

‘Climategate’ professor Phil Jones awarded £13 million in research grants

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Global Research Editor’s Note

The announcement of the award came one day after the announcement that Phil Jones was stepping down from the Climate Research Unit, pending a police investigation into the leaked emails.

The professor at the centre of the ‘Climategate’ affair has successfully received more than £13 million in research funding.

Prof Jones has stood aside as head of the CRU while an independent inquiry investigates thousands of emails and other documents stolen from the university’s computer server and published on the internet. The figure is disclosed in a leaked, internal document posted on the internet by climate change sceptics who have seized upon it as evidence of a funding “gravy train” for scientists conducting research into the area.

The grants were awarded following successful applications made by Professor Phil Jones, who headed up the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia.

The money is largely for research into the effects of global warming and is in addition to the main government education grant awarded to the university.

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Climate change sceptics point to an email written by one scientist in November 1999 as evidence of manipulation of the figures to mask falling global temperatures.

“I’ve just completed Mike’s Nature [the science journal] trick of adding in the real temps to each series for the last 20 years (ie, from 1981 onwards) and from 1961 for Keith’s to hide the decline,” the email said.

In another email, the death of a leading climate change sceptic is described as “cheering news”.

The emails are being used by climate change sceptics to allege that attempts were made to manipulate data to “prove” the existence of man-made climate change.

They also allegedly point to efforts to block Freedom of Information requests by sceptics. Allegations that data was altered and FOI requests blocked have been vigorously denied.

The spreadsheet listing all successful grant applications made by Professor Jones was part of the batch of leaked documents. It shows Professor Jones, along with other academics at the university, received more than 50 separate grants with a value of £13.7 million from a number of funding bodies including the European Union, Nato, and the US department of energy.

Several British bodies also gave substantial sums including the Met Office, the Environment Agency, the National Rivers Authority and the Department for the Environment.

Prof Jones' name appears alongside all the grants, which range in value from as little as £730 for work carried out on Scottish temperature indices for the Scottish Environment Protection Agency to £6.6 million given by the Higher Education Funding Council for England for the establishment of the Zuckerman Institute for Connective Environmental Research at UEA, an award winning research facility which includes the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change.

According to the spreadsheet, Prof Jones's first successful grant application was made in 1991 to the Department of Environment and was worth £179,484 for 'climate change detection'.

Other grants appear more obscure such as a European Union grant for £42,464 for a project entitled: "Assessing the impact of future climatic change on the water resources and the hydrology of the Rio de la Plata Basin."

Several grants, totalling more than £3 million, are made by the National Environment Research Council, a quango based in Swindon. They include research for "Exploring the potential for dendroclimatological analysis in Northern Ethiopia" which was worth £18,639.

Besides Prof Jones, many of the leading academics - past and present at CRU - are also named on the spreadsheet, including Prof Trevor Davies, who is now pro-vice-chancellor at UEA but who once headed up the CRU.

Professor Ross McKittrick, visiting professor of environmental economics at the University of Buckingham and an arch sceptic who was subject of some of the leaked emails, said: "Climate sceptics are always accused of taking money from industry but it is now clear the money is on the other side.

"There is a huge amount of money on the global warming side. Institutions like the CRU have a very large budget but that would disappear if global warming ceased to exist.

"Scientists are enjoying a funding gravy train; there is so much money in climate research. Lots of areas of science are short of money but not climate change."

The CRU has come under scrutiny since the emergence of the emails which have been hugely damaging to the climate change lobby ahead of the UN climate change summit in Copenhagen. It has been reported the CRU database was hacked into some time ago but the emails released to maximise the impact ahead of Copenhagen which begins tomorrow.

The CRU dismisses suggestions that data has been manipulated and points to a huge body

of evidence which back up the fundamental principle that man is responsible for a rise in global temperatures which will have catastrophic consequences if unchecked.

Funding bodies are sticking by the CRU. A spokeswoman for the NERC said: "We do fund climate change research at UEA.

Whenever research grants are applied for, academics go through a very rigorous peer review system. We have every confidence in the British and international climate research being undertaken at CRU."

The CRU refused to comment on the leaked spreadsheet.

A spokesman said: "The university has made it clear that all issues arising from allegations as a result of emails stolen from the CRU and published without permission on the web will be considered by an independent review."

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