



## New Institute Energizes Stanford/SLAC Collaboration

President Barack Obama has said it, Secretary of Energy Steven Chu has said it: we need to do more to combat global warming. And now a new Stanford initiative is taking action. In January Stanford launched a \$100 million energy initiative supporting research in topics from science to engineering to policy that will help the US free itself from fuels that damage the environment and endanger national security. A crucial part of this effort is studying the basic science underlying the solar cells, hydrogen tanks and wind turbines that can power our society into the future.



SIMES Director Zhi-Xun Shen. (Click for larger image.)

That basic science research is happening at the Stanford Institute for Materials and Energy Science, a joint SLAC-Stanford collaboration. SIMES researchers work on the cutting edge, learning to make more powerful solar cells, glean clean-burning hydrogen fuel from a glass of water, and transfer electricity along power lines with a minimum of loss. The new initiative will provide funding for five new Stanford faculty, as well as support for post-doctoral researchers and graduate students. According to SIMES Director Zhi-Xun Shen, the initiative will bring new vigor to the already strong energy research effort at Stanford and SLAC, attracting the brightest minds in the world to the collaboration.

"This is enormous for the energy program at Stanford and SLAC," Shen said. "Enterprises live or die on the quality of the people involved. If you can put together good people and give them the right environment and infrastructure, you can go a long way."

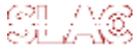
The Stanford initiative will foster discourse and collaboration among people working on all aspects of the energy crisis, from scientists investigating basic energy processes to civil engineers trying to incorporate emerging green technologies and policymakers designing better incentives and treaties. SIMES is partnering with the Global Climate and Energy Project, or GCEP, a collaboration between physical scientists and engineers of all stripes. Under the new energy initiative, GCEP will unite with the Precourt Institute for Energy Efficiency, Stanford's center for green policy and architecture. Shen said he couldn't be more pleased. It means that scientific breakthroughs won't stop at SIMES; new knowledge will flow quickly into the hands of the engineers who will put it into practice.

"This collaboration allows us to take fruits of basic research and take the next step towards real applications," Shen said.

Shen said the most important consequence of the new initiative will be to grow and strengthen the body of people at Stanford and SLAC who are tackling the energy problem. "What is exciting is that we will have a much bigger community, and if we do it right, the total will be much larger than the sum of the individuals."

—*Lauren Schenkman*

SLAC Today, *February 9, 2009*



SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory, Menlo Park, CA  
Operated by Stanford University for the U.S. Dept. of Energy



[Page Contact](#)

Last update: 02/09/2009 09:06:32