

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

# NSERC *Contact*

*Investing in people, discovery and innovation*

## Good News in the 2001 Budget

Editorial by NSERC President Tom Brzustowski

There was good news for university research in the 2001 federal budget. The annual budget of NSERC will increase by 7 percent or \$36.5 million a year, starting in fiscal year 2002-3.

I am very grateful for this decision of the Government of Canada, and consider it very important for several reasons. First, it's a permanent increase. Second, it is a substantial amount that will help NSERC to meet the needs of the new applicants to the Research Grants Program in last year's cohort (761 first-time applicants out of a total of 3,080 applicants for discovery grants), and the further growth in this year's cohort (781 first-time applicants out of a total of 2,924), and also to provide support for more research students. That growth in demand is a clear sign that the Government's many efforts to attract more active science and engineering researchers to Canadian universities are working.

But perhaps the most important thing is this: at a time when the economy has slowed down, when government revenues have declined, and when there are new pressures for spending on security in the aftermath of September 11, the Government of Canada has made the commitment to increase permanently and significantly its investments in university research and in the advanced training of HQP in science and engineering. I consider that a great example of "putting your money where your mouth is." It underlines the Government's commitment in last year's Speech from the Throne to move Canada up to 5th place in the world in terms of R&D spending per capita. I take Budget 2001 as a clear statement that NSERC's essential role in that move has been recognized.

It's also clear that the NSERC budget must continue to grow as Canada sets out on that climb towards fifth place. NSERC will have to help the universities meet the demand for many more people with advanced training in science and engineering. Some estimates say Canada needs to have 180,000 research scientists and engineers

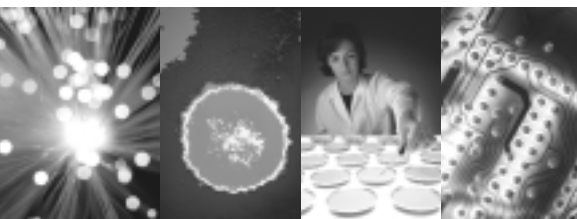
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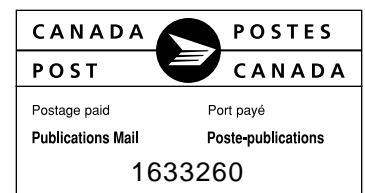
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by the end of the decade, compared with the current 80,000. Some of the additional people will work in universities and government labs, mainly on the “R” side of R&D, but most of them will work in industry, much more on the “D” side. The hope is that this much enlarged R&D workforce will produce more Canadian innovations, more new traded goods and services whose added value derives from imbedded knowledge. Their work will bring greater prosperity to Canada and enable us to afford more of what we consider important, including public spending on our children, health, education, basic research, the environment, etc. In my opinion, doing more R&D is not an end in itself. It is very important if it provides the means for improving the well-being and quality of life of Canadians, and that is the way I have always interpreted the government’s goal of moving to 5th place.

And the budget had still more to say about research funding:

“In recognition of the priority identified by universities and provincial governments for further funding targeted to the indirect costs of research, Budget 2001 provides a one-time investment of \$200 million through the granting councils to Canada’s universities to help alleviate financial pressures that are associated with federally supported research activity at universities and research hospitals. This initiative will help support world-class research facilities and respond to the needs of Canada’s smaller universities in their efforts to become more research-oriented.”

The investment is to be made in the current fiscal year, and its intent is clear. It is to help the universities meet the indirect costs of research, such as the library, serviced labs, animal facilities, workshops, computer networks, research administration, ethics reviews of research involving human subjects, insurance, accounting, and all the other costs that the institution must bear to support the research done by its faculty and students. These issues have been discussed thoroughly among the government, the granting agencies, and the universities, both individually and collectively through the AUCC for the last couple of years, and are now well understood. Therefore, I expect it to be a straightforward matter to divide the \$200 million among the universities, to decide how the spending is to be accounted for, and then to transfer the funds as grants in the name of the university presidents.

