Jonathan Dorfan, SLAC Professor and Director Emeritus, to Lead New Graduate University in Japan

Menlo Park, Calif. — Dr. Jonathan Dorfan has been named president-elect of the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) Graduate University. Dorfan is a SLAC professor of physics and former director of the Department of Energy's Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, now renamed SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory. When OIST, a new institute in Okinawa, Japan, receives accreditation—expected in late 2011—and formally becomes a university, he will become the university's first president and CEO of the OIST School Corporation.

"Jonathan Dorfan is an excellent choice to lead the new Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University," said John Hennessy, president of Stanford University, which operates SLAC. "As a physicist and as SLAC's third director, he demonstrated leadership and vision, attracting great scientists and inspiring them to work collaboratively to advance our knowledge in this new century. Beyond Stanford's borders, he has been an outstanding statesman for science."

SLAC Director Persis Drell added: "I am very excited for Jonathan as he takes on this new leadership role at OIST. I know that the challenges of Jonathan’s new job are well met by his leadership skills and that as president of OIST he will have the opportunity to benefit science globally."

Dorfan joined Stanford University and SLAC more than three decades ago. In his first two decades at the laboratory, Dorfan's research interests focused on experimental particle physics and accelerator design. Between 1994 and 1999, he led the team that designed and built the SLAC B-Factory, which experimentally proved one way in which the universe preferentially creates more matter than antimatter.

Dorfan became SLAC director in 1999 and over the next eight years managed the laboratory's transition from a single-purpose, particle physics research center into a multi-program laboratory known for its excellence in particle physics, photon science, astrophysics and accelerator science. Dorfan also strengthened the laboratory's integration with Stanford University, developing a new concept of joint SLAC–Stanford institutes. These institutes, which include the PULSE Institute for Ultrafast Energy Science, the Kavli Institute for Particle Astrophysics and Cosmology, and the X-ray Laboratory for Advanced Materials, now known as the Stanford Institute for Materials and Energy Science, offer a cross-disciplinary forum for researchers to advance science.
In his new role, Dorfan will continue to build cross-disciplinary connections. OIST focuses on research that combines neuroscience, molecular sciences, mathematical and computational biology, and environmental science. Dedicated to world-class research and education at the intersections of these fields, OIST already employs more than 170 scientists. Over the next several years, Dorfan will work to broaden the research horizons, recruit additional faculty and students from around the globe, while also developing the graduate school curriculum and increasing collaboration with academia and industry worldwide.

At a time of limited funding for scientific research and development, OIST's discovery-oriented, cross-disciplinary research is more important than ever, Dorfan said. "The graduate university will have a fluid structure, thereby maximizing faculty's ability to conduct unconstrained research," he said. "It is already an active, vibrant place with outstanding people, a bold mission and a spectacular campus."

"I leave SLAC and Stanford with a heavy heart," he continued. "But this is an opportunity to create a research environment that's only limited by the imagination of the people that I can bring there. It's very much in the spirit of what we do here; it's a privilege to be accorded this opportunity."

*SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory is operated by Stanford University for the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science. The laboratory's mission is to explore the frontiers of photon science, astrophysics, and accelerator and particle physics in service to the nation and the world.*