

INSIDE Iowa State

U R T H E F A C U L T Y A N D S T A F F

International physics institute lands at Iowa State

by Skip Derra

Iowa State will be home to a new International Institute of Theoretical and Applied Physics. ISU and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) formally have agreed to establish the institute on campus.

The institute will be only the second of its type in the world; the other is the International Center for Theoretical Physics in Trieste, Italy. Researchers from around the world are expected to come to the institute at Iowa State to initiate international research projects and foster closer working relationships with other researchers.

"This is a rare opportunity for the United States and Iowa State to help shape the global community and foster goodwill," said President Martin Jischke. "As a leading research university, we want to encourage and welcome scientists from around the world to participate in the programs of the new institute."

Federico Mayor, director general of UNESCO said, "The institute will form a valuable focus in the United States for research alliances involving scientists from the United States and the developing world. In this way, the institute will complement the long-standing and highly appreciated contributions that U.S. universities already make to development by training large numbers of foreign students to doctoral levels in science and engineering."

James Vary, professor of physics and astronomy and acting director of the institute, said the institute will allow Iowa State to contribute to the new world order.

"By working with scientists from developing countries, we will be able to address such global issues as economic development, energy and the environment," Vary said.

A primary goal of the institute is to enable scientists of developing countries to carry out advanced research and teach effectively in their own countries and to strengthen the scientific infrastructure of their regions. Another goal is to foster collaborations between U.S. scientists and their colleagues in developing countries in the joint pursuit of excellence in scientific teaching and research.

"These goals are entirely consistent with, and indeed enhance, Iowa State University's mission as a land-grant, research university, and their realization will provide important opportunities for students and faculty at Iowa State," said Provost John Kozak.

Initially, several hundred scientists from developing countries are expected to participate annually in institute activities. As funding grows, the number of participants worldwide taking part in institute activities is expected to expand rapidly, Vary said. The amount of time visiting scientists spend at Iowa State will be dictated by the nature of their projects. Many of the projects also will be carried out in different parts of the world.