Sponsored program funding serves as one indication of research growth and sophistication.

UNLV is a doctoral-degree-granting institution with more than 28,000 students, approximately 6,500 of whom are graduate/professional students. The university is ranked in the category of “high research activity” by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Nearly 120 graduate degree programs are offered, including 38 doctoral and professional degrees. UNLV offers a broad range of respected academic programs and is increasingly recognized as a premier metropolitan research university.
Researchers from UNLV and partner Nevada System of Higher Education institutions have received $15 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to investigate climate change and its effects on Nevada.

The five-year effort is teaming nearly 20 UNLV faculty members with researchers from UNR, the Desert Research Institute, and Nevada State College to develop the infrastructure necessary to determine how climate impacts the state’s ecosystem services, specifically water resources.

Faculty and students also plan to work with community leaders to direct research efforts that will inform policy and decision-making across the state.

“Climate change and its associated impacts to resources, economics, and society are among the most important issues facing the region, nation, and world,” says Thomas Piechota, co-principal investigator and UNLV director of sustainability and multidisciplinary research. “This project will not only improve our understanding of how climate change impacts our ecosystems and water resources, but will also focus on solutions to scientific and social issues that lead to informed decision making.”

An interdisciplinary team of faculty from each institution is using the grant to focus on six interrelated components – climate modeling, ecology, water resources, policy and outreach, education, and cyberinfrastructure.

UNLV will participate in all of these areas with a focus in water resources, policy, education, and outreach.

Project highlights include the development of an ecological monitoring network designed to measure the basic parameters of climate change necessary to determine the potential impact of climate change on the state’s water resources and biodiversity. The network of stations will contribute to research in the areas of ground water recharge, wildfire fires, and invasive and endemic species.

Aside from infrastructure, the grant will fund three new faculty positions, two technicians, graduate student assistantships, undergraduate fellows, and postdoctoral fellows. Also, more than $1 million will fund interdisciplinary research teams from multiple institutions that will take advantage of the infrastructure developed through the grant.

Grant funding from the NSF will be distributed equally among partner institutions, with UNLV to receive approximately $4.5 million. As part of NSF requirements that states show commitment to their projects, the Nevada System of Higher Education will provide $6.5 million in total funding to the project from non-federal sources.

The grant was funded by the NSF through Nevada EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research).

For a complete description of the grant and progress updates, visit the Nevada EPSCoR web site at [www.nevada.edu/epscor](http://www.nevada.edu/epscor).

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**Awards**

In FY2009, UNLV received approximately $76.5 million in external award funding with nearly $40.1 million supporting research, including significant support from a number of federal agencies:

- Dept. of Energy—$12.3 million
- Dept. of Education—$9.0 million
- Dept. of Interior—$4.8 million
- Dept. of Agriculture—$3.3 million
- Dept. of Defense—$2.7 million

**Top Five Academic Areas Receiving Research-Related Award Funding in FY2009**

- Sciences—$11.5 million
- Engineering—$9.7 million
- Harry Reid Center for Environmental Studies—$7.7 million
- Education—$7.0 million
- Research and Graduate Studies—$5.7 million

**Award Funding By Sponsor Type in FY2009**

- Federal—$55.7 million
- Federal Pass Through—$15.2 million
- State—$2.8 million
- Foundation/Corporate—$1.9 million
- Local—$828,000

**Expenditures**

Research expenditure data – the amount of funding expended for the purpose of research – is the gold standard for measurement of research activity in higher education. (See graph at left.) It indicates the amount of external funding spent by faculty and staff to conduct research; hence, it accurately reflects the productivity of funded researchers. Sponsored program expenditure data reflects activity on all types of sponsored program projects, including those dedicated to instruction or public service, as well as research. Hence, research expenditures are a subset of total sponsored program expenditures.