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## **NASA Nebraska Space Grant Receives Workforce Development Grant**

The NASA Nebraska Space Grant Consortium (NSGC), a component of the Aviation Institute at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, has been selected to receive yet another substantial grant from NASA. Of the 52 National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program institutions, 45 were competitively selected by NASA to receive funding for aerospace workforce development. The Space Grant Aerospace Workforce Development Competition was created to enlarge and enhance the resource pool of well-prepared higher education graduates and faculty that stay connected to or become involved with NASA employees, contractors, or principal investigators.

A total of \$3.56 million is being granted, with awards ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 and averaging approximately \$78,000. NSGC's funding will increase by \$82,500 for a grand total of \$572,500, annually. The carefully prepared proposal submitted by NSGC included strategies for increasing Nebraska's presence in the field of geosciences, augmenting opportunities for workforce development in Nebraska, and developing a pipeline of employees for NASA. NSGC was selected based on a competitive evaluation of Nebraska's programs and plans to strengthen the nation's education base. The NSGC's participation will increase the number and diversity of highly qualified individuals who are knowledgeable of and experienced in NASA's research mission.

Focus was placed heavily on the successful NSGC Nebraska Native American Outreach Program (NNAOP), which is now a partnership among tribal community leaders, academia, tribal schools, and industry. NNAOP has flourished into a comprehensive, goal-oriented, and well-focused initiative, providing support and direction for educational enhancement throughout Nebraska's Native American public schools. The Workforce Development grant will expand NNAOP endeavors to include collection of geospatial data, an invaluable aid in precision farming, management of watersheds, analysis of crop yields, identification of population shifts, and mitigation of the impact of impervious surfaces on the land.

The NSGC is now proceeding with the implementation of a Geospatial Extension Specialist (GES) in Nebraska. The GES will develop linkages between academic programs and commercial entities; transfer the technology of geospatial products to the public and corporate communities; and contribute to workforce development in Nebraska through the implementation of continuing education credits, training, and workshops in geoscience.

The ways in which the Workforce Development grant will support Nebraska students are three-fold. First, Nebraska will support and participate in the National Student Satellite

Program, a national effort to engage students in the design, construction, and flying of a vast array of spacecraft. Second, Nebraska will host the First Annual Nebraska Science and Technology Recruitment Fair, which will include NASA, industry, and government personnel showcasing opportunities for student employment in the science fields. Third, NSGC will be able to place more individuals within NASA-sponsored programs by seeking collaborative partnering with new and innovative programs, such as the NASA Langley Aerospace Vehicle Systems Technology Office Student Competition.

For information regarding this and other NSGC endeavors, please contact Mary Fink at [nasa@unomaha.edu](mailto:nasa@unomaha.edu).

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