NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT

Robert Gordon, Vice-President Research & Acting Provost
Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3601 or rogordon@wlu.ca

Kevin Crowley, Director
Communications & Public Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University
519-884-0710 ext. 3070 or kcrowley@wlu.ca

SEPT. 8, 2017 | 127-17

Laurier researchers receive $1.2 million in funding from Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council

WATERLOO – Twelve Wilfrid Laurier University researchers, including three graduate students, have received a total of $1.2 million in funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's (NSERC) Discovery Grants Program to support excellence in research.

The award recipients include researchers from the departments of biology; chemistry and biochemistry; geography and environmental studies; mathematics; physics and computer science; psychology; and the Lazaridis School of Business and Economics.

"Laurier's scientific and quantitative researchers are leaders nationally and internationally, as these awards demonstrate," said Robert Gordon, vice-president research and acting provost as well as the supervisor of one of the awarded students, **Vera Sokolov** (née Bosak). "Our NSERC award recipients are making substantial breakthroughs in their fields or have demonstrated the potential to do so in the future."

A number of the award recipients focus their research on climate change in Canada's North. Brent Wolfe, a professor of geography and environmental studies, received funding for his work on shallow northern lakes.

"Significant parts of northern Canada are dominated by landscapes rich in shallow freshwater lakes, which have long sustained wildlife and Indigenous communities' ways of life," said Wolfe. "Some of these lakes, such as those in the Peace-Athabasca Delta, are facing multiple stressors including climate-driven diminishing supply of floodwater, new hydroelectric development, and the potential for contaminants from the Athabasca oilsands. My research will address pressing knowledge gaps on the influence of these and other stressors on water quantity and quality in northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories."

Derek Gray, an assistant professor of biology, also researches northern lakes as well as lakes in the Great Plains. His focus is on how zooplankton respond to climate-change-induced stressors including permafrost thaw in the North and changing salinity levels in the Great Plains.

"In an era of environmental change, the need to understand the factors that shape the distribution and abundance of organisms on our planet is of paramount importance," said Gray. "These factors vary widely from place to place, so my research examines the regional factors that are important for evaluating how living communities might respond to environmental change. It will also provide the data needed to develop management plans and adaptation efforts."

Two of the students receiving NSERC graduate scholarships also conduct their research in the North. **Geoff Kershaw**, whose supervisor is William Quinton, focuses on changes to permafrost in alpine regions. **Katherine Standen**, whose supervisor is Jennifer Baltzer, researches changes in plant community composition, structure and function in response to permafrost thaw in the boreal forest.

Sokolov's research is also connected to climate change, though in southern Ontario, where she focuses on greenhouse gas emissions from dairy manure storage systems.

In addition to the above, the following Laurier researchers received funding from NSERC:

…more

- Mojtaba Araghi, an assistant professor in the Supply Chain, Operations and Technology Management group at the Lazaridis School of Business and Economics, received five years of funding for research on incorporating customer satisfaction into service operations management.
- Mihai Costea, an associate professor of biology, received funding for two projects: a five-year project on parasitic plants and a one-year project on scanning electron microscopy applications.
- Masoud Jelokhani-Niaraki, a professor of chemistry and biochemistry, received two-year funding for molecular studies of uncoupling proteins.
- Ilias Kotsireas, a professor of physics and computer science, received two-year funding for a project titled "Parallel Algorithms for Autocorrelation Problems."
- R. Mark Reesor, an associate professor of mathematics, received five-year funding for a project titled "Studies in Simulation, Optimal Control, Risk Management and Contingent Capital."
- Kim Roberts, a professor of psychology, received five years of funding for research into the relations between source monitoring, evaluation and executive function processes in children.
- Matthew Smith, a professor of biology, received five-year funding for a project titled "Protein Targeting to the Chloroplast Outer Membrane and Toc Complex Assembly and Function."

This research was supported by the Research Support Fund.

Read the NSERC announcement online.

– 30 –