chance to become involved in science at an early age.

"The purpose of the program is to share the resources that the University has in science teaching and to make it available to the community, especially elementary and middle schools," said Paul Csonka, University physics professor and one of the seven main professors involved in the program.

Professors at the University have been independently introducing children to science for



Explaining bug anatomy, Graham Huesmann, a biology graduate, shows a small insect to Cascade Middle School 8th grade students during the school's science tour at the University science lab.

years, but Tublitz said he felt it would be helpful to the community if a unified group of scientists was formed.

This would give elementary teachers one place to find a wide variety of professionals to meet their needs.

"Now we have a formal means by which teachers can contact the scientists," Tublitz said. "[Teachers] have a number they can call that will deal with any request they may have."

The program consists of volunteers from University faculty and staff, post-doctorate students and undergraduates.

The program gives professors a chance to introduce science to younger children before they become preoccupied with pre-

conceived stereotypes that science is too hard or boring, Csonka said.

"I think some of us really like working with the little kids, because they are very interesting," Csonka said. "They are very receptive, because they are not yet cynical or preoccupied with their own problems. You do feel like you've made an impression [and] that maybe these children will be motivated later on to study it."

Csonka is one of many professors who have gone out to individual classrooms to talk to students and has brought science equipment to students to give the students more hands-on experience.

"The most important thing we

want people to know is that the University is a public institution and [it has] public resources. Not many people know they can use it. If more people knew about it then they would be less suspicious of everything going on here," Csonka said.

Csonka said it is important to share the University's science resources with schools that don't have the time or money to spend on science.

"We can easily provide them with the equipment they need," Csonka said.

Some of the professors have also met with schools and are giving advice to teachers about implementing more science in their curricula, Csonka said.

## Three professors recognized for excellence in teaching

■ **AWARDS:** The three professors each received a \$2000 salary increase

By Regina Brown  
Higher Education Editor

University President Dave Frohnmayer hand-delivered distinguished teaching awards to three University professors during class yesterday morning.

"It was surprising," said Carol Silverman, an Anthropology

professor. "I walked a photographer who started taking pictures, a vice-provost and the president. I thought either I did something really good or really bad."

Silverman, a professor emerita, is this year's recipient of the Thomas F. Herman Award for Distinguished Teaching.

Each year, students and University faculty nominate outstanding professors to receive the award, the University's highest

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honor for professors, said Ross West, a science writer for the University Office of Communications.

Professors Wesley Wilson and Linda Fuller received Ersted awards, a similar award for associate professors. Fuller teaches sociology and Wilson teaches economics.

Wilson teaches a statistics class in which students simulate his research on computers.

The winners received a crystal apple from President Frohnmayer in recognition of their work, and an additional \$2000 will be added to their base salaries.

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