



opportunity announcement for Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Data Resources for Fusion Energy Sciences. Approaches that could support the deployment of a fusion pilot plant on a decadal time-scale were preferred for their “high programmatic importance,” according to the FOA, which was opened to applications in December 2022.

The recipients will pursue research in science discovery, diagnostic data analysis, model extraction and reduction, plasma control, analysis of extreme-scale simulation data, and data-enhanced prediction, according to the DOE. Multiple awards will focus on establishing new systems for managing, formatting, curating, and accessing experimental and simulation data, and the products of that work will be available in public databases.

Total funding is \$29 million for projects lasting up to three years in duration, with \$11 million for fiscal year 2023, and outyear funding contingent on congressional appropriations. A list of the seven projects chosen for funding is available on the FES program homepage, at science.osti.gov/fes. ☒

In Case You Missed It . . .

A new advanced nuclear research facility has opened at Abilene Christian University—the Gayle and Max Dillard Science and Engineering Research Center (SERC). The \$23 million, 28,000-square-foot facility contains the Nuclear Energy eXperimental Testing Laboratory (NEXT Lab), which has joined with Abilene-based Natura Resources to design, license, and commission a molten salt–fueled research reactor. More than 300 people were on hand September 1 to celebrate the opening and tour the facility, including donors, government officials, and scientists from ACU and other research institutions.



ACU’s grand opening event for the Gayle and Max Dillard Science and Engineering Research Center. (Photo: ACU)

DOE-supported nuclear data benchmarking for diverse missions is the focus of \$5.8 million in funding announced by the Department of Energy’s Office of Science on September 13. Five projects will benchmark nuclear data for a range of nuclear science investigations and applications, including energy, space exploration, and nonproliferation. In addition to improving nuclear data benchmarks, projects funded under the award will also be used to improve the curation of new and legacy data collected at experimental facilities, according to the announcement. Four of the five funded projects include participation from Brookhaven National Laboratory.

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