

KU Discovery & Innovation

News from KU Research

February 2015

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Obama at KU: 'Investing in Research' is Key

President Barack Obama spoke at KU January 22 before a full house at the Anschutz Sports Pavilion.

In his remarks, the President said "The truth is, when it comes to infrastructure and research, both [political] parties generally agree that it's important."

He added, "We've got to build the most competitive economy in the world, and that means building the best infrastructure; and

opening new markets so we can sell products around the world; and investing in research so we keep on being the creators of new products; and businesses can keep creating jobs right here in Kansas and around the world."



The President was preceded at the podium by Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little, left. In her remarks, she noted "KU discoveries have truly changed the world. Helium was isolated for the first time just up the hill [in Bailey Hall]. The time-release capsule was invented here, joining the countless treatments and cures developed by our scientists. And every day our scholars are uncovering everything from new species to new ways of understanding our history. All of this in service of our mission to lift students and society." [Coverage of the visit is available online.](#)

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Deadline Arrives for Level I Strategic Initiative Grant Proposals

The next deadline for Level I Strategic Initiative Grant proposals is Monday, February 16, at 5 p.m. This is the second and final Level I proposal cycle for the 2014-15 academic year.

Information about the program, including the application components, is [available online](#). The site provides access to the secure, online application form. [Level II Strategic Initiative Grant](#) proposals are evaluated separately and can be submitted at any time.

Since its start in 2012, the Strategic Initiative Grant program has awarded more than \$5.4 million in Level I awards to Lawrence researchers for innovative, collaborative projects.



KU bioengineering doctoral students Nikki Galvis (left) and Aly Boyer were among more than 100 people who attended the Medical Devices Summit February 2 at the KU Medical Center.

KUIC Summit Highlights Medical Devices

KU Innovation and Collaboration hosted an all-day Medical Device Summit recently in Kansas City. The theme – “From Research to Patients” – underscored the importance of translational research in all aspects of health care.

Participants heard the perspectives of entrepreneurs, intellectual property experts, and others. The event also featured a commercialization plan pitch competition. Representatives of three companies made presentations, followed by a panel discussion, questions from the floor, and an audience vote.

Companies making pitches were Somadone, Evoke Medical, and Creative Technology Concepts (CTC). There was a tie for first between Evoke and CTC. Each received \$1,000 in corporate services plus \$3,000 in intellectual property services from the firm of Spencer Fane Britt & Browne.



Among the speakers at the summit was KU's Cory Berkland, left, professor in the Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering and the Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry. His topic was “Creating

and Sustaining a Company Developing Medical Products.”

[The entire summit program is available online.](#)

Evoke has ties to KU through students Nikki Galvis, Eileen Cadel, Hadley Sis, and Ben Wong in the Bioengineering Graduate Program, plus Lisa Friis, associate professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, and Paul Arnold, professor in the Department of Neurosurgery at KUMC.

KU Research Notes

TRT Session on Uniform Guidance Implementation

The next Thursday Research Topics is scheduled for February 12, starting at 11 a.m. in the auditorium at Simons Laboratories. The subject is “**Uniform Guidance: It's Here! KU's Implementation.**” Speakers from the Office of Research will be Linda Sadler, chief financial officer; Gina Cregg, director of budgets and finance; and Alicia Reed, associate director of research administration.

OMB's Uniform Guidance took effect December 26. It has been called “the single most significant change in research regulations in the past 50 years.” This presentation will provide important updates on how Uniform Guidance is being implemented at KU. It is free and open to all KU staff, and will conclude at 11:40.

Reminder: [Grant Coordinators Meeting](#) is February 24, rescheduled from January 22 due to the President's visit.

KU Research Resolves Slow Award Set-Up Problem

The KU Office of Research has resolved an “unacceptable situation” that arose last summer: extreme slowness in setting up research grants – both new and continuing – once they were awarded.

“This situation arose due to several factors,” said Mary Lee Hummert, interim vice chancellor for research, “including staff vacancies and the challenges of implementing a new accounts receivable/billing system.”

Even so, she said, the situation had “serious negative effects on investigators, research centers, and the university's research mission that demanded our attention and remediation.”

Hummert complimented the Post-Award Services staff, which worked with a team from Huron Consulting to streamline the set-up processes. As a result, the average time to set up an award with all PI documentation in place is now five working days. (Complex awards that include multiple projects or sub-contracts will require more time, as will awards that lack essential documentation.)

