

KU Discovery & Innovation

News from KU Research

November 2014

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Bailey, Lunte Among 2014 Higuchi Awardees



KU's Victor Bailey and Craig Lunte (left) are among four recipients of the state's most prestigious recognition for scholarly excellence: the **Higuchi-KU Endowment Research Achievement Awards**. The four will be recognized at the Lied Center during an invitational ceremony on December 9.

The awards, established in 1981 by Takeru and Aya Higuchi, recognize exceptional long-term research accomplishments by faculty at Kansas Board of Regents universities. Each award includes \$10,000 for ongoing research efforts. The money can be used for materials, summer salaries, fellowship matching funds, hiring research assistants or other support related to research. This year's recipients:

- **Balfour Jeffrey Award in Humanities and Social Sciences**
Victor Bailey, Charles W. Batey Distinguished Professor of Modern British History, KU
- **Dolph Simons Award in Biomedical Sciences**
Craig Lunte, Professor of Chemistry, KU
- **Olin Petefish Award in Basic Sciences**
Susan J. Brown, University Distinguished Professor of Biology, Kansas State
- **Irvin Youngberg Award for Applied Sciences**
Frank F. White, Professor of Plant Pathology, Kansas State

KU Research Begins Proposal Peer Review Service

When preparing a grant proposal for external funding, critical feedback from a fellow expert can be invaluable. It's also difficult to obtain, since it involves imposing on an equally busy colleague to read and assess a complicated document as a personal favor.

To help facilitate meaningful and objective input, the KU Office of Research has introduced a Proposal Evaluation and External Review (PEER) service. Its purpose is to get a proposal to a well-qualified colleague of the PI's choosing at a key stage in the submission process: close enough to the deadline so the proposal is in near-final form but early enough to make changes.

The goal of PEER is to help strengthen the proposal and enhance its chances for success with the funding agency. To accomplish that goal, KU Research will compensate approved external reviewers (one per proposal) in the amount of \$500 for each written, confidential assessment.

PIs in any discipline can take advantage of PEER. An eligible proposal must be in near-final form at the time of application, and the submission deadline must be at least 30 days in the future.

Full details and the application form are available online. Questions can be directed to Rodolfo Torres, associate vice chancellor for research, torres@ku.edu, 864-7237, or Nancy Biles, assistant director, Pre-Award Services, kucrpeer@ku.edu, 864-7434.



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New Strategic Initiative Grant Announced

A project to explore a new and innovative direction for the development of antibiotics has received a Level I Strategic Initiative Grant from KU's Research Investment Council. A team led by Mario Rivera, professor of chemistry, was awarded approximately \$300,000 over two years in support of "Validating Bacterial Iron Metabolism as Target for Antibiotic Discovery."

"We received an excellent group of proposals in September," said Mary Lee Hummert, interim vice chancellor for research and chair of the council. "They displayed great creativity and tied in well with the four Bold Aspirations strategic initiative themes."

Rivera is joined by Josephine Chandler, assistant professor of molecular biosciences; John Karanicolas, associate professor of molecular biosciences and computational biology; Bill Picking, Foundation Distinguished Professor of Pharmaceutical Chemistry; Lester Mitscher, emeritus professor of medicinal chemistry; and Richard Bunce, professor of chemistry at Oklahoma State University.

"Our team is currently pursuing NIH and Department of Defense funding to translate our findings into a program aimed at discovering a new class of therapeutic agents for the treatment of antimicrobial-resistant infections," said Rivera. "The Strategic Initiative Grant will make the team's proposals more competitive for significant federal funding."

Deadline: Level I Strategic Initiative Grants

Mary Lee Hummert, interim vice chancellor for research and chair of the Research Investment Council, has announced the next deadline for Level I Strategic Initiative Grant proposals: 5 p.m., Monday, February 16, 2015.

Since it started in 2012, the Strategic Initiative Grants program has awarded more than \$5.4 million in Level I awards to Lawrence researchers for innovative, collaborative projects. These 16 projects all relate to one or more of the four Bold Aspirations strategic initiative themes and are an indication of the progress being made in "Driving Discovery and Innovation."

Information about the program, including the components of the application, is [available online](#). The site will also link to the secure, online application form as the deadline approaches. **Level II Strategic Initiative Grant** proposals are evaluated separately and can be submitted at any time.



