SFU’s Vice-President, Research, Dr. Mario Pinto, believes strongly in a team approach that uses people’s strengths in a concerted effort. That’s the reason for the Major Projects Office (MPO) – to promote, encourage and support the development of proposals for submission to major grants competitions at the provincial, national and international levels.


Dr. Colin Jones, Professor in the Department of Chemistry, has been appointed as Director of the MPO to August 31, 2005. A faculty member at SFU since 1965, he served as Chair of Chemistry from 1979 to 1988 and as Dean of Science from 1988 to 1999. He is also currently Chief Executive Officer for the Faculty of Health Sciences, President of the Western Canadian Universities Marine Sciences Society, and a member of the Board of TRIUMF.

Research Links caught up with Dr. Jones between proposals to ask him about the MPO.

**Why do Major Projects need a special office?**

The essential element is the proactive role of the office in seeking out opportunities and encouraging faculty to pursue them. The MPO will promote, support and encourage SFU researchers to pursue major research initiatives, either individually or in multidisciplinary teams. Where appropriate, it will also facilitate linkages with other institutions in these initiatives. MPO activities will include liaison with various provincial and national granting agencies to keep up to date on developments across the research granting scene.

**What is considered a Major Project?**

Any project with the potential to have a major impact on the research programs of the University. These could include major grant competitions such as Genome Canada III, where multi-year funding of several million dollars may be involved, through to SFU’s active participation in major national facilities such as the CLS (Canadian Light Source, located at the University of Saskatchewan) or TRIUMF (Canada’s National Laboratory for Particle and Nuclear Physics, located at the University of British Columbia).

**Does that mean the office is now concerned with more than the Canada Foundation for Innovation?**

Certainly the MPO will actively pursue the next Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) competition anticipated in 2005. However, the office is concerned with far more than proposals to CFI. For example, in Fall 2004 the MPO has facilitated the submission of three Letters of Intent to Competition Two of the BC Leadership Chairs Program, one each in the areas of medical, social and technological research. Five preliminary Letters of Intent have been submitted to Genome BC, the first step in the Genome Canada Competition III; and five applications in which SFU is the lead institution have been submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Cluster Design Grants competition. Another example is the SSHRC Community–University Research Alliances (CURA) grant program, for which we have been actively encouraging applications in strategic areas.

**What is the Major Projects Steering Committee?**

This committee will replace the CFI Steering Committee. Chaired by the Vice-President, Research, it will comprise the Faculty Deans or their representatives; the Vice-President, Academic; a senior representative from Finance; and the Director of the MPO as an ex-officio member.

**What are the steps in developing a proposal for a Major Project?**

Faculty who feel they could benefit from the assistance of the MPO in developing major research proposals should contact the Director of the MPO. The ORS and Grants Facilitators will be identifying major upcoming research opportunities to the MPO. The Faculty Deans and the Vice-President, Research may also assist in identifying major projects where there is a role for the MPO. Depending on the nature of the project, consultation and coordination may be needed with Finance, Facilities Management and the office of the Vice-President, Advancement. The MPO will work closely with the faculty, Grants Facilitators and ORS from inception to submission of proposals.

**Contact Information**

Dr. Colin Jones, 604-291-5714, cwjones@sfu.ca
Message from the Vice-President, Research

Defining a Strategic Research Plan

Dr. B. Mario Pinto

SFU’s response to the changing climate in research opportunities and implementation of the federal government’s Innovation Strategy requires strong vision, leadership and strategic planning for us to position ourselves as Canada’s most research-intensive comprehensive university. Moving towards this goal, I have convened a Task Force to develop a Strategic Research Plan for the University. Our current plan sets out SFU’s use of infrastructure funds from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and deployment of its allocated Canada Research Chairs. The new plan will go beyond these areas to identify our priority areas for research, in order to guide decision-making in the allocation of resources and provide a means for assessing how well we are meeting our objectives on an annual basis.

