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LTER Office at UNM Receives \$15.6 Million in Funding

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August 19, 2009

LTER Network Office at UNM Receives \$15.6 Million in Funding



The Long Term Ecological Research (LTER) Network Office, based in the Biology Department at the University of New Mexico, has been awarded \$15.6 million by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support its scientific research activities for the next six years. The two-part funding includes a \$6.7 million award for five years from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) to support cyberinfrastructure development for integrated network science in LTER, and \$8.9 million as renewal of the LTER Network Office (LNO)'s core Cooperative Agreement between NSF and UNM for six years.

“Significant changes in the vision for LTER network science have taken place since our last renewal in 2003, based on decadal strategic planning by the LTER community,” observed Robert B. Waide, the LNO Executive Director and a Lead Principal Investigator who will be responsible for implementing the award. “The stimulus funding will provide the first opportunity to implement the new scientific goals described in the Decadal Plan for LTER.

“This plan envisions collaborations between ecologists and social scientists to create a new body of theory that draws on and incorporates information technology and the most advanced educational approaches to amplify the social impact of this vision,” he said, adding that as a result, the LNO also identified needs for additional support to address new network synthesis, cyberinfrastructure, and governance goals.

To ensure accountability, LNO will undergo periodic reviews by external panels chosen by NSF during the duration of the awards, including the usual triennial reviews stipulated under the Cooperative Agreement.

NSF established the U.S. LTER program in 1980 to support research on long-term ecological phenomena in the United States. The Network, a collaborative effort involving more than 1800 scientists and students, comprises 26 research sites distributed throughout the U.S. mainland, the Caribbean, the Pacific island of Moorea, and Antarctica.

The LTER Network Office was created by NSF in 1983 to support and coordinate network and site activities of the LTER Network and moved to UNM in 1997. The Office provides a central point of contact and collective expertise to support the research and education goals of the LTER Network, represent the network in interactions with other scientific networks and institutions, facilitate operation of the network as a cohesive research entity, and foster new, broadly-based initiatives that extend LTER science, education, and cyberinfrastructure to new communities.

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UNM Research Prepares for the Future, Examines the Past, Explores the Complexity of Life



A look at the top-10 research stories from UNM in 2009

Between the economy, the political battles over jobs, health care and the environment, 2009 was a somber year. But behind all the depressing headlines there were solid accomplishments and progress in research at UNM. Here's a chance to look at some of the top stories in research.

1. UNM Cancer Center Researchers Identify New Mutant Genes

In 2009 researchers at the UNM Cancer Center identified a genetic mutation underlying one of the most common childhood cancers, acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). About 37 children are diagnosed with the disease in New Mexico every year. The discovery could lead to more effective treatments for patients who experience little benefit from drugs targeted toward adults. [More...](#)

2. One Can Act Without Group Support; Even in the Bacterial World

When you isolate a bacterium, it immediately begins to try to change its reality. Researchers found it can begin to genetically reprogram itself to adapt and thrive. The researchers were looking at how bacteria behave. It's long been thought that bacteria needed to act as a group, sending out signals among themselves to behave in a certain way. But it doesn't seem to be that way at all. [More...](#)

3. UNM Cancer Center Designated as NIH Center for Systems Biology

UNM researchers are also beginning to look at how cells 'talk' to each other. The UNM Cancer Center received money from the National Institutes of Health this year to set up a Center for Systems Biology. They are looking at what events trigger cancer and other diseases at the cellular level. [More...](#)

4. Sexual Encounters of the Third Kind: Darwin's Beetles Still Producing Surprises

The reproductive lives of animals is complicated, and even more so for the various species of beetles. UNM researchers have found that males come in three physical forms, alpha, beta and gamma. [More...](#)

5. UNM's CETI Program Awarded \$10.7 Million Grant from National Institutes of Health

UNM researchers are thinking about how viruses attack, both in mammals and in computers. A new Center for Evolutionary and Theoretical Immunology (CETI) grant to the Biology Department for \$10.7 million will allow researches in different departments to collaborate on research into the spread of disease. [More...](#)

6. LTERT Network Office at UNM Receives \$15.6 Million in Funding

The National Science Foundation studies the way ecological systems change over decades. At the Long Term Ecological Research Network Office based in the Biology Department at UNM a new \$15.6 million grant will allow researchers to study how plants and animals react to changing climate conditions at a station north of Socorro. The money will be spent to support research activity at the site over the next six years. [More...](#)

7. DataONE (Observation Network for Earth) Project at UNM Receives \$20 Million Award

Scientists have been researching and publishing data since 1950 for the National Science Foundation. Grants are given to specific researchers who report their findings using a variety of programs and organizational systems. No one has ever tried to put the individual results from thousands of studies together into a searchable data base that could be used by anyone. Until now. UNM Professor and director of e-science at University Libraries William Michener has been given \$20 million over the next five years to begin building a cyber infrastructure for sharing science. [More...](#)

8. Scientists at UNM, USC and Utah State Study Colorado Magmatism and Uplift

The Colorado Plateau centered in the Four Corners area of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah is about 2.2 kilometers above sea level. However, the rocks that drape the plateau show that it was sea level 65 million years ago. Geologists have long argued over what pushed the plateau above the surrounding landscape. Now researchers from UNM, the University of Southern California and Utah State University think they have figured it out. [More...](#)

9. [Center for High Tech Materials Celebrates 25th Anniversary](#)

Your laptop is getting smaller and faster because places like the Center for High Technology Materials at UNM are doing some of the hard work of figuring out how to make the next generations of computer chips more efficient. Their original research is already in your laptop. But that's only part of what they do.

[More...](#)

10. [UNM Research Team Finds Evidence Cacao Ritually Used in Chaco Canyon](#)

If just reading all this has been exhausting, kick back and have a cup of hot chocolate. That's what people in New Mexico have been doing for more than a thousand years. Anthropologist Patricia Crown has found that the inhabitants of Chaco Canyon were drinking and treasuring chocolate at a time when Western European culture was just emerging from the Dark Ages. [More...](#)

For more stories about some of the amazing research conducted at UNM, visit and read Quantum, UNM's online publication of research, scholarship and creative works at: [2010 Quantum](#).

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Posted by scarr at 04:23 PM | [Comments \(0\)](#)