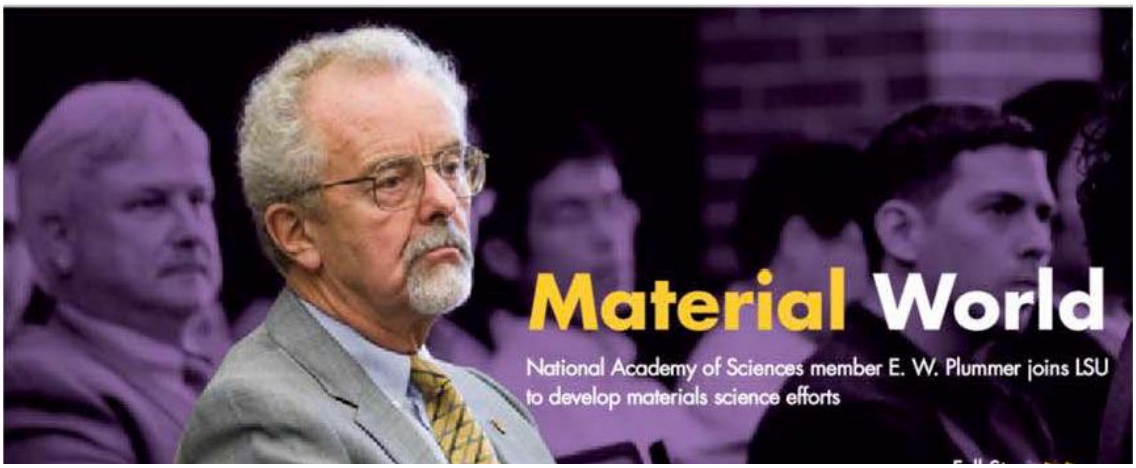
Materials Science at LSU Receives Prestigious New Faculty



BATON ROUGE -- E. W. Plummer, member of the National Academy of Sciences and one of the world's leading physicists, will join the LSU faculty as special assistant to the vice chancellor of research and economic development and professor of physics and astronomy. His appointment becomes effective Jan. 6.

Plummer will play a major role in advancing the university's efforts toward developing the materials science cluster of the Multidisciplinary Hiring Initiatives, or MHI. He will be joined by five additional new faculty hires, each of whom will play an integral role in the future of materials science at LSU.

"Plummer will certainly be instrumental as LSU begins to organize and pursue its materials science and engineering efforts," said Brooks Keel, vice chancellor for research and economic development. "Our faculty and students will also benefit from having the opportunity to work with one of the country's leading scientists. His contributions to materials science at LSU will certainly play a huge part in the future of the university."

Plummer is the first National Academy of Sciences member to join LSU's faculty in the history of the university. Equally important to the LSU materials science initiative at LSU are the five other new hires:

- Professor Mark Jarrell will join the Department of Physics and Astronomy and CCT in January. His appointment is also in conjunction with LONI, the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative.
- Associate Professor Rongying Jin will join the Department of Physics and Astronomy in January.
- Assistant Professor Juana Moreno came to LSU in August with a joint appointment in physics and astronomy and CCT, the Center for Computation and Technology.
- Associate Professor Shane Stadler came in August to LSU's Department of Physics and Astronomy, and will also conduct research at the university's Center for Advanced Microsystems and Devices, or CAMD.
- Professor Jiandi Zhang will join the Department of Physics and Astronomy in January.

Materials science is the fabrication, analysis and theoretical understanding of the basic properties of materials, allowing the design of stronger, more lightweight materials for use in aircraft and automobiles; more advanced magnetic materials allowing for greater data storage on computers; faster and more reliable electronic materials used in cell phones and DVD players; and new and improved "lab on a chip" technology that has homeland security applications.

"One of the goals of the MHI is to support the Flagship Agenda through attracting and retaining nationally recognized faculty,"said LSU Chancellor Michael Martin. "Having Plummer join the LSU family is definitely a major step in the right direction, and with his input and impressive body of work, we are gaining the momentum needed for the university to meet and even surpass its goals."

Plummer received a doctorate in physics from Cornell in 1968 and is currently the director of the Joint Institute for Advanced Materials. He has published more than 300 scholarly articles and mentored more than 70 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows throughout his career. He specializes in surface physics, which investigates the electronic, magnetic and structural properties of a material's surface at the atomic scale.

The MHI, which involves aggressively pursuing and hiring multiple high profile faculty members to create interdisciplinary areas of national prominence, is another method that LSU is using to achieve its Flagship Agenda goals of improving the university and its faculty and students. It supports the National Flagship Agenda by increasing research productivity and long-term economic development, increasing the number and quality of students at the university, converting scientific and technological discoveries into new products and processes, applying university resources to solve economic, environmental and educational challenges and improving the national reputation of the university.