Research News

• On September 1st, the Vice-President, Research Office launched a university-wide consultation for the Strategic Research Plan. This process includes an online survey, a Faculty SRP Consultation Session, and a Twitter discussion on #SFUSRP.

• The Mental Health Commission of Canada commissioned SFU’s Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction, led by Elliott Goldner, to produce Canada’s first-ever national set of mental health indicators. The report, entitled Informing the Future: Mental Health Indicators for Canada, was released in June. It contains a broad range of indicators about distinct groups of Canadians, including children, youth, seniors, and immigrant populations. A second report highlighting the mental health of Canada’s indigenous peoples will be released at a later date.

• AGE-WELL, Canada’s first research network to focus on technology and aging and co-led by SFU gerontology professor Andrew Sixsmith, has launched its first slate of core research projects supported by a total of $5 million in funding. Five of these projects involve SFU researchers, focusing on technologies to predict, prevent and detect falls (Steve Robinovitch, BPK), assistive technologies (Judith Sixsmith, Public Policy), digital games to enhance lifelong learning (David Kaufman, Education), innovation technology for caregivers (Andrew Wister, Gerontology), environment-based sensing (Norm O’Rourke, Psychology).

• SFU alumna Alelyse Weiler has received a prestigious $180,000 Trudeau Scholarship for her research and community efforts in raising Canadian awareness of sustainable food initiatives for migrant farm workers.

• On June 19th, SFU announced the creation of the Faculty of Environment’s Pacific Water Research Centre, a hub of collaborative research applied to mitigating real-world water crises globally. Its interim director is REM professor Murray Rutherford.

• British Columbia’s universities outpace the rest of the country in attracting research income from Canadian granting agencies, said President Petter. As Chair of the Research Universities Council of BC, he issued a release in early July noting that BC’s research universities have increased their per-capita share of federal research grants by 148 per cent, double the Canadian average.

• A four-year SSHRC-funded partnership project led by Peter Hall of the Urban Studies Program has culminated in an interactive exhibit that will run until the end of October and will leave on in perpetuity as rich multimedia resource about waterfront transformation in New Westminster. Hall collaborated with the City of New Westminster and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union of Canada on the project, which brought together dozens of New Westminster civic employees, public schools teachers and students, long shore pensioners, academic researchers worldwide with SFU graduate and undergraduate students.
Research Grant Successes

- SFU is the lead institution (with UVIC, the University of Toronto and University of Waterloo) in the newly funded Advanced Research Computing (ARC) platform. ARC will help SFU and other Canadian universities develop a high performance cyber network that will enable Canadian researchers to access and analyze massive pools of data in search of a deeper understanding of how the scientific, social, health and economic worlds connect. Managed by Compute Canada, the initiative has been fully funded through a $30-million investment from CFI’s Cyberinfrastructure program.

- SFU has received nearly $13 million in new funding from NSERC in its 2015 Discovery grants, scholarships and fellowships competitions. Of SFU’s 58 Discovery grants, Krzysztof Starosta of Chemistry received the top Discovery award amount, a total of $505,000 over five installments for his project “Structure of nuclei far from stability.” Part of this funding includes $1.2 million for research infrastructure through the Research Tools and Instruments Program. Eight researchers received Discovery Accelerator Supplements, recognizing the superior potential of their research programs. In addition, 21 students received scholarships and fellowships to support their research programs.

- SFU health sciences researcher Robert Hogg has been awarded a $6.5-million grant from CIHR’s inaugural Foundation Grants program to continue identifying ongoing health inequities among vulnerable HIV-positive populations in British Columbia and the rest of Canada. Hogg is a senior scientist in the Epidemiology and Population Health program at the BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS (BC-CfE) and is also principal investigator of the Canadian HIV Observational Cohort (CANOC) Collaborative Research Centre.

Innovation Updates

- On October 1st, SFU will launch SFU Innovates, a new, university-wide brand and strategy identifying a suite of initiatives and associated action plan to inspire, develop, and support impact-driven innovation and entrepreneurship. The event will take place at the new SFU Innovates incubation centre at Harbour Centre in Vancouver, a space for open innovation in Vancouver’s digital and gaming sector.

- Four companies with SFU connections were recognized at the BC Technology Industry Association’s (BCTIA) 2015 Technology Impact Awards, indicating that SFU graduates are building successful BC companies at every stage of corporate growth:
  - Most Promising Startup, Optigo Networks: This VentureLabs client company was co-founded in 2012 by SFU Faculty of Applied Sciences alumnus Byron Thom and has nine employees.
  - Emerging Company of the Year, Cooledge Lighting Inc.: Cooledge is a research partner of the 4D LABS advanced materials science and engineering facility. Its chief financial officer, Edwin Fok, holds an MBA from SFU.
  - Adoption of Technology, Traction on Demand: Founded in 2008 as a
community engagement program by SFU alumnus Greg Malpass, the company now has 75 employees in BC and revenues of $5-10 million.

- **Company of the Year, Sierra Wireless**: Co-founded by SFU Beedie alumnus Andrew Harries in 1993 (he left the company in 2004), today this publicly traded company posts revenues of $500 million to $1 billion. Sierra Wireless is a partner of SFU’s School of Engineering Science and an industry sponsor of its wireless communications research. The Sierra Wireless Mobile Communications Laboratory and Professorship in Mobile Communications held by Rodney Vaughan was established at SFU in 2012.

In addition, SFU Mechatronic Systems Engineering student Jessica Peare received a $5000 grant from the BCTIA BC Technology Scholarship program.

- **Local company MetaOptima Technology**, which grew out of the SFU Innovation Office’s Venture Connection program and now employs nine, launched its MoleScope™ mobile skin cancer-monitoring device at the World Dermatology conference in June. MetaOptima Technology was founded by SFU computing science alumna Maryam Sadeghi. MoleScope™ has received approval for use as a medical device in Canada, the US, and Europe, to be followed shortly by Australia, and will be available in a consumer version for $149 and a more expensive professional version.

- In its latest progress report, Burnaby tech company Nano One mentioned its collaboration with SFU’s 4D LABS to characterize its next generation cathode battery materials. The company aims to demonstrate long lasting high energy density batteries in 2015 and begin scalable pilot production of its materials in 2016.

- $1.5 million in funding from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) will strengthen the Angel investor community in Western Canada, of which SFU has been a pioneer. The monies will go to the National Angel Capital Organization (NACO) to identify, recruit and educate potential Angel investors, aiming to triple the number of Angel investors in Western Canada over the three years of the initiative. Mike Volker, former Director of SFU’s Innovation Office and manager of VANTEC, was on hand for the July 30th announcement by Andrew Saxton, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance.

- SFU President Andrew Petter contributed an op-ed to The Globe and Mail as part of a series responding to and expanding upon an essay written by Research in Motion co-founder Jim Balsillie on Canada’s innovation performance. He talked about the need for more interaction between university researchers and the community-at-large, citing SFU’s 4D LABS as an example. This followed a Vancouver Sun article in late June in which BC’s research university presidents responded to news from RUCBC that indicated that BC’s universities attract more federal funding than any other province in Canada.