

## **Kansas EPSCoR Awarded \$20 Million from the National Science Foundation for Climate Change and Renewable Energy Research**

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A \$20 million award from the National Science Foundation (NSF) will further establish Kansas as an internationally recognized leader in global climate change and renewable energy research.

The five-year award to Kansas NSF EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research), a statewide program that includes major Kansas research universities, will provide a fresh integrative approach to address climate change and renewable energy challenges.

The grant is a multi-institutional, multi-sector effort that will link four universities: the University of Kansas (KU), Kansas State University (K-State), Wichita State University (WSU) and Haskell Indian Nations University; three Kansas-based companies: Abengoa Bioenergy, MGP Ingredients, and Nanoscale, and two companies outside of the state: ADM (Illinois) and Netcrystals (California) in a massive research effort. The initiative will also be supported by \$4 million in matching funds from KU, K-State and Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation (KTEC).

“This is a tremendous opportunity for the state of Kansas,” said Kristin Bowman-James, principal investigator and project director of Kansas’ EPSCoR program. “With this funding we will be able to harness the talents of researchers across the state to address two major issues of society today -- climate change and renewable energy -- under the umbrella of a single integrated initiative. We envision that this interdisciplinary research effort, bridging across the natural and social sciences and engineering, will ultimately allow Kansas to be a key leader in research that addresses serious global challenges.”

The *Climate Change and Renewable Energy* initiative spans a variety of disciplines, with five team leaders. Chuck Rice, University Distinguished Professor of Agronomy at K-State, leads the group that will use climate modeling tactics to predict the effects of climate change. Dietrich Earnhart, Associate Professor of Economics at KU and colleagues will assess how farmers make decisions about which crops to grow. Judy Wu, University Distinguished Professor of Physics at KU, will explore the use of nanotechnology to harness solar energy with a cadre of scientists and engineers. Dan Wildcat, Director of Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) Center and acting Vice-President of Academic Affairs at Haskell, and Joane Nagel, University Distinguished Professor of Sociology at KU, will work with tribal college students in exploring climate change and energy issues on Native American lands, while developing an educational pathway for Native Americans to earn doctoral degrees.

About 40 scientists are currently involved in the collaborative consortium, representing a vast array of disciplines, including agronomy, anthropology, computer science, economics, geography, mathematics, sociology, engineering, biology, chemistry and physics.

“This large award from the National Science Foundation for research in climate change and renewable energy showcases the talent of faculty researchers not only at KU but throughout Kansas,” said KU Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little. “The project is particularly impressive since it includes so many disciplines across institutional lines.”

EPSCoR is a federal program that targets states that have traditionally been underfunded in the sciences and engineering. In part, funding comes to EPSCoR jurisdictions through the Research Infrastructure Improvement (RII) program, which makes awards on a competitive basis for proposals that are aligned with the State’s science and technology needs. For more information on NSF EPSCoR see:

<http://www.nsfepscor.ku.edu/>