Hummert said “We in the Office of Research are committed to maintaining this level of service. It is our goal to provide [researchers] with the highest level of service, so we welcome your questions and feedback.”

KU Seeks Nominations for the 2015 Higuchi-KU Endowment Research Awards

Nominations are being received through April 1 for the 2015 Higuchi – KU Endowment Research Achievement Awards. The awards – one in each of four broad areas of study – are the highest honor given for Kansas Board of Regents university faculty accomplishments in research, scholarship and creative activity.

The awards were established 1981 by Regents Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Pharmacy Takeru Higuchi, his wife, Aya Higuchi, and KU Endowment. Each award includes \$10,000 to be expended over five years in support of the recipient’s research activities. The honorees are also recognized at a public ceremony in the fall.

The criteria for each award, a list of past recipients, submission guidelines, and the nomination form are [available online](#). Questions about the nomination process may be directed to [Teresa Kopsa](#), (785) 864-3567.

New Grant Specialist at KU Research



Jordan Blair, left, has joined Pre-Award Services as a grant specialist on Team 1. Her background includes a B.A. in sociology and English from KU and a J.D. from Washburn University. She previously worked for H&R Block, and AgriLogistics, Inc., in Gardner, KS.

Monroe Promoted at KU Research

Liz Bennett Monroe, finance manager for the Core Research Resource Service Labs in the Office of Research, has been named assistant director for budgets and financial services. She reports to Gina Cregg, director of budgets and finance.

“Liz has done an exceptional job the past five years developing collaborative relationships with the research service labs,” said Cregg. “I am looking forward to working with her in her new role and know her skills and experience will contribute to our organization.”

Monroe’s background includes a B.S. from Culver-Stockton College, an M.B.A. from Oklahoma State University, and CPA licensure in Kansas. She was previously an accounting manager and controller for Health and Benefit Systems, LLC and a financial analyst for Payless.



From left: Kristi Billinger, assistant vice chancellor for research; Elena Semyonova-Smith, and Anita Abel, assistant director for Post-Award Services.

KU Research Staff Person Recognized

Elena Semyonova-Smith, a grants officer and Team Two leader in Post-Award Services, has achieved Certified Research Administrator status from the national [Research Administrators Certification Council](#). She is the only holder of this recognition at the Lawrence Campus.

Smith passed a rigorous 250-question test in November, following several months of intensive study of all aspects of research administration. The process certifies that an “individual, through experience and testing, has the fundamental knowledge necessary to be a professional research or sponsored programs administrator.” The certification is renewable and valid for five years.

“Earning certification is personally satisfying,” said Elena. “It’s given me a broader view of my profession, for which there really is no academic preparation. I encourage my KU colleagues to look into it as goal for their careers.” The Council also certifies pre-award and financial research administrators.

Elena came to the U.S. from Russia in 1996. She joined the Office of Research in 2000 following two years at KU’s Institute for Policy and Social Research. Her background includes a master’s in economics from the St. Petersburg State Mining University (Technical University).

“We’d like to see more staff follow Elena’s example,” said Kristi Billinger, assistant vice chancellor for research. Anita Abel, assistant director for Post-Award Services, added, “We’re very proud of what she’s accomplished.”

Deb Maloney and Lori O’Neal at the KU Medical Center are KU’s only other Certified Research Administrators.

Hall Center Speaker Rescheduled to May



The planned February 18 KU appearance by award-winning playwright and actress Anna Devere Smith, left, has been rescheduled for Thursday, May 14. She was to speak as part of the **Hall Center Humanities Lecture Series**.

Her rescheduled appearance will be at the Lied Center, starting at 7:30 p.m. The program will be free and open to the public, with support provided by the Sosland Foundation of Kansas City.

Smith's *Fires in the Mirror* was the finalist for the 1993 Pulitzer Prize in drama. She received the National Humanities Medal from President Obama in 2013.

KU Research Launches Centers Portal

A new **Research Centers Portal** provides links and information about each of the Lawrence Campus centers and institutes. The site also features a selection of research projects and how they have had an impact on society. The projects are organized by major research area, including Human Development and Cognitive Function, Information and Modeling Complex Systems, Environment and Energy, Humanities and Social Development, and Education. Mary Ann Roesner, KU Research web manager, created the site.

