Two SFU Faculty Artists Secure Major Research/Creation Grants

In the recent national competition for funds under the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council’s (SSHRC) Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts program, SFU composer Arne Eigenfeldt and interdisciplinary artist Judy Radul ranked at or near the top.

“This is a significant result for the School of Contemporary Arts and SFU,” said Professor Owen Underhill, the School’s Interim Director when the awards were announced. “Only 31 of 115 applications were approved, and the dollar total for SFU is the fourth largest of all Canadian universities.”

Arne Eigenfeldt

Jazz musicians often improvise during performance. It’s a hallmark of the genre. Composers, on the other hand, write music down and expect it will be performed according to what’s written each time. SFU professor Arne Eigenfeldt is a former jazz performer and a classically-trained composer. His goal is to combine the best of both worlds, composition and improvisation. To achieve this, he’s enlisted that most ubiquitous of modern tools, the personal computer.

“My idea is to use artificial intelligence, which is what the three-year SSHRC-supported project is all about,” he explains. “I’ve entitled it Encoding Musical Knowledge in Software Performance Tools. I’m interested in real-time composition — performing and composing at the same time. While computers have been improvising for decades now, most of the choices have been based upon randomness, which real improvisers obviously don’t do. I’m interested in having the computer make musically intelligent decisions, and to do this during the performance itself. Because today’s computers are so powerful, these decisions can go beyond the single melodies of an improviser, and achieve the complexity of real-time composition.”

Dr. Arne Eigenfeldt, pictured here with his real-time composition tools.

Dr. Eigenfeldt takes his academic role seriously. “As a composer at a major university, I’m incredibly lucky,” he muses. “I have a regular paycheque, compared to freelance composers who must survive on whatever commissions and other funds they can obtain. I have a responsibility not to compete with these people for funds, but to contribute something that benefits everyone.

“I do all of my work on my MacBook, so the SSHRC grant isn’t necessary for equipment. Although I’ve been programming for over twenty years, I

See Research/Creation page 7
Over the last three years, SFU has made considerable progress in enhancing its status as a research-intensive university.

We have now reached a level of maturity that affords us invitations to join major research consortia and even to lead them in some instances. Our sponsored research funding has grown from $53 million in 2004/05 to a new peak of over $67 million in 2006/07 (see graph at right).

In comparison with other universities across the country, SFU continues to achieve excellent results in the annual competitions for research grants from the three federal granting agencies (see chart below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>SFU Success Rate</th>
<th>National Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Discovery Grants 2007/08</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSERC Research Tools and Instruments Grants 2007/08</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSERC Idea to Innovation (I2I) Grants (Cumulative 2003-2007)</td>
<td>68%*</td>
<td>47%* (est.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Standard Grants 2007/08</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Operating Grants September 2006</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The I2I Program does not operate on a ‘competition’ basis.

In addition to the grants below, with regard to translating ideas into innovation and new ventures, SFU leads the country in the I2I grant competition with a success rate of 68%. We have secured contracts from Western Economic Diversification and Industry Canada for investment in the TIME (Technology, Innovation, Management, Entrepreneurship) Centre in downtown Vancouver, to provide relevant business and legal expertise to our spin-off companies. The Milken Institute recently released an in-depth examination of the world’s leading universities for technology transfer, meaning the ability of those universities to turn their intellectual property into commercial applications. For the period 2000-2004, SFU ranked #34 overall after the University of Toronto (#33), and is #1 in North America both in start-up companies per million dollars of research expenditures and start-up companies per patent issued.

In the last three years for which results are available (2003-2005; B. Clayman, for AUTM report), SFU ranked #4 in Canada for the number of invention disclosures received per million dollars of research expenditures, and #5 in Canada for the number of US patents issued per million dollars of research expenditures.
SFU: Now a Major Research Centre

SFU, the “little university that could” in the 20th Century, has become a major research force in the 21st.

Vice-President, Research B. Mario Pinto lists the reasons, starting with the quality of SFU faculty, staff and students, and the breadth and depth of their experience and expertise. “These have enabled us to form linkages with industry, other universities in BC and beyond, and outstanding research organizations, including the Health Authorities, BC Cancer Agency, Genome BC, TRIUMF, the Michael Smith Foundation, the Down Syndrome Research Foundation and the NRC Institute for Fuel Cell Innovation. The research climate in Canada has become so sophisticated and complex that it demands a high level of finesse and skill to take advantage of the opportunities it offers.” As a result, the SFU Vice-President, Research now operates at four levels — local, regional, national and international — promoting linkages and collaborative initiatives, while ensuring SFU researchers have the tools to operate and compete.

Dr. Pinto convinced the University’s senior administration that he needed help with his office’s rapidly expanding responsibilities. Thus, on September 1, SFU biologist Norbert Haunerland became the first Associate Vice-President, Research.

“We have complementary skills and experience,” says Dr. Pinto, “so I know we’ll work well as a team. Norbert will take on the planning and development of major projects. He’ll also oversee our participation in the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Canada Research Chairs and BC Leadership Chairs, leaving me more time to build linkages with national and international research consortia and to raise funds.”

Dr. Haunerland, who is originally from Germany, came to SFU in 1989 from the University of Arizona. His research focus is lipids and how fatty acids regulate genes. “I’ve always been interested in administration too,” he says. “I was Chair of SFU’s Department of Biological Sciences for five years, and served on the University Senate. Our new Faculty of Health Sciences brought me in to help develop their undergraduate programs and chair their tenure committee. These assignments gave me valuable interdisciplinary experience, exposing me to other areas of science and the social sciences.”

What attracted him to the position of Associate Vice-President, Research? “SFU’s current emphasis on research,” he replies. “We’re getting more government money for research, but they’re demanding more accountability in return. Among other things I’ll be developing criteria by which we can demonstrate our success.”

Dr. Haunerland can be reached at 778-782-4152 or via email at sfuavpr@sfu.ca.

Now, That’s a Switch!

It’s textbook technology transfer: curiosity-driven university research leads to the discovery of novel materials with commercial potential. Patents follow quickly to protect their use, and then a new company is formed to bring them to market.

SFU chemist Neil Branda, Canada Research Chair in Materials Science, has been investigating the properties of a class of organic materials that can exist in two states – colourless and coloured. “Using sunlight or electricity, we can toggle them back and forth between states,” he explains, “and once transformed they remain in that state indefinitely until you change them back. They differ from the well-known photochromic eyeglass lenses, which darken spontaneously in sunlight but can take a long time to fade back to clear. Our materials also darken automatically. The advantage is that they can be switched to clear.”

See Switch page 7

Ms. Ziba Afshar, Mr. Doug Wiggin, Dr. Neil Branda (front)
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Community Trust Endowment Fund

Competition 3: Call for Proposals November 30th

We are pleased to announce a call for proposals for the Community Trust Endowment Fund. Proposals must be submitted to vprsec@sfu.ca by Friday, November 30, 2007. Application forms and background documentation are posted at www.sfu.ca/vpresearch/CTEF/ctef_call.html.

Research teams must be comprised of at least five full-time tenured or tenure-track SFU faculty from at least two of the Priority Areas for Strategic Investment identified in SFU's Strategic Research Plan. Research proposals must be built on a true partnership across disciplines and must emphasize a synthesis of research expertise in a well-integrated, high-quality, interdisciplinary program that extends beyond existing research themes.

The SFU Community Trust Endowment Fund (CTEF) was established in 2005 to contribute to the University's support of research, teaching and scholarship. Under the Terms of Reference approved by the Board of Governors in November of 2005, the first $3.5 million of income earned from the CTEF will be channeled into major initiatives under the five themes of SFU's Strategic Research Plan (see www.sfu.ca/vpresearch/srp_final.pdf) with proposals invited every six months until January 2008, and thereafter on an annual basis. The first three projects recommended for funding under this initiative to date bring together interdisciplinary teams from across the University, as well as external collaborators:

