

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 26, 2014

Contact: [Tiffannie Bond](#)/[Melissa Biernacinski](#)
Imagine Communications
702-837-8996

Northern, Southern Nevada students awarded summer scholarships *Students will partake in the Summer Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program*

LAS VEGAS – Five students from Northern Nevada colleges and six from Southern Nevada were recently awarded undergraduate scholarships for the Summer Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program by the education outreach team for the Nevada System of Higher Education’s (NSHE) Nevada The Solar-Energy-Water-Environment Nexus project (Solar Nexus project).

The program provides recipients with an opportunity to conduct hands-on research and engage with a college faculty mentor and a co-mentor at a university or research institute. Most recipients will work on an aspect of the Solar Nexus project, a five-year (June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2018) research project focusing on solar energy generation and its impacts on the nexus – or linkages – among Nevada’s limited water resources and fragile environment. The focus of the Solar Nexus project is to create a center of research excellence on solar energy conversion to electricity, minimizing its negative impacts on water usage and the environment.

At the completion of the summer research project, each student will present a poster at a summer undergraduate research symposium to be held at campuses in Reno and Las Vegas in August. Students from throughout Nevada were selected to take part in the program, which will take place at several NSHE institutions.

The scholarships were awarded through the National Science Foundation Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) as part of the Solar Nexus project.

Students who earned the scholarships include:

Southern Nevada: Samuel Bassong, Nevada State College; Sierra Combs, Nevada State College; Brenda Favela-Belmonte, Nevada State College; Kris Thanesjesdapong, College of Southern Nevada; Nicole Vita, Nevada State College; and Maya Zawlodzki, Nevada State College.

Northern Nevada: Zoheb Ashraf, Truckee Meadows Community College; Kevin Bumgartner, Truckee Meadows Community College; Elana Ketchian, Western Nevada College, Douglas Campus; Bryce Powell, Great Basin College; and Benjamin Siegel, Truckee Meadows Community College.

“This program gives students the opportunity to further prepare for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) careers,” said Lori Brazfield, NSHE director of system-sponsored

programs and the EPSCoR office. “Through this experience, we hope students will discover the opportunities available to them in Nevada through science.”

The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) is a national program funded by the Department of Energy (DOE), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

EPSCoR Nevada serves as the catalyst for inspiring undergraduate students to go on to earn their master’s degrees and PhDs in science, technology, engineering and math. EPSCoR Nevada students continue on to earn their master’s degrees, PhDs, start their own companies and more. Many of them choose to stay in Nevada.

The Solar Nexus Project is unique since it supports coordinated research on the nexus of solar energy generation with impacts on water resources and the environment. Its research involves and/or will benefit the following areas: solar power, engineering, diversity, education, cyberinfrastructure, Nevada economic development and diversification and workforce development, data collection, connectivity, software tools to help scientists, students and decision-makers.

The Solar Nexus Project’s main administration is located in the NSHE System Sponsored Programs Office/EPSCoR Office at 5550 W. Flamingo Road, Suite A2. For more information on the project, visit nvsolarnexus.org, email nshespo@nshe.nevada.edu or call 702-522-7070.

#####