Expanded Services Help SFU Researchers Obtain Funding

Two new positions, Health Research Consultant and Faculty of Arts Research Grants Facilitator, have been established to help SFU researchers identify potential sources of research funding, prepare successful funding applications, and increase the visibility of SFU’s research expertise.

Health Research Consultant

Dr. Jane Hood is serving as Health Research Consultant, reporting to Vice Presidents Clayman and Waterhouse. She earned her Ph.D. in Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine from the Institute of Medical Science at the University of Toronto. Dr. Hood has a distinguished research career that includes appointments at the Hospital for Sick Children and the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry. Most recently, she served as Deputy Director, Programs Branch of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and assisted in the evolution of CIHR from the Medical Research Council.

At SFU, Dr. Hood is helping researchers in health-related areas to become familiar with the expanded mandate of the CIHR. “I’m talking to researchers who may have a research program that is eligible for CIHR funding,” explains Dr. Hood. “Together we are determining how their research may fit within the CIHR funding programs. I’m also sharing my knowledge of the CIHR peer review process, which I believe is particularly helpful as the researchers begin the application process.”

Dr. Hood has been familiarizing herself with the expertise of the 100 members of SFU’s Institute for Health Research and Education (IHRE) and is establishing a searchable expertise database. She is also working hard to increase the visibility of SFU health-related research in the community. She is a member of the CIHR-BC steering committee and sits on the task force developing new programs for the BC Health Research Foundation. “I see outreach to the health community, establishing links with other BC health-related organizations and promoting SFU research excellence in the area of health as critical elements of my job,” explains Dr. Hood.

“I am delighted to have Dr. Hood working with us,” says Dr. Bruce Clayman, Vice-President, Research. “Her expertise and knowledge of the environment of health research funding will prove invaluable to faculty members in IHRE.”

Please see the Funding Links column on page two for information about applying to CIHR.

Dr. Hood can be reached at 268-6696, email: jhood@sfu.ca.

Faculty of Arts Research Grants Facilitator

Dr. Laurie Beckwith has been appointed to the newly created position of Faculty of Arts Research Grants Facilitator. Dr. Beckwith received her Ph.D. in archaeology from the University of Calgary and her research interests include South American archaeology, ceramic analysis and non-western art. She brings to the position experience as the Research Grants Officer at Wilfrid Laurier University. Most recently she worked as an archivist in the Photography Acquisition and Research section of the National Archives of Canada.

Dr. Beckwith is encouraging and assisting faculty members to apply for research funding from the three Canadian granting councils, private foundations and international funding agencies, as well as from industry. She assists in the development and preparation of both letters of intent and full applications for funding.

“I view the role of Grants Facilitator almost as an internal peer review committee,” says Dr. Beckwith. “There are certain things in the granting process that you can’t control, but there are things that can be controlled and that’s my role.

*New positions* continued on page 2
Message from the Vice President, Research

SFU designated host institution for MITACS-NCE
Dr. Bruce P. Clayman

In November 1999, Dr. Arvind Gupta, (SFU School of Computing Science) was appointed Program Leader of the Mathematics of Information Systems Technology and Complex Systems - Networks of Centres of Excellence (MITACS-NCE). On September 22, 2000, the MITACS Board of Directors unanimously agreed that SFU be designated as the Host Institution of the Network effective November 1, 2000. MITACS has thus joined the TeleLearning Research Network as an NCE hosted by SFU. SFU is now one of only three universities in Canada that host two NCE’s.

MITACS is a federally funded NCE in the mathematical sciences. It was launched in October 1998 as a joint initiative of Canada’s three premier mathematical institutes:

- Centre de recherches mathématiques,
- The Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences, and
- The Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences.

Their mandate is to provide mathematical models, software tools, and highly-qualified personnel to assist Canadian firms in key sectors of the Canadian economy.

Networking is key to MITACS activity—among researchers in a project, between the MITACS projects and between academics and industry. MITACS provides a unique opportunity for more than 200 university scientists in a range of disciplines and at various geographical locations to work together.

MITACS currently funds 23 research projects (three of which are based at SFU) addressing five key areas of the economy:

- biomedical sector
- commercial/industrial sector
- information technology sector
- manufacturing sector
- trading/finance sector

Project teams include university faculty, research associates, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and industrial scientists.

My colleagues and I are very pleased and proud that SFU has been designated as the host of MITACS. We have worked with MITACS Program Leader Dr. Arvind Gupta, his colleagues and staff to effect a smooth transition in the administration of the project. We look forward to continuation and enhancement of our good relationships for the betterment of MITACS research across Canada.