Caldwell Takes Leadership Post at KUMC

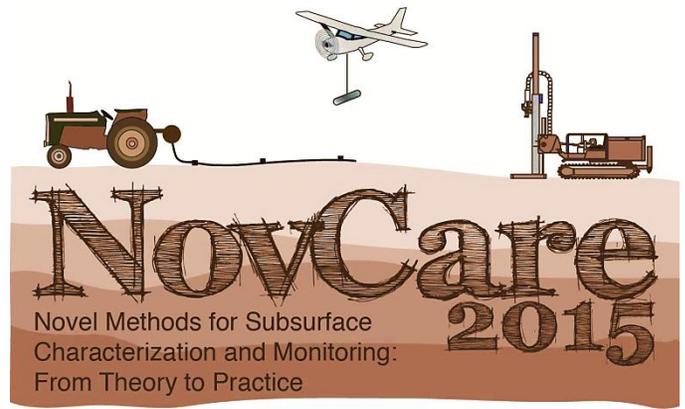


Jamie Caldwell, left, has joined the KU Medical Center as associate vice chancellor for research administration and executive director of the KUMC Research Institute, Inc. He succeeds Paul Terranova, who retired in December.

Caldwell comes to KUMC from the Office of Research Services for the Health

Sciences at Loyola University, Chicago, where he was director for 15 years. He previously worked for 15 years in research administration at the University of Chicago.

Caldwell's background includes an M.B.A. in health care management from Loyola and an undergraduate degree from Chicago State University. Professional recognitions include the 2014 Outstanding Achievement in Research Administration Award from the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA).



KGS to Host International Conference

NovCare, an academic program that was held last year in Leipzig, Germany, is coming to Lawrence May 19-21, with KU's Kansas Geological Survey (KGS) as its host.

The theme of the three-day event is "**Novel Methods for Subsurface Characterization and Monitoring: From Theory to Practice.**" The topic is concerned with the scientific description of conditions on and beneath the ground, especially as it relates to hazardous waste sites.

NovCare 2015 will take place at The Oread in Lawrence. It is organized by the KGS, Michigan State University, the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research, and the University of Tübingen. It is the fourth in a series that has proven to be an excellent forum for exchanging ideas and experiences related to the challenges of this topic.

Abstracts for oral or poster presentations should be submitted by February 27 to novcare@ufz.de. The six thematic categories are:

- Integrated characterization of the unsaturated and saturated zones;
- Characterization at the interface (stream-aquifer interactions, coastal settings);
- Opportunistic characterization (natural/anthropogenic stimuli and tracers of opportunity);
- New tools for watershed characterization;
- Geotechnical site characterization; and
- Long-term monitoring.

Steve Knobbe, a research assistant in hydrology at the KGS, is the local site coordinator for the conference. One of the keynote speakers will be Rick Miller, senior scientist in the Exploration Services Section at the KGS.

Selected papers from NovCare 2015 will be published in a special edition of *Environmental Earth Sciences*.

KU Seeks Community Input on Its Role in Innovation and Economic Prosperity

KU is applying for designation as an “Innovation and Economic Prosperity University” through the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. This prestigious national designation is awarded only to universities that have demonstrated excellence in innovation and economic development initiatives.

As part of the application process, KU will soon host two **Innovation & Economic Prosperity Community Forums**. All KU employees, students and the public are welcome to participate. The forums are designed to help KU leaders better understand and improve the university’s efforts and activities related to innovation and economic development.

The two forums are scheduled next week, as follows:

- **Tuesday, February 17, 4 – 6 p.m.**
Bioscience & Technology Business Center
2029 Becker Drive, Lawrence
- **Thursday, February 19, 4 – 6 p.m.**
BEST Conference Center, KU Edwards Campus
12600 Quivira Road, Overland Park

A networking reception will follow each event.

The forums are the second part of KU’s designation efforts. The first part was an online survey sent in January to the KU community and key external partners. The results of that survey will be part of the discussion at the two forums.

Online registration is required to attend. For more information, contact **Chelsea Nuttall** at KU Innovation and Collaboration, (785) 864-2441.

Proof of Concept Funding Available

KU researchers are invited to submit applications for the **Proof of Concept Fund**, which supports KU technologies that are near the commercialization stage and could become marketplace solutions in the near future.

