UCF Researchers Receive Record $121.4 Million in Funding in 2006-07

RESEARCHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA received a record $121.4 million in outside grant funding in the 2006-07 fiscal year. Double-digit percentage increases in education, engineering, optics and simulation contributed significantly toward the overall 18 percent increase over last year’s funding.

The 2006-07 fiscal year marks the third consecutive year in which UCF researchers have surpassed $100 million in research funding. They collected $104.4 million in 2005-06.

“Research funding is often perceived as an indicator of the quality of a university’s research,” said Dr. Jose M. Soileau, UCF’s vice president for Research and Commercialization. “UCF researchers routinely compete with their peers at the nation’s top research universities for federal project funding.”

For example, Eduardo Sales, a psychology professor and scientist at the Institute for Simulation and Training (IST), received $1 million a year from the Office of Naval Research for a five-year project on how team members process information to develop a shared understanding of their tasks. The research aims to help the military better coordinate rescues of missing aid workers and other complex missions.

The project began in 2006 with a theoretical study and will continue this fall with experiments on how team members’ understanding is affected by command and control.

By drawing upon experts in psychology, philosophy, computer science and engineering, the project is exactly the type of multidisciplinary work that helped IST increase its research funding to $34 million, a 72 percent increase over the previous year.

“Over a three-year period, we augmented our research resources and sought increased collaboration with other UCF units, other universities and potential partners outside the academic community,” said Randall Shumaker, director of IST. “These initiatives provided the opportunity to produce more proposals and compete for more comprehensive efforts that we could not have hoped to accomplish alone.”

UCF researchers received $57 million from federal government agencies, $32 million from state agencies, and $32 million from industries and other sources in the 2006-07 fiscal year, which concluded June 30.

“The College of Engineering and Computer Science attracted $20.9 million in funding, largely as a result of recruiting and retaining faculty who aggressively pursue grants,” said Debra Reinhart, professor and executive associate dean.

Engineering projects included $957,000 for the development and testing of wastewater treatment systems for removing nutrients from septic tanks. The grant was awarded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection by Ni-Bin Chang and Martin Wanielista, professors of Civil and Environmental Engineering. “Nutrients encourage algae plant growth in some water systems where it can be harmful,” Wanielista said. One of those nutrients, nitrogen, has been shown to cause health problems in children.

In another collaborative project, assistant professor Richard Eastes of the Florida Space Institute and adjunct associate professor Jayant Wanielista said. One of those nutrients, nitrogen, has been shown to cause health problems in children.

In another collaborative project, assistant professor Richard Eastes of the Florida Space Institute and professor James Harvey of the College of Optics and Photonics received $1 million from NASA to design a robot to help astronauts build a multipurpose structure in space. Their research includes $200,000 from Florida Power and Light to develop an ultraviolet imaging spectrometer that would give scientists a better view of how space weather affects the earth.

The College of Engineering led all UCF colleges and institutes with $21.1 million in research funding in 2006-07. Much of that total came from state programs focused on teaching reading and literacy. Federally funded projects include $403,000 received by associate professors Lee Cross and Lynn Hartle to train specialists to work with families of infants and toddlers and $418,000 received by professor Wilfred Wanielista of the College of Engineering. “Nutrients encourage algae plant growth in some water systems where it can be harmful,” Wanielista said. One of those nutrients, nitrogen, has been shown to cause health problems in children.

In another collaborative project, assistant professor Richard Eastes of the Florida Space Institute and professor James Harvey of the College of Optics and Photonics received $1 million from NASA to design an ultraviolet imaging spectrometer that would give scientists a better view of how space weather affects the earth.

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10-YEAR RESEARCH FUNDING HISTORY, 1998-2007

TOTAL FEDERAL AWARDS, 1998-2007
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“Research funding is often perceived as an indicator of the quality of a university’s research. At UCF, that is especially true because several of the large grants that researchers received were extremely competitive,” said M.J. Soileau, UCF’s vice president for Research and Commercialization.

“UCF researchers routinely compete with their peers at the nation’s top research universities for federal project funding,” Soileau said. “Increasingly, UCF scientists are the ones being funded.

For example, Eduardo Salas, a psychology professor and scientist at the Institute for Simulation and Training (IST), received $1 million a year from the Office of Naval Research for a five-year project on how team members process information to develop a shared understanding of their tasks. The research aims to help the military better coordinate rescues of missing air and water crews.

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The College of Optics and Photonics received $61.1 million, including $45 million to establish a state center of excellence in advanced laser technology. These funds helped build the Townes Laser Institute, which was dedicated in May.
10-YEAR RESEARCH FUNDING HISTORY, 1998-2007

TOTAL FEDERAL AWARDS, 1998-2007
2007 SPONSORED RESEARCH PROGRAM AWARDS BY SPONSOR TYPE

- **FEDERAL**: $32.3 M
- **STATE**: $32.0 M
- **PRIVATE/OTHER**: $571 M

2007 RESEARCH AWARDS BY ACADEMIC UNIT

- **Student Development and Enrollment Services**: $3,635,617
- **Yueng College of Hospitality Management**: $70,777
- **Neuroscience Technology Center**: $1,000,000
- **Institute for Simulation and Training**: $74,996,239
- **College of Health and Public Affairs (COHPA)**: $6,434,497
- **Florida Solar Energy Center (FSEC)**: $6,821,014
- **College of Education**: $2,014,914
- **Continuing Education**: $3,370,740
- **College of Science**: $9,299,341
- **College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS)**: $50,000,000
- **College of Nursing**: $1,144,990
- **College of Optics and Photonics**: $16,567,071
- **Barrett College of Biomedical Sciences**: $7,666,214
- **College of Arts and Humanities**: $718,086
- **Administration and Other**: $4,636,656
- **Advanced Materials Processing and Analysis Center (AMPAC)**: $2,414,956

Total: $571 M