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GOVERNOR BUSH APPLAUDS RESEARCH FUNDING AWARDS TO UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

UCF takes away three of the 30 awards

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Contact: RUSSELL SCHWEISS (850) 488-5394

TALLAHASSEE - Governor Jeb Bush congratulated Florida's university-based research community on their outstanding performance in the 2006 Department of Defense (DoD) Multidisciplinary University Research Initiative (MURI) grant program. The University of Central Florida (UCF) received three of 30 grants awarded to 20 universities. The MURI grants awarded total more than \$150 million, with Florida's grant contracts expected to be valued at approximately \$15 million.

"Advancing Florida's ability to sustain a strong science-based research and development community is paramount to diversifying Florida's economy," said Governor Bush. "This is tremendous honor for Florida's research community, and in particular, for the scientists and researchers at UCF. These projects will continue to build Florida's reputation as an 'Innovation Hub of the Americas'."

The only other university receiving three lead-institution MURI awards is Caltech, followed by MIT, the University of Michigan, Penn State and Arizona State, who received two awards each. Two of the University of Central Florida awards came out of the Florida Photonics Center of Excellence; the third is from UCF's Institute for Simulation and Training.

MURI Awards presented to UCF:

- Dr. Martin Richardson as Principal Investigator will study "Ultrafast Laser Interaction Processes For LIBS and Other Sensing Technologies." Other institutions participating with UCF's Center for Research and Education in Optics and Lasers (CREOL) as the lead are University of Nebraska, Lincoln, University of California, Berkeley, Johns Hopkins University, and Florida A&M University. Dr. Richardson is also Co-PI with Prof. John Ballato, Clemson University, on a MURI to study "High Power Fiber Lasers."
- Dr. Eduardo Salas of Institute of Simulation and Training and UCF's Department of Psychology. Salas is Principal Investigator with Drs. Florian Jentsch, Steve Fiore and Shawn Burke as Co-PIs, focusing on "Cognition and Collaboration in Network Centric Operations."

· Dr. Van Stryland as Principal Investigator, with Dr. Pieter Kik as co-PI, will study "Ultrafast Switching for Optical Imaging." Other institutions participating with CREOL as the lead are Georgia Institute of Technology, Purdue University, and University of Arizona. Additionally, Dr. Stryland is also a participant on a MURI award to Kent State, led by Dr. Palfy-Muhoray, to study Negative Index Materials.

The grant program provides funding to academic institutions to identify and encourage large-scale, multi-disciplinary research that represent exceptional opportunities for future DoD applications and technology. The average award is \$3 million over three years, with possible additional funding available (up to a total of five years).

"I congratulate the grant recipients and, indeed, all of Florida's research community," added Jack Sullivan, President and CEO of the Florida Research Consortium. "The award of these MURI grants really validates Florida's focus on science-based research. In particular, these awards point to the need for an expanded university-based Centers of Excellence program. Florida's academic research model must include a strong focus on collaborative research that translates into commercial applications, whether in the defense fields, or in medical or other high-tech industries. Ultimately this research translates into knowledge-based jobs of the future, and new companies with emphasis on science and technology based industries. The Centers of Excellence allows us to do just that."

Said M.J. Soileau, Vice President for Research, of UCF, "This is really a tremendous honor, and speaks to what the University of Central Florida does best. By creating an atmosphere in which cutting-edge research and development activities can thrive, and focusing on research that supports Florida's high tech economic sectors, universities will be source of highly useful technologies, ideas and inventions that can be commercialized. This commercialization will lead to new science and technology based companies and new high-wage, knowledge based jobs. The UCF awards directly support the key economic sectors of simulation and training, and optics and photonics. It's an honor to support these researchers, and the Florida Photonics Center of Excellence."

According to Randall Shumaker, director of UCF's Institute for Simulation and Training, the award also acknowledges UCF's and central Florida's position in the modeling, simulation and training industry. "Defense, local industry and the academic community-from graduate school to community college to high school magnet programs-have worked together for years," says Shumaker. "Add the well-respected human factors psychology community and you have a critical mass of modeling, simulation and training expertise that will stand up to any others."

The University of Central Florida's Institute for Simulation and Training (IST) is an internationally recognized research institute that focuses on advancing modeling and simulation technology and increasing understanding of simulation's role in training and education. As a research unit of the university's Office of Research and Commercialization, the institute's approximately 150 faculty, staff and students provide a wide range of research and information technology services for the modeling, simulation and training community.

The University of Central Florida's College of Optics & Photonics is a graduate college for optical science and engineering education, and research. The UCF College of Optics & Photonics is recognized as one of the top three independent optics academic departments in the nation. The College offers interdisciplinary graduate programs leading to MS and Ph.D. degrees in optics. CREOL, The Center for Research and Education in Optics and Lasers, and FPCE , the Florida Photonics Center of Excellence, are research centers within the college.