



Astronomer Harlan Spence To Head UNH Institute For Study Of Earth, Oceans, And Space

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Astronomer Harlan Spence is the new director of the University of New Hampshire's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space (EOS). Credit: Courtesy of Harlan Spence.

DURHAM, N.H. –Astronomer Harlan Spence has been named director of the University of New Hampshire's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space (EOS), announced UNH University Professor and Provost John Aber. Spence's appointment is effective January 1, 2010.

Spence, a professor of astronomy at Boston University who studies theoretical and experimental space plasma physics, is bringing six projects to UNH, totaling more than \$55 million in funding from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF). He will bring two large space exploration projects to campus to further strengthen the university's role in space physics. The Radiation Belt Storm Probes mission is intended to increase the safety of space exploration by increasing our understanding of energetic electrons and ions in Earth's space environment. The Cosmic Ray Telescope for the Effects of Radiation (CRaTER) project focuses on the radiation environment at the moon relative to future human or robotic exploration. Combined funding for these two long-term projects is

nearly \$47 million.

"We are very fortunate to be able to bring to campus and to EOS someone with Dr. Spence's stature as a scholar and experience as an academic leader. His interests in, and connections to Earth and ocean science, in addition to his recognized excellence in space science, will provide broadly-based and well-rounded leadership for EOS at an important point in its history," said Aber.

Spence received his Ph.D. in geophysics and space physics from the University of California at Los Angeles. He has spent 15 years in increasingly responsible faculty positions at Boston University's department of astronomy and the Center for Space Physics, serving for three years as chair of the department of astronomy. He is a well-known scholar with more than 100 publications in the scientific literature of space and solar physics and he has been coauthor of six refereed National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Committee reports. Spence has been a frequent adviser to U.S. science agencies, having served on 17 advisory committees to NASA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NSF, and the NAS.

"I am excited to accept the directorship of EOS, an institute that in my opinion clearly possesses outstanding stature on the national landscape as a university-based research enterprise and in areas of high scientific value to society. I see promise for taking EOS to a next level of even greater accomplishment and worth to the university and to the nation," said Spence. "As Director, it will be my delight to work with all stakeholders in developing and implementing a shared vision that propels EOS to this next level, a process informed by

lessons of the past, rooted in realities of the present, and buoyed by prospects for the future. I am particularly compelled by the opportunity to interweave more completely EOS's impressive research prowess with the essential fabric of UNH's academic mission, a process that will strengthen and enhance both."

The Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space is UNH's largest research enterprise, with 275 faculty, staff and students engaged in more than 300 research projects. EOS receives more than \$37 million each year in funding from NASA, NOAA, NSF and other federal agencies. EOS comprises four research centers: the Space Science Center, Ocean Process Analysis Laboratory, Climate Change Research Center, and Complex Systems Research Center. Researchers have expertise in space science, solar terrestrial theory, engineering, atmospheric chemistry, ocean dynamics and chemistry, biogeochemistry, climate change, paleoclimatology, forest and wetland ecology, hydrology, marine science, and remote sensing of terrestrial and ocean ecosystems.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

-30-

Photograph available to download:

http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2009/sept/HarlanSpenceHeadshotSept09.jpg

Caption: Astronomer Harlan Spence is the new director of the University of New Hampshire's Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space (EOS).

Credit: Courtesy of Harlan Spence.