The Task Force comprises one representative from each of the Faculties of Applied Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Health Sciences and Science, and two representatives from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. I have appointed two of four additional members, and two were chosen by the Vice-President Academic. The names and affiliations of the Task Force members are listed below, as well as on the Web site of the Vice-President, Research at www.sfu.ca/vpresearch/srp_taskforce.html.

The Task Force’s goal is to prepare a first draft of the new plan by February 28, 2005 for consultation with the senior academic administrative group (academic Deans, Vice-Presidents, Academic and Research, and the President). A second draft incorporating suggestions from this group will then be circulated for consultation throughout the SFU community, including faculty, staff, and student organizations. The final draft will be prepared by May 2005 for submission to the Senate Committee on University Priorities (SCUP), Senate and the Board of Governors for consideration, revision and approval.

I am grateful to the members of the Task Force for their willingness to serve the University in this important undertaking, and I look forward to very stimulating discussions with the University community as we plan our research priorities.

In the interests of obtaining the broadest possible consultation across the University, the Task Force invites all interested parties to submit their opinions on this important subject. Your opinion will be considered confidential unless you expressly state otherwise. Anonymous submissions will not be considered by the Task Force.

Grants and Contracts: What’s the Difference?

Sponsored research takes place under a variety of arrangements, from unrestricted grants to very specific contracts with milestones and deliverables. At one end of the spectrum, unrestricted research grants give investigators complete freedom to pursue research in their discipline; funds are paid in advance with no terms and conditions, nor any financial reporting requirements, intellectual property rights or deliverables to the sponsor. However, most research funding from the private sector, and from government organizations other than the three federal funding agencies, comes with strings attached in the form of a legally enforceable agreement. These agreements may include conditions setting forth specific terms governing the conduct, direction and scheduling of the tasks to be performed, designating ownership of proprietary rights to the research results, laying out the financial regimen to be followed, and other restrictions. Whatever the sponsor may call such funding awards, they are contractual agreements and, as such, must include some compensation for the overhead costs incurred by the University in negotiating, administering and supporting them.

The true costs of research include a range of expenses incurred by the institution over and above the direct costs of specific projects. In recognition of this, the federal government now compensates universities for a portion of the indirect costs associated with research grants from the three federal funding agencies. The true costs of research, and the percentage of overhead that universities should recover for sponsored research, have been the subject of extensive study by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC). SFU’s normal overhead rates, based on the AUCC recommendations, are listed in Section 7 of Policy R10.01, External Research Grants and Contracts. See www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r10-01.htm.

Your submission should be sent to:

Dr. B. Mario Pinto, Chair
SFU Strategic Research Plan Task Force
Strand Hall Room 3194
Simon Fraser University

Or via email to vpres@sfu.ca
(Please provide your contact phone number for verification.)

Members of the Strategic Research Plan Task Force

B.M. Pinto, Vice-President, Research, Chair
Wade Parkhouse, Applied Sciences
Carole Gerson, Arts and Social Sciences
Dan Weeks, Arts and Social Sciences
Blaize Horner Reich, Business Administration
Phil Winne, Education
Michael Hayes, Health Sciences
Norbert Haunerland, Science
Peter Borwein, Mathematics
Greg Dow, Economics
Arvind Gupta, Computing Sciences
Lynne Quarmby, Molecular Biology & Biochemistry

Continued on page 3
BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH NETWORKS

SFU’s goal is to become the most research-intensive comprehensive university in Canada. What will that mean for SFU researchers? It will certainly involve a growing number of multi-institutional collaborations and research networks, both national and international. The larger and more complex the idea, and the greater the number of partners, the more time and resources needed to develop, communicate, promote and coordinate a project.

Proposal Development

Fortunately, SFU researchers can draw on the expertise of a network of experienced staff to help design and build collaborative projects.

• The Major Projects Office (see article in this issue) will facilitate the development of collaborative research proposals and help identify potential collaborators.
• Grants Facilitators in each Faculty will work with researchers to craft a well-presented proposal.
• The Office of Research Services (ORS) will provide advice on budgets, intellectual property rights, liability and other legal issues, and overhead rates.
• Research Accounting staff will review proposed budgets in detail with a view to the eventual audit that is required for many network projects, the cost of which also has to be included in the budget.
• Technology Managers in the University/Industry Liaison Office will assist with identifying private sector partners and commercial potential.