SUMO Consortium Hosts Conference

KU's Consortium Targeting Small Ubiquitin-related Modifier (SUMO) for the Treatment of Inflammatory-Related Diseases held the 1st Annual Midwest Regional SUMO Conference October 13 at the School of Pharmacy. Jeff Staudinger (above), professor of pharmacology and toxicology, is shown addressing the meeting. The interdisciplinary SUMO Consortium was established with a \$300,000 Strategic Initiative Grant Level I award.

"Customer Experience" is Center's Focus

The KU School of Business recently established the **Center for Integrated Customer Experience**. It is a collaborative project between the school and founding partner Cerner Corporation, along with Hill's Pet Nutrition and The University of Kansas Hospital.

Directors Kissan Joseph, professor of marketing, and Alan Halfen, a postdoctoral fellow, will lead the center's research, which will focus on the increasing complexity of understanding customers and how to interact with them. The goal is to help bridge the gap between real industry issues and the school's research capabilities.

"Companies are currently evaluating the way they interact with their customers," Halfen said, "and they want to know about their customers. But at times external insight and experience in capturing consumer perception and preference is helpful. We can come into that role and help them develop research projects that hone in on the specific things they want to know about their company and about their customers."

In addition to producing meaningful research, the center also provides opportunities for students. As part of the partnership, Cerner will provide two fellowships and Hill's Pet Nutrition and The University of Kansas Hospital will each provide one fellowship for M.B.A. students to participate in the center's research.

KU Presents “Brain Scoop” Creator



Emily Graslie (left), a pioneering YouTube educator and the Field Museum’s “chief curiosity correspondent,” will discuss science and aspects of her work Thursday, November 13 at 7 p.m. in The Commons at Spooner Hall.

This **KU Common Book program** is sponsored by the KU Natural History Museum, the Spencer Museum of Art, the Office of

First-Year Experience, the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, and The Commons.

Graslie is celebrated for her popular YouTube show, “**The Brain Scoop**,” which explores the behind-the-scenes world of the Field Museum. She launched the show while at the University of Montana’s Wright Zoological Museum. It was called “witty and educational and wonderfully produced,” with a host who “doesn’t just want to bury her face in bones and skins: she’s an articulate and hilarious educator.”

Graslie, 25, received a B.F.A. in studio art at Montana and is pursuing a master’s degree in museum studies from Johns Hopkins University. Among her honors, *Chicago Magazine* named Graslie its “Best Celebrity Nerd” of 2014, noting “Her job is to dissect the venerable [Field Museum], opening up its insides to show how it functions.”

Call for Nominations: University Scholarly Achievement Award

Each year, KU recognizes up to four mid-career faculty members as recipients of a **University Scholarly Achievement Award**. The award recognizes a significant scholarly or research contribution (exhibition, performance, composition, article or book, or major collaborative project) or a series of closely related contributions.

To be eligible, a faculty member must be an associate or full professor; be within 10 years of appointment as an associate professor; have completed three years at KU; and not have received a prior major KU award for this body of work.

Please send an e-mail to Debra Bia at dbia@ku.edu by December 19 indicating your intention to submit a specific nomination. A complete nomination is due by January 20. Full **details are available online**.

KU Research Kudos

- **Donna Ginther**, professor of economics and director of KU’s Center for Science, Technology & Economic Policy at the Institute for Policy & Social Research, is co-author of “**Women in Academic Science: A Changing Landscape**,” published in *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, which attracted national media attention.
- **Jerry DeNoyelles**, deputy director of the Kansas Biological Survey, will speak November 13 on “Reservoir Sedimentation: Challenges in Kansas” at the **Governor’s Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas**.
- **Town Peterson**, University Distinguished Professor and senior curator at the Biodiversity Institute, will speak at Watson Library at 3:30 p.m. on November 20 on “Merging Science With History: Filling in a Century of Mexican Ornithology.”
- KU’s Specialized Chemistry Center was featured recently in *A Decade of Discovery: The NIH Roadmap and Common Fund*. It was highlighted for research that helped Cleave Biosciences attract venture capital to develop a small molecule chemotherapeutic agent to slow down p97, a protein that plays a role in multiple cell processes, including cell division. KU SSC p97 team members are **Frank Schoenen, Kevin Frankowski** and **Kelin Li**.
- **Sally Utech**, associate director of the Hall Center for the Humanities, is one of 15 KU Staff Fellows chosen for the 2014-15 academic year.
- The October 2 segment of “Sunflower Journeys” on public television station KTWU highlighted efforts to clean and restore the KU Natural History Museum’s Panorama. Interviewed for “**Dyche’s Panorama**” (starting at the 10:50 mark), were **Kris Krishtalka**, director of the Biodiversity Institute; Ron Harvey, a conservator with Tuckerbrook Associates; and **Bill Sharp**, assistant director of research administration and author of a biography of Lewis Lindsay Dyche.
- **Judith Carta, Charles Greenwood** and **Dale Walker** of the Life Span Institute’s Juniper Gardens Children’s Project will direct a new national network of experts in language and literacy development called **Bridging the Word Gap Network** with a two-year grant of \$593,000 from the Department of Health and Human Services.

