

Foundation awards ASU researchers

Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) has awarded \$1.5 million to seed the first round of research grants to eight ASU professors.

The awards are designed to provide a catalyst for researchers of exceptional quality to help secure future federal funding, and support researchers in the areas of advanced communications and information technologies, biosciences, and sustainable systems.

The ASU recipients and their areas of research are:

Chitta Baral, a new bioinformatics tool; John Crittenden, tools and strategies for more sustainable urban development; Joe Fernando, predictive models of air circulation patterns for urban planning; and Sandeep Gupta, creative methods to boost efficiency, manage power consumption and address thermal management issues.

Also, Sudhir Kumar, expansion of a bioinformatics database, called TimeTree; Valerie Stout, investigation of a bacterium that has relevance to Arizona crops such as citrus and cotton; Wim Vermaas, looking at a photosynthetic bacteria that has high potential as a sustainable biofuel; and Neal Woodbury, nanoscale techniques and imaging to understand gene regulatory networks.

“The projects funded by [this grant] are significant because of the impact they will have in their fields and their potential to help create a research environment that supports a knowledge-driven economy,” says William Harris, president of SFAz.

NSF aids energy programs

ASU’s Electronic Systems department at the Polytechnic campus has received a \$900,000 National Science Foundation grant to develop alternative energy programs and courses in conjunction with community colleges in Arizona and Texas.

The Arizona-Texas Consortium for Alternative and Renewable Energy Technologies Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Project and ASU’s Electronic Systems department will partner with education, government and industry to help develop programs that better prepare and increase the number of students completing associate applied science degrees, certificate programs and bachelor’s degrees to meet the work

force needs of the energy, transportation and electronic industries.

In addition, the ATE project will create industry internships, provide training to improve the skills of the existing work force, offer professional development activities to teachers in grades 9-16, and serve as a nationwide and statewide public awareness vehicle.

Cronkite students excel

The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication has been named first in the nation in the annual Hearst Journalism Awards.

“The Hearst Awards are the gold standard for college journalism, and this year’s first-place finish is a testament to the truly remarkable team of talented students and dedicated teachers,” says Christopher Callahan, dean of the Cronkite School.

The school also claimed top awards from the National Press Photographers Association (two first-place awards), the Broadcast Education Association (eight awards) and the Society of Professional Journalists (35 awards) for work done by students during the past year.

Senior research earns recognition

ASU’s James McCabe was part of a research team awarded the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) research award for 2007.

McCabe, assistant professor of social work in the College of Human Services, served as a research consultant for the Boomer-ANG Project, which conducted an extensive analysis to look at the status, needs and opportunities that exist for the leading-edge “baby boomer” generation.

“To better serve the needs of this emerging population, we recommended, among other things, that senior centers establish a new ‘identify’ or ‘brand’ beyond their senior service focus. Today’s senior centers offer many sedentary programs, such as knitting and bingo, which simply will not appeal to boomers.”

Engineering students earn scholarships

Eric Anderson, a bioengineering sophomore, and Allison Engstrom, a materials science and engineering junior, have received Goldwater Scholarships.

The \$7,500 scholarship, the nation’s highest award for undergraduates planning careers in scientific research, is given on academic merit, as well as the extent and sophistication of the student’s undergraduate research.

Anderson has worked to develop improved drug delivery models and also focused on brain research and better understanding of glioblastoma, the most aggressive and invasive type of brain tumor.

Engstrom’s research is in promising nanotechnology to improve the efficiency of fuel cells, a “green” technology that can cleanly generate electrical power for homes and cars while producing only water and heat as byproducts.

Executive education receives boost

The ASU School of Public Affairs’ executive education is expanding across the southwestern U.S. through a major investment of \$1 million from local businessman Bob Ramsey.

The contribution ensures that public executives in the newly named Bob Ramsey Executive Education Program will receive premier education in building public-private partnerships, leadership, ethics and community resilience.

“I have learned that many business leaders want to be part of public policy solutions, and I think this investment in public official education will help accelerate these partnerships,” says Ramsey.

Three earn Udall Scholarships

Three women, all single mothers in their 30s and 40s, with 10 children between them and dreams of helping Native American communities, have won national Udall Scholarships of \$5,000 each.

Sharon Cini, an American Indian Studies major, wants to become a health care administrator in the hospital at her grandmother’s hometown on the Navajo reservation.

Jennifer Jackson, majoring in elementary education and in family studies, plans to become a school principal and then a superintendent on the Navajo reservation.

Andrea Garfinkel-Castro, an urban planning major, aims to bring energy conservation and energy management to affordable housing projects, including those in Native American communities.