Indirect Cost Recovery

Research contract budgets must cover both direct and indirect costs of the proposed research (see “Grants and Contracts” article in this issue). Recognizing that each major project proposal is unique, ORS staff will assist researchers in determining the appropriate overhead rate and incorporating that amount into the proposed budget.

Matching Funds

Sponsors of collaborative research networks typically require cash or in-kind support from other sources in addition to their contribution towards the full cost of a project. Identifying and securing matching funds and in-kind contributions is often a major challenge, particularly since these promised contributions must be actually received before a final contract can be signed with the sponsor.

Project Management

Project management responsibilities of the host institution can involve complex, negotiated legal and financial arrangements to cover funds distribution and participants’ rights to intellectual property arising from the research. The complexities of running a collaborative research network mean that a full-time project manager’s salary should normally be included in the proposal budget.

International Collaboration

SSHRC and CIHR now allow funds to be transferred to co-investigators outside Canada in the form of subcontracts between SFU and the recipient institution, the terms of which

CONTINUED NEXT COLUMN
Following are some 2005 funding deadlines, arranged chronologically and beginning in February. The Office of Research Services (ORS) routinely receives and forwards new funding opportunity information to our list members (i.e., nserc-list@sfu.ca, sshrc-list@sfu.ca, cihr-list@sfu.ca). In addition, please check our Web site (www.sfu.ca/ors) and follow the links from “External Grants” to “Funding Opportunity Databases” for more information.

Please note that all applications, whether electronic or on paper, must be approved by the ORS using an SFU Research Funding Application Signature Sheet prior to their submission. This form can be found at www.sfu.ca/ors/forms/sig_sheet.html and must accompany a copy of the application for ORS records. Applicants are strongly advised to allow sufficient lead time for the proper consideration at each level.

**Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)**
http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/4567.html
Registration Deadline: February 1, 2005
Application Deadline: March 1, 2005

Operating, equipment, maintenance and group grants all require registration in advance of the full application deadline. As a reminder, the CIHR does not allow for late registrations for either new applications or renewals.

**Sandler Program for Asthma Research (SPAR) - US**
www.sandlerresearch.org/mission.html#Institutional%20indirect%20cost
Application Deadline: February 11, 2005

The Sandler Program supports basic research directed towards uncovering basic mechanisms in the pathogenesis of asthma. Studies may involve laboratory or clinical investigation, including genetic and epidemiological studies.

**Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)**

Program: Strategic Project Grants (SPG)
Application Deadline: April 15, 2005

The Strategic Project Grants Program funds project research in target areas of national importance and in emerging areas that are of potential significance to Canada. The research is early-stage with the potential to lead to breakthrough discoveries. Targeted areas include biosciences, environment and sustainable development, information and communications technologies; and value-added products and processes.

**Canada Council for the Arts and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)**

Program: New Media Initiative
www.canadacouncil.ca/grants/mediaarts/r1127223008646562500.htm
Postmarked Deadline: April 15, 2005

The purpose of this program is to promote collaborative links among artists, scientists and/or engineers to combine creativity with the development and application of new technologies and knowledge.

**Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)**

Program: Idea to Innovation (I2I) Program
www.nserc.gc.ca/professors_e.asp?nav=profnav&lbi=b4
Deadline: April 15, 2005

This program provides funding to university researchers, through defined stages, for research and development activities leading to technology transfer to a new or established Canadian company. Two distinct funding phases are proposed, which are characterized by the maturity of the technology or the involvement of an early-stage investment entity or an industrial partner.
Update on Research Grants Facilitators
New Appointments

Faculty of Applied Sciences: Dr. Julia Vaughan

Originally from Cambridge, England, Julia Vaughan moved to Vancouver in December 2003, after five years in Los Angeles, California. Her background is in astronomy, physics, computing, and science education. For her Ph.D. in Astronomy, she used radio telescopes to study the structure and origins of plasma jets in quasars, an extremely active type of galaxy powered by a central black hole. She spent four years working with the California Science Center in Los Angeles as an Exhibit Developer on projects such as the Air and Space Gallery (aeronautics, humans in space, planetary science and astronomy), and Creative World (energy conservation, fuel cells, car engines, and telecommunications). At university and at the non-profit Science Center, she gained experience writing and shaping grant proposals.

