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Canada Foundation for Innovation funds two Laurier research facilities

WATERLOO – The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) announced June 18 that it is providing nearly \$2.7 million to fund research facilities at Laurier.

A grant of \$1,999,712 from CFI's New Initiatives Fund will be used to help establish the \$5-million Canadian Aquatic Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Boreal Ecosystem Research (CALIBER).

A \$698,462 grant to the Sun Life Financial Movement Disorders Research and Rehabilitation Centre (MDRC) will support research into the effect of particular brain structures on movement impairments, as well as the development of new assistive devices and rehabilitation strategies for people with movement disorders.

"We are very pleased to see the hard work and talent of some of our most gifted researchers recognized by CFI," said Laurier president Dr. Max Blouw. "The MDRC's work on Parkinson's disease has garnered national attention, and Laurier is already very well known as an institution that does important work on water and the northern environment."

"This funding demonstrates our commitment to supporting innovative research across Canada," said Peter Braid, MP for Kitchener-Waterloo. "These two important new initiatives at Wilfrid Laurier University will make a positive impact on the lives of Canadians and people around the world."

Research through CALIBER will help to vastly improve our knowledge of, and ability to protect, freshwater resources in Canada's vast northern boreal areas.

The boreal region covers about one third of Canada and three quarters of Ontario, and contains 20 percent of the world's unfrozen surface fresh water, but little is known about water flow and storage processes in the area.

"The primary objective of CALIBER is to develop a new suite of predictive tools, urgently needed by user groups such as government agencies and local water boards, so that Canada's boreal freshwater resources can be sustainably managed and preserved for future generations," said Dr. Bill Quinton, associate professor in Laurier's geography and environmental studies department.

The CFI grant will help fund renovations to Laurier's Science Research Centre and the adjacent science building to bring the university's water research activities together in one location. It will also help fund the purchase of sophisticated analytical equipment.

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The laboratory will be used by researchers from the Laurier Institute for Water Science and the Cold Regions Research Centre.

The Sun Life Financial Movement Disorders Research and Rehabilitation Centre (MDRC) is the first university centre to integrate research and rehabilitation with a specific focus on movement disorders. MDRC researchers have assumed a lead role in scientifically evaluating rehabilitation strategies for Canadians living with Parkinson's disease and other neurodegenerative movement disorders, which affect limb control, balance, walking, speech and cognition.

"This funding will have an immediate and direct impact on patients, while the outcomes of our research will have a broader impact across Canada and the world," said Dr. Quincy Almeida, associate professor in the kinesiology and physical education department and director of the MDRC.

The grant will support the development of the centre's neurocognitive assessment unit, including a virtual reality laboratory and motion analysis systems. The centre's exercise rehabilitation research will be enhanced by data-collecting exercise equipment.

Dr. Paul Maxim, associate vice-president: research, said the two CFI grants provide strong evidence that Laurier's researchers are producing scholarship of the highest quality.

"We are competing for funds at the national level and obtaining them," said Maxim. "This success in the CFI funding competition will provide the resources for two teams of researchers to continue doing work of national and international importance."

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is an independent corporation created by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure. The CFI's mandate is to strengthen the capacity of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and non-profit research institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development that benefits Canadians.