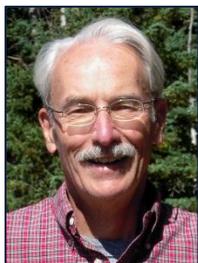


BTBC Phase II Open House is Nov. 20

The Bioscience & Technology Business Center (above) will **host an open house** for its new Main Facility Phase II on Thursday, November 20, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. The 51,000-ft² facility now houses 11 tenant companies and offices of KU Innovation and Collaboration. Please **RSVP online** by November 13. The BTBC is located at 2029 Becker Drive on the West Campus Research Circle.

Protein COBRE Renewed for Five Years

KU's Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) in Protein Structure and Function has received a five-year, **\$5.6 million award from the National Institutes of Health (NIH)**. The center, established in 2002 and renewed in 2008, is led by Robert Hanzlik, professor of medicinal chemistry.



"This is a highly competitive process," said Hanzlik (left). "Only about half of the phase I COBRE programs receive phase II funding. In obtaining phase III funding, our program is part of a select group nationally."

The center fosters health-related basic research around a single scientific theme.

By better understanding the structure and function of proteins present in cells, and the way they interact, researchers gain a deeper understanding of how proteins carry out the work of the cell. Scientists can use this information to develop new and improved drugs.

In addition to establishing state-of-the-art core labs for protein research, the center also accelerates the careers of outstanding junior faculty through regional workshops and individual mentoring by senior faculty. "The advanced instrumentation in the core labs is crucial for protein research and invaluable for KU," said Hanzlik. "But even more valuable in the long run are the bioscience faculty who we've recruited, nurtured and 'graduated' to independent success through the COBRE."

KU Research Notes

Thursday Research Topics: Bob Rummer to Speak

Bob Rummer, director of research development in the Office of Research, is the next **Thursday Research Topics** speaker on Thursday, November 13 at 11 a.m. in the Simons Labs Auditorium. The title of his talk is "Research Development and Collaboration."

Rummer came to KU in 2013 following 28 years as a research engineering and project leader with the U.S. Forest Service. Research Development seeks to strategically target proposal efforts and supports faculty as they strive to develop complex collaborative projects. Rummer will describe some of the changes in the research world as well giving an overview of activities of the Research Development team.

Reed Named to New Research Administration Post



Alicia Reed, coordinator of research development, was named associate director of research administration in the Office of Research in October. She reports to Kristi Billinger, assistant vice chancellor for research and director of research administration.

Reed will work closely with Billinger on all aspects of research administration. She will assist with special projects and the coordination of Pre-Award Services, Post-Award Services, Contract Negotiations and Research Information Systems.

Reed has held progressively more responsible roles since joining KU in 2005 as a grant specialist. She became a grant officer and Team 3 leader in 2010, and has worked in research development for the past year. Her academic background includes B.A. degrees in anthropology and sociology, as well as an M.A. in sociology, all from KU.

New Grant Specialists in Pre-Award Services

Tina Roberts and Bob Szrot have joined Pre-Award Services as grant specialists at Youngberg Hall. Tina most recently worked with Douglas County Senior Services as its resource development director. Bob is a Baker University graduate and most recently worked with Rezolve Group, an educational support services firm, as director of client relations and communications. They will be assigned to a team once their training is complete.



Economic Policy Conference Examines Kansas Impacts of Affordable Care Act

The annual [Kansas Economic Policy Conference](#) was held October 23 at the Kansas Union. Sponsored by KU's Institute for Policy & Social Research, the 2014 conference topic was the impact of the federal Affordable Care Act on people, business and health care providers in Kansas.

Panelists during the morning sessions and luncheon session (above) included representatives of hospitals and insurance companies, as well as business leaders and KU faculty.

Featured participants were Scott Brunner, senior analyst and strategy team leader, Kansas Health Institute; Arthur Daemrich, associate professor of history and philosophy of medicine, KU School of Medicine; Sandy Praeger, Kansas insurance commissioner; and Andy Allison, former director of Arkansas Medicaid.



