

Campus Digest

June 23, 2011

Brazilian research ties announced

A \$200,000 investment announced recently by The São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), University of Toronto and The University of Western Ontario will be used to enhance support for research collaborations between investigators in Brazil and Canada.

Announced in Ottawa at a workshop entitled *Advancing Excellence in Strategic Engagement with Brazil*, the new cooperation agreement will promote and support scientific research projects between institutions of higher education and research in the state of São Paulo, Brazil, and the two Canadian universities.

Stem cell scientist awarded Taylor Prize

Dr. Rudolf Jaenisch, a founding member of the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research and professor of biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has been named this year's recipient of the J. Allyn Taylor International Prize in Medicine. Jaenisch is a pioneer in creating transgenic mice, leading to some important advances in understanding cancer, neurological/connective tissue diseases and developmental abnormalities.

The Robarts Research Institute at The University of Western Ontario's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry has been awarding this international prize to leading scientists since 1985. The award, which focused on stem cell research this year, will be presented Nov. 21 at the J. Allyn Taylor International Prize in Medicine Symposium and dinner.

Mayor taps professor for energy post

London Mayor Joe Fontana has appointed Western biochemical engineering professor Argyrios Margaritis to a three-year term on the Mayor's Council for Sustainable Energy. Members include representatives from local energy utilities, business sector, educational sector, Western, Fanshawe College and members from the London Economic Development Corporation.

The council is charged with promoting existing and new sustainable energy technologies as well as supporting the collaboration between local business and researchers at Western and Fanshawe College to create new business opportunities in sustainable energy production for the creation of new jobs in the London area.

Margaritis is a world-renowned expert in biochemical engineering which includes pioneering research in the renewable biofuