Board of Governors Report  
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B. Mario Pinto, Vice-President, Research

Research News

Research Centres & Institutes

SFU’s Institute for Diaspora Research and Engagement was launched at the Surrey campus on April 25th. It aims to “promote a greater awareness of diaspora-related issues and establish a reputation as a leading research centre and incubator of diaspora social innovation.”

IRMACS celebrated its 9th anniversary in April, launching its 2014 thematic year dedicated to the pan-Canadian research initiative AGE-WELL: Aging Gracefully across Environments using Technology to Support Wellness, Engagement, and Long Life. Gerontology professor Andrew Sixsmith is one of 23 co-investigators of AGE-WELL, which brings together ten academic and health institutions.

University Rankings

SFU is one of the world’s top 25 universities under 50 years of age according to the latest Times Higher Education (THE) rankings. SFU ranks 2nd in Canada (after the University of Calgary at #19) and sixth in North America based on its performance in research, citations, teaching, international outlook, and industry income. THE editor Phil Baty remarked that these universities view their youth as “a clear strategic advantage in an uncertain global academy that demands bravery, risk-taking and fresh thinking.”

The 2014 Leiden rankings were expanded in 2014 to measure the performance of 750 universities worldwide, based solely on citation impact and scientific collaboration. Overall, SFU was ranked #267 worldwide, #116 in North America, and #10 in Canada. SFU stands out for its high level of collaboration, ranking 3rd in Canada and 61st in the world for its proportion of long distance collaborative publications, and 2nd in Canada and 122nd in the world for its proportion of international collaborative publications. In terms of impact, SFU ranks within Canada’s top 10 universities in both its mean citation score (#9) and the proportion of its publications that belong to the top 10% most frequently cited (#10).

Research Grant Successes

- Two SFU researchers will receive grants from the Canada Foundation for Innovation’s John R. Evans Leaders Fund to acquire research infrastructure for their leading research programs. Erik Kjeang of Mechatronic Systems Engineering will use the $120,000 to help equip a unique-to-Canada fuel cell and battery testing facility at the Surrey campus. Partnering companies include Ballard Power Systems Inc., Mercedes-Benz Fuel Cells and Prudent Energy. Bingyun Sun of Chemistry will use her $300,000 grant to obtain the most sensitive system currently available for studying cell surface proteins.


Research Awards & Honours

- David Vocadlo of Chemistry has advanced to a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Chemical Glycobiology, and Majid Bahrami of Mechatronic Systems Engineering has received a new Tier 2 chair appointment in Alternative Energy Conversion Systems.

- Rosalie Tung, the Ming and Stella Wong Professor of International Business at SFU’s Beedie School of Business, has been voted as president-elect of the Academy of International Business (AIB) executive board.

- In total, eleven SFU women (faculty, staff, students and alumni) have been recognized for their leadership as nominees for the 2014 YWCA Women of Distinction awards. These include professor Diana Allen of Earth Sciences for her research in environmental sustainability and her contributions to public policy and mentorship, and retired staff member Justine Bizzocchi, founder of SFU Venture Connection.

- English professor emerita Sandra Djwa has received another prize for her labour of love, the biography of her friend and renowned Canadian poet P.K. Page. The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences has awarded Journey With No Maps: A Life of P.K. Page with the Canada Prize in the Humanities. The book has also received a Governor General’s Literary Award and was shortlisted for the Charles Taylor Prize.

- Three SFU students have won the SSHRC Storytellers Challenge for their stories of a SSHRC-funded research project at SFU that is making a difference in the lives of British Columbians: Luseadra McKerracher for research on what evolution reveals about food aversions during pregnancy, Bryce Westlake for cybercrime research that is helping fight child exploitation and terrorism, and Maria Zakharova for her research of the mechanisms behind voters’ electoral choices.

Innovation Updates

- Five young SFU entrepreneurs and SFU Venture Connection clients have received Top 30 Under 30 awards from BC Business Magazine: Michael Cheng, creator of WittyCookie; Igor Faletski and John Boxall of Mobify Research and Development; Lisa Fraser of Squeezease Therapy; and Milun Tesovic, co-founder of MetroLyrics.com.

- SFU has been named runner-up to the University of Victoria for BC’s “most entrepreneurial post-secondary institution of the year” award from Startup Canada.

- Venture Labs bioinformatics company Fusion Genomics has been in the news recently for its work to pursue international collaborations to advance innovations in childhood cancer diagnostics.

- SFU’s Venture Connection program was mentioned in a University Affairs article on the rise of campus incubators at Canada’s universities. Of such programs, the article states that these are “great examples of the kind of high-impact experiential learning opportunities that universities are increasingly promoting…that should help them with their future careers.”

- SFU alum Eugene Suyu, CEO of the publicly traded company Tinkerine, dreams of bringing 3D printers into homes and classrooms. The Vancouver Sun reports that his company is offering a model under $2000 that will soon be ready for shipping.