

Microbiology head accorded Distinguished Professor honors

By Barbara Pitoniak
News Office staff

Derek Lovley, head of the Department of Microbiology, has been appointed a Distinguished Professor by President William M. Bulger. The appointment was made following approval by the Board of Trustees at its Wednesday meeting in Boston. The title recognizes Lovley for his outstanding academic and professional accomplishments.

Lovley was recommended for recognition by Chancellor David K. Scott, Provost Cora B. Marrett, and dean of the College of Food and Natural Resources (CFNR) Robert Helgesen. "This is an outstanding honor for professor Lovley, one that not only recognizes the international prestige his work generates for himself and the University but also one that sets a standard of excellence for all faculty

Trustees approve Lovley appointment

members," said Helgesen.

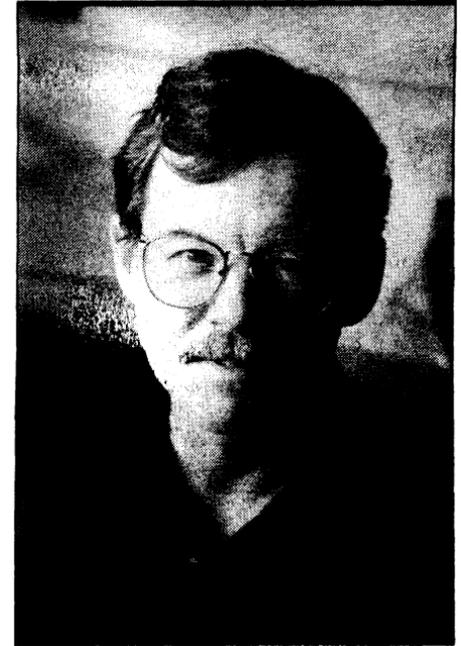
An international authority in the field of environmental microbiology, Lovley's research focuses on unusual forms of anaerobic microorganisms, bacteria that transform their food into energy without using oxygen. He has made numerous seminal discoveries in his field and is responsible for the development of an entirely new area of research in microbiology: dissimilatory iron reduction. Lovley has determined that certain kinds of microorganisms, which live several miles below ground, can use iron to metabolize their food, a discovery which could help shed light on how life began on Earth. His previous research has demonstrated that microorganisms that can grow on iron can be used in treating contaminated groundwater. He has also studied "hyperthermophiles," organisms that

thrive in hot temperatures and are most closely related to early forms of life, from which modern bacteria, plants, and animals have descended.

Lovley joined the faculty in 1995, following an 11-year career as a research hydrologist with the United States Geological Survey (USGS). He was appointed department head in 1997.

Lovley is currently pursuing research funded by 10 outside grants, the largest number in all of CFNR. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Microbiology and is a recipient of the Mendenhall Lecturer Award, the highest scientific honor awarded by USGS. He is widely published and his research has also been featured in national and international media reports.

Lovley received his doctorate from Michigan State University in 1982.



Derek Lovley, head of the Department of Microbiology since 1997, has served on the faculty for four years. (Chronicle file photo)