That can’t be the end of it, of course, because the indirect costs of university research are of a continuing nature. And \$200 million, even annually, may not be the appropriate amount. But the budget has certainly made an excellent start on dealing with a very important element of Canada’s capacity for university research.

The science and engineering research community in Canadian universities has good reasons to be grateful for the 2001 federal budget.

## **Policy Research Awards**

**Fifteen students from universities across Canada received Canadian Policy Research Awards Graduate Student Prizes in Ottawa Dec. 6. The Prizes recognize excellence in policy-relevant research at the graduate and post-doctoral level.**

**Two of the 2001 winners, Tracy Ewen (University of Victoria) and Paula Kennedy (University of Manitoba), held NSERC Postgraduate Scholarships. New NSERC Council Member Amrit Bhuie (see page 3) won a Graduate Student Prize in 2000.**

**The Prizes are jointly sponsored by the Policy Research Initiative, SSHRC, CIHR, and NSERC. For more information, visit [www.policyresearch.gc.ca](http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca).**

# Innovation Agenda More Important Than Ever

Industry Minister Brian Tobin called on the federal government to keep its fiscal commitments and not become a “single issue government” in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

In a Sept. 19 meeting with representatives from the various agencies that report to him, Mr. Tobin stressed the importance of continuing to invest in innovation and industry. He said that even against the backdrop of a slowing economy and the tragedy of Sept. 11, the Canadian government has to “stay the course on investing in our institutions” and address issues such as indirect funding.

“There is no magic formula but hard work and focus, and getting back on the agenda is a darn good start,” said Mr. Tobin.

He called the Innovation Agenda a chance to engage Canadians, build a national consensus on how they see themselves and sustain investment commitments. He said that the Innovation Agenda is more important than ever because of the disaster.

“Even if you have a terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre that diverts attention, energy and money away from other spending programs, you keep those commitments,” Mr. Tobin said.

He described the role of university-based research in science and engineering as fundamental and stressed the need to attract

and keep “bright minds” and first-class researchers in Canada.

“We need to invest in our universities, in our colleges, in our [Networks of] Centres of Excellence,” said Mr. Tobin.

The Minister also took time to applaud the agencies he leads for doing “a very good job of moving Canada in the direction of becoming a very smart, a very connected country” that places a priority on innovation and commercializing knowledge.

“It’s a recognition that you can’t wave a magic wand from Parliament Hill and make Canada a more innovative society,” said Mr. Tobin.

He also said that Canada must compete against the world to keep the best and most productive students from leaving.

“We can’t make these targets — these goals that we have established — temporary goals, or targets that are pushed aside by other events,” said Mr. Tobin.

by Jennifer Saltman  
(NCE/Carleton University Journalism Student)



Industry Minister  
Brian Tobin

Canadian Space Agency

## Council Membership News

The Honourable Brian Tobin, Minister of Industry, and the Honourable Gilbert Normand, Secretary of State (Science, Research & Development), recently announced that Amrit K. Bhuie and John Vederas have been appointed to NSERC’s Council for three-year terms, and that Gilbert Drouin and Nityanand Varma have been reappointed for a second term.



Amrit K. Bhuie

**Ms. Amrit K. Bhuie**, a Ph.D. student at the University of Toronto’s Institute for Environmental Studies and Forestry, holds a Master’s degree in Forestry and Environmental Toxicology. In her work in environmental assessment and management, Ms. Bhuie audited technical reports and provided expert guidance and action recommendations to project proponents. Her assessment studies have involved field analysis for pollutants such as MMT additives used to raise the octane rating of unleaded gasoline.

