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Contact: Sean Lynch

slynch@acteonline.org, 703-683-9312

ACTE Announces Arkansas Health Science Technology Education Instructor as National Award Finalist

ALEXANDRIA, VA—The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announces Jessica Young, a health science technology education instructor at Southern Arkansas University (SAU) Tech Career Academy in Camden, Arkansas, as the 2015 ACTE Region IV New Teacher of the Year. The ACTE New Teacher of the Year award recognizes CTE teachers with three to five years' experience (at the middle, secondary or postsecondary level) who have made significant contributions toward innovative and unique CTE programs and shown a professional commitment early in their careers.

As a Health Science Technology Education instructor at SAU Tech Career Academy in Camden, Arkansas, Jessica Young enjoys implementing non-traditional methodologies in her classroom. Young has been a licensed nurse for the last 15 years, and in the first part of her career she gained hands-on experience in long-term care, home health and hospital environments. As part of her course, she brings students into these environments, which she says "can be uncomfortable," but provide a vital reality check for those interested in pursuing a career in the high-stakes health-care profession. She assigns project-based learning assignments, not just to develop necessary skills, but also to foster compassion for patients. For one such assignment, her students were tasked with interviewing nursing home patients and writing about their lives. "I never saw nursing homes as real homes until I did that assignment," says former student Taylor Watkins. "I gained a new perspective on life, giving thanks, compassion, and especially the safety and security of a home."

In addition to being an active member of ACTE, Young is also an avid supporter of SkillsUSA, for which she has held various leadership responsibilities. Her students have competed at the state level and earned four gold medals, and seven of her students have been chosen as state officers. Young employs humor, music and games in the classroom and minimalizes use of the textbook. Her interactive, hands-on methods have resulted in high course scores and requests from peers to teach them how to incorporate similar methods into their classes.

Young is one of five finalists for the 2016 national title. The national winner will be announced at the [ACTE Awards Banquet](#), a dinner and award presentation recognizing the best CTE educators in the country. The event will take place on Thursday evening, November 19, during ACTE's CareerTech VISION 2015 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Awards Banquet is sponsored by Express Employment Professionals, Kuder, CareerSafe, Certiport, and Stratasy. For more information about the ACTE Excellence Awards, [visit our webpage](#).

About ACTE

The [Association for Career and Technical Education \(ACTE\)](#) is the nation's largest not-for-profit association committed to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, guidance counselors and others at all levels of education. ACTE is committed to excellence in providing advocacy, public awareness and access to resources, professional development and leadership opportunities.

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