A talented and dedicated faculty is the University’s most precious—and most costly—resource. Recruiting and retaining a faculty of gifted educators is paramount. Recognizing the very important need to invest funds as a way of providing more opportunities for faculty to advance their creativity and research and to inspire and transform students, the mining industry has provided generous funding for faculty positions in the Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering.

Goldcorp Inc., Newmont Mining Corporation and Barrick Gold of North America have recently funded the Goldcorp Endowed Chair, the Newmont Endowed Professorship, and the Barrick Gold of North America Visiting Professorship, the latter a term position. The Goldcorp and Newmont professorships are among 24 endowed positions at the University. Endowed professorships provide funding in perpetuity for the position, while term professorships are funded for a specific period of time.

“By funding these professorships, the mining industry has strongly signaled its commitment to its future workforce and environmental sustainability,” said Jeff Thompson, dean of the College of Science.

Named chairs and professorships are the highest honor the University can bestow on a member of its faculty and are a coveted and widely recognized accolade, signaling a professor at the top of his or her field. The support monies for each position enable the holder to further their work with support for their teaching and research activities. The Goldcorp Endowed Chair in Minerals Engineering is held by Carl Nesbitt, the Newmont Endowed Professorship in Minerals Engineering is held by Maurice Fuerstenau, and the Barrick Gold of North America Visiting Professorship is held by Thom Seal. Seal also holds the John N. Butler Endowed Professorship in Extractive Metallurgy, which was established in 1986. The other named position in the Mackay School was established in 1991, the Arthur Brant Endowed Chair in Geophysics, and is held by James Taranik.

Nesbitt and Seal were recently named to their professorships and the two new faculty members bring extensive and important research experience from both higher education and industry. A Nevada graduate, Nesbitt, ’80 (chemical engineering), ’85 M.S. (metallurgical engineering), ’90 Ph.D. (metallurgical engineering), has been teaching metallurgical engineering courses for more than 20 years and has conducted research for more than 18 years, resulting in a number of patents. Seal, who earned his bachelor’s in environmental chemistry from Oregon State and his master’s (mining engineering) and Ph.D. (mining engineering – metallurgy) from the University of Idaho, spent more than 30 years working in the mining industry, retiring in 2008 as Newmont’s manager of metallurgy technology. Nesbitt’s research focus is in carbon and recovering metals, such as removing mercury from processing streams, while Seal’s research is in enhanced metal extraction. The two are working and teaching in tandem—and their enthusiasm is contagious. This spring they employed distance-education technology to reach students across the state and beyond.
“Eventually, we’re hoping to team up online with experts at other universities who could teach their specialties in mineral processing,” Seal said. “The online method of teaching allows each one of us to take our specialty worldwide and add it to the knowledge base of the future.”

Professor Emeritus of Metallurgy Maurice Fuerstenau, who earned his bachelor’s from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology and his master’s and doctoral degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is the only University of Nevada, Reno faculty member to have been elected to the National Academy of Engineering for his contributions to mineral processing, hydrometallurgy and engineering education.

In another measure of support, the mining industry initiated an increase to the mining claim fee in Nevada to support higher education in Nevada. The additional fee, collected through the Nevada Commission on Minerals Resources Division of Minerals, now supports the University’s mining engineering program. “We’re grateful for the wonderful and continued support we have from these mining companies, and the industry as a whole,” Thompson said. “Their contributions allowed us to expand and develop the mining engineering portion of our academic offering, with more to come for the future. It is successful partnerships such as this between higher education and the mining industry that help build the education base and sustain local and state economies.”

—Keiko Weil ‘87

To learn more about how you can help support professorships in the Mackay School, contact Development Director Char Hagemann at (775) 682-8791 or hagemann@unr.edu.

Mackay School of Earth Sciences and Engineering Chairs and Professorships:

**Goldcorp Endowed Chair in Minerals Engineering**
Dr. Carl C. Nesbitt
Research focus: Carbon and recovering metals

**Barrick Gold of North America Visiting Professorship**
John N. Butler Endowed Professorship in Extractive Metallurgy
Dr. Thom J. Seal
Research focus: Enhanced metal extraction

**Newmont Endowed Professorship in Minerals Engineering**
Dr. Maurice C. Fuerstenau
Research focus: Surface chemistry/froth flotation, hydrometallurgical processing, kinetics and environmental remediation

**Arthur Brant Endowed Chair in Geophysics**
Dr. James V. Taranik
Research focus: Applications of aerospace remote sensing and geophysics to the study of the Earth