CELEST Participation at the Annual Meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)

For the past three years CELEST, an NSF-sponsored Science of Learning Center, has led key activities in the annual meeting of the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) [www.sacnas.org].

In 2007, CELEST sponsored a scientific symposium called “Frontiers of Neuroscience: How Does a Brain Give Rise to a Mind” that was held at the SACNAS meeting in Kansas City, Missouri. Our diversity outreach consultant, Prof. Ramon Lopez, served as the symposium chair and speakers included Professors Daniel Bullock, Jacqueline Liederman, and Ennio Mingolla as well as Prof. George Alvarez (then of MIT, now at Harvard) who has since joined the CELEST Governing Board. Two Hispanic females from SACNAS later applied to a doctoral program at Boston University in order to work with CELEST researchers as a direct result of this diversity outreach activity.

At the 2008 meeting, Lopez organized a Science of Learning Centers (SLC) scientific symposium entitled "Brain, Mind, Learning: Research at the Science of Learning Centers" at the SACNAS meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. Speakers were CELEST Professors Barbara Shinn-Cunningham and George Alvarez, Francis Balcom of SILC, and Kirsten Butcher from the University of Utah representing the PSLC. This session was so well-received that the SACNAS organizers asked Lopez to organize the 2009 meeting plenary session around a Science of Learning Centers theme.

The 2009 SACNAS meeting in Dallas, Texas featured an SLC plenary session called Learn-a-Palooza that included speakers from five of the six Science of Learning Centers and Dr. Joan Straumanis, program manager of the NSF SLC program. Prof. Frank Guenther of CELEST spoke in this panel session that was attended by the entire SACNAS conference (roughly 2000 people). Profs. Guenther and Alvarez also both gave smaller scientific symposia, each attended by about 150 people.

We look forward to participating in and continuing our diversity outreach efforts at the SACNAS 2010 conference.

CELEST Professor Frank Guenther engages with students at the 2009 SACNAS meeting.