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Daley College prof wins national teaching award

By [Peter Sachs](#) • Education reporter • December 09, 2008 @ 3:30 PM

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A math professor at Daley College will be the first community college math teacher in the nation to win the most prestigious award from the Mathematical Association of America.

M. Vali Siadat will be presented with the Haimo Award for distinguished teaching of mathematics at the group's annual meeting in January.

Past awards have gone to professors at schools such as Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but never before to professors at two-year colleges.

"This is the first time a member of a two-year institution has been able to compete among so many others and receive this highly coveted award," Siadat told the City Colleges' Board of Trustees at a recent meeting.

Award recipients receive \$1,000 and a plaque, according to the math association's Web site – not to mention the burnished credentials of receiving such a well known award in the math field.

Siadat, who has taught at Daley for more than 20 years, received the award in part for developing a new method for teaching math that combines an emphasis on basic math abilities with more advanced problem-solving skills.

Known as the Keystone method, other instructors at Daley and at colleges across the nation have started using it in their math curricula, says Sonia Ramirez, the chairwoman of Daley's mathematics department.

"Especially for our department, we feel very proud of Dr. Siadat's accomplishment," Ramirez says.

Each year, the math association usually gives the award to three different professors from across the nation. Because the awards have not been given out yet, the association would not say who the other winners are, says Ryan Miller, a spokesman for the group.

Ramirez says Siadat was one of the main reasons she came to teach at Daley five years ago.

"One of the reasons that I came to Daley was because of him," Ramirez says. "I thought, 'That's a very cool thing to do, to do something to improve a student's mathematical skills.'"

"Of course, it's going to boost how people think about Daley College," says Sylvia Ramos, the president of Daley College. "This is wonderful for us and the