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Thursday, March 4, 2010, 10:10am MST

Science Foundation launches post-doctoral scholars program

Phoenix Business Journal

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Science Foundation Arizona will invest nearly \$2 million to lure scientists and engineers to the state to work with universities, with a potential commitment of up to \$7 million.

The Bisgrove Scholars post-doctoral program was announced Thursday as a way to bring research talent to the state to bolster its science and engineering programs. Arizona State University and Northern Arizona University will partner with SFAz.

The competitive program seeks to land about seven scholars statewide for two years to work at the universities and try to link the programs with various industries.

“The Bisgrove scholars will help put Arizona on the map as a research hub, where young and talented scientists and engineers are welcomed and encouraged to innovate,” said William C. Harris, president and CEO of SFAz. “Over time, it could even compete with other well-known and important national and international scholarships, such as Rhodes Scholars.”

SFAz plans to invest \$1.9 million in the project’s first five years, with a review planned three years in, said Margaret Mullen, the group’s chief operating officer.

After five years, SFAz will put \$5 million into an endowment fund along with \$25 million from the universities that will keep the program going, Mullen said.

“That should allow it to run in perpetuity, based on what the universities have told us when we first started discussing it,” she said.

The program is named after Jerry Bisgrove, a Phoenix businessman whose Stardust Foundation contributed \$25 million to SFAz when it was starting.

“The kind of talent that the Bisgrove Scholars program will attract is vital to the economic success of Arizona and ASU’s ability to attract and support excellence in research and education,” said Michael Crow, ASU president.

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