

AFRL RESEARCH TOPIC CALL FOR FY18

RX18-8

1. **Research Title:** Nanocarbon Synthesis and Application
2. **Individual Sponsor:**
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3. **Academic Area/Field and Education Level:** Materials Science and Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Physics, Chemistry, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Electrical Engineering, Operations Research and Applied Mathematics (MS or Ph.D. level)
4. **Objectives:** The technical objectives of the topic are: 1) To understand and control the synthesis of nanostructured carbon materials such as carbon nanotubes and graphene, and 2) to use nanostructured carbons in applications including batteries, field emitters, sensors and electronic devices. We use “Automated Rapid Experimentation and in-situ Spectroscopy” (ARES) as a method for our investigations.
5. **Description:** Nanostructured carbons, including carbon nanotubes and graphene have shown exceptional promise in applications ranging from high strength/stiffness structural materials to chem-bio sensors, electronic devices, and electrodes for energy storage and field emission. Currently controlled synthesis is one of the major limits on our ability to transition these materials into fielded applications. We are developing ARES as a method to greatly increase our ability to explore experimental space for both synthesis and applications by developing automated (i.e., pre-planned, without user intervention) experimentation, and then autonomous (i.e., fully closed loop experimentation with only high-level user interaction). Our multi-disciplinary team comprises materials, physics, artificial intelligence, electrical engineering, and robotics. In the near future we plan to expand the disciplines to encompass Operations Research and Applied Mathematics.
6. P. Nikolaev, D. Hooper, F. Webber, R. Rao, K. Decker, M. Krein, J. Poleski, R. Barto, and B. Maruyama, “Autonomy in materials research: A case study in carbon nanotube growth”, Nature Pub. J.: Comp. Mater., p. 16031, 2016.
7. <http://www.nature.com/nmat/journal/v11/n3/abs/nmat3231.html>
Rao et al., “In situ evidence for chirality-dependent growth rates of individual carbon nanotubes”, Nature Materials, V. 11, pp. 213-216, 2012 doi:10.1038/nmat3231

<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/nn304064u>
Rao et al., “Revealing the Impact of Catalyst Phase Transition on Carbon Nanotube Growth by in Situ Raman Spectroscopy.” ACS Nano, 2013, 7 (2), pp 1100–1107
DOI: 10.1021/nn304064u
8. **Research Classification/Restrictions:** This research has no ITAR restrictions.
9. **Eligible Research Institutions:** Place an X in all that apply.
X Universities (DAGSI) AFIT (only) USAFA
10. **Interest in Summer USAFA Cadet:** No