### Novel Initiative Aims to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

NSERC and the Energy Sector of Natural Resources Canada are jointly supporting early-stage, exploratory research on new energy technologies that could reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

**The deadline for receipt of applications is Feb. 1, 2002. Proposals are expected to be for projects of two or three years’ duration that do not exceed \$100,000 per year. A second competition is planned for 2002-2003.**

**To find out more about the program, visit [www.nserc.ca/guide/b5\\_e.htm](http://www.nserc.ca/guide/b5_e.htm).**

**Dr. John Vederas** is a professor of chemistry at the University of Alberta. He has made key discoveries about the biochemical pathways found in, among others, cholesterol-lowering drugs and antibiotics. He and his colleagues were the first to identify a natural non-toxic protein that could prevent the growth of harmful bacteria on food. His work now forms part of a University of Alberta initiative to investigate the functional properties of human and other genomes.



John Vederas

# Alberta Ecologist Wins Canada's Top Science Prize

**David Schindler**, one of the world's leading — and most outspoken — environmental scientists, was awarded the 2001 **Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering**.

Dr. Schindler was a finalist for the Medal last year.

In a special ceremony honouring NSERC prize winners at the National Gallery of Canada on November 5, His Excellency John Ralston Saul presented the NSERC Herzberg Medal to Dr. Schindler. Also presented at the ceremony were NSERC's Awards of Excellence, E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowships, Howard Alper Postdoctoral Prize, and Doctoral Prizes.

**Dr. Schindler** is internationally recognized for his research on acid rain and the deleterious impact phosphorus-based detergents have had on the world's freshwater supplies. Since conducting this research in the 1970s, he has become a scientific spokesman on many contentious environmental issues, such as global warming, the plight of Canada's boreal lake life, and the threat posed by long-lasting pollutants.

Dr. Schindler's warnings did not go unheeded. They have effectively given rise not only to changes in North America and Europe banning phosphates in detergents and the creation of hundreds of wastewater treatment facilities, but also to a new era of whole-ecosystem research. "David Schindler is a role model for many young scientists the world over," said NSERC President Dr. Tom Brzustowski. "He has had an enormous influence beyond his field."

The prize guarantees that Dr. Schindler will receive \$1 million from NSERC over the next five years...and a measure of freedom. In an interview before the award ceremony, Dr. Schindler said that the award means that he can be a lot more efficient; it will free him from the time-consuming necessity of having to fill out grant applications and allow him to focus more on his research and students. The University of Alberta ecologist can add the NSERC Herzberg Medal to other



NSERC Herzberg Medallist David Schindler (left) with John Ralston Saul.

Anthony Scullion Photo

big honours he has received over the past decade: the \$175,000 Stockholm Water Prize in 1991, presented by the Queen of Sweden for conserving water resources, and the \$150,000 Volvo International Environment Prize in 1998.



The 2001 Award of Excellence winners, (left to right) David Schindler (Alberta), Richard Puddephatt (Western Ontario), and Donald Mackay (Trent), shown with NSERC Vice-President Suzanne Fortier.

Anthony Scullion Photo



NSERC President Tom Brzustowski (second from right) with the 2001 E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellows: (from left) Peter Grütter (McGill), Simaan AbouRizk (Alberta), Ben Koop (Victoria), Sarah Otto (British Columbia), Arokia Nathan (Waterloo) and Warren Piers (Calgary).

Anthony Scullion Photo

Dr. Schindler was chosen over two other finalists, Donald Mackay of Trent University and Richard Puddephatt of the University of Western Ontario. The three Prize finalists each receive the **NSERC Award of Excellence** which consists of a crystal sculpture. Drs. Mackay and Puddephatt also receive \$50,000 each in research support.



The 2001 Doctoral Prize Winners: (from left) Cameron Currie (Toronto), Eldon Emberly (Simon Fraser), Yuri Leontiev (Alberta), and Vien Van (Waterloo).

Anthony Scullion Photo

**Donald Mackay's** application of physical chemistry and chemical engineering principles to create what have become known as "Mackay models" has allowed for the prediction of the long-term behaviour and fate of organic chemicals, such as PCBs, in the environment, and for the assessment of human and wildlife exposure. These models have in turn

provided the factual basis for a new era of environmental stewardship.

