

MEDIA ADVISORY – May 23, 2002

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**OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS AWARDS \$3.5 MILLION
TO RESEARCH PROJECTS ACROSS OHIO**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Twenty-one research projects in fields as diverse as biomedical research and education reform will receive a total of \$3.5 million from a program that was designed to reward Ohio’s publicly-funded universities for enhancing their most outstanding doctoral programs while simultaneously addressing critical state needs.

At its monthly board meeting on Thursday, May 23, the Ohio Board of Regents voted to approve the awards selected through the Incentive Fund Program, which was created by Ohio’s public research universities.

The universities agreed to divert a percentage of state funding for doctoral education into a fund that would be distributed in a competitive, peer-reviewed grant process, using consultants with no connections to the universities applying for the money.

“The idea was to concentrate some funding in programs that were of exceptionally high quality and met critical state needs,” said E. Garrison Walters, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Economic Advancement at the Board of Regents. Critical state needs were defined as K-12 education, the commercialization of research and enhancing public health and safety for all Ohioans.

A total of 60 applications from 12 Ohio universities were received in 2000 for this first round of funding under the program. A panel of experts selected from universities outside of Ohio reviewed the applications and selected the winners.

Three of the award-winners were at Thursday's meeting to accept their awards and make presentations to the board: Professor Ernst von Meerwall of the University of Akron shared his work in polymer-based nanotechnologies; Professor Wayne Carlson of Ohio State University discussed his research into human figure motion synthesis; and Professor Janet Graden of the University of Cincinnati presented her project – "3Rs: Revitalizing Education Reform, Researching Effective Approaches, and Reforming Accountability."

The program, which would have grown to about \$20 million a year, was discontinued after budget cuts significantly reduced funding to state-assisted schools.

"The decision was made to suspend the program," Walters said. "The universities are struggling to maintain their basic operations."

A set of brief sketches providing some examples of Incentive Fund projects is attached. The Incentive Fund Program's report to the board, including a list of all the award-winners, also is available.

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