UNH Ph.D. Candidate Receives Major Experiential Education Award

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Recommended Citation
Potier, Beth, "UNH Ph.D. Candidate Receives Major Experiential Education Award" (2007). UNH Today. 929.
https://scholars.unh.edu/news/929

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December 3, 2007

DURHAM, N.H. – Carrie McGown, a Ph.D. candidate in outdoor education at the University of New Hampshire, was named Outstanding Experiential Teacher of the Year by the Association of Experiential Education (AEE) at that group’s annual international meeting in early November. The award recognizes an individual who demonstrates an active passion for experiential education principles and theories in teaching practice in a public or private school system.

“From running a canoe touring company to paddling across Canada, Carrie McGown has shaped her life to be about living, learning and teaching experientially,” said Kirsten Kindt, membership services manager at AEE. Kindt notes that at Briercrest College in Saskatchewan, where McGown has taught since 1999, she led students to the Northwest Territories on a two-and-a-half month canoe expedition that saw students bring a portable climbing wall to teach climbing in ten Aboriginal communities. McGown, along with her best friend, also became the first women to paddle across Canada – 5500 miles from ocean to ocean – in a canoe expedition sponsored by the Royal Canadian Geographic Society.

“We’re very proud of Carrie and her accomplishments,” said Michael Gass, professor and chairperson of kinesiology at UNH. “She is obviously a special and extremely valuable professional. Her work and background is indicative of the type of students we attract to our program here at UNH.”

McGown, a native of Parry Sound, Ontario, holds a B.A. in outdoor recreation from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario and an M.S. in experiential education from Minnesota State University in Mankato. She has been enrolled in the Ph.D. program at UNH since 2007; her focus is on the philosophy of education, particularly as experiential education relates to faith. McGown lives in Barrington.

AEE, a nonprofit, professional membership association dedicated to experiential education and the students, educators and practitioners who utilize its philosophy, is the major professional organization for outdoor educators. McGown was chosen from among 700 AEE members who identify themselves primarily as educators at schools or colleges. UNH’s Gass received the Experiential Teacher award in 1998, and in 2003, UNH’s outdoor education program received AEE’s Organizational Member of the Year award.

To learn more about the outdoor education program at UNH, go to http://www.chhs.unh.edu/kin_oe/.
