

Grant funds undergraduate research

■ **CHEMISTRY:** Assistant Professor Michael Haley supervises the molecular research of five students

By Jennifer Schmitt
Higher Education Reporter

A University assistant professor of chemistry is using a \$195,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to allow undergraduate chemistry majors to conduct hands-on lab research of molecules.

Assistant Professor Michael Haley received the award last March. The National Science Foundation Career Award is given to well-rounded professors who show an ability to conduct research and who also have a strong teaching ability and philosophy, Haley said.

Scientists now face more competition for science grants because of budget cutbacks on both the state and federal levels, he said.

"Back in the '60s and '70s you



HALEY

could get a grant if you could breathe and write a letter that made sense," Haley said.

"Now the competition is a lot tougher. The foundations are giving out only maybe 15 percent of the requests."

Currently, five undergraduate students are conducting research under Haley's supervision as part of the grant research project, he said.

"The undergraduates in my lab have their own projects; they are not go-fers for the graduate students," Haley said. "They are working on synthesizing actual molecules, and although they are under my supervision, they are doing their own research that could lead to publication."

Through the lab research on

molecules, undergraduates explore and expand on basic foundations of organic chemistry and basic knowledge of reactive or strained molecules.

The more practical and general uses of the research are in technological areas such as the use of liquid crystals, which are found in watches or calculators.

"The liquid crystals that this research may be applicable to are more disc shaped than the rod-shaped ones that are in a watch or calculator display," Haley said. "These disc-shaped ones could be used for the heads-up displays for TV screens or jet fighters."

Conducting research in the lab is part of the degree requirement for all chemistry majors and gives students a chance to decide whether they want to pursue lab research after graduation, Haley said. This research requirement is in addition to general lab courses.

"You don't want to graduate and get a job and then realize, 'I hate this; this is baloney,'" Haley said.

Students demand year-round Need Grants

■ **HEARING:** Scholarship commission considers financial aid and work-study revisions

By Jean M. Bond
Higher Education Reporter

Oregon's Need Grant program is not reaching enough eligible students and should be made available year-round, said students and student associations at State Scholarship Commission hearings last Wednesday. The commission will respond to these concerns and make its final decision about the budget in July.

Need Grants are distributed among three educational sectors: community colleges, state universities and private colleges.

About 95 percent of eligible students at private colleges and 90 percent of eligible students at state institutions receive Need Grants, but only 65 percent of eligible community college students get the grants, said Ed Dennis, executive director of the Oregon Student Lobby.

Community college students get fewer Need Grants because they are more likely to enroll on short

notice, said Brett Hall, president of Community Colleges of Oregon Student Association and Commission. That means they often do not get their paperwork in before Need Grant money runs out.

"What we'd ultimately like to see is more money added to the pot so we can get year-round coverage," Hall said.

The commission invited all interested parties to testify at the hearings as part of the budget process, said Doug Collins, executive director of the commission. The 1997-1999 budget is to be turned in to Gov. John Kitzhaber by August, he said.

Year-round awards are probably going to be the commission's top priority and would cost the state another \$7 or \$8 million dollars, Collins said.

The State Scholarship Commission budgets \$25 million per biennium for Need Grants, Collins said, with an additional \$3 million set aside for supplementary grants for private college students.

"Any private school student who gets a Need Grant can apply for extra money from that \$3 million," Dennis said. "We believe the extra \$3 million should be

rolled into the main Need Grant fund. In a time of limited resources, we need to spread [them] around."

Need Grants cover about 11 percent of educational costs for students who receive them.

The average Need Grant is \$940 for community college students, \$1020 for state school students and \$1400 for private school students per year, who receive an average supplementary award of \$970.

"The most critical thing is to increase [Need Grants] so all eligible students can receive [them]," Clark said.

The commission also discussed whether to request a state work-study program, Collins said. The program would be similar to the federal program but would try harder to place students in work-study positions related to their career goals.

The program has been proposed in the past, but there has never been enough money to start it, Collins said. The commission will need to decide whether to pursue the work-study program or to focus all its energy on expansion of the Need Grant program.

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