Advanced Materials and Nanotechnology for Medical Applications

A multidisciplinary team of eight SFU researchers are working together to take novel molecules and nanomaterials from the chemistry lab into clinical settings to develop new and innovative strategies for medical imaging, diagnostics, surgery and drug delivery. The research team includes internationally successful researchers in organic, inorganic, materials and bio-organic chemistry, molecular biology and biochemistry, kinesiology and computer sciences, working synergistically to create, apply and test novel approaches for the diagnosis and treatment of prostate cancer and kidney stones as their first targets. The team also extends into SFU's Faculty of Business Administration to capture an important source of expertise, and the work is carried out under the guidance of experts in the fields of ethics, medicine and medical imaging to ensure a seamless and rapid application of breakthroughs to real-life problems. This initiative crosses several priority areas identified in SFU's Strategic Research Plan, and was developed in response to the converging interests of the materials science, nanotechnology and medical communities to improve the quality of patient care and patient outcomes. The team leader is Dr. Neil Branda, SFU Professor of Chemistry, Canada Research Chair in Materials Science, and Acting Executive Director of 4D LABS.

Education Systems and Outcomes in Diverse Communities

A team of 16 SFU researchers in economics, education, public policy, psychology and biological sciences are engaging in projects to inform public debate and public policy on education, focusing on two interrelated research themes: (1) standards, assessment, accountability and organization; and (2) education and integration in diverse communities. The education system plays a vital role in the social and economic integration of diverse population groups by providing important skills and knowledge and by shaping the spatial organization of communities. This project will bring thematic coherence to the work of a diverse group of researchers in areas that overlap with several priority areas of SFU's Strategic Research Plan: public policy, economic organization, aboriginal learning, immigration, urban studies, and population health. It builds on well-established strengths in economics, psychology and education, integrates them with one another and with SFU's new strength in public policy and emerging strength in dialogue, and bridges to SFU's major new initiative in health sciences. The team leader is Dr. Jane Friesen, Associate Professor of Economics.

Bioinformatics for Combating Infectious Diseases: Novel Methods for Drug and Target Identification and Evaluation

Infectious diseases are a leading cause of productivity loss and are responsible for roughly a third of annual deaths worldwide; sepsis and mortality caused by infectious diseases are also on the rise in the U.S. Antimicrobial resistance is increasing rapidly and newly emerging diseases are causing considerable concern: a new global pandemic could have a significant economic impact. This proposal is focused on the development of more accurate and faster bioinformatics algorithms and tools for identifying anti-infective drug targets, candidate drugs and potential vaccines. The interdisciplinary team capitalizes on SFU's unique strengths in computational, physical, chemical and biological sciences to discover potential new therapeutic targets and test them first in silico and then in the laboratory. The program provides an environment for trainees from the basic and applied sciences to learn career skills relevant to performing interdisciplinary, team-based, internationally competitive research. With the ability to analyze many infectious disease-causing microbes in parallel, the computational methods the team will develop could potentially have a wide impact on efforts to control multiple infectious diseases. The team co-leaders are Dr. Cenk Sahinalp, Associate Professor of Computing Science and Dr. Fiona Brinkman, Associate Professor of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry.
**Everything You Should Know About SFU’s New Conflict of Interest Policy**

One tends to associate conflict of interest with politicians who get too chummy with land developers. So why does SFU need a conflict of interest policy?

“The immediate answer is that the three federal granting agencies (NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR) that support university-based research in Canada have made it a condition for receiving their funds,” explains K.C. Bell. Mr. Bell, Director of Special Projects in the SFU President’s Office, drafted the new policy and guided it through discussion and comment, until it was approved by the Board of Governors in May 2007. “Actually, SFU has been developing this policy for over a decade. The granting agencies’ edict provided fresh impetus for us to complete it.”

This is not mere paperwork. The policy applies to every SFU member. A “member” is anyone who teaches, conducts research or works in any capacity at SFU, as full- or part-time faculty, staff or student, or represents the university in any consulting or contractual capacity. If you are an SFU member, then it applies to you and even to those close to you. “Furthermore,” Mr. Bell stresses, “the onus to disclose a real or potential conflict of interest is on the SFU member. Members who think they may be in a conflict may wish to begin by discussing it with a supervisor, but failure to comply by disclosing ultimately constitutes misconduct.”

Notwithstanding the dire warning, the document is reasonably brief and easy to read. A preamble sets out the context and objectives of the policy. This is followed by definitions of Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment (where a member’s off-campus activities might detract from his or her commitment to the University). Key terms such as “reviewer,” “family member,” “financial interest” and “outside activity” are defined as well.