**Richard Puddephatt's** research is in the area of the synthesis and use of organometallics. His investigations into the fundamental chemistry of gold and other so-called noble metals, primarily platinum and palladium, have established a large body

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Glenn Tattersall (left), receiving the Howard Alper Postdoctoral Prize from Howard Alper.

Anthony Scullion Photo



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of basic understanding that is fuelling novel applications from chemotherapy to nanotechnology.

At the gala, NSERC also awarded the first **Howard Alper Postdoctoral Prize**, which recognizes Canada's top postdoctoral student. The Prize went to Glenn Tattersall of the University

## University - Industry **Synergy**

The Synergy Awards were presented during the 2001 Innovation Conference: Investing in Innovation, held in Montreal on November 19-20. Sponsored by The Conference Board of Canada and NSERC for the past seven years, the awards recognize the most successful university-industry partnerships. The award includes a \$25,000 research grant for the university partner, and an original sculpture for their industrial collaborator.

The winning partnerships for 2001 are:

### Small- and medium-sized companies category

- The **Pressure Pipe Inspection Company** and **Queen's University** for developing a unique patented technology that inspects large concrete high-pressure water supply pipes. This technology enables electromagnetic signals to be transmitted through the pipes to the steel pre-stressing wires embedded in the concrete, thereby allowing analysts to monitor distortions and determine if there are broken wires that may cause pipes to rupture.

### Large companies category

- **CanAmera Foods** and the **University of Manitoba** for their development and commercialization of a new, selectively bred rapeseed. The seed's high erucic acid oil is used in industrial applications, such as lubricants and anti-stick agents, while the low glucosinolate meal from the seed is used in animal feed.
- **Kodak Canada Inc., Eastman Kodak Company, McMaster University, INRS-Eau at the Université du Québec** and **Wilfrid Laurier University** for measuring silver released into the environment during the photofinishing process and researching the effects of silver on aquatic organisms. It is expected that this research will help set criteria for new water quality guidelines for metals in the environment.

### Ventures involving several industry partners category

- **Datec Coating Corporation, Millenium Biologix Inc.** and **Queen's University** for the advancement and commercialization of two distinct university-industry

of British Columbia. Dr. Tattersall has done pioneering research in the field of energy metabolism in small mammals and other vertebrates. Dr. Alper has donated \$100,000 from the proceeds of the NSERC Herzberg Medal that he won last year to the setting up of the new award that bears his name. Each year, the winner will receive \$20,000.

The winners of the E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowships and Doctoral Prizes, who were also presented with their awards, were featured in the Spring 2001 issue of *Contact*.

For more information on the prizes and prizewinners, visit [www.nserc.ca/fact\\_e.htm](http://www.nserc.ca/fact_e.htm) and [www.nserc.ca/media\\_e.htm](http://www.nserc.ca/media_e.htm).



Anthony Scullion Photo

(left) Alan King, INCO (Consortium representative) and (right) Doug Oldenberg, University of British Columbia Geophysical Inversion Facility, winners of the Leo Derikx Award, pictured with Leo Derikx (second from left), formerly of NSERC, and the Hon. Gilbert Normand, Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development).

research ventures. With Datec, these include ceramic paint technology used in industrial markets for applications such as electric insulation, non-stick surfaces, and coatings for diamond mining. With Millenium, unique synthetic bone biomaterials have been developed for orthopedic, dental, diagnostic and therapeutic products.

- **Ontario Beekeepers' Association (a consortium)** and the **University of Guelph** for their research into pollination. Successful, sustainable pollination programs will lead to better quality fruits and vegetables, increased agricultural productivity and lower food prices.
- **Solutia Canada Inc., LPM Technologies, the University of Toronto** and the **Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières** for their development of state-of-the-art technology that brightens pulp inexpensively while limiting any impacts on the environment. The technology reduces the use of chemicals in processing and improves a paper mill's machine performance.

