University of San Diego
Academic Grant Awards – Spring 2011

Scott Anders, Director, School of Law, Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC), has contracted with the City of San Diego, Environmental Services Department for $85,000. This one year project focuses on a proposed scope of work to include: Benchmarking San Diego with other local governments and evaluating policy options that would contribute toward a reduction of regional greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020; reviewing the City’s draft General Plan as well as the draft Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plan to expand policies and review associated documents designed to increase climate mitigation and adaptation; clarifying the vulnerabilities in the City due to climate change and provide adaptation options; and present findings at a variety of government and community meetings.

Lisa Baird, Biology, has received a $250,000 award from The Fletcher Jones Foundation. The foundation has continued its science/technology funding tradition at USD by making possible the purchase of a scanning electron microscope for interdisciplinary use in the science labs. The funding allows USD to purchase up-to-date digital instrumentation to replace outdated equipment. The foundation provided a million dollars worth of technology for the Science Center earlier in the decade and has been a benefactor of USD for many years.

Margaret Dalton, Director, Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC), School of Law, has received 2011 funding from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This is year two of a three-year continuation award. Although currently being funded incrementally with the final award amount to be determined, previous annual funding amounts have consistently been $85,000. Each semester upper-division law students, supervised by attorneys, advocate on behalf of low-income taxpayers who have on-going disputes with the Internal Revenue Service. During the semester, the students will conduct client interviews, identify the federal tax issue(s) in dispute, determine the best course of action to resolve those tax issues, review client tax documentation, conduct federal tax research, review the Internal Revenue Code, contact IRS personnel and represent their clients in negotiations with the IRS.

Robert Fellmeth, Professor and Executive Director of the Center for Public Interest Law (CPIL), Children’s Advocacy Institute (CAI), along with Elisa Weichel, Administrative Director of the CAI are the recipients of a $213,573 iPod Nano Cy Pres award. The funds will be used to support the CAI California’s Foster Youth In Crisis program, offering current and former foster youth legal assistance and advocacy, expanding CAI’s policy advocacy and public education efforts at improving federal and state laws and policies so that youth aging out of the system have improved outcomes, and develop a guide for foster youth that will provide them with basic consumer education materials and related resources. Cy pres awards are funds in class action cases that, for a variety of reasons, cannot be distributed to class members or beneficiaries who were the intended recipients. Under the cy pres doctrine, courts can distribute these residual funds to appropriate organizations, allowing them to provide desperately needed basic civil legal services in their communities.

Robert Fellmeth, School of Law, and Executive Director of the Center for Public Interest Law (CPIL), Children’s Advocacy Institute (CAI), along with Elisa Weichel, Administrative Director of the CAI are the recipients of a $49,000 grant from the Price Family Charitable Fund to be used for their Transition Life Coach Program (TLC). The funds will be used to further implement the work of CAI aimed at improving the foster care experience for youth in care and improving outcomes for
youth who have aged out of care. The TLC Program’s 2011 goals are to engage in a variety of public education and advocacy efforts aimed at convincing San Diego County officials to commit funds for a statistically significant TLC pilot project so that CAI can measure outcomes. A TLC Program, under court supervision, would provide flexible funding and a life coach/mentor for youth aging out of foster care. As would a responsible parent, a coach would begin at age 16 to prepare a foster youth to succeed at the tasks necessary to insure their successful transition to adulthood. The court and coach would stay involved with the youth during this extended after care period.

Scott Himelstein, Director of the Center for Education Policy and Law (CEPAL), School of Leadership and Education Science (SOLES), is the recipient of a $24,000 grant from the Gary and Mary West Foundation (Foundation). It is the desire of the Foundation to support community college and career training programs in the San Diego area. CEPAL was selected by the Foundation to assist in facilitating a collaboration among a variety of stakeholders - local community colleges, other potential partners, and the federal grant funding organizations – and to provide the information and strategic guidance necessary to ensure that viable options are explored to support the San Diego area community colleges in pursuing some of the $500 million in funding available from the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant Program (TAACCCT), U.S. Department of Labor. These federal grant funds, part of the 2010 legislation, are intended to provide quality education and training services to TAA [Trade Adjustment Assistance] for Workers program participants and prepare them for employment in high-wage, high-skill occupations.

Kathy James, DNSc, School of Nursing and Health Science, has received notice from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, in partnership with the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the National Cancer Institute, that she has been awarded $2,281 from the 2011 We Can!® Assistance Program. The award will help support Dr. James’s spring research program at Linda Vista Elementary School where she works with mothers and children to prevent child obesity. The NIH developed the We Can Program as a national movement of families and communities coming together to promote healthy weight in children ages 8 through 13. They especially target those working with at-risk and diverse populations.

David Shirk, Director of the Trans-Border Institute (TBI), received $16,322 from the Congressional Research Service (CRS), Library of Congress. The TBI project team will be examining how escalating drug trafficking-related violence in Mexico has impacted the U.S. side of the Southwest border. The study will include interviews with the public, law enforcement and private sector officials at the local and state level along the Southwest border. The mission of CRS is to serve Congress throughout the legislative process by providing research, analysis, and information services that are non-partisan, objective, timely, comprehensive, reliable and confidential. The results of the study will be documented in a written report and presented by the project team to CRS in Washington, DC.

The Lilburn Corporation has awarded Marie Simovich, PhD, Biology, a $6,700 contract for her “Dale Dry Lake Crustacean Survey” taking place in Twenty-Nine Palms, California over this year. The Lilburn Corporation is an environmental planning consulting firm specializing in permitting complex and controversial land use projects. Phase I of Dr. Simovich’s work will include the collection of holding water and shrimp species identification; Phase II, if needed, would involve soil sampling and the genetic identification of cysts.
The W. M. Keck Foundation awarded $250,000 to USD to establish an office of undergraduate research known as U-RISE (Undergraduate Research-Inspired Student Engagement). The office will coordinate undergraduate research across disciplines and across campus. Funding will allow USD to hire a director experienced in the field to centralize activities, share best practices, cultivate external funders, promote undergraduate research among faculty and students, and track progress. The program will raise the visibility of undergraduate research across disciplines, and acknowledge its importance in student education.