For more detailed information on MITACS, visit www.mitacs.math.ca/home.shtml.

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"New positions" continued from page 1

to point out how to put the research proposal in the best light. Successful grant applications share certain elements even though projects are quite different.”

Dr. Beckwith is working with Drs. Sara Swenson and Dawn McArthur, Grants Facilitators in the Centre for Systems Science, and, like them, is available to assist faculty members from across the University. “There are no sharp lines drawn among us between Faculties, which reflects how discipline barriers are coming down. So we work across lines, as a team, and on a variety of projects,” notes Dr. Beckwith.

“I am pleased to have been able to assist in the creation of the position of Grants Facilitator in the Humanities and Social Sciences,” says Dr. Clayman. “Although SFU’s record of research funding in these areas is second to none among our counterpart universities, we can always do better and Dr. Beckwith is ideally situated to help us raise our success rates even higher.”

Dr. Beckwith can be reached at 268-6686, email: laurie_beckwith@sfu.ca until she begins a leave in February, returning in early July 2001; however, continued assistance will be available to researchers during her leave.

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Graduate Student Research

Did you know that funded research projects undertaken by graduate students require the same internal approvals as research funded for faculty members? This means that the student must arrange for his/her supervisor to complete the SFU Research Funding Application Cover Signature Sheet available at www.css.sfu.ca/sites/ora/AppSheet.html.

You should also note that graduate student research is subject to reviews for animal care, human ethics and biohazards. For further information, please see www.sfu.ca/ora/research_review.html.

Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)

The CIHR invites applications from all areas of health including: biomedical research, clinical research, research respecting health systems, health services, the health of populations, societal and cultural dimensions of health, and environmental influences on health.

The CIHR web site is located at www.cihr.ca. Funding program deadlines can be reviewed by following the links from “Funding Opportunities.”

Note: If you are planning to apply to the March 1, 2001 deadline for a new or renewal Operating Grant, you will need to contact the CIHR prior to February 1, 2001 and obtain a PIN (Personal Identification Number). A PIN is required to complete all CIHR application forms. Applicants who previously had an MRC PIN must also complete this process in order to validate their PIN and choose a password.

For further information, please see www.cihr.ca/funding_opportunities/application_forms/how_to_apply_e.shtml.

The closing dates for the receipt of complete application packages are listed in the CIHR funding program deadline list. When a closing date falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be extended to the next business day. An application received after the deadline date will be accepted if courier marked on or before the deadline date. Otherwise, late or incomplete application packages will not be accepted. Late documentation will not be accepted, except notices of acceptance of publications, letters confirming academic appointment, and notices of any other support requested or received.

Questions may be directed to Nancy McNeil, Research Grants Officer, 291-4120, email: mcneil@sfu.ca.
Meet our New Technology Manager

We are delighted to introduce Ms. Ziba Afshar, a Technology Manager in the University/Industry Liaison Office (UILO). Focusing mainly in the biotechnology and life sciences areas, Ms. Afshar assists faculty, students and staff to identify industrial applications for their research, establish collaborative partnerships with industry and government, transfer University-developed technology to industry, and create new ventures in the form of University spin-off companies.

“Ms. Afshar brings to the position more than nineteen years of research, management, business and consulting experience in life sciences and is the author of several publications and patents,” notes UILO Director, Mr. Michael Volker.

Prior to joining SFU, Ms. Afshar was a consultant to the life sciences industry in Alberta. She spent ten years at NAEJA Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (formerly SynPhar Laboratories Inc.), where she was responsible for managing the company’s multidisciplinary screening and drug discovery program. “Her experience managing in-house, national and international collaborative drug discovery projects, and preparing research grant applications, collaborative research proposals and patent applications provides the UILO with a welcome level of expertise in the transfer of research results from the life sciences,” says Mr. Volker.

Before joining the life sciences industry, Ms. Afshar spent six years at the University of Alberta, Department of Pharmacology, establishing and managing the natural products laboratory which was responsible for the isolation and identification of anticancer compounds from marine samples. Her experience also includes working on the synthesis of pheromones as a research associate in Mexico.

Ms. Afshar earned an M.B.A. at the Universities of Alberta and Calgary and an M.Sc. in Organic Chemistry from the University of Alberta.

Ms. Afshar can be reached at: 291-3014, email: zafshar@sfu.ca.

Highlighting Research at SFU

Simon Fraser University was ranked as Canada’s best comprehensive university in the annual Maclean’s magazine issue of November 20, 2000. This is the fifth time SFU has been first in its category and the University has consistently placed at or near the top of the ranking.

