

# Twenty-Four Years of Teaching Science Has its Rewards

## Alumna receives Presidential Award for Outstanding Math and Science Teaching

Friday, September 23, 2016



*ROBIN ELLWOOD (CENTER) WITH ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY DIRECTOR JOHN P. HOLDREN AND JOAN FERRINI-MUNDY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES, NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION, AND FORMER FACULTY MEMBER IN MATHEMATICS AT UNH.*

Robin Ellwood '85 '93G '13G was among a select group of K-12 teachers nationwide to receive a prestigious Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in

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Washington D.C. earlier this month. Ellwood is an eighth-grade science teacher at Rye Junior High School in New Hampshire.

The Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching are the highest recognition that K-12 mathematics and science teachers may receive for outstanding teaching in the United States. The awards went to 213 teachers, representing two years of nominations.

Awardees receive a certificate signed by President Barack Obama, a trip to Washington D.C. to attend a series of recognition events and professional development opportunities, and a \$10,000 award from the National Science Foundation.

"The recipients of this award are integral to ensuring our students are equipped with critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are vital to our nation's success," President Obama said in a press release. "As the United States continues to lead the way in the innovation that is shaping our future, these excellent teachers are preparing students from all corners of the country with the science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills that help keep us on the cutting-edge."

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Ellwood, who has a B.A. in zoology, an M.Ed. in secondary education and a Ph.D. in education from UNH, has been teaching science at Rye Junior High School for 24 years. Even while on expedition to the Antarctic, she was able to teach, keeping in touch with students back home via the Internet as they followed her daily journal entries. Ellwood strives to inspire student learning through inquiry and project-based opportunities that promote

authentic application of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) concepts.

Students in Ellwood's classes engage in discussion, hands-on manipulation of materials, transference of classroom skills to field-based investigations, and work with community members and experts to delve into local, regional and global issues. Her students have built an underwater, remotely operated vehicle that was successfully deployed in Antarctica, and they are currently installing a remotely operated surveillance camera to study biological, physical and environmental dynamics within a secluded wetland ecosystem. She has received numerous grants, totaling in excess of \$45,000, to support innovative projects and opportunities for students.

"I am honored and humbled to receive this award and cherish the support from students, colleagues, administrators, community members and family that have made my efforts possible," said Ellwood.

WRITTEN [Susan Dumais '88 '02G](#) | College of Liberal Arts

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