Julia enjoys working closely with Sara Swenson, the Senior Research Grants Facilitator. “There are no fixed boundaries,” explains Julia. “We overlap and trade grant applications back and forth — we share the opinion that the more eyes see it, the better the application will get. Being in adjoining cubicles, we just pop around to one another’s for discussions or, when things get hectic, call out over the walls!”

Faculty of Science: Dr. Theresa Kitos

“I have quite a variety of interests in life,” smiles Theresa Kitos. “I enjoy gardening, I absolutely love playing soccer, and I am fascinated by both the arts and the sciences.” This has influenced her career choices: although she began her university training in the area of fashion design, that interest was eventually superseded by an attraction to the sciences. After completing her undergraduate degree, she worked for several years in a research laboratory at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Her interest was piqued by this introduction to basic research, leading her to pursue a Master’s degree in Biochemistry at the University of Kansas, followed by a Ph.D. in Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases with Dr. Tyrrell at the University of Alberta. After completing these postgraduate degrees, she taught second- and third-year biochemistry courses at SFU, and five years later joined Dr. Rosemary Cornell’s research group in the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry. She has been a researcher with Dr. Cornell for the last six years.

“My interest in the arts is still there,” says Theresa, “but these days my artistic side is satisfied by allowing myself a bit of time to dabble in oil painting, figure drawing and photography. I’m very excited about the prospect of being able to assist individual researchers and groups of scientists in their pursuit of research funding, and am also looking forward to working with and learning from the other Research Grants Facilitators and grants-related staff on campus.”
**Faculties of Applied Sciences and Science: Dr. Sara Swenson**

In addition to her work in the Faculty of Applied Sciences, Sara Swenson has been appointed Senior Research Grants Facilitator in the Faculty of Science. Working half time in each of the two Faculties, she will help coordinate grants facilitation with the two new Research Grants Facilitators. As researchers in these two Faculties work together on collaborative projects in many areas, effective cross-Faculty grants facilitation is becoming essential. “Grants facilitation is really a team effort between the researchers and the facilitators,” says Sara. “Our faculty members are getting stretched more and more as they balance research, teaching, administrative, and community activities. My goal is simply to provide whatever assistance I can to the faculty in order to submit more and better grant proposals. All of us who are involved in the process of writing and developing research grants bring different ideas, strengths, and abilities to the process. I am confident that we have made a difference at SFU in terms of the quality and quantity of grant applications we are able to submit to funding agencies. I really look forward to building a strong grants facilitation team to assist faculty members in both Applied Sciences and Science.”

After completing her Ph.D. in Physics at SFU, Sara Swenson was appointed SFU’s first Research Grants Facilitator in 1997. She pioneered a service that has now expanded to all six Faculties across campus.

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**Faculty of Health Sciences: Dr. Adrienne Drobnies**

With three years experience as Research Grants Facilitator for the Faculty of Science, Adrienne Drobnies has moved to the new Faculty of Health Sciences, where she is now responsible for coordination of multi-investigator, interdisciplinary health-related grant applications. Adrienne received her Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of California at Berkeley, and completed postdoctoral research at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. She has been a clinical chemist at Stanford Hospital in California and at BC Children’s and Women’s Hospital. From 1993-2001, she was a research associate in the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry at SFU, where her research dealt with lipid metabolism and angiotensin signal transduction.

As Research Grants Facilitator for Health Sciences, Adrienne will assist in the development of inter-departmental, inter-university research teams, and act as a liaison with health-related funding agencies.