



News Release

CONTACT: Jade Boyd
PHONE: (713) 348-6778
E-MAIL: jadeboyd@rice.edu

ICON Funds UCSB Survey Of Nanotechnology Current Practices

International Council on Nanotechnology Studies Occupational Safeguards

HOUSTON, March 15, 2006 – The International Council on Nanotechnology (ICON) has awarded \$55,000 to researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) to conduct a “Review of Current Practices for Nanotechnology Safety.”

ICON, a coalition of academic, industrial, governmental and civil society organizations, is administered by Rice University’s Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology (CBEN).

“ICON is working to document current practices for identifying, managing and reducing risks – across all lifecycle phases – for the production, handling, use and disposal of nanomaterials,” said Kristen Kulinowski, executive director of CBEN. “Our goal is to identify the safest way to work with nanomaterials, and to do that we need to identify the best approaches in use today by industries that are already developing and using nanomaterials.”

The current practices initiative is intended to help companies manage potential nanotechnology risks with more certainty. ICON also hopes the initiative will help inform risk management efforts that are underway at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies.

The project leader at UCSB is Patricia Holden, professor of environmental microbiology. The UCSB team includes Magali Delmas, assistant professor of business policy, Richard Appelbaum, professor of sociology and global and international studies, and Barbara Herr Harthorn, research anthropologist, PI, and co-director of UCSB’s NSF Center for Nanotechnology in Society (CNS-UCSB).

Work at UCSB will proceed in two stages. The first involves a comprehensive review of all existing “best practice” development efforts. In the second stage, the researchers will interview a broad range of companies internationally to determine current practices. One of their major goals will be “to identify critical needs for the standardization and implementation of safe

practices in the nanotechnology industry in different parts of the globe.” ICON plans to make the results of the project public by the end of the year.

Dr. Harthorn commented, “The ICON-funded study will provide essential data on current nanotech industry standards and practices for enhancing the environmental and health safety of nanomaterials. By providing comparative data on companies in the US, Europe and Asia, it will help shed light on new safety models as they are being implemented and also help identify where they are most needed. This work will provide important baseline data for NSF-funded research the CNS-UCSB is planning on risk and society issues, and we are delighted to partner with the UCSB Bren School of Environmental Management.”

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About ICON

The International Council on Nanotechnology is a multi-stakeholder group whose mission is to assess, communicate, and reduce nanotechnology environmental and health risks while maximizing its societal benefit. Our efforts are founded on the belief that partnership activities, between governments, industry, academia and non-governmental organizations are the key to an environmentally responsible nanotechnology industry. For more information visit <http://icon.rice.edu>.

About CBEN

The Center for Biological and Environmental Nanotechnology is a National Science Foundation Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center dedicated to developing sustainable nanotechnologies that improve human health and the environment. Located at Rice University in Houston, CBEN is a leader in ensuring that nanotechnology develops responsibly and with strong public support. For more information visit <http://cben.rice.edu>.

About Rice University

Rice University is consistently ranked one of America’s best teaching and research universities. It is distinguished by its: size—2,850 undergraduates and 1,950 graduate students; selectivity—10 applicants for each place in the freshman class; resources—an undergraduate student-to-faculty ratio of 6-to-1, and the fifth largest endowment per student among American universities; residential college system, which builds communities that are both close-knit and diverse; and collaborative culture, which crosses disciplines, integrates teaching and research, and intermingles undergraduate and graduate work. Rice’s wooded campus is located in the nation’s fourth largest city and on America’s South Coast. For more information visit <http://www.rice.edu>.