### Leo Derikx Award

- The **University of British Columbia Geophysical Inversion Facility and a Consortium of eleven companies** for their development of new and more accurate ways of processing and interpreting geophysical data in the mining exploration industry.

For a full description of the winners' achievements, see [www.nserc.ca/about/award\\_e.htm](http://www.nserc.ca/about/award_e.htm).

# Competition News

## PromoScience Gets Down to Business

PromoScience, NSERC's leading initiative to cultivate young people's interest in science and engineering, has now officially entered its second year. On November 7, an eight-member panel completed its two-day review of more than 90 applications that had been submitted for funding. Forty-one of those organizations were awarded grants totalling \$1.4 million over the next three years.

Panel chair Tim Loughheed was among a number of members who had participated in the previous selection process. He notes that this year's crop of applicants provided some important distinctions.

"There was a significant proportion of carefully focused proposals, which might not necessarily affect large numbers of young people directly, but which could have a major, lasting effect on their lives and the society in which they participate," he says. "It made us very sensitive to the impact that these grants could bring to a community."

A list of the successful applicants will be posted on the PromoScience Web site, at [www.nserc.ca/promoscience/recipients\\_e.htm](http://www.nserc.ca/promoscience/recipients_e.htm), in late January 2002.

## Results of the 2001-2 Strategic Project Grants Competition

This was the first competition involving the new strategic target areas approved by Council last year.

A total of 319 proposals (requesting \$44.6 million in year 1) were received in the 2001-2 competition — a 17 percent increase over last year. NSERC was able to fund 79 new projects, worth \$10.7 million, resulting in a 24.8 percent success rate. In addition, the panels recommended another 52 proposals (worth \$7 million), should additional funds become available.

Here are the results of the competition by target area:

### Strategic Project Grants 2001-2 Competition Summary

Area	Number of Appl.	Awards	Success Rate (%)	Total (millions of \$) Requested	Funding Awarded	Funding Rate (%)
New Directions	17	4	23.5	2.6	0.5	19.2
Biosciences	87	21	24.1	12.2	3.1	25.4
Environment and Sustainable Development	110	31	28.2	16.4	4.1	25.0
Information and Communications Technologies	40	8	20.0	6.0	1.3	21.7
Value-Added Products and Processes	65	15	23.0	7.4	1.7	23.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>44.6</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>24.0</b>

## Introducing ... NSERC's Representatives

NSERC staff kicked off a new initiative to improve interaction with Canada's researchers by meeting Dec. 10 with NSERC "Representatives" (Reps) from 27 Canadian institutions.

NSERC President Tom Brzustowski welcomed the newly appointed NSERC Reps into the NSERC family. "These experienced and senior researchers will give us an unprecedented opportunity to improve our understanding of the situations faced by our researchers and to get the message out about the quality and significance of the research NSERC supports."

Among the items on the Agenda were a review of recent developments at NSERC, a discussion of the role of NSERC Reps in support of the work of the Offices of Research Services and Communications in their institutions, and a tutorial on how to get messages into the political arena.

Each university or college where NSERC supports researchers was invited last fall to name a senior researcher or research administrator as NSERC Rep. They will work with NSERC to provide two-way communications with the researchers and to interact with the local community. A second group will be named in the spring.

Regular teleconferences will be held with the NSERC Reps in each region and NSERC Reps will be active in bringing the Council to the attention of local community leaders.

# Research Partnerships Program Changes

Changes have recently been made to some of the regulations pertaining to NSERC's Research Partnerships programs. The full details will be posted on the Council's Web site early in the new year. In the meantime, here are some of the highlights.

## IP Policy Formalized

Following broad consultations over the past several months, NSERC has clarified its policy on Intellectual Property (IP) and the guidelines for interpreting and applying it.

