A longstanding research and educational partnership between the university and the nation’s largest defense contractor just got stronger.

The University of Maryland and the Lockheed Martin Corp. signed an agreement in June that supports three joint research centers on campus, encourages collaboration on large, external funding opportunities and eases the administrative process to stimulate new research in areas like climate change, cybersecurity and counterterrorism.

“They can access our expertise, and we get first crack at some really interesting scientific problems,” says Patrick O’Shea, a UM professor and chair of electrical and computer engineering who is tasked with implementing the new agreement.

Lockheed Martin has committed a minimum of $1 million per year for three years into this strategic relationship. This investment will include supporting three centers of collaboration—in logistics, climate change and cybersecurity, with the logistics center already in place.

The agreement builds on a relationship with Lockheed Martin that goes back more than 60 years. Aviation pioneer Glenn L. Martin first approached the university in the 1940s, making two large gifts to Maryland that helped build an engineering classroom building and wind tunnel. Subsequent mergers transformed the Martin Aircraft Co. into Lockheed Martin, with the corporation supporting numerous laboratories, endowed professorships and other research and academic endeavors over the years.

Recent projects that joined Maryland faculty with scientists from the Bethesda, Md.-based corporation are one of the largest recruiters of faculty from Maryland’s School of Public Policy, business, computer science and public health. Other research in counterterrorism would join engineers and computer specialists with faculty experts in psychology, linguistics and criminology.

“Over the past two years, we’ve encouraged senior scientists from Lockheed to visit campus and brainstorm on how we can match our strengths with areas of mutual interest,” says Ken Gertz, associate vice president for research development.

Gertz, who spearheaded the effort to bring about the new agreement, says the university hopes to use it as a model to forge partnerships with other large corporations. “We already do a good job of interacting with many labs and agencies in the federal government,” he says, “and we’re hoping this partnership model can open the door to other unique, corporate strategic relationships.”

partnerships between a university and a corporation anywhere,” says Darryll Pines, dean of the A. James Clark School of Engineering. “They are one of the largest recruiters of our graduates, and I expect that to only increase as this new agreement expands faculty and student involvement from across campus.”

O’Shea says he is already meeting with deans from other colleges to determine how their faculty can contribute. With Lockheed Martin involved in so many projects worldwide, O’Shea sees research opportunities for almost every college and school on campus. “It isn’t all defense related, or tied only to engineering,” he says.

For example, Lockheed’s interest in better managing health records for both the military and civilians could involve faculty from Maryland’s School of Public Policy, business, computer science and public health. Other research in cybersecurity would join engineers and computer specialists with faculty experts in psychology, linguistics and criminology.

Lockheed Martin has committed a minimum of $1 million per year for three years to support:

• three centers of collaboration—in logistics, cybersecurity, and climate change;
• joint pursuit of research opportunities geared toward federal agency and commercial needs;
• robust research programs that make more efficient use of facilities, processes and people.

C. D. Mote, Jr. (far left), who recently retired as university president, and Ray D. Johnson, senior vice president and chief technology officer of Lockheed Martin, at the signing ceremony in June.

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“Over the past two years, we’ve encouraged senior scientists from Lockheed to visit campus and brainstorm on how we can match our strengths with some of their most forward-looking projects,” says Ken Gertz, associate vice president for research development.

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We introduce you to new faculty and research scientists in the Maryland research community.

Meredith Kleykamp is an assistant professor of sociology. Her research examines the determinants and consequences of military service in the United States, focusing on differences by race/ethnicity and gender.

Kanisha Bond is an assistant professor of government and politics. Her research involves terrorism and insurgency, international organization, conflict studies, statistical analysis and formal modeling.

Craig Fryer is an assistant professor of community and public health. His research focuses on minority and health disparities, the health of young adult populations and substance abuse issues.

Jordan Boyd-Graber is an assistant professor in the College of Information Studies. His research involves applying statistical models, particularly latent variable approaches, to natural language applications.

Edith L. Wong is an associate professor of English specializing in 19th-century African American literature. Books she has authored include “Neither Fugitive nor Free: Atlantic Slavery” and the “Legal Culture of Travel.”

The U.S. Senate recently confirmed John Laub, distinguished university professor of criminology, as director of the National Institute of Justice, or NIJ. He is the first criminologist in four decades to lead the NIJ, which is the research, development and evaluation arm of the U.S. Department of Justice. Laub’s research includes crime and deviance over the life course, juvenile delinquency, juvenile justice and the history of criminology.

The National Capital Section of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics has named James Baeder, professor of aerospace engineering, as its 2010 Engineer of the Year. Baeder was recognized for his research leading to improvements in the prediction of aeromechanics in helicopters and other rotary wing vehicles, especially as it relates to diminishing rotorcraft noise.

The American Academy of Arts & Sciences selected Stanley Plumly, professor of English and director of the Creative Writing Program, as a fellow. Plumly has published 10 volumes of poetry, is the author of a much-lauded biography of John Keats and serves as the state’s poet laureate.