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From marine robot math to nuclear astronomy: LSU names 6 research 'Rainmakers'

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LSU is honoring six faculty members who have earned national or international recognition for their research.

The "Rainmakers" honor is given to professors who stand out for their ability to secure research funding and publish in prominent journals.

"Their high-caliber discoveries further the university's mission to improve lives in Louisiana and all around the world," Vice President of Research and Economic Development Robert Twilley said in a news release.

The Rainmakers includes scholars in the early, middle and senior stages of their careers. The winners will each receive a \$1,000 stipend and be honored in a reception in the Huey P. Long Fieldhouse ballroom.

The release describes the research each professor does that won them the award:

Don Zhang: An associate professor of psychology, Zhang studies how people make decisions at work while facing risk and uncertainty. He measures risk-taking as a personality trait and how it affects work environments.

Christine Lattin: An assistant professor of biological sciences, Lattin studies the biological mechanisms that help animals handle stress and changes in their environment. The neural pathways in the European starlings she studies are similar in all vertebrates, so her findings could help people with anxiety, PTSD or similar conditions.

Kathleen Searles: An associate professor of political science and mass communication, Searles studies how information spreads online, spreading noncredible information and leading to campaigns of abuse and harassment. She studies how that information affects society and politics.

Catherine Deibel: A professor of physics and astronomy specializing in nuclear physics, Deibel studies the atoms that drive stellar explosions. Her team develops, builds and tests detectors that are used in particle accelerators around the world.

Rafael Orozco: A professor of world languages, literatures and cultures, Orozco studies how languages change. While his primary focus is Spanish in the U.S. and Latin America, he is leading a massive project studying the presence or absence of subject personal pronouns in languages ranging from Mandarin to Swabian German.

Michael Malisoff: A professor of mathematics, Malisoff studies mathematical systems and control theory, and his research has been applied to U.S. aerospace defense systems and marine robotics.

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