

April 28, 2009

New UCSB Energy Research Center Funded with \$19 Million from Stimulus Act

Santa Barbara, California, April 28, 2009

UC Santa Barbara's Institute for Energy Efficiency will be home to one of 46 new multi-million-dollar Energy Frontier Research Centers (EFRCs) announced today by the White House.

The UCSB EFRC is one of 16 to be funded by President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It will receive a total of \$19.0 million over the five-year initial award period. The EFRCs, which will pursue advanced scientific research on energy, are being established by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science at universities, national laboratories, nonprofit organizations, and private firms across the nation.

Professor John Bowers is director of UCSB's EFRC, the Center on Materials for Energy Efficiency Applications, and also of the university's Institute for Energy Efficiency. "The award of this center supports and strengthens the two core missions of the Institute for Energy Efficiency: creating new technologies for energy efficiency, and training a new generation of energy scientists and engineers," Bowers commented. "We're delighted by the recognition, and by the confidence shown by the DOE in the research leadership of our faculty and our partners."

The Center on Materials for Energy Efficiency Applications will be established as a new interdisciplinary center under the aegis of the Institute for Energy Efficiency. The objective of the center is to discover and develop materials that control the interactions between light, electricity, and heat at the nanoscale, for significantly improved efficiencies in solar energy conversion, solid-state lighting, and thermoelectrics for conversion of heat into electricity. The center's research plans include collaboration with scientists at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, UC Santa Cruz, and the University of Michigan.

UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang stated that he is "thrilled about this exciting recognition of the pioneering research of our Institute for Energy Efficiency." He went on to note, "This prestigious \$19 million EFRC grant is a testament both to the achievements of our IEE faculty and to the Institute's strengths?"

The 46 EFRCs, each to be funded in the range of \$2-5 million per year for a planned initial five-year period, were selected from 260 applications received in response to a solicitation by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science in 2008. Selection was based on a rigorous merit review process by panels composed of scientific experts from outside the Department of Energy. Of the 46 EFRCs selected, 31 are led by universities, 12 by DOE National Laboratories, two by nonprofit organizations, and one by a corporate research laboratory.

Among the 46 EFRCs selected for funding, job creation was the criterion for providing Recovery Act funding, as is UCSB's. Those 16 EFRCs chosen for full five-year funding under the Recovery Act provide the most employment for postdoctoral associates, graduate students, undergraduates, and technical staff.

Over the five-year initial period, UCSB's Center on Materials for Energy Efficiency Applications will employ:

- An average of 24 graduate student researchers
- An average of two postdoctoral researchers
- 14 undergraduate researchers
- An associate director
- An administrative assistant

The award will also provide support for twenty faculty members here and for additional faculty members and researchers at our partner institutions.

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Relevant websites:

- [UCSB Institute for Energy Efficiency](#)
- [Department of Energy's Energy Frontier Research Centers](#)
- [White House Fact Sheet: A Historic Commitment to Research and Education](#), on the occasion of President Obama's speech to the National Academy of Sciences
- [Audio](#) and [Video](#) of President Obama's Speech

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About the College of Engineering at UC Santa Barbara

The College of Engineering at UC Santa Barbara is a global leader in bioengineering, chemical and computational engineering, materials science, nanotechnology and physics. UCSB boasts five Nobel Laureates (four in sciences and engineering) and one winner of the prestigious international Millennium Technology Prize. Our students, professors, and staff thrive in a uniquely-successful interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial culture. Our professors' research is among the most cited by their peers, evidence of the significance and relevance of their work.

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Related Links

[UCSB Institute for Energy Efficiency](#)

[Department of Energy's Energy Frontier Research Centers](#)

[White House Fact Sheet: A Historic Commitment to Research and Education](#)

[Video of President Obama's Speech](#)

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