“In drafting the policy, we looked at what other universities have done or are doing,” says Mr. Bell. “As you’d expect, each has applied its own flavour, ranging from legalistic to friendly and even casual. I think we’re somewhere in the middle. We tried to ensure that when we say something must be done in a certain way we can always point to another part of the document that explains why. Most important, perhaps, we provided a range of examples, because most people don’t realize how broadly the concept of conflict of interest applies.”

The examples illustrate situations that could lead to an indirect or direct conflict of interest. “Interest in a concern,” for instance, refers to situations where an SFU member or member’s family has a substantial interest in any concern with which the university does, or may do, business. Other examples focus on matters such as faculty/student relationships, inappropriate use of information, gifts and gratuities and using one’s position to influence others inappropriately. A “Conflict of Interest Reporting and Assessment Procedure,” with the necessary forms for reporting, appears at the conclusion of the policy document.

“We are an entrepreneurial university,” observes Dr. B. Mario Pinto, Vice-President, Research, whose office is responsible for overseeing the policy. “So in our eagerness to enhance our reputation, all of us, faculty, staff and students alike, are advised to take the new policy very seriously.”

Obviously, every SFU member should read the policy. You can view the full document online at [www.sfu.ca/policies/general/gp37.htm](http://www.sfu.ca/policies/general/gp37.htm).

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**Implications for Research**

Not surprisingly, research gets special attention in the new Conflict of Interest Policy. “Faculty members and staff preparing to apply for research funding must complete a new declaration, on the revised Research Funding Application Signature Sheet, disclosing any real or potential conflicts of interest,” explains Dr. Hal Weinberg, SFU’s Director of Research Ethics.

If the proposed research involves human participants, the real or potential conflict will be reviewed by the University’s Research Ethics Board (REB). In every case, the applicant’s disclosure will be sent to his or her supervisor with the REB’s determination as to whether the research includes a conflict of interest and, if so, whether and how it can be managed or if it must be disallowed. Where the research does not involve human subjects, the REB will refer the disclosure to the applicant’s supervisor for a review, determination, and report to the Offices of Research Services and Research Ethics. If a real or potential conflict arises in the course of carrying out a research project, the researcher must disclose the conflict to his or her supervisor for review and reporting as outlined above.

**Links to the Conflict of Interest Reporting and Assessment Procedure and its related forms, are published in the Conflict of Interest Policy document.**
consider myself a composer who programs. The grant will allow me to hire computer science students to do the more complex stuff. And the great thing is that it will also allow me to pay artists as well!"

Judy Radul

The theatrical elements of courtroom trials have fascinated television and movie producers and their audiences for decades. Think of Twelve Angry Men, Judgment at Nuremberg and Perry Mason, for example. But can the real courtroom, with its actors, rhetorical speeches, costumes, rituals, conventions and dramatic moments, be a work of art? That’s what Judy Radul, Associate Professor, is determined to find out.

“As a visual artist I’m intrigued by performance,” she explains. “And lawyers and judges tell us that how one performs in court is very important. You’ll hear them say, for instance, ‘He didn’t perform well in the witness box,’ or ‘She didn’t seem believable.’ So how you act can affect how you might be judged.”

Her project, entitled Sir, What I Meant Was... is in the early planning stage. It will involve several video screens showing trial participants. “The screens will likely be arranged to connote various levels of power – the judge on one, the accused on another, lawyers on others, and so forth. The audience could be a participant. So as you walk into the installation you might see yourself on one of the screens.”

Ms. Radul is an artist, but she’s also an Associate Professor. “The SSHRC programs provide funds based on the premise that an artistic creation is research.”

“Sir, What I Meant Was... stages questions of judgment in an art gallery, which makes sense since the gallery is a fitting place to think about how representation affects belief.” The installation is scheduled to open at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery in Vancouver in 2009, and then go on tour.

