OSU honors faculty for excellence in research

Each year, Oklahoma State University recognizes outstanding faculty members for their excellence in research. Each Regents Distinguished Research Award winner is recognized nationally and internationally for achievements in their respective fields of study. Winners are honored every year at Fall Convocation. This year’s winners are:

Dr. Jayson Lusk, professor and endowed chair from the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Lusk is among the most prominent scholars working on the economics of food consumption and policy. He is editor of the Oxford Handbook of the Economics of Food Consumption and Policy, and co-author of the undergraduate textbook, Agricultural Marketing. He sits on the editorial boards of six international scientific journals, and serves on the executive committee of two agricultural economics associations.

Dr. James Huston, Regents professor from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Huston is a nationally recognized scholar on nineteenth-century U.S. political economy, centering on the Civil War years. A central theme in his research is the use of current economic theories to guide understanding of policy issues at the state and national level. He also studies American concepts of distribution of wealth and the northern fear of slavery. He has published 30 articles and four books, and has been an invited presenter at numerous historical conferences.

Dr. John Mintmire, Regents professor from the College of Arts and Sciences.

Mintmire has an established international reputation in materials science and physics. His research focuses primarily on computational simulations, particularly involving carbon nanotubes. He is a Fellow in both the American Physical Society and the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry. He has authored or co-authored 100 publications during his career, 25 since arriving at OSU in 2001.

Dr. Betty Simkins, professor and Williams Co. Chair from the Spears School of Business.

Simkins is a global voice in financial research, particularly risk management. She was recently appointed to the Strategic Risk Council Advisory Committee for the Conference Board of Canada. Simkins is the first non-Canadian and the first academic to serve on this oversight committee. Her first book, Enterprise Risk Management: Today’s Leading Research and Best Practices for Tomorrow’s Executives, was published by Wiley in January.

Dr. Carolyn Henry, professor from the College of Human Environmental Sciences.

Henry is a leading family science researcher, studying families and adolescents within contexts. Her research was among the first to examine how parenting and overall family systems work in concert to promote child or adolescent development. Henry’s emphasis on the integration of theory, research and practice is evident through publications in refereed journals, invited book chapters and practitioner-oriented publications that translate research findings into practice. Henry’s has mentored over 20 graduate and doctoral students during her career, many of whom now participate in instruction and research.

Dr. Robert Fulton, professor and endowed chair from the Center for Veterinary Health Sciences.

Fulton is a renowned expert on bovine infectious diseases. He has received over $2.8 million in external grants from agencies like the National Science Foundation and Pfizer Animal Health. His work has resulted in several vaccines and diagnostic tests for cattle. His career includes 105 published refereed papers, numerous awards, including the 2009 Pfizer Award for Research Excellence, and frequent presentations at national and international meetings.

Dr. Gregory Sawyer, associate professor from the Center for Human Environmental Sciences.

Sawyer's research focuses on the trafficking of muscarinic acetylcholine receptors. He has received grants from the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology and the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Sawyer has authored several journal articles and a book chapter and is an active member of both the Society for Neuroscience and the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics. Author's note: Not pictured: Drs. Lusk, Gasem and Fulton.
OSU names 2010-11 Niblack Research Scholars

Oklahoma State University has selected 12 undergraduate students to participate in the 2010-11 Niblack Research Scholars program. Funded by a gift from OSU alumnus Dr. John Niblack, each student will receive an $8,000 scholarship and will have the unique opportunity to conduct research as undergraduates.

The 2010-11 Niblack Research Scholars are:

- Josiah Couch, a junior majoring in physics from Duncan, Okla.
- Joshua Damon, a junior double majoring in chemistry and biochemistry from Stillwater, Okla.
- Sarah Firdaus, a senior majoring in biochemistry from Stillwater, Okla.
- Danielle Hentges, a junior majoring in chemical engineering from Jenks, Okla.
- James Le, a junior majoring in chemistry from Oklahoma City, Okla.
- Jared Pembroke, a junior majoring in biochemistry and molecular biology from Fairview, Okla.
- Alexandra Robideau, a junior majoring in entomology from Kanyak, Texas
- Jacob Sticklor, a senior majoring in mechanical and aerospace engineering from Edmond, Okla.
- Clifton Woods, a junior majoring in biomedical biochemistry engineering from Chickasha, Okla.
- Thomas Wright, a senior majoring in physics and math from Stillwater, Okla.
- Connie Yearwood, a junior majoring in animal science from Colony, Okla.
- Rosalina Yorks, a junior double majoring in zoology and microbiology from El Dorado, Kan.

“Att most universities, hands-on research is performed primarily by graduate students and faculty,” said Steve McKeever, OSU’s VP for research and technology transfer. “OSU is unique in that it offers programs, like the Niblack Research Scholars, that allow undergraduates to participate in research, too.”

Niblack, who attributes his own pursuit of research as a profession to the experience he received as an undergraduate at OSU, says he funds the program to give young people the valuable skills and experience for their future career, “I know that when I look back at my career, the Niblack program will be my first stepping stone to working in an active lab, learning the techniques and practice of current research,” said Thomas Wright, who began the program this fall.

“This program is exactly what I need to prepare me with the valuable skills and experience for my future career,” said Sarah Firdaus, another current scholar who plans to pursue her graduate degree. “I know that when I look back at my career, the Niblack program will be my first stepping stone that helped me achieve my goals in life.”

Niblack is the former vice chairman of Pfizer Inc. He worked as an active scientist for the multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical company from 1967-1980 directing research into drugs for viral illnesses, cancer and autoimmune disorders. He was appointed director of research for the company’s U.S. laboratories in 1980 and named president of Pfizer’s Central Research Division in 1990. He became vice chairman in 1993 and retired in 2002.

Oklahoma EPSCoR to co-host entrepreneur workshop

The Who Wants to be an Entrepreneur Workshop will be held Friday, November 5 at the Coca Cola Events Center in downtown Oklahoma City. The interactive workshop is open to all college students, faculty members and young entrepreneurs, and will explore topics such as understanding the entrepreneurial process, developing financial projections and creating an investment-winning pitch. Richard Sudek, chairman of Tech Coast Angels, the nation’s largest angel investment network, will be a keynote speaker and panelist. The workshop is free and includes lunch. However, registration is required.

For more information or to register, visit www.okepscor.org. This event is also hosted by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the National Science Foundation and i2E.