

Henry L. Alder Awards

Brandy Wiegers

Central Washington University

As a faculty member at Central Washington University, Dr. Brandy Wiegers has demonstrated a level of distinguished teaching both inside and outside the classroom. Dr. Wiegers' teaching is highly interactive. From interactive worksheets in her calculus class to designing a class for math majors that uses writing projects and group presentations, Dr. Wiegers continues to broaden her teaching and impact her students. Her work within the classroom creates relationships that she fosters outside the classroom with major advising, graduate school application support, outreach work, and undergraduate research mentorship.

Dr. Wiegers has been especially involved in founding outreach and mentoring programs. She helped start the Kittitas Valley Math Circle through which more than sixty undergraduates have volunteered as mentors, spending time out of class working with Dr. Wiegers to learn about teaching and engaging in mathematical problem solving. More recently, Dr. Wiegers has expanded her efforts to support Spanish-speaking students in her local schools. She applied for and won an MAA Tensor SUMMA award and successfully launched a Spanish language-Math Circle for middle school students.

Dr. Wiegers also created and runs the Grad-CAMP (Graduates Creating Applications for More Professional Experiences) summer program, which supports students who are applying for graduate school and postgraduate work the summer before their graduation year. For the last five summers, she has run interactive workshop sessions for these students and mentored them through the application process. Through this she was able to work with the Mathematical Alliance of Doctoral Studies and the Field of Dreams Conference to partner CWU students with mentors for graduate school applications. As a final note, Dr. Wiegers has created the Central Convergence Research Experiences for Undergraduate (CCREU). Funded in 2018 and 2019 by a Mathematical Association of America National Research Experience for Undergraduates Program (MAA NREUP), the program has provided research experience for underrepresented undergraduates.

Dr. Brandy Wiegers has had an incredible start to her career as a mathematics professor, and we enthusiastically recommend her for the Alder Award.

Response

I am humbled to be a member of this list of award winners and to be recognized by the MAA. Most especially because the MAA has provided crucial support to the mathematician I have become, through grant funding of our community engagement programs to the MAA Teaching Guide and Project NExT experiences that I use in the classroom. That is why I am even more taken aback by this recognition. I thank the MAA for giving me this opportunity to hear from students about the impact that my work has had on their mathematical journey.

I must share that I cried twice on the day I received the news about the Alder Award, once in joyful surprise as I received the MAA email and second time in shared sorrow as a student shared a personal hardship that they had learned about while at JMM. I was struck the next day that these two experiences go hand in hand with one another, as I was only able to be there to support that student at JMM because of the relationship we gain through teaching. Thank you to the MAA for this poignant reminder of the impact that all of our work has on the community around us. Thank you also to the friends, colleagues, mentors, and most especially students who helped me become a mathematical learner and mentor.

Biographical Sketch

Dr. Brandy Wieggers is an Associate Professor at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington. She grew up in Meridian, Idaho having spent her youth as a dedicated Girl Scout and student. Her undergraduate work was at the University of Idaho where she graduated with Biological Systems Engineering and Mathematics Degrees. She completed a PhD in Applied Mathematics at the University of California, Davis in 2008. Her research focused on computational mathematical biology and numerical analysis. From Davis she worked at the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute as the founding director of the National Association of Math Circles. She then made her way to San Francisco State University as the Co-Director of the (CM)² NSF GK12 program and the Program Director of CSME Outreach and Student Success.

Her work at Central Washington University began in 2014. Over her tenure at Central she created the Kittitas Valley Math Circle and Math Circle Mentorship and Partnership (MC-MAP) programs while supporting other opportunities for students' mathematical exploration. These projects inspired her founding and working as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Math Circles (digitalcommons.cwu.edu/mathcirclesjournal/). Currently Dr. Wieggers serves as a counselor on the Council on Undergraduate Research and she is an officer in several of the Special Interest Groups of the MAA including undergraduate research (UR), recreational mathematics (REC), and Math Circles for Students and Teachers (MCST).