Recognizing there could be commercial applications for the technology, Dr. Branda contacted UILO Technology Manager Ziba Afshar. They submitted patent applications and secured an NSERC I2I grant to support prototype development. Meanwhile, the UILO posted a description of the technology on its Web site and circulated a flyer to potential licensees. Ultimately, they decided to form a new company called SWITCH Materials Inc., and secured early-stage funding from Pangea Ventures Ltd., GrowthWorks, Western Universities Technology Investment Fund (WUTIF) and Ventures West. The University took an equity position in the company and transferred ownership of the patents to it. Doug Wiggin, with some 25 years experience in technology-based company management, was hired in May 2007 as Chief Executive Officer.

“The materials not only change colour. Many of their other properties change as well,” says Mr. Wiggin. “For instance, how they bend light can be varied, which is useful for the information technology industry. They way they carry a charge will be useful in molecular electronics. And recently we’ve investigated the way they react with other materials, which is important for releasing therapeutics. We see applications in automotive, aerospace, architecture and electronics, to name just a few.”

For more information, visit www.switchmaterials.com.
**Who’s New**

If you’re reluctant to try pronouncing her name Catalan style, she’ll be happy to answer to “Angie.” She’ll also be happy to answer questions about granting programs. As the newest staffer in the Office of Research Services, Maria-Angeles Jover works closely with her colleague BJ Spearman and with Grants Officer Nancy McNeil, ensuring that faculty and staff are fully conversant with funding opportunities. She’ll be maintaining a portfolio of grant records and databases, helping prepare reports and ensuring that the website stays up to date. She will also be providing support for the UILO on a regular basis.

She’s not a newcomer to SFU, however. Angie began by taking temporary assignments in various campus office locations such as Facilities Management, SFU International, and Science Stores.

Louis Hui is intrigued by the entrepreneurial aspects of technology transfer, and he’s come to the right place! Louis is a Westlink intern in the SFU University Industry Liaison Office and, under the mentorship of Technology managers Ziba Afshar and Don Osman, he’s learning about and participating in license negotiations, patents and spin-off company creation, and evaluating the market potential of novel university-developed technologies.

The SFU UILO is a charter member of the Westlink Innovation Network, and has been a strong supporter of the Westlink Technology Commercialization Internship Program since it began. Internship candidates such as Louis must have post-secondary education in science and/or business and/or related work experience. In his case, he has a Masters degree in Biomedical Technology from the University of Calgary.

“I read about the Westlink Internship program on their website www.westlink.ca and decided to apply immediately,” he explains. “I started my second of three placements in the program here at the UILO in May and the experience and mentorship have been tremendous. I can only hope that my next placement, in venture capital, will be as rewarding.”

**Brava, Sacha!**

This time last year, Sacha Mann was an intern in SFU’s University/Industry Liaison Office (UILO), and now she’s at a venture capital firm in the U.K. conducting research at a leading university. How did this happen?

An SFU MBA graduate, she arrived at the UILO in May 2006 under the Westlink Innovation Network’s Internship program. During her eight months at SFU, under the direction of Technology Managers Ziba Afshar and Don Osman, she learned about technology transfer, licensing and patent management, and how to establish new companies to commercialize life science and medical device technologies. She also was directly involved in the creation of two spin-off companies.

Sacha accepted another Westlink placement after SFU at the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) in Vancouver, where she focused on BDC Venture Capital’s $100 million seed fund for early-stage technology companies. It was while she was there that she learned she had been selected as a Kauffman Fellow.

Established as a legacy of US entrepreneur Ewing Kauffman, the prestigious Fellowship program identifies and develops future leaders for the global venture capital industry. In the past ten years, over 100 Kauffman Fellows have completed the two-year program, leading investments of over $3.6 billion in 417 companies, and creating $10.8 billion in annual revenues and 42,000 jobs. For more information, see www.kauffmanfellows.org.

The Kauffman Fellowship awarded to Sacha has taken her to Edinburgh, Scotland, as an Investment Manager with Archangel Informal Investments Ltd. And, through the program’s partnership with the UK Department of Trade and Industry, she will be working with Edinburgh University to conduct research into venture capital investing.

**Funding Links**

The Office of Research Services (ORS) regularly publicizes research funding opportunities for SFU faculty members. For further information, please see: www.sfu.ca/ors/funding_opp.html