The policy reiterates the Council's long-standing position that IP arising from an NSERC grant belongs to either the inventor or the university, according to university policies, but that other sponsors can also expect access to the research results. NSERC recognizes that reaching an agreement on IP rights involves very complex issues that must be dealt with by the parties directly concerned; however, it requires assurance that any such agreement is consistent with the support of the research with public funds.

## Eligibility of Organizations Clarified

The principles determining the eligibility of partner organizations have been clarified. A partner must have:

- a credible plan for exploiting the research results to benefit the Canadian economy, environment, or society;
- the expertise and resources to implement the plan, or to acquire this capacity; and
- the potential to offer job opportunities for those trained in the project.

These principles allow venture capital firms to be eligible in early-stage development when no established company has the capacity to exploit the research results.

## Changes to IRC Program Streamline Administration

On the recommendation of the Committee on Research Partnerships, NSERC has made a number of significant changes affecting the Industrial Research Chairs (IRC) program in order to streamline program administration:

- The IRC program will support "junior" chairs that are associated with a Senior IRC or are established independently. Internal candidates will be eligible, but, as with Senior Chairs, incrementality is a requirement;

- Universities will be able to appoint excellent candidates from outside the academic milieu to Executive Industrial Research Chairs for five-year terms without tenure.
- IRC and Canada Research Chair awards may be held concurrently, subject to certain conditions.

Current or past chairholders who want to discuss their own situations are encouraged to call the RPP program.

Further information on the program changes mentioned above will be available on NSERC's Web site in the new year. Visit [www.nserc.ca/programs/prognewsres\\_e.htm](http://www.nserc.ca/programs/prognewsres_e.htm), or call (613) 992-5619.

## The Royal Golden Jubilee Ph.D. Program

### An opportunity for research partnerships

The Thailand Research Fund invites Canadian professors to participate in its Royal Golden Jubilee Ph.D. Program. The Program will enable them to bring Thai Ph.D. students to Canada to study and to carry out research at Canadian universities, or to make short trips to Thailand to follow up on collaborative research projects and to establish further research co-operation with counterparts at Thai universities. For more information, visit the Fund's Web site: <http://rgj.trf.or.th/eng.htm>.



NSERC President Tom Brzustowski congratulates Ron Freedman, publisher of *Research Horizons*, at the new magazine's launch Dec. 5.

# Two Innovation Platforms Get the Go-Ahead!

NSERC unveiled the first of its newly instituted innovation platforms — the NSERC Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Innovation Platform (NanoIP) — during Council's October meeting. A month later, the second innovation platform became a reality with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding for an NSERC-eMPOWER Innovation Platform.

The Innovation Platform concept is a new NSERC initiative aimed at strengthening and accelerating Canadian research in strategically important fields. Each Innovation Platform will establish an external "virtual institute." A Research Director and all-sector Advisory Committee will direct and guide research investments, but will operate with a minimum bureaucratic burden on researchers.

## NanoIP

"The NSERC Nanoscience and Nanotechnology Innovation Platform provides a national framework for bringing all Canadian researchers into a major, world-scale research thrust in these important research areas. The NanoIP will complement and work with established nano-centres such as those at the University of Toronto, McMaster University, the NRC National Institute for Nanotechnology in Alberta and Nano-Quebec," says NSERC President Tom Brzustowski.

NSERC estimates that it is already spending more than \$20 million in support of nano-related research in Canadian universities. The NanoIP will add \$1 million to establish the office of the Research Director and to set up the Advisory Committee, develop the strategic vision and plans for the NanoIP and start some strategic initiatives. The budget for the NanoIP is expected to grow as more funding becomes available.

The Research Director will identify members of the Research Advisory Committee and, with the Committee, undertake strategic planning for the NanoIP. Researchers will be invited

to self identify as "members" of the NanoIP, and will be able to take advantage of special NanoIP programs as well as NSERC's current suite of programs.

