

UT News

The University of Texas at Austin

# Statoil Partnership Bolsters UT Austin Graduate Research and Supports Longhorn Athletics

Nov. 10, 2016



Cockrell School of Engineering graduate students conducting energy research in the Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering. *Cockrell School of Engineering*

AUSTIN, Texas — Statoil, an international energy company based in Norway, has signed a \$2.5 million partnership renewal agreement to support graduate student research focused on geology, geophysics and petroleum engineering at The University of Texas at Austin.

The \$2.5 million completes a multiyear agreement with the company that totals \$8 million. The renewed funding will be provided over a five-year period and will expand graduate research opportunities in the Cockrell School of Engineering and Jackson School of Geosciences. The partnership is focused on research that has the potential to solve problems affecting energy and the environment, and a portion of the funding will support current faculty research efforts.

Statoil has a long tradition of working with academia to further innovation and foster STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in future generations. The company is a dedicated partner to UT Austin, supporting STEM camps and energy- and STEM-related curriculums in the Cockrell School and Jackson School, and recently signing a multiyear sponsorship agreement with Texas Athletics and the Longhorn Network, through Longhorn IMG Sports Marketing, beginning this fall. Statoil's commitment to the university will be recognized with an on-field presentation during the Longhorns football game against West Virginia University this Saturday, Nov. 12.

"We are pleased to strengthen our relationship with The University of Texas through the renewal of our research grants and adding Texas Athletics to our overall support to a world-class academic institution renowned for its leading research and education," said Gene Beck, Statoil's senior vice president for U.S. onshore operations.

During the past five years, Statoil has supported more than 30 UT Austin graduate students through its Statoil Fellowship program. The new funding aims to support 11 continuing graduate student research projects and five new Statoil fellows.

"UT Austin's partnership with Statoil has made a difference in the educational opportunities for our graduate students," said Jon Olson, chair of the Department of Petroleum and Geosystems Engineering in the Cockrell School. "Through this program, our graduate students take what they learn in the field and turn it into valuable research aimed at improving our energy sector. For many of our students, the coveted fellowship is a springboard to careers in the energy industry."

The research conducted by Statoil fellows has been shared through conferences, presentations and journal publications, including one study published in *Science*.

"I commend Statoil for its vision and commitment to UT Austin even in these tough times," said Scott Tinker, director of the Bureau of Economic Geology in the Jackson School. "Of course, the real winners are the talented students who become Statoil fellows, which is a very prestigious honor."

The Cockrell School and Jackson School will work together to select research projects focused on the development of improved tools and methodologies for using data about the Earth's subsurface. The new agreement focuses on four key research areas: unconventional resources and improved development of drainage of shale plays; continental margins and the structural and stratigraphic evolution of basin fills; integration of geological, geophysical and petrophysical data

in Earth models; and trap integrity in salt basins, subsalt imaging and seal-versus-pore pressure challenges.

Statoil, which has its North American offices headquartered in Houston, is active in oil and gas production in and outside Norway, and is also involved in renewable energy.

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