Today the Science and Transcendence Advanced Research Series (STARS) program awarded $20,000 planning grants to twenty interdisciplinary research teams. STARS sponsors ground-breaking interdisciplinary research on the ways science, in light of philosophical and theological reflection, points towards the nature, character and meaning of ultimate reality. STARS research will be undertaken in a highly innovative way: through small teams of scientists and humanities scholars.

“I am delighted with the extraordinary quality and ground-breaking approaches to interdisciplinary research by these twenty winning teams,” said Robert John Russell, STARS Principal Investigator and the Ian G. Barbour Professor of Theology and Science in Residence at the Graduate Theological Union. "The wide range of scientific research spans key topics from fundamental physics and evolutionary biology to the neurosciences and mathematics. The implications for our understanding of human spirituality, ethics, aesthetics and religion are very promising.”

Over the next two years, STARS will award five major research grants of $100,000 each. In 2008 two of these grants may be renewed at $200,000. The awards at every level will be based on the recommendations of a panel of distinguished judges.

STARS is a program of the Center for Theology and Natural Sciences (CTNS) in Berkeley, California. For more than twenty-five years, CTNS has worked to build bridges between theology and science through research, teaching, and public service. STARS is funded through a grant from the John Templeton Foundation.

For more information about CTNS, visit http://www.ctns.org/ or call 510-848-8152.
For more information about the STARS Program, visit http://www.ctnsstars.org/.

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LIST OF RESEARCH TEAMS AWARDED $20,000 RESEARCH PLANNING GRANTS

Extraterrestrial Contact (ETC): Considerations on Human (Dis) Placement in the Cosmos
- George Annas, Boston University
- Devon Burr, SETI Institute
- John Hart, Boston University
- Thomas Kunz, Boston University
- Margaret Race, SETI Institute

Human Values, Mind and Brain
- Miquel Capo, University of Balearic Islands
- Camilo Cela-Conde, University of Balearic Islands
- Marcos Nadal, University of Balearic Islands
- Tomas Ortiz, Complutense University of Madrid

Genetics, Neuroscience, and the Nature of Being: A Dialectic, Natural Philosophical Approach That Seeks to Preserve the Notion of Transcendence
- Kevin FitzGerald, Georgetown University Medical Center
- James Giordano, Georgetown University Medical Center

Material and Nonmaterial Cultural Evolution in Human and Bonobo
- Patricia Gray, University of North Carolina-Greensboro
- Gregg Henriques, James Madison University
- Nancy Howell, Saint Paul School of Theology
- Dave Pruett, James Madison University
- Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, Great Ape Trust
- Stuart Shanker, York University

Transcending the Boundaries of Scientific Research: Exploring Reality and the Search to Know
- Rodney Holder, St Edmund’s College, Cambridge University
- Angeliki Kerasidou, Oxford University
- Chris McKay, NASA Ames Research Center
- Margaret Yee, Oxford University

Information and the Origin of Life
- Andrew Robinson, University of Exeter
- Christopher Southgate, University of Exeter

Dynamic Forms for Systems and Molecular Biology
- Alejandro Garcia-Rivera, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley
- Mark Graves, Graduate Theological Union
Did Sympathy and Morality Evolve?
Marie George, St. John’s University
Oliver Putz, Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley

The Nature of Ethics and the Ethics of Nature: The Ultimate Reality of the Good, the Transcendent, and the Flourishing of Life
Lori Beaman, University of Ottawa
Chris McKay, NASA Ames Research Center
Tim McPhearson, Columbia University
Richard Randolph, Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences

Observation of the Gravitational-Wave Analog of the CMB and Its Implications for the Origin of the Observable Universe
Raymond Chiao, University of California, Merced
Kirk Wegter-McNelly, Boston University

Quantum Physical Investigations into the Causal and Logical Orders and the Physical Basis of Possibility
Tim Eastman, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center
Michael Epperson, California State University Sacramento
David Finkelstein, Georgia Institute of Technology
William Kallfelz, University of Maryland
Henry Stapp, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Time and Reality: New Insights from Quantum Non-Locality and Gentle Measurements
Yakir Aharonov, George Mason University
Joseph Berkovitz, University of Sydney
Jeffrey Bub, University of Maryland
Menas Kafatos, George Mason University
Jeff Tollaksen, George Mason University

Emergence Theory Applied to Biological Systems
Gennaro Auletta, Pontifical Gregorian University
George Ellis, University of Cape Town
Luc Jaeger, University of California, Santa Barbara

The Rationality of Ultimate Value: Emotion, Awareness, and Causality in Virtue Ethics and Decision Neuroscience
Warren Brown, Fuller Theological Seminary
Greg Peterson, South Dakota State University
Kevin Reimer, Azusa Pacific University
Michael Spezio, California Institute of Technology
James Van Slyke, Fuller Theological Seminary
Intense Experiences and Ultimate Reality
  Patrick McNamara, Boston University
  Wesley Wildman, Boston University

A Scientific Approach to Divine Infinity
  Wolfgang Achtner, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen
  Klaus Mainzer, University of Augsburg
  Eric Steinhart, William Paterson University of New Jersey
  Hugh Woodin, University of California, Berkeley

Quantum Mechanics and the Appearance of Reality
  David Albert, Columbia University
  Brian Greene, Columbia University
  Maulik Parikh, Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics

Organic Embodiment of Transcendent Moral Commitments
  Edward Larson, Pepperdine University School of Law
  Stephen Post, Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine
  Jeffrey Schloss, Westmont College
  Paul Zak, Claremont Graduate University

Mind and Personal Identity from a Dynamical Systems Perspective
  James Reggia, University of Maryland
  Allen Stairs, University of Maryland

Brain Connectivity and Contemplative Experiences
  James Fallon, University of California, Irvine
  Aaron Kheriaty, University of California, Irvine
  Adrian Preda, University of California, Irvine