The program, now in its third year, seeks to advance the development of novel applied technologies that have near-term potential for licensing and commercialization within three years of funding. The fund does not support basic research. It does advance technologies that have already shown commercial appeal and for which the university has already applied for intellectual property protection.

This fund is open to KU researchers from all areas of innovation and technology, including electronics, software, communications, life sciences and engineering. Awards generally will be in the range of \$15,000 to \$50,000, and the total number of awards will depend on the number and quality of applications submitted.

Applications are due March 2. Award notifications will be made about a month after. Full details, including eligibility and evaluation criteria, are available at the **[Proof of Concept Fund webpage](#)**.

“Part of KU’s mission is to make discoveries that change the world,” said Julie Nagel, interim associate vice chancellor for innovation and entrepreneurship. “That includes commercializing our discoveries into real-world products and solutions. The Proof of Concept Fund is key to our efforts to do that.”

Postdoc Group Offers Travel Grants, Presents Val Stella Entrepreneurism Talk



The KU Postdoctoral Association (KUPA) is offering multiple travel awards to reimburse postdocs up to \$500 for the

cost of attending scientific or professional development conferences. Travel may be for any time in the calendar year following the award date.

To apply, complete the **[application form available online](#)** and submit all required information. Entries must be emailed to **KUpostdocs@gmail.com** on or before 5 p.m. on March 2. A panel of KU faculty will judge applications. In addition, attendance at KUPA meetings and overall involvement in the group will be considered. Awardees will be announced on or before March 31.

On Friday, February 27, KUPA will host a presentation by Val Stella at 11 a.m. in Pharmacy 3004 on the topic of “Entrepreneurship for KU Postdocs.” Stella is University Distinguished Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry and a board member of the Bioscience & Technology Business Center at KU. He founded three companies based on his research and continues to be an important campus resource for those seeking to commercialize their intellectual property. **[KUPA members may RSVP online](#)** by February 20 for the free pizza lunch.

Upcoming Events

Additional events and details are available at the [KU Calendar](#).

FEBRUARY 12

Thursday Research Topics: "Uniform Guidance: It's Here! KU's Implementation"

11 – 11:40 a.m.

Simons Labs, Auditorium

Capitol Graduate Research Summit

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

State Capitol Building Rotunda, Topeka

FEBRUARY 16

Deadline: Strategic Initiative Grants Level I Proposals

FEBRUARY 17

Innovation and Economic Prosperity Community Forum

4 – 6 p.m.

Bioscience & Technology Business Center

FEBRUARY 19

Innovation and Economic Prosperity Community Forum

4 – 6 p.m.

KU Edwards Campus, BEST Building Conference Center

Lecture: Andrew Revkin,

"Science and the Environmental Writer"

7 p.m.

Spooner Hall, The Commons

FEBRUARY 19-21

"Engineering Expo"

8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. (Thursday-Friday), 9 a.m. – Noon (Saturday)

School of Engineering

FEBRUARY 19 (THROUGH SEPTEMBER 4)

Exhibit Opening and Panel Discussion: "Contested American Identities – KU Scholars Address the Challenge," with Jennifer Hamer, Blane Harding, Dot Nary and Clarence Lang

6:30 p.m.

Watson Library, Haricombe Gallery, Third Floor West

FEBRUARY 22: RESCHEDULED

KU Grant Coordinators Meeting

10:30 a.m.

Simons Labs, Auditorium

FEBRUARY 27

"Entrepreneurship for the KU Postdoc," with Val Stella

11 a.m.

School of Pharmacy 3004

MARCH 11-14

Science Pioneers, Inc.: 64th Annual Greater Kansas City Science and Engineering Fair

Union Station, Kansas City, MO

MARCH 27-28

[Re] Engaged Architecture Symposium, Celebrating 20 Years of Studio 804

School of Architecture, Design & Planning
Marvin Hall and The Forum

APRIL 25

Undergraduate Research Symposium

Noon – 7 p.m.

Kansas Union

MAY 14: RESCHEDULED

Humanities Lecture Series: Anna Deveare Smith, "Snapshots: Portraits of a World in Transition"

7:30 p.m.

The Lied Center

MAY 19-21

2015 NovCare Conference: "Novel Methods for Subsurface Characterization and Monitoring - From Theory to Practice"

The Oread, Lawrence

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