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Lerner Honored at White House

APS Member **Jennifer S. Lerner**, Carnegie Mellon University, recently received the National Science Foundation's prestigious Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) at a White House ceremony. The PECASE program recognizes outstanding scientists and engineers who, early in their careers, show exceptional potential for leadership at the frontiers of knowledge. It is the highest national honor for researchers in the early stages of their careers.



Lerner

"This award is a testament to [Lerner's] talents and hard work, as well as a tribute to Carnegie Mellon's interdisciplinary approach to research and education," Carnegie Mellon Provost Mark Kamlet said.

Lerner is head of the Emotion and Decision Laboratory at Carnegie Mellon. Drawing primarily on psychology as well as economics and neuroscience, the lab examines the influence of emotion on human thought and action. Lerner's recent work revolves around two domains: judgments of risk and choices in economic transactions. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Lerner and her colleagues found that Americans who experience anger over the attacks are more optimistic about the future, less likely to take precautionary actions, and more likely to favor aggressive responses than those who experience fear.

More recently, Lerner authored a ground-breaking study that found that seemingly incidental emotions can influence the prices at which individuals buy and sell goods. Lerner's research revealed that people who are sad are willing to accept less money to sell something than they would pay for the same object. The study was published in the May 2004 issue of *Psychological Science*, and can be read at www.psychologicalscience.org/journals/.