

Posner wins prize for studies of cognition

■ **BRAIN:** The psychology professor researched human thought and neuro-imaging

By Laura Cadiz
Higher Education Reporter

After studying the human cognition process for over a decade, Michael Posner, psychology professor, has received a national award and is \$50,000 richer because of it.

Posner was notified three weeks ago that he and collaborator Marcus Raichle, M.D., a professor at Washington University in St. Louis, were the recipients of the 11th annual Charles A. Dana Award for Pioneering Achievements in Health and Education.

The award, which honors outstanding contributions to health in the United States, honors Posner and Raichle for researching neuro-imaging and understanding the cognitive process in the human brain. Next month Posner and Raichle will attend a dinner in their honor where they will receive the award and a \$50,000 cash prize.

"I appreciate it a lot," Posner said of the award. "It's a very nice thing to happen."

Posner and Raichle first met in 1985 when Washington University's neuro-imaging department was looking for a psychology professor who would help a group at the university approach the study of the human cognitive process. Because he was interested in higher mental functions, Posner was invited to speak at Washington University.

This resulted in Posner and Raichle teaming up to embark on a research journey that would eventually end in success. Posner then spent three years researching with Raichle while on leave from the University.

Posner first became interested in human cognition studies while he was working with stroke patients in a Portland hospital. "It [the research] is the result of the studies that I did with them," he said.

By conducting this research, Posner and Raichle have pioneered the use of neuro-imaging

and have added contributions to both the medical and educational field. "This is related to the contributions to the understanding of mental disorders such as Attention Deficit Disorder, schizophrenia and a wide range of mental illnesses that have been studied by others using the methods that we have worked out," Posner said.

Posner has been teaching here since 1965 and said his research is a common strand through all that he does, as he uses brain imaging methods to help his students understand the higher mental process.

Currently, Posner is researching new processes to look at the effect of cognitive rehabilitation in closed-head injuries. He is also following how infants' brains change as they mature and develop new skills. "I am currently working on both [projects] and others that are related to changes in brain circuitry in developing and learning new skills," Posner said.

Posner has goals for his current research as well. "I hope we discover interesting things and help some people," he said.

Citizens address plan's impact

■ **DRAFT:** University wants further expansion of its telecommunications network

By Christian Hill
Community Reporter

The Eugene City Council Committee on Telecommunications met Monday night to obtain citizen feedback about the impact of their draft telecommunications plan.

With the passage of the Telecommunications Bill of 1996 and its removal of some of that industry's restrictions, the CCT is attempting to enact a policy that will satisfy both citizen concerns and industry interests.

The committee held a meeting on Oct. 10 to get the telecommunications companies' feedback on the draft plan. The committee will take the feedback at the two meetings and finalize its telecommunications plan for Eugene in the coming weeks. The City Council is scheduled to adopt the CCT's final policy in late December.

"[The policy] will guide our overall planning effort," said Randy Kolb, information ser-

vices director for the city of Eugene.

Joanne Hugi, director of the Office of University Computing, sent a letter to Kolb and the committee, wishing for the further expansion of the University's telecommunications network. In it she stated: "The University has long had a vision of a state-of-the-art, high-speed telecommunications network hub to service the region by fostering economic development, broad educational delivery, and enhanced network capacity. A high-speed telecommunications infrastructure to the homes in our region is vitally important to achieving the goals of the University of Oregon."

Many representatives from Northwest Internet industries had concerns about the small role Internet services have in the draft plan, as compared to the wire-line and wireless telecommunications services. But all committee members and speakers agreed the top priority of the plan is to allow everyone access to services at a reasonable rate.

One of the primary issues that directly affect citizens is the placement and construction of

cellular towers for wireless communication.

Kolb says citizens complain when companies build too many towers near residential areas.

Jim Weaver, Eugene mayoral candidate, said he has contacted many experts, including those at the University, and learned no one knows the impact of EMFs on the body. He advised that the committee keep the number of towers to a minimum and keep them away from populated areas.

The CCT now has two options. One is to allow the moratorium to run out and "crank out" the policy, allowing less time to work out a final plan and less feedback from citizens. The second option is to allow a 45-day extension that allows for more work on the policy.

Committee, community and industry members will continue the discussion on the draft plan on Nov. 7.

Anyone interested in more information about the Eugene City Council Committee on Telecommunications can check out their web page at <http://204.203.17.34/council/telecomm>.

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