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Higher Education

Lamar University

News Release
Wednesday, November 15, 2017

LU partners with UT in Department of Energy grant to explore innovative CO_2 storage technology

Lamar University and the University of Texas are partners in a $4 million grant from the Department of Energy to explore new technologies for offshore geologic CO_2 storage. LU will receive approximately $150,000 in funding for its portion of the project spread across the colleges of engineering and business.

This $4 million award for "Offshore Gulf of Mexico Partnership for Carbon Storage – Resources and Technology Development" was one of only two given nationally by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Fossil Energy (FE) to receive federal funding to assess offshore geologic storage of carbon dioxide (CO_2) and technology development in the Gulf of Mexico. It is the result of work the Center for Innovation, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship (CICE) pioneered late last year in collaboration with the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology for CO_2 Storage technology in Southeast Texas, said CICE director Paul Latiolais.

An earlier "CarbonSAFE" DoE grant of $100,000 allowed LU's CICE to host the International Workshop on Offshore Geologic CO_2 Storage that brought together 30 scientists from Europe, Asia, South Africa, and the U.S. to interact with industry experts and researchers in SE Texas. "This collaboration between scientists and engineers at UT and Lamar University created the platform for the latest grant, driven by the CICE and College of Engineering," Latiolais said.

Joining with UT researchers in developing the grant were LU's Daniel Chen, professor of chemical engineering, Tracy Benson, associate professor of chemical engineering, and Mahdi Safa, assistant professor of construction management.

Offshore geologic storage involves capturing CO_2 from a stationary emissions source, transporting the captured CO_2 to an offshore site, and injecting it into a geologic formation deep beneath the seabed, where it remains safely stored and isolated from the ocean water.

The new projects will focus on assembling the knowledge base required for secure, long-term, large-scale CO_2 storage, with or without enhanced hydrocarbon recovery, and assessing technology-development needs (infrastructure, operational, monitoring), which differ from those onshore.

The projects were selected as part of FE's Carbon Storage Program, (https://www.netl.doe.gov/research/coal/carbon-storage) which advances the development and validation of technologies that enable safe, cost-effective, and permanent geologic storage of CO_2. The National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) will manage the projects.

Under the grant, the University of Texas at Austin and LU will pursue five activities to support safe, long-term CO_2 storage in offshore geologic settings: offshore storage resources characterization; risk assessment, simulation, and modeling; monitoring, verification, accounting; infrastructure, operations, and permitting assessment; and knowledge dissemination. The project will reach outside the local area and make use of relevant U.S. and global expertise to develop opportunities and reduce deployment barriers. It will thereby increase the potential to implement offshore CO_2 storage in many parts of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program planning areas.

The Office of Fossil Energy funds research and development projects to reduce the risk and cost of advanced fossil energy technologies and further the sustainable use of the Nation's fossil resources.

To learn more about the programs within the Office of Fossil Energy, visit the Office of Fossil Energy website (https://energy.gov/fe/office-fossil-energy)or sign up for FE news announcements. More information about the National Energy Technology Laboratory is available on the NETL website. (https://www.netl.doe.gov/)

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