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Grad Students to Launch Los Alamos National Laboratory Projects

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Los Alamos National Laboratory's MBA Summer Internship Program recently picked four graduate students to be summer interns and help the lab's scientists and engineers find commercial uses for new technology and to assist real-life companies with business challenges.

The 2010 class consists of four people studying for their masters degree in business administration: Justin Dewey of the University of New Mexico, John Harris of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Ian Soti-Landis of Keck Graduate Institute and Jacqueline Shen of Cornell University, who is returning to the program for a second year.

The team begins its work in June and will spend 10 to 12 weeks assisting Technology Transfer Division employees, LANL inventors and regional entrepreneurs with a variety of business development and commercialization activities — with special emphasis on supporting new businesses based on LANL technology and expertise.

“We are looking forward to another exciting year of hosting tomorrow's brightest business leaders to commercialize lab technology and assist regional companies,” said Steve Girrens, leader of LANL's Technology Transfer Division, which oversees the program.

Real-world studies

While the Technology Transfer Division is still making the final pick of projects for this year's group, the class of 2009 spent its energies on projects as specific as helping a Chama-based sports memorabilia business, Sportartist.com, develop a marketing strategy and another big project with a more regional, long-range reach.

Project coordinators enlisted the 2009 team to help devise a strategy to make Northern New Mexico's technology-based businesses — what organizers call the “technology cluster” — more nationally competitive. “The technology-cluster strategy moved us into new territory of addressing several interrelated industries, rather than a single company,” said Belinda Padilla, LANL Technology Transfer program manager.

The technology-cluster effort was a partnership with REDI (Northern New Mexico's Regional Economic Development Initiative), whose 2009 regional plan identified a need to make tech-based businesses more competitive with similar businesses in other parts of the country.

"The team's efforts provided a thorough and valuable analysis as well as a road map of implementation strategies," said Ed Burckle, executive director of the Regional Development Corporation, which manages REDI. The New Mexico Technology Council Today and REDI have teamed up to act on the recommendations in the technology cluster strategy developed by the MBA students.

Sharing knowledge

The Technology Transfer Division is a conduit for LANL collaborations with private industry. It promotes sharing LANL technologies and discoveries with entrepreneurs willing to find commercially feasible, tech-based products that can benefit society as a whole. The division concentrates on technology licensing, cooperative research and development agreements and special assistance for employees interested in starting a business based on their LANL inventions.

For more information on the lab's MBA Summer Internship Program, please visit <http://www.lanl.gov/orgs/tt/internships.shtml>.

Finance New Mexico is an initiative of the New Mexico Small Business Investment Corporation (NMSBIC) and its partners to assist individuals and businesses in obtaining skills and funding-resources for their business or idea. To learn more, go to www.FinanceNewMexico.org.

