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UT Jackson School of Geosciences frees up funding for new initiatives



Jonathan Sherchand (https://thedailytexan.com/staff_name/jonathan-sherchand/)

Riese Yates (https://thedailytexan.com/staff_name/riese-yates/), News Reporter March 12, 2022

The Jackson School of Geosciences plans to propel research and free up funds by adopting academic provost money into the school's salary funding, according to Dean Claudia Mora.

The Jackson School of Geosciences has historically paid its tenured and tenure track faculty with the college's endowment funds, but effective Sept. 1, half of the salary funding

will be paid using funding from the provost, Mora said.

The change will save the college nearly \$930,000 a year, allowing them to develop many projects, including paid work and research opportunities for undergraduates, more ambitious field research for graduate students and professional development workshops for staff, according to Mora.

Mora said the college's foundational studies have always been important, but will become exceedingly necessary to face challenges coming in the next 100 years because geosciences "(is) a field that's fundamentally important to subsurface extraction of energy."

"(Geosciences) provides the foundation for energy science and a lot of environmental science," Mora said. "It's where climate science was developed. It's where water resources are studied."

Mora said the school is planning to pay undergraduate researchers to get more

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News involved, because it is beneficial for students to participate in conducting studies early in their academic career. In doing so, they can begin understanding how fundamental geosciences work is performed.

"We recognize that you can't simply ask an undergraduate to do your research for free in your lab," Mora said.

Third year geoscience major Esly Balderas said she would save time doing paid research in place of working her current part-time job.

"Research is important," Balderas said. "It's good for college, graduate school applications and also when you start applying for internships. They like to see that you have experience other than academics."

The college also hopes to use the money to support graduate students through research excursions, more fellowship activities and larger monthly stipend checks, Mora said.

Along with new student services, the funds will give faculty new opportunities to improve their professional skills in small group workshops and activities, Mora said.

Mora said another focal point of the new initiatives is bringing people together by facilitating connections between faculty and students.

"One of the important things for me is that the students understand and appreciate that they work not only with the faculty here, but with researchers at (the Bureau of Economic Geology), and that they have access to 300 geoscience professionals," Mora said.

Editor's note: This story originally appeared in the March 4, 2022 (https://thedailytexan.com/2022/03/04/dt-3-4-22/) flipbook.

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