## NSERC-eMPOWER Innovation Platform

eMPOWER Canada and NSERC have joined forces to build up the supply of highly qualified people to work in Canada's knowledge-based industries (**M**icroelectronics, **P**hotonics and **O**ptoelectronics, and **W**ireless and **R**adio engineering). eMPOWER Canada will provide the strategic planning for the new Innovation Platform and NSERC will provide program and project management, project evaluation and fiscal management.

"We have conducted the eMPOWER campaign for over a year now," said Jim Roche, eMPOWER Chair and President of Tundra Semiconductor Corporation. "In our conversations with senior government officials, we've been advised repeatedly to work with the existing funding institutions. NSERC's concept of Innovation Platforms, which can accommodate intensive industry representation on review boards, gave us the opportunity to do that. I'm delighted that this will be one of the first examples of a functioning Innovation Platform. We've built the partnership. Now all that we need is the allocation of an appropriate investment from government to bring this work to life."

"The NSERC-eMPOWER Innovation Platform will be among the first of the new initiatives NSERC plans to launch to accelerate research in areas of particular Canadian opportunity or need," says NSERC President Tom Brzustowski. "It builds upon our experience with the Canadian Microelectronics Corporation (CMC) and Micronet, a national Network of Centres of Excellence, bringing the universities, government and private sector together to foster research, discovery and innovation."



## Workshop SPARKs Enthusiasm

Some of NSERC's SPARK Mentors gathered in front of the University of Guelph's Dairy Building during a SPARK Workshop they attended there Nov. 17: (bottom row, left to right) Robie Liscomb, Victoria; Owen Roberts (SPARK founder and host of the Workshop, Guelph); Kathryn Warden, Saskatchewan; Geoff McMaster, Alberta; Karen Levenson (Assistant in the Guelph SPARK office); (middle row, left to right) Robert Cooney, Lethbridge; Jessie-May Rowntree, York; Frank Smith, Laurentian; Sandy Cameron, Regina; Catherine Young, Dalhousie; (top row, left to right) Jim Greer, Calgary; Magda Havas, Trent; and Allister Hain, Carleton.

SPARK is a unique initiative through which students at participating institutions are recruited, trained and paid to write stories about the NSERC-supported research at their institution. To learn more about it, visit [www.nserc.ca/science/spark/index.htm](http://www.nserc.ca/science/spark/index.htm).

Letters inviting universities to participate in the next SPARK competition will be sent to Vice-Presidents, Research in late January 2002.



# NSERC Circle Holds First Meeting

Twenty-two members of the newly formed NSERC Circle met Oct. 16-17 in Edmonton with NSERC President Tom Brzustowski, Nigel Lloyd, Director General of Research Grants and Scholarships, Janet Walden, Director General of Research Partnerships, and Bill Coderre, Director of Corporate Development, to provide advice on future policies and initiatives.

The NSERC Circle, composed of recent recipients of E.W.R. Steacie Memorial Fellowships and the Gerhard Herzberg

Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering, was created by Dr. Brzustowski as a sounding board for new ideas.

The two-day meeting featured presentations of members' research programs and a discussion of how NSERC might help Canada to "leapfrog" in areas of special significance to Canada.

The group encouraged Dr. Brzustowski to re-convene the NSERC Circle next year.

## Michael Smith Awards for Science Promotion

Most of the winners of the Michael Smith Awards announced in July (see *Contact*, Fall 2001, or visit [www.nserc.ca/msmith/recipients/2001\\_e.htm](http://www.nserc.ca/msmith/recipients/2001_e.htm)) have received their awards. Here are photos from two of the ceremonies:



Les Scientifines was presented with a Michael Smith Award at a ceremony in Montreal, Nov. 15. Shown are (left to right): Nafija Rahman; Grade 6 student Munni Akhter, who was master of ceremonies; Claire Chamberland, Chair of the Board of Les Scientifines; and Tom Brzustowski, President of NSERC.

