

USU Faculty Members Honored for Contributions in Science and Technology

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USU Executive Vice President and Provost Noelle Cockett



Michelle Baker, professor of biology



Dean of the College of Engineering Christine Hailey



Paul Hill, Extension professor, Washington County

Utah State University made an impressive showing in the 2015 Governor's Medals for Excellence in Science and Technology, with four faculty members honored for their contributions: Noelle Cockett, Michelle Baker, Christine Hailey and Paul Hill.

"It is always an honor when one of our outstanding professors is selected for this prestigious award by the governor," said USU's President Stan L. Albrecht. "This year, we are particularly privileged that four of our best and brightest were singled out and recognized for their many achievements over long and impactful careers in science and technology."

Noelle Cockett, USU's executive vice president and provost, was selected in the field of academia. Cockett is a world leader in sheep genomics, a critical resource not only for the global agricultural economy, but also for human and veterinary medicine. She worked on the international team that sequenced the sheep genome, and she has developed and distributed resources used on a daily basis by sheep genomics researchers. Cockett is only the second person to receive a Governor's Medal more than once; she was also a recipient in 2004.

USU honorees in the field of education are Michelle Baker, Christine Hailey and Paul Hill.

Baker is a professor of biology and leads iUTAH, a \$20 million multi-institution project funded by the National Science Foundation to study and protect the state's water resources.

Christine Hailey is the dean of the USU College of Engineering and a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering. Hailey is an advocate for graduate student programs and has been instrumental in increasing the participation of women in engineering at USU.

Paul Hill is a USU Extension professor in Washington County where he has brought nationally recognized STEM education programs. Since 2011, youths participating in Washington County's 4-H program have completed more than 1,400 STEM projects. Hill is the first USU Extension professor to receive a medal.

"Individually, their contributions are exceptional," said Mark McLellan, vice president for research and dean of the School of Graduate Studies at USU. "As a group, they create a powerful illustration of the benefits of combining cutting-edge research with statewide engagement to benefit Utah's students, workforce, environment and economy."

The last time four faculty members from USU received Governor's Medals was in 1988. The medals have been awarded since 1987.

The Governor's Medals for Excellence in Science and Technology are awarded to residents and companies who have provided distinguished service or made significant contributions to Utah's advanced scientific and technological knowledge, education and industry. Utah Governor Gary Herbert, along with the Utah Science Technology and Research (USTAR) agency and the Governor's Office for Economic Development announced the winners Dec. 15. The recipients will be honored at a gala on Jan. 13, 2016.

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