FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Governor Honors University Educator for Excellence

WARRENSBURG, MO (Jan. 21, 2010) – Described by a colleague as a “model teacher at UCM who has earned tremendous respect from her students,” Shari Garber Bax, Ph.D., has been selected by the University of Central Missouri to receive the Missouri Governor’s Award for Excellence in Education.

Bax, an associate professor of political science, joins college and university educators from across the state for the awards ceremony to be sponsored by the Council on Public Higher Education Feb. 10 in Jefferson City. The announcement of her selection was made by George Wilson, UCM provost and vice president for academic affairs, during the Board of Governors’ meeting Jan. 21.

According to Wilson, the award is based on criteria that include: effective teaching at the undergraduate level; effective advising of undergraduate students; service to the college community; commitment to high standards of excellence; success in nurturing student achievement; and the impact the faculty member has had on the academic and personal lives of students.

Bax joined the Department of Political Science in August 1997, and since that time has taught courses such as American Government, State Government, Parties and Interest Groups, Campaigns and Elections, the American Presidency, and others related to politics and government. She designed the Legislative Politics course, and has strived to build hands-on opportunities for her students through her involvement in the State Government Internship program.

In nominating Bax, James Staab, chair of the Department of Political Science, praised her commitment to students, and her ability to incorporate innovative simulation experiences into the classroom. He noted, “Dr. Bax has an excellent rapport with students and works tirelessly on their behalf. Her classes are anything

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but ‘straight lectures’; she fosters an interactive environment in which students are encouraged to express their views and engage in classroom discussion.”

He pointed out her service as coordinator of the American Democracy Project since 2003 has opened many doors for students to gain hands-on experiences in learning about self-government and civic engagement. ADP sponsors programs such as Constitution Day, local election forums, candidate debate watches, voter registration opportunities and much more. Bax has also strived to teach students the value of being better stewards of their natural resources through her participation in Environmental Awareness Month activities such as the “Mess on the Mall” event and by bringing guest speakers to campus such as nationally known author Daniel Quinn.

Bax’s support for programs that foster a better understanding of politics and government has extended statewide as an academic consultant to Missouri Boys State and Missouri Girls State, which take place each summer at UCM.

Other activities that demonstrate her commitment to students include service as a faculty advisor to individual Honors Scholars and for groups such as Students for Political Action, College Democrats, Sue Shear Fellows, and Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority. She has dedicated her time to mentoring students underrepresented in higher education through the McNair Scholars program.

Bax has a strong record of campus involvement outside the classroom. Recently ending her term on the university Academic Standards Committee, she has contributed to UCM through her participation in numerous college and university committees such as the Human Subjects Review Committee, University Curriculum Committee, Ad Hoc Committee on Post Tenure Review, Writing Across the Curriculum Committee, and Foundations of Excellence Task Force.

She has shared her expertise with the state and local community through her membership on the Governor’s 2009 Citizen Transition Adviser Team and serving as commissioner for the 2001 Missouri House Apportionment Commission. Additionally, Bax has served as chair of the Warrensburg Planning and Zoning Commission and is a Supervisory Election Judge for Johnson County.

Students, faculty and staff have honored Bax over the years with most recent honors that include the 2008 College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences’ Meritorious Service Award, and recipient of the 2008 Professor of the Year Award presented by the Political Science Student Association.

Bax came to UCM from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, where she earned her doctorate in political science in 1997, and master’s degree in political science in 1994. She was awarded a bachelor’s degree from University of the South, Sewanee, TN, in 1992.

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