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Laurier researchers receive \$1.2 million in NSERC grants

WATERLOO – Fifteen Wilfrid Laurier University science researchers have received a total of \$1.2 million in funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC). The Laurier researchers represent a variety of disciplines from Biology to Environmental Studies to Psychology.

The results from the 2012 Discovery Grant and 2012 Research Tools and Instruments Grant were announced Wednesday, May 23, in Toronto by the Honourable Gary Goodyear, Minister of State for Science and Technology, and Suzanne Fortier, president of NSERC.

"We are extremely proud of our NSERC grant recipients," said Abby Goodrum, vice-president: Research. "They demonstrate not only the depth but the breadth of scientific research that is being undertaken at Laurier. Their work will make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in their disciplines and will have a lasting impact on Canada's ability to lead the world in scientific discovery."

The Discovery Grants Program is NSERC's largest and longest-standing program and a key element of Canada's support for excellence in science research and training at Canadian universities. The following Laurier researchers have been awarded Discovery Grant funding for five years:

- **Mihai Costea**, associate professor of Biology, is looking at the biodiversity and biogeography of parasitic plants.
- **Stephanie Dewitte-Orr**, assistant professor of Biology and Health Sciences, is investigating antiviral immune responses in fish.
- **Gabriel Moreno-Hagelsieb**, associate professor of Biology, is doing research on computational genomics and metagenomics.
- **Joel Weadge**, assistant professor of Biology and Chemistry, is studying mechanisms involved in bacterial cellulose biosynthesis.
- **Richard Petrone**, associate professor of Geography and Environmental Studies, will examine how hydrological and ecological processes interact with a range of ice conditions in northern wetlands.
- **Brent Wolfe**, associate professor of Geography and Environmental Studies, will identify hydrological processes that control contemporary lake water balances in Wapusk National Park in the Hudson Bay Lowlands.
- **Diane Gregory**, assistant professor of Kinesiology and Health Sciences, is looking at the integration of mechanics and physiology in the form and function of spinal discs.

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- **Shengda Hu**, assistant professor of Mathematics, is studying both classical and quantum applications of differential geometry, an area of pure mathematics, to structures in the physical world.
- **Manuele Santoprete**, associate professor of Mathematics, is investigating mathematical methods in classical and celestial mechanics.
- **Evgueni Zima**, associate professor of Physics and Computer Science, is developing alternative algorithms for symbolic and numeric summation.
- **Kim Roberts**, professor of Psychology, is investigating how children are able to manage information from different sources, including teachers, books, peers, and digital media.
- **David White**, assistant professor of Psychology, will be studying social influences on the brains of songbirds.
- **Xuan Zhao**, associate professor of Operations and Decision Sciences in the School of Business and Economics, is examining the management of global supply chains.

For the 2012 NSERC Discovery Grant competitions, Laurier has increased its success rate over the previous year and is above average overall within its category of small universities.

In addition to the Discovery Grants, NSERC announced successful Research Tools and Instruments (RTI) grants to support the research of Laurier Faculty of Science professors **Joel Weadge**, **Geoff Horsman**, and **Sukhvinder Obhi**.

About the Discovery Grants Program: An integral component of Canada's support for research and training excellence at Canadian universities, the Discovery Grants Program funds ongoing programs of research in every scientific and engineering discipline. The results announced today included 2,161 Discovery Grants with a total value of \$325,730,214.

About the RTI grants: RTI grants foster and enhance the discovery, innovation and training capability of university researchers in the natural sciences and engineering by supporting the purchase of research equipment and installations.

NSERC announcement: http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/NewsRelease-CommuniqueDePresse_eng.asp?ID=355