

UA lands \$5M to find life in space

By Ashley Nowe
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The UA's search for life on other planets has gotten a \$5 million boost.

In August, about 15 UA scientists joined the NASA Astrobiology Institute and the National Optical Astronomy Observatory to search for life inside and outside the solar system.

The UA will receive a \$1 million-per-year budget from the NAI that lasts for five years before the UA must reapply.

"It is really hard to get into this program," said Nick Woolf, professor of astronomy, who leads the Tucson-based project. "Even schools like Harvard got denied this time around."

"In order to learn more about how our planet started, we need to look into other solar systems and see what is happening there," Woolf said.

UA scientists, from the astronomy department to the geosciences department, will be looking into the origin, evolution and the future of life on Earth.

"This is really our hunting license," Woolf said.

The \$1 million dollar a year budget that the NAI provides will help the teams look into three research areas in planetary development — the gases that form planets, young planets that are evolving and planets that are already matured.

In order to better understand Earth's formation, researchers will look at the compounds and molecules that exist in space to see how often planet formation occurs.

Steve Strom, associate director of the NOAO, said, "We also need to see how the changes in a young sun's energy output might influence the evolution of life on Earth-like planets in other solar systems."

Another group of researchers will study the evolution of young parent stars, a star that other planets rotate around such as the sun.

"We will look at stars, similar to the

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DRAWING A CROWD



MELISSA HALTERMAN/Arizona Daily Wildcat
Biochemistry junior Payam Morgan and family studies and human development sophomore Gina Pierotti examine the new calendars of UA Presents events. Both students work as ushers for UA Presents.

Innovation, a job-saver

By Cara O'Connor
SENIOR WRITER

When last year's budget cuts threatened student jobs at *UApresents*, they decided to take action.

The student employees formed the *UApresents* student association to work with the communication and development departments and come up with some solutions to save their jobs.

The student employees met with *UApresents'* full time staff at the end of last semester. At that meeting and the ones that followed, they found ways to save money

and agreed to work with the full-time *UApresents* staff to promote the shows and bring in bigger audiences.

"They were so enthralled with our student association idea that they decided to pay," said Claire McInnes, a molecular and cellular biology senior and the club's president.

The club, which is in its first year, came up with ideas about how to cut corners. For example, all of the ushers started coming to work 15 minutes later. The time they gave up amounted to very little pay difference for each individual, but put together it

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2-year hiring freeze lifted

By Tim Lake
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Top administrators yesterday ended a two-year hiring freeze that prevented departments from employing new staff without approval from a university vice president, according to a memo from Provost George Davis.

The freeze was originally implemented in late 2001 to help offset a \$13.9 million state-mandated budget cut. Though the university has suffered more than \$40 million in cuts since the freeze began, the UA now has a good enough grip on the budget crisis that departments can be freer to hire new staff, several administrators said yesterday.

"This sends the message we are moving out of the era of the budget constraints," said Sandra Taylor, senior vice president for campus life.

She called the freeze "very limiting and very cumbersome."

UA lobbyist Greg Fahey, who for two years has asked legislators to minimize cuts, said the hiring freeze has served its purpose. He said the university worked its way through the cuts and that is the reason the freeze was lifted.

"The budget situation has stabilized," and the university can now return to normal management — similar to before the freeze, said Budget Director Dick Roberts.

While the hiring freeze required vice presidential approval for all new hires, now departments have more flexibility.

"If I wanted to hire someone, I needed to get my vice president to approve even starting a recruitment," said Allison Vaillancourt, assistant vice president for human resources.

"We were worried our budget would be cut," Vaillancourt said. "We were being conservative."

"Now we know where we stand," Vaillancourt said.

"As long as I have money in my budget, I can do the hire," she said.

Vaillancourt said the lift on the freeze will mostly affect staff and appointed personnel positions.

According to Davis' memo, recruiting and hiring of general faculty, including tenure-track and continuing track appointments, lecturers, senior lecturers and multi-year appointments must still go through his office.

However, Vaillancourt said this is not a new procedure and predated the freeze.

Chain Gang scores honors, despite hazing violations

“I have never considered Chain Gang to be a drinking club.”

— Marc Viscardi
Chain Gang president

By Dana Crudo
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

At last night's ASUA Senate meeting, the first Club of the Month award was given to Chain Gang Junior Honorary.

"Through numerous philanthropic events, Chain Gang furthers the notion that college students truly care about the communities they live in," said Marc Viscardi, president of Chain Gang.

This award comes just a few

months after the Dean of Students' Office placed Chain Gang on probation for hazing and alcohol violations.

"They were found in violation of the part of the code of conduct that is related to hazing," said Theresa Holthusen, program coordinator of judicial affairs, who conducted the investigation of Chain Gang.

They had gone on a scavenger hunt, an activity that is considered to be hazing, she said.

"They did not consider them as

scavenger hunts," she said. "They referred to them as lists handed out."

Viscardi, who was initiated when Chain Gang was accused of hazing does not agree with the Dean of Student's findings.

"I still take issue with the hazing accusation ... I don't personally think we were hazed," said Viscardi, a journalism and creative writing junior. "If other members felt like they were then it was wrong and things will be changed."

The organization plans on making some changes by being extremely careful and making sure no hazing or underage drinking occurs during the fall semester.

As Holthusen conducted a hazing investigation, she said she also found that members had committed alcohol violations as well.

"Alcohol was present at several occasions where a number of underage students were at the event."

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