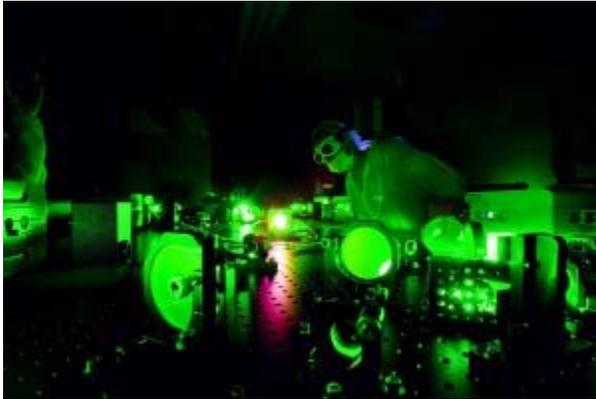


NU to partner in major defense research effort



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OMAHA -- The University of Nebraska has won an \$84 million contract with the United States Strategic Command that could make it a major player in national security research.

The contract will allow the university to create a University-Affiliated Research Center for research designed to detect and prevent strategic attacks. NU will investigate

in the areas of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons detection; passive defense against weapons of mass destruction; consequence management; and space, cyber and telecommunications law.

The new research center will have a different focus than the 13 other UARCs across the country, said Gen. C. Robert Kehler, STRATCOM commander.

“This is the first of its kind to focus on combating weapons of mass destruction,” he said.

The university-wide initiative, announced in Omaha on Thursday, will draw on a broad range of expertise from all four NU campuses. It will be housed in the university’s National Strategic Research Institute, which the Board of Regents approved in May.

However, a permanent home for the new research center has not yet been decided. For now, its work will be distributed across multiple locations where research currently is being conducted.

The initial contract award from the Department of Defense -- which the university won through a competitive bidding process -- provides for up to \$84 million over the next five years to support the early research activities of the National Strategic Research Institute. Research opportunities through the UARC are expected to grow in the coming years, and the university anticipates additional future funding.

“The UARC is good for the university, it’s good for Nebraska and it’s good for our country,” NU President J.B. Milliken said.

Robert Hinson, who retired from the U.S. Air Force at the rank of lieutenant general after serving for 33 years, is the founding executive director of the National Strategic Research Institute.

Milliken said the university has identified nearly 100 faculty members whose research could be aligned with the new research center, including nanoscience researchers and

the Diocles Laser project team at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Diocles project involves using a large laser to develop new compact sources of electrons and gamma rays and could help detect nuclear materials.

“The UARC will give NU scientists like myself the opportunity to take the next step toward translating their academic research into real-world technologies,” said Donald Umstadter, director of the Diocles project.

The university has increased its funding from the Department of Defense from \$7.3 million in 2000-01 to \$34.8 million in 2010-11.

“Our goal is to seek more and more research opportunities,” Hinson said. “I believe the University of Nebraska, through this UARC, is well-positioned to grow as one of the best research and development programs in the country.”