

National Science Foundation Invests in UC San Diego with \$3 Million Grant to Fund San Diego Science Festival and Educational Outreach Efforts

NSF grant will also create a sustainable National Science Festival Network with partners that include UC San Diego, MIT Museum, The Franklin Institute of Philadelphia and UC San Francisco

July 23, 2009

Judy Piercey

Johnnie Lyman, a graduate student at UCSD's Scripps Institution of Oceanography, explains that micro-organisms found in the ocean feel somewhat like Jell-O at last year's San Diego Science Festival Expo.

The University of California, San Diego has received a \$3 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support the 2010 San Diego Science Festival and fund the creation and growth of Science Festivals nationwide. The grant award follows the highly successful first annual San Diego Science Festival, held March-April 2009.

The San Diego Science Festival strives to highlight San Diego as a national and global leader in scientific innovation, focusing heavily on improving pre-workforce development through math and science education. UC San Diego will work with a group of collaborators dedicated to increasing the number of college graduates across all fields of science, technology and engineering to benefit both regional and national economic interests. In addition, the university will focus on presenting unique opportunities for local San Diego businesses to become involved in program and pipeline development for future scientists.

Hundreds of children listen to the "Mad Science" show at last year's San Diego Science Festival Expo.

"We're thrilled that the National Science Foundation views the 2009 San Diego Science Festival as a national model," said UC San Diego Vice Chancellor Penny Rue. "The San Diego community warmly embraced this inaugural initiative highlighting education in the sciences-in fact, the Festival drew 50,000 attendees to its signature Expo Day, making it the largest single-day celebration of science in the nation. We look forward to expanding our outreach efforts as the Festival grows, and encouraging San Diego's youth to pursue careers in science, engineering and technology."

With the support of many local community members and national coalition partners, UC San Diego secured the three-year (2009-2012) NSF grant for the purpose of:

Funding the 2010 **San Diego Science Festival** to reach out to San Diego's youth and encourage them to pursue careers in science and technology;

Creating year-round **Science Festival Educational Enrichment** activities for students of all ages across the San Diego region, culminating in an annual week-long celebration of science and technology; and,

Establishing the **National Science Festival Network** to extend and support the growth of Science Festivals and year-round educational enrichment activities throughout the nation in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Museum, The Franklin Institute (Philadelphia) and UC San Francisco.

At the Calit2 booth, at the 2009 San Diego Science Festival Expo, students got to drive rovers.

Continuing on the success of the inaugural San Diego Science Festival, UC San Diego is working diligently, with community partners, as the lead organizer of the 2010 San Diego Science Festival. The university was the lead facilitator, in collaboration with entrepreneur Larry Bock and 100 leading science organizations, for the inaugural 2009 event.

In addition to funding the week-long, central San Diego Science Festival event, the NSF grant will be utilized over the three-year period for the purpose of establishing year-round Science Festival Educational Enrichment activities for students of all ages across San Diego. Each annual cycle of enhanced science education programs will both open and close with the week-long celebration of science and technology in conjunction with local science and research firms, museums, colleges and universities and other members of the San Diego science community.

UCSD graduate student Sam Lasse, left, and a student from High Tech High in San Diego, demonstrate how chemical fluorescence works at last year's San Diego Science Festival Expo.

Nicole Garcia, who will enter UC San Diego as a freshman this fall, commented on the need for science outreach in the community: "Here in America, we take pride in providing the best opportunities for everyone, regardless of race, age, sex or financial status. Programs that support science and mathematics in schools must be offered to even the poorest schools if this nation is to live up to its creed. Offering these programs is a fairly easy decision to make if it will provide support and assistance to students who are making every effort to seize what chances they are given." Garcia is currently an intern at Lockheed Martin, corporate host for the 2009 San Diego Science Festival.

The NSF grant also funds the creation of a sustainable national network of Science Festivals in cities and towns across America, designed to promote broader youth, student, family and public understanding of science, engineering and technology. The National Science Festival Network will support a Web portal and associated networking resources designed to lower entry costs and provide organizational strategies for new Science Festival organizers across the nation, and to promote year-round science and technology activities directly associated with Science Festival efforts as they evolve.

Jeff Milton, founder of Torrey Path LLC, gives San Diego high school students a virtual tour inside a molecule inside the StarCAVE at Calit2 at UC San Diego. Photo Credit: Erik Jepsen/Calit2

The National Science Festival Network partners-UC San Diego, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Museum, The Franklin Institute (Philadelphia) and UC San Francisco-were strategically selected to represent major U.S. educational entities on both coasts. By introducing these festivals and establishing affiliated programs for science educational enrichment year-round, the group is launching a new "Decade of Science" in the United States.

Initially inspired by international science festivals that draw crowds in the hundreds of thousands, the continued goal of the San Diego Science Festival is to increase community awareness of science and inspire our nation's youth to consider entering a science-related education and career. A fitting location, San Diego is at the forefront of scientific research and development, and home to many leading biotechnology and technology corporations

Dates for the 2010 San Diego Science Festival, organized by UC San Diego with the support of community collaborators, will be announced soon. For more information, please visit www.sdsciencefestival.com or call 858-534-3544.

Media Contacts: Judy Piercey, UC San Diego, 858-534-6128, jpiercey@ucsd.edu Jana Ferron, Sneaker Academy, 619-957-2426, jf@sneakeracademy.com

