**Research Connection**

*News from Sponsored Research Services*

March, 2011

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**2011 Student Research Conference**

Each year, WTAMU invites submissions from undergraduate and graduate students for the 2011 Student Research Conference. This year’s conference will be held Friday, April 15, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The Student Research Conference will be held at the College of Business, on the second floor of the Classroom Center. The conference will end with an awards ceremony honoring winning entries with certificates, plaques, and cash awards totaling $2,000!

To be eligible for cash awards, students must submit an abstract by the submission deadline of March 28, 2011, attend the conference, and present the paper. There is no fee to participate but registration is required. Visit the conference website listed below for additional details.

Submission categories include: Agriculture, Behavioral Sciences, Business and M.I.S., Communication, Digital Media, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Health Sciences, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Performance. For more information, contact Dr. Lisa Davis at 651-2641 or visit the [conference website](#).

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**Texas Undergraduate Research Day**

Two students represented WTAMU at the Texas Undergraduate Research Day at the State Capitol in Austin, February 14. Brian Yates presented his research on the question: "Do Herbicides Cause Golden Algae Blooms?" Yates' faculty adviser is Dr. Jim Rogers. Dustin Hume presented on the subject: "Toward the Design and Understanding of Mobile Geospatial Privacy: An iPhone Design Case." Dr. Jeffry Babb serves as Hume's adviser.

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**NSF’s Merit Criteria Review**

The National Science Board's Merit Review Task Force is undertaking a thorough review of the NSF's merit review criteria (Intellectual Merit and Broader Impacts). NSF has established a website through which you can submit your thoughts and ideas to the Task Force. Please take this opportunity to provide comments and suggestions. [Here is the link to the Task Force website](#). The site is open to receive comments through March 15, 2011.

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**What are Export Controls, and Why are They Important to Me?**

“Export Control” regulations are federal laws that regulate the distribution of strategically important technology, services, software, and information to

Continued on page 2
Continued from page 1

foreign nationals and foreign countries. Any research activity may be subject to export controls if it involves the actual export or "deemed" export of any goods, technology, or related technical data that is either

- "dual use" (commercial in nature with possible military application), or
- inherently military in nature.

Under these regulations, export is not limited to the physical shipment or transmission of items. Technology, software, or technical data is considered "released" as a "deemed export" through

- visual inspection by Foreign Nationals of U.S. origin equipment and facilities,
- oral exchanges of information in the U.S. or abroad, or
- the application to situations abroad of personal knowledge or technical experience acquired in the U.S.

For export control purposes, a "foreign national" includes any individual in the U.S. in nonimmigrant status (i.e., H-1B, H-3, L-1, J-1, F-1, B-1, Practical Training), and individuals unlawfully in the U.S. Any branch of a foreign government or any foreign corporation or group that is not incorporated or organized to do business in the U.S. is also considered a foreign national.

Before a controlled item or material is exported an export license may be required, which is usually a lengthy process. There are, however, exclusions to the export control regulations and the licensing requirement. For educational institutions, the two most common exclusions are the fundamental research and public domain exclusion. Basic and applied research resulting in information that is ordinarily published and shared broadly within the scientific community is considered to be "fundamental research" and is excluded from the export licensing requirements. The "public domain" exclusion applies when information becomes generally accessible to the public in any form. A third exclusion is the "educational information" exclusion, which covers instruction in science, math, and engineering taught in courses listed in catalogues and associated teaching laboratories of academic institutions.

Most of the items, information, or software that WTAMU researchers ship or share with colleagues is not of the nature that would be restricted, nor are they destined for countries or individuals subject to U.S. embargoes or sanctions. WTAMU however is required to exercise due diligence; ergo, this is just the first of several informational articles and tools you will see in the coming weeks.

As the principal investigator (PI) you are in the best position to know whether particular technology, data, or information involved in your research is subject to export control regulations. To assist you, Sponsored Research Services will soon be launching a revised proposal transmittal form with questions designed to help identify export control issues.

There are significant fines and potential imprisonment for violations of the export regulations, so please take the time to complete the export compliance training offered through TrainTraq. Export Controls & Embargo Training – Basic Course (2111212) is available through single sign on at https://sso.tamus.edu/. The training provides a quick way to acquire the necessary basics to identify export control issues. Sponsored Research Services will work with you to ensure the appropriate steps are taken once a potential export control situation is identified.

For questions, contact Executive Director Kaaren Downey (651-3554 / kdowney@wtamu.edu) in Sponsored Research Services.

