

LSU Faculty Receive Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Awards

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BATON ROUGE – Two faculty members at LSU are recipients of the 2015 Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Awards, from Oak Ridge Associated Universities, or the ORAU, consortium.

LSU Assistant Professors Celalettin Emre Ozdemir in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Kenneth Lopata in the Department of Chemistry received the awards. Both faculty members hold joint appointments with the Center for Computation & Technology.

The Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Awards provide seed money to support the research of junior faculty at ORAU member institutions. These awards are intended to enrich the research and professional growth of young faculty and to result in new funding opportunities.

Ozdemir's research addresses sediment transport processes in the Gulf Coast including marsh erosion. The award supports his new research effort to build multi-scale erosion models that will advance people's understanding and ability to predict marsh erosion ranging from centimeters to kilometers in length.

"My new research has the potential to help people living on coastlines that are threatened by coastal erosion including those who live in Louisiana. This award gives me tremendous motivation to pursue this project, which may become an overarching component of my career," Ozdemir said.

Lopata's research focuses on developing fundamental computational simulations of the response of electrons and nuclei in insulating materials when subjected to very intense light, which is crucial for interpreting and motivating cutting-edge experiments, and ultimately for designing tunable electromagnetically hardened materials. He will use the funds to purchase hardware for developing the required prototype software for the project. After developing the software, he will be able to scale-up the computer simulations to large hybrid supercomputers at LSU, Louisiana and various National Science Foundation and Department of Energy facilities around the country.

"This award gives me the computational resources necessary to develop code that will ultimately run on some of the largest supercomputers in the world," Lopata said.

ORAU awarded 35 grants to junior faculty at 31 universities this year. LSU was one of four universities to have more than one Powe award recipient. The other institutions with two recipients were the University of Maryland, Missouri University of Science and Technology and Utah State University.

Full-time assistant professors at ORAU member institutions, who are within two years of their initial tenure track appointment and whose research is in the disciplines of engineering and applied science, life sciences, mathematics or computer sciences, physical sciences, policy, management or education are eligible.

Past Powe award recipients at LSU include Cameron Thrash (2014), Karen Maruska (2013) and Michal Brylinski (2012) in life sciences; Ying Wang (2010), Michael Benton (2009) and Francisco Hung (2008) in engineering and applied science and Donghui Zhang (2009) in physical sciences.



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