Balzan Prize is awarded to Susan Trumbore for contributions in Earth system dynamics

Thursday, September 17, 2020
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UCI News



UCI’s Susan Trumbore is a pioneer in the use of radiocarbon measurements in environmental research, particularly in how carbon flows from the atmosphere through plants and soils.

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Susan Trumbore, UCI professor of Earth system science, is among four recipients of the 2020 Balzan Prize, one of the most prestigious international awards in natural science and humanities. She was recognized for her contributions in the field of Earth system dynamics. Trumbore, who is also a director of the Max Planck Institute for Biogeochemistry in Jena, Germany, is a pioneer in the use of radiocarbon measurements in environmental research, particularly in how carbon flows from the atmosphere through plants and soils. She's also a leader in the application of accelerator mass spectrometry techniques to better understand the carbon cycle and climate change. "It's important to combine observations with quantitative models to develop a fundamental understanding of how organisms and ecosystems function," Trumbore said. "Through our work, we have been able to demonstrate that current global models overestimate the rate that carbon can be stored in soils, which should inform policies about how much CO2 can be safely emitted into the atmosphere by humans." The Balzan Prize includes an award of $830,000, half of which should be dedicated to further research projects involving young scientists.

Original Source
Earth System Science
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