This front-runner status derives in large part from the success of our researchers in winning external support for their work. SFU placed first in the faculty category in terms of the number of awards per full-time faculty, first in the number of social sciences and humanities grants, and second in medical/science grants.

Simon Fraser University’s research excellence and external research funding record were celebrated at the President’s Research Luncheon held in November. The fifth annual event of its kind, the luncheon held at SFU’s Harbour Centre Campus attracted a record number of guests from the community including business and government leaders. Our guests met with eighteen SFU researchers from the humanities, social sciences, business, sciences, education and applied sciences. Drs. Don DeVoretz (Economics) and Erika Plettner (Chemistry) delivered feature presentations, describing their work and the results of their research. During the luncheon, guests enjoyed music from a CD by Dr. Owen Underhill, Chair, School of Contemporary Arts and each guest was presented with a CD of acoustic instrumental music created by Dr. Barry Truax, Department of Communication, who is a pioneer in the electronic soundscape.

In his opening remarks Dr. Bruce Clayman, Vice-President, Research commented, “This is a great time to be involved in the research enterprise, now that there is growing public awareness of the value of university research and its importance to the success of Canada in the global, knowledge-based society. The federal government has recognized this and is investing heavily in programs such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the Canadian Institutes for Health Research and Canada Research Chairs. We are optimistic about their funding the missing component - the indirect costs of university research, too. The federal government has also recognized the critical importance of research and scholarship in the humanities and social sciences and has increased funding to the federal granting council for this area.”

Dr. Clayman also noted that provincial governments, including the Government of British Columbia, are making substantial investments in the direct—and in some cases the indirect—costs of university research.

Events such as the President’s Research Luncheon help us to celebrate SFU’s researchers and to highlight the direct and positive impact their work has on our society. “This is a wonderful opportunity to influence the view of public policy makers concerning the importance and relevance of university research,” says Dr. Clayman.

We were proud to feature the following researchers at the 2000 President’s Research Luncheon on November 9. Back row from left, Luis Goddyn, Rosalie Tung, Carole Gerson, Peter Klein, Douglas Stead, Mark Jaccard, Paul Percival, Erika Plettner, Karen Kavanagh, Mark Roseland, Don DeVoretz (front row from left) Zia McRobbie, Bernice Wong, Peter Grimmett, Susan Wendell, Steve Hart, Mary Lynn Stewart, Dara Culhane.
In the last issue of Research Links (Autumn 2000) Ms. Ellen Loosley, Director, Office of Research Services (ORS), discussed the increasing volume and complexity of research funding agreements, particularly contract agreements, and outlined plans to meet these challenges.

Since then there have been some interesting developments in ORS including the return of Mr. Adrian Sheppard as Contracts Officer and the creation of a Contracts Assistant position, which was recently staffed by Ms. Alyse Kirlik.

Ms. Kirlik assists faculty members in their research endeavours by facilitating the approval process of contract and grant agreements. Utilizing the ORS database called Grant Track, she follows agreements from the proposal stage; obtains SFU internal approvals, contract signatures and Financial Services account set up, and finally ensures that completion and other wrap up requirements are met.

“We are already noticing that having the resources of a Contracts Assistant allows us to provide quicker file processing, more efficient administration of existing agreements, and better assistance to researchers in following up on funding opportunities,” comments Ms. Loosley.

By having Ms. Kirlik carry out the many administrative tasks involved in this area, Mr. Sheppard is able to concentrate on legal issues and the negotiation of terms and can better assist faculty researchers in understanding and following through on the conditions of the agreements.

Mr. Sheppard holds a law degree from the University of Victoria. He worked for three years as a licensing agent for the provincial government. He can be reached by telephone at 291-5717 or by email to adrians@sfu.ca.

Ms. Kirlik has more than eight years of legal and secretarial experience. Prior to joining SFU, she was a legal secretary and office manager dealing primarily with real estate contracts, mortgages, and personal estate matters. She also worked as an Administrative Assistant at the Society of Notaries Public of BC. She can be reached by telephone at 268-6684 or by email to alyse_kirlik@sfu.ca.

Are you working on an idea that you would like to turn into a business? The National Research Council Canada’s Entrepreneurship Office and their collaborators Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, the BC Advanced Systems Institute and NRC’s Industrial Research Assistance Program are offering a training program entitled “Creating a Technology-Based Business Venture.”

The seven-day course will be delivered in Vancouver in three phases, spread over ten weeks, from February through April 2001. The course will help researchers, research associates, post-doctoral fellows and others to learn how to create a technology-based business.

Visit www.nrc.ca/entrepreneurship for more information.