The [Kansas Statistical Abstract 2013](#), published online by KU's Institute for Policy & Social Research (IPSR), contains in one place the latest available state, county, and city-level data for Kansas on: population, vital statistics and health, housing, exports, education, business and manufacturing, crime, employment, income, finance, state and local government, recreation, communications, transportation, agriculture, climate, and energy and natural resources. This is the 48th annual edition of the highly trusted *Abstract*.

Principal staff contributors at IPSR were Genna Hurd, Susan Mercer, Laura Kriegstrom Stull and Xanthippe Wedel, along with student assistant Anna Tatarko.

KU United Way Campaign Continues

"Live United" is the theme of the [2014 United Way campaign](#) at KU. This once-a-year appeal invites faculty and staff to support many local programs that affect the education, health and self-sufficiency of the community.

KU Research staff organized a United Way fundraiser October 27 at the Multidisciplinary Research Building. Two varieties of pot pie stew raised \$800 in donations!

Are "Outsider" Scientists More Creative?



According to J. Rogers Hollingsworth, a sizable number of pioneering scientists emerged from institutions of modest

scientific renown. That "outsider" status, he believes, fosters an entrepreneurial spirit that feeds creativity.

At 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 12, Hollingsworth will speak on "Creativity and Entrepreneurship in American Science: From Rags to Riches" at the Kansas City (MO) Central Library, 14 West 10th Street. The event is free and open to the public.

Hollingsworth is an emeritus professor of history and sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a visiting scholar at the University of California, San Diego, and a former senior scholar at the Kauffman Foundation.

"In most adults I've met, there is some ember within that carries their soul of curiosity. For some it is almost extinguished and needs to be fanned. For others it's like a pilot light. You just have to put some extra fuel there, and it ignites. We live in a time where it is possible to reignite people's inner geek – or reveal an inner geek you didn't know you had. Your inner geek is simply what empowers your curiosity about the natural world. When you see a problem, you ask, I wonder how we can solve it? Rather than, I wonder how fast we can run away from it?"

Neil deGrasse Tyson, "Why I Want You to Seek the Inner Geek," [National Geographic, November 2014](#)

Upcoming Events

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

NOVEMBER 12

Lecture: J. Rogers Hollingsworth, "Creativity and Entrepreneurship in American Science: From Rags to Riches"
6:30 p.m.
Kansas City Central Library, 14 W. 10th St., Kansas City, MO

NOVEMBER 12-13

Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas
Hilton Garden Inn, Manhattan

NOVEMBER 13

Thursday Research Topics: Bob Rummer, "Research Development and Collaboration"
11 – 11:40 a.m.
Simons Laboratories, Auditorium

KU Grant Coordinators Quarterly Meeting

3:30 p.m.
Simons Laboratories, Auditorium

Byron T. Shutz Lecture: Jide Wintoki, "The Effect of Corporate Governance and Legal Institutions on the Value of Companies in the U.S. and Around the World"

3:30 p.m.
Spooner Hall, The Commons

Lecture: Emily Graslie, Chief Curiosity Correspondent, Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago

7 p.m.
Spooner Hall, The Commons

NOVEMBER 17

Big 12 Universities Water Workshop: "High Plains Aquifer Panel Discussion"
5 p.m.
The Oread, 1200 Oread Avenue, Lawrence

NOVEMBER 18

Big 12 Universities Water Workshop: Public Sessions
9 a.m. - Noon
Kansas Union, Woodruff Auditorium

NOVEMBER 20

Libraries Lecture Series: Town Peterson, "Merging Science With History: Filling in a Century of Mexican Ornithology"
3:30 – 5 p.m.
Watson Library, Third Floor West

Open House: Bioscience & Technology Business Center Phase II

4:30 – 6 p.m.
2029 Becker Drive, West Campus Research Circle

NOVEMBER 21

Lecture: Paolo Giubellino, "The Big Bang in the Laboratory"
1:30 – 2:30 p.m.
Spooner Hall, The Commons

Roundtable: "Excavating the Universe: Physics Interacts with the Arts"

2:30 – 4 p.m.
Spooner Hall, The Commons

DECEMBER 12

KU Center for Research, Inc. Board of Trustees Annual Meeting
3:30 p.m.
Lied Center, Pavilion

FEBRUARY 16, 2015

Deadline: Strategic Initiative Grants Level I Proposals

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