Oklahoma State University has honored five faculty with the 2014 Regents Distinguished Research Award. Recipients are selected based on evidence of outstanding and meritorious research achievements and are recognized nationally and internationally in their fields of study.

Murat Hancer, professor, School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration, College of Human Sciences

Dr. Hancer’s research focuses on hospitality human resources management and hospitality information technology. He is particularly interested in the effects of restaurant employee job satisfaction on service quality and has written widely on the topic. Dr. Hancer believes psychological empowerment of hospitality industry workers can lead to improved employee satisfaction and service quality in the restaurant industry.

In 2011, Dr. Hancer received the Outstanding Graduate Faculty Mentor Award in the College of Human Sciences and the university-wide Outstanding Graduate Coordinator award in 2012.

Tyler Ley, associate professor and Williams Foundation professor, School of Civil and Environmental Engineering, College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology

Dr. Ley investigates using material science to improve constructions materials, the development of sensors to monitor roads and bridges, and the imaging of the structure and chemistry of materials at the micron and nano scale. In his six years at OSU, his research has been awarded more than $8.8 million in grants, including the funding of 32 projects in which he was the principal investigator. Dr. Ley’s work has led to five patent applications.

His research has been published in 45 peer-reviewed publications and he has co-authored 25 industry reports with his students. He is actively collaborating on research projects with a variety of OSU departments outside of engineering. One project with the College of Education involves developing an engineering-based curriculum for 5th grade students. He is also collaborating on projects involving nine other universities.

In 2014, Dr. Ley was recognized with the American Concrete Institute Walter P. Moore Award, the organization’s highest honor for a faculty member. A passionate teacher, Dr. Ley received the 2011 Halliburton teaching award and the CN Epsilon Honor Society Teacher of the Year award in 2009.

Larry L. Mullins, Regents professor and Venneman professor of psychology, College of Arts and Sciences

In his 30 years as a psychology researcher and teacher specializing in pediatric psychology and child health psychology, Dr. Mullins has focused on risk and resistance factors that predict adjustment outcomes in children with chronic health conditions. His research includes a broad array of children’s health issues and disorders and the development of empirically supported psychological interventions for the parents of these children.

Dr. Mullins has served as the principal investigator on 14 individually awarded grants. He has been named to the editorial board of five major journals in psychology and is currently the associate editor for the journal Clinical Psychology in Medical Settings. He was named a fellow of the Society of Pediatric Psychology (Division 54) and of Family Psychology (Division 43) of the American Psychological Association. As an instructor and mentor, Dr. Mullins has graduated 13 doctoral students, most of whom have gone on to research careers in psychology. In 2006, he received the Martin Levin Mentorship Award from the Society of Pediatric Psychology.

Jeanmarie Verchot, professor of entomology and plant pathology, Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources

Dr. Verchot established her laboratory at OSU in 1998 to investigate viral pathogens affecting agriculture and horticulture plants. Dr. Verchot and her team have made important discoveries in the topics of viral-vector relationships, viral diseases of wheat, mechanism of virus movement from cell to cell, virus interactions with the host endomembrane network and cellular stress response. Her research was enhanced by multiple million in state and federal funding. The Verchot laboratory has done important research into the relationship between a wheat mosaic virus and its vector that has been widely referenced. She also studied the intercellular movement of a potato virus that launched broader research into the role of cellular membranes. The project resulted in a Cambridge University sabbatical for Dr. Verchot to study oxidative stress and cell death responses to virus infection. Dr. Verchot has published 83 scientific articles and her work has been cited more than 1,500 times, excluding self citation.

Jiahong Wu, Regents professor of mathematics, College of Arts and Sciences

In his research, Dr. Wu examines the applications of several nonlinear partial differential equations, which are fundamental in understanding many fluid phenomena from small-scale blood flows to large-scale geophysical flows. Some of Dr. Wu’s most important work has been the investigation of equations that model large-scale movements of the atmosphere and oceans, including weather systems like hurricanes. Another important area of Dr. Wu’s research includes the study of the vanishing viscosity limit of the Navier-Stokes equations, which model events important in understanding topics including machinery lubrication, airflow around wind turbines and large-scale atmospheric and ocean flows.

Dr. Wu has authored more than 70 journal articles and co-authored a monograph, and his work has been cited more than 1,300 times. He has earned numerous prestigious awards including the Centennial Fellowship from the American Mathematical Society and the Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Award from Oak Ridge Associated Universities. His work has been supported by the National Science Foundation and the American Mathematical Society.
OSU announces search for vice president for research

A nationwide search for OSU vice president for research has been approved by the OSU/A&M Regents. The search is now underway for a person with demonstrated professional and administrative experience in all aspects of leading an academic research enterprise.

Dr. Sheryl Tucker, dean of the OSU Graduate College, was appointed interim vice president for research in January 2014 and serves as the search committee chair. The executive search firm Baker and Associates, LLC., has been selected to lead the search. The search announcement and position description with responsibilities and qualifications are available on the VPR search website, http://adminsearch.okstate.edu.

TDC licensing revenue continues to grow

The Technology Development Center has again set a new record in FY2014 for licensing income. Topping $2 million in royalty revenue for the first time in 2012, TDC reported just over $2.1 million in 2013. This year the OSU technology licensing office saw record licensing revenue of more than $2.2 million. Royalties are generated from university-developed technologies licensed to companies.

“The increase in royalties overall is largely due to the growth in licensing revenue from our wheat varieties,” said Dr. Steven Price, associate vice president for technology development and TDC director. “Of course the license for the probiotic that is administered to dairy and feedlot cattle continues to be the number one OSU royalty generator and has been for the past several years.”

For information about the TDC and licensing OSU technologies call (405) 744-6930 or visit https://tdc.okstate.edu.

Van Den Bussche joins VPR; Research Services relocates

Dr. Ron Van Den Bussche has been named to fill a new position in the office of the vice president for research as interim associate vice president. Formerly the associate dean for research in the College of Arts and Sciences, his responsibilities include projects involving bioinformatics, core facilities, research infrastructure, research priorities, and increasing the visibility of research, scholarship, and creative activities at OSU.

OSU Research Services staff have relocated to 206 Whitehurst Hall. The move consolidates several VPR offices to the second floor of Whitehurst. Research Services coordinates campus-wide planning of research proposals and awards, and is responsible for the OSU export control compliance program, central administration of electronic research administration systems, and coordination of OSU limited submission competitions.

OSU names 2014-15 Niblack Research Scholars

Fifteen Oklahoma State University undergraduate students will receive $8,000 scholarships and the opportunity to conduct supervised research in a university lab as 2014-15 Niblack Research Scholars. The annual program is funded by OSU alumnus John Niblack, who wants to give the students an early chance to do real scientific research that goes beyond book study or the routine lab experience.

“The scholarships permit them to do frontline research with the supervision of a professor and a graduate student mentor,” said Niblack, who had a similar experience himself as an undergraduate student at OSU. He went on to become a scientist and a vice chairman for Pfizer Inc., a multi-billion dollar pharmaceutical company.

“Research as an undergraduate is crucial to the field that I’m going into,” said OSU psychology major Elisa Duell from Alva, Oklahoma, a 2014-15 Niblack scholar. “I’m able to get my feet wet in a sense by gaining an understanding of all aspects of the scientific method before I’m in graduate school.” Videos about the students and their research are available at http://niblack.okstate.edu.

The 2014-15 Niblack Research Scholars are:

• Kelsey Anderson, a physiology/pre-med major, Edmond, Okla.
• Kristina Baker, a microbiology/molecular genetics major, Sands Springs, Okla.
• Erica Crockett, a nutritional sciences major, Stillwater, Okla.
• Rachel Davis, a chemical engineering major, Fort Smith, Ark.
• Elisa Duell, a psychology major, Alva, Okla.
• Katherine Janike, a nutrition/pre-med/Spanish major, Lincoln, Neb.
• Brett Johnson, a horticulture major, Stillwater, Okla.
• Casey Landis, a biochemistry/molecular biology/pre-vet major, Skiatook, Okla.
• Christian Ley, a biosystems and agricultural engineering major, Broken Arrow, Okla.
• Julia Matera, an animal science and biochemistry major, Columbia, Mo.
• Jonathan Mitchell, a mechanical and aerospace engineering major, Broken Arrow, Okla.
• Will Shaffer, a biochemistry/molecular biology major, Carthage, Mo.
• Ashley Simenson, a nutritional sciences major, Howard Lake, Minn.

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Unusual Patents: Where Do Ideas Come From?

Ira Flatow

Host of National Public Radio’s Science Friday

NPR science correspondent and award-winning journalist

Wednesday, February 18, 2015

7:00 pm

Student Union Theater, OSU-Stillwater

www.research.okstate.edu