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Accolades from the Governor

10.28.2009 | Research Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland named the University of Dayton's von Ohain Fuels & Combustion Center an Ohio Center of Excellence and assigned the same designation to a newly created University of Dayton center working with strategic energy and environmental informatics Wednesday, Oct. 28, at a press conference in Columbus, Ohio.

The University of Dayton is the only Ohio school to receive two Ohio centers of excellence.

"The University of Dayton is very pleased to be recognized by the state of Ohio for its expertise in advanced energy," said Mickey McCabe, University of Dayton vice president for research. "Being awarded two centers of excellence in this area is the result of a tremendous amount of hard work on the parts of the University of Dayton Research Institute and our science and engineering faculty researchers."

The von Ohain Fuels & Combustion Center received its designation for its work in the areas of fuels, combustion, and emissions research and development for aerospace propulsion. The von Ohain center has an on-going six-year, \$47.55 million grant with the U.S. Air Force to help develop clean alternative fuels from various feed stocks such as coal, biomass and algae, enhance engine fuel efficiency, reduce combustion-generated emissions, and investigate the environmental impact of fossil fuels use. The work of this center will help Ohio create a viable, home-grown alternative to increasingly expensive foreign petroleum-based fuel. University researchers also are working on a two-year, \$980,000 Air Force pollution-reduction contract to see how algae can help reduce carbon emissions and wean America from its dependence on foreign oil.

"Even with renewable energy sources, coal will remain a vital resource for the foreseeable future. Finding ways of turning Ohio's coal into a clean, more viable and cost-effective energy resource will help create jobs, keep Ohio's utility costs down, and help promote the growth of advanced energy industries in Ohio" said Dilip Ballal, director of the von Ohain Center.

University expertise across divisions in analyzing energy consumption and savings helped it achieve a center of excellence designation in strategic energy and environmental informatics.

The School of Engineering is a year into its new master's program in clean and renewable energy. The school's award-winning Industrial Assessment Center received the 2003 U.S. Department of Energy National Center of Excellence Award and the 2006 Ohio Governor's Award for Energy Excellence. The Industrial Assessment Center performs energy audits for companies that have resulted in an estimated half-billion dollars savings during the past 15 years. The University of Dayton Research Institute's Air and Water Research program analyzes carbon dioxide footprints and applies models to how pollution affects air and water.

"Our utilities and local government agencies are sitting on mountains of untapped data," said John Leland, director of the University of Dayton Research Institute. "When combined and analyzed using methods developed at the University of Dayton, we can target areas of energy efficiency."

The University of Dayton ranks 11th among all colleges and universities in federally sponsored engineering research and development.

Seven other Ohio schools — Bowling Green State University, Case Western Reserve University, Central State University, University of Cincinnati, The Ohio State University, Ohio University and the University of Toledo — will host centers. The state selected these centers based on existing national or international expertise and a sustained record in the area of advanced energy, according to Leland.

The centers will help the state meet the requirements of Senate Bill 221, signed by Strickland last year. The law specifically mandates that 25 percent of all Ohio's electricity production come from advanced energy sources by 2025. The centers are committed to focusing their academic and research activities on advanced energy to achieve national and international distinction and ultimately drive the global competitiveness of Ohio's economy.

"Meeting our advanced energy standard depends on making sure we continue to develop new technologies," Strickland said.

"These centers of excellence will play a key role in meeting that goal as well as strengthening Ohio's position as a market leader in supplying the world's advanced energy economies. That is important and for a simple reason — when we grow these industries, we create jobs."

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