BOISE STATE’S KUSTRA ANNOUNCES RECORD INCREASES IN GRANT AWARDS AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS IN ANNUAL ADDRESS

In his annual State of the University Address today, Boise State University President Bob Kustra focused on the innovative spirit that has brought about another record for external research and grant awards.

Boise State’s external funding increased by greater than 35 percent in fiscal year 2010, jumping from last year’s $37 million milestone to more than $50 million. In addition to marking the biggest year-to-year rise in school history, FY10 also broke records regarding support from key federal entities, patents issued and impacts to local and state economies.

“No one knows what America’s next big idea will be. But thanks to the efforts of Boise State faculty and students to expand the borders of their disciplines in the creation of new knowledge, I firmly believe that their research and creative endeavors will play a role in that innovation,” Kustra said. “With the fastest growing research program in Idaho, we are on the leading edge of new ideas that are making our community, state, nation and world a better place for coming generations.”

Awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) rose dramatically in FY10. NSF contributions increased 40 percent to $6.8 million while NIH awards essentially tripled to $6.1 million. The funding supported a wide spectrum of projects and initiatives, but areas of particular strength included:

- **Instrument Acquisition for Campus and Community Use.** Investigators secured significant funds from the NSF to acquire sophisticated instruments for research and education, including a $597,877 mass spectrometer proposed by associate professor Ken Cornell in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and a $627,185 laser source and measurement system proposed by assistant professor Wan Kuang in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Boise State partners with business and industry by providing access to such high-level equipment as well as facilities and expertise that might otherwise be out of reach.

- **Cancer Research and Development of Treatment Methods.** Researchers are making great strides in the effort to better understand and treat cancer. In the Department of Biological Sciences, chair/professor Denise Wingett and associate professor Cheryl Jorcyk both received NIH Academic Research Enhancement Awards to pursue their work and involve students. Wingett is engineering nanoparticles to preferentially kill cancer cells, which would improve the effectiveness of chemotherapy. Jorcyk is studying the mechanisms and potential blocking of a protein in the metastasis of breast cancer to bone.
“Research advances knowledge. Developing this knowledge to benefit society involves identifying potential ways to use and implement what is achieved in the lab,” said Vice President for Research Mark Rudin. “Boise State is dedicated to maximizing the impact of intellectual property created in the laboratory through technology transfer and commercialization.”

The university’s Office of Technology Transfer facilitates the identification, protection and commercialization of intellectual properties generated by faculty, students and staff, including creative, scientific and technical research findings. Director Mary Givens said that of the seven U.S. patents issued to Boise State, four became official in FY10.

“Boise State’s faculty has performed well above the national average over the past two years when it comes to the number of invention disclosures and patent applications,” Givens said. “Exploration through research leads to lab discoveries that result in patents. And to maximize the economic and social benefits of each patent, the Office of Technology Transfer has organized Innovation Teams to recommend development paths to commercialization.”

As a leading knowledge-based enterprise in the region, Boise State impacts the community beyond supplying the market with raw and refined materials. An economic impact report compiled by an outside company showed that each $1 million of Boise State research activity maintains 11 direct jobs and 18 indirect jobs in Idaho. With 80 percent of this activity funded by federal entities that means new money flowing into the state that supports jobs, generates skilled graduates and facilitates innovations with the potential to improve resource management, industrial efficiencies and quality of life.

Research and creative enterprise in the arts and humanities also drive the economy and the richness of the community it supports. External funding in FY10 bolstered Boise State’s Visiting Artist and Scholar Program, which brings talented experts to campus for public workshops and talks. Another grant received by assistant professor of English Matt Hansen enabled a unique Service-Learning project that connects elementary students to Shakespeare, empowering them to enhance their vocabulary, confidence and teamwork skills. And associate professor John Bieter in the Department of History secured funding so the university’s Basque Studies Center could team up with Boise’s Basque Museum and Cultural Center and other sponsors to create four interpretive signs highlighting key areas of the city’s unique Basque culture and history.

“Boise State’s commitment to community outreach and partnerships has earned the university the Carnegie Foundation’s prestigious Community Engagement classification, an honor that is earned through sharing resources, collaborating on research and engaging with businesses and our community wherever we can,” said Rudin. “In that sense, reaching $50 million is just the tip of the iceberg — one that is gaining power and momentum every year.”

To learn more about Boise State research, visit http://www.boisestate.edu/research.

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