NSERC President Tom Brzustowski presents a Michael Smith Award to CBC Radio's Quirks & Quarks host Bob McDonald, Nov. 7, at CBC headquarters in Toronto.



# NSERC-Canada Council Joint Initiative in New Media

NSERC and the Canada Council have launched a joint initiative to foster synergy between artists and engineers and scientists.

The Councils will jointly fund projects in new media that have both artistic and scientific or engineering components.

Applications may be submitted to either Council. Proposals will be evaluated jointly by the Canada Council's New Media Residencies program and NSERC's Strategic Project Grants program. Proposals suitable for support by another Research

Partnerships Program — for example, the Collaborative Research and Development (CRD) grants program — may also be considered.

Details, including application instructions, are available at [www.nserc.ca](http://www.nserc.ca), under Program News.

Contact Sandra Acs in NSERC's Information, Communications and Manufacturing Sectors, at (613) 943-7831, or Marilyn Burgess in the Canada Council's Media Arts Section, at 1-800-263-5588, ext 4251.

# Newsbureau Working for You

*As always, the NSERC Newsbureau continues to alert the media about NSERC issues and NSERC-funded researchers. Here are some examples of what we've been up to since the last time we reported to you.*

The current fascination with aging baby boomers has stimulated interest in the research of the University of New Brunswick's Eric Hildebrand on elderly rural drivers. He was featured on CBC TV and CTV National News in October and November.

@discovery.ca first aired its nine-minute profile of Tom Brzustowski on Oct. 5 and has subsequently rerun it on at least three occasions.

The University of Lethbridge's Jean Choi appeared in the *Windsor Star* and in two side-by-side articles in *La Presse*. The interest in her work on the sexes'

different sense of direction was triggered by an article in the *Newsbureau Bulletin*, NSERC's weekly newsletter to the press.

The *Bulletin* was also responsible for the coverage received by Luc De Nil of the University of Toronto whose work on stuttering was covered by *La Presse* and *Le Devoir* in November. Dan Weary of the University of British Columbia's appearance in the *Bulletin* also led to an article on cognition in cattle and pigs in *The National Post* and, subsequently, to other articles in *La Presse*, *The Toronto Sun*, *The Ottawa Sun* and *The Edmonton Sun*. Also featured in the foregoing articles was Jon Watts of the University of Saskatchewan whose work on cognition in cattle was originally provided to *The National Post* journalist Margaret Munro by the Newsbureau.

Ever since the Newsbureau first promoted Dan Levitin in December 2000, the McGill University music-and-the-brain researcher has been consistently featured in the media. Since September, he has been on CBC's Radio Québec, CBC's Radio Montreal Arts, and in the *Montreal Gazette* where he was interviewed about the role of music during a crisis.

Other similar items, together with the major coverage of David Schindler's winning of the Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering, have made the past few months some of the most successful ever in terms of NSERC mentions in the media. We will let you know the final tally in the next issue of *Contact*.

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## The Importance of Confidentiality: A Reminder

*As a public service, NSERC reports cases of misconduct and any sanctions the NSERC Committee on Professional and Scientific Integrity may impose. In accordance with the federal Privacy Act, NSERC does not disclose the identity of an individual subjected to sanctions.*

An external reviewer violated NSERC's confidentiality and non-disclosure guidelines by disclosing a portion of an application received from NSERC. An inquiry conducted by the reviewer's institution found that the information (provided to help a student under the reviewer's supervision prepare for doctoral work) was shared on the mistaken assumption that it was public domain information.

NSERC's Committee on Professional and Scientific Integrity took extenuating circumstances into account and, as a result, NSERC decided to reprimand the researcher but not to impose sanctions.

### **To our external reviewers**

**We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank you for the invaluable support you provide to our peer review process. Please remember that all parts of an NSERC application, including bibliographies, are strictly confidential and must not be discussed or disclosed without prior approval from NSERC. Any breach of confidentiality damages the integrity and the reputation of the peer review system itself.**