On The Calendar

**March, 2011**
25 – Undergraduate Summer Research Grant Applications Due
28 – Student Research Conference Abstracts Due (Papers & Presentations Eligible for Cash Award)

**April, 2011**
1 – Student Research Conference Abstracts Due (Papers & Posters Not Eligible for Cash Award)
15 – **Student Research Conference**

**May, 2011**
14 – WTAMU Graduation – 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

**Barnes, Latman and Wright to Present Research**

Dr. Neal Latman (Biology) and Dr. Larry Barnes (Communication Disorders) are scheduled to present their research entitled "Acoustic Measures of Female Voice During Menstrual Cycle" to the American Physiological Society section of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology 2011 meeting in Washington, D.C. this April.

At the same meeting, Jaime Wright (M.S. in Biology from WT) and Dr. Latman will be presenting Wright’s master’s thesis research to the American Society of Investigative Pathology. Dr. Latman says, “This is quite an acknowledgement of the significance of her (Wright's) work, and the interest in it by the 'big boys and girls' in this field.”
NSF CAREER Workshop

The NSF CAREER is a prestigious award designed to give investigators a strong start in their research careers. Typical awards are $400,000 over 5 years (or $500,000 over 5 years for Biology). This workshop discusses program requirements and proposal writing strategies, how to find funding opportunities, how to contact a program officer, advice on winning strategies, and more. The workshop was held March 8, with Dr. Emily Hunt, a recent Young Investigator Programs awardee, leading the discussion and Q&A. The workshop was recorded, so if you are interested in viewing this workshop, contact Sponsored Research Services at 651-2984.

Sponsored Research Services always encourages you to bring proposals to our office with enough time for a thorough review. Don’t miss the boat!

Undergraduate Summer Research

Each year the Killgore Research Committee requests proposals for Undergraduate Summer Research grants. Generally, awards are made in the amount of $3,500 or less and are available for all disciplines. Faculty should notify students of this opportunity.

Proposals must follow the guidelines to be considered for funding. The guidelines and required forms can be found at this webpage. The deadline for applications is March 25. Questions may be directed to April Swindell at 651-2270, or by email at aswindell@wtamu.edu.

Lab Tech Dresses Inappropriately — What Should I Do?

Reader question: The new lab tech we hired has multiple, visible body piercings and wears low-cut tops and even lower-cut jeans. This isn’t how she dressed during the interview when she apparently removed some of the piercings, too. I realize that disheveled scientists are nothing new. But in a serious workplace, where minds should be on science, aren’t there minimal dress code requirements? Can I legally create and enforce a “dress code” for my own lab team?

Expert Comments: Legally, you’re within your rights to develop and enforce a dress code for your lab, and that includes jewelry, such as piercings. Having said that, I encourage you to seek the guidance of your institution’s Human Resources department. HR may not be aware of how the individual is dressing, and it’s possible the body piercings could be a safety concern in a lab setting.

In fact, I think you should take the following steps:

Don’t have any conversations with the staff member without your HR department’s input. HR can show you the specific institutional policies that already exist, help you adapt those policies to your specific lab, and assist you to create an effective way to have the conversation with the employee.

Continued on page 4
Continued from page 3

Next, present your concerns to the employee. Explain why the clothing choices are inappropriate for the workplace. If you encounter resistance, explain the consequences if the person doesn’t change their choice of dress. But don’t come down hard right away: It could be that the person wasn’t aware of the code or didn’t realize that there was something wrong with the way she is dressing. Remind the person that the dress code is to ensure that individuals are dressed professionally and acceptably at all times.

Make sure the code is consistent for all employees. You can’t treat one differently from another, and you can’t single out a specific person. You can’t have one set of rules for someone because she has four earrings, and not for the person who only has two. There’s an overall expectation for everyone, and if someone deviates from it, then you handle it.

Use your institution’s guidelines and procedures if you have to enforce discipline. Solutions could include giving the individual a written warning letter — or even sending them home with instructions to return properly dressed. Remember that consistently enforcing policy is crucial. Otherwise, you provide lawyers with grounds for discrimination and retaliation lawsuits.

Another suggestion: Check, or develop, a dress code for your lab. It will partially depend on the current dress code at your institution, but may include safety or other specific lab-related concerns. At my college, we have a general dress code. We leave it up to each department to tailor the code to their specific requirements.

For example, student affairs may wear jeans because they’re involved in various student events, plant operations must wear uniform pants and shirts, and in the administrative building, it’s professional dress. Fortunately, we’ve never had a problem. Our lab does not have a specific dress code, other than to be dressed professionally and appropriately for the task.

Keep in mind that the dress code you’re developing shouldn’t be just for your lab. If you have multiple labs, such as a chemistry lab and a biology lab, the dress code should be the same in both labs. Again, keep the rules consistent. Once it’s developed, make sure your staff is aware of it, what the expectations are and what the repercussions will be if the code is violated.

Expert Comments by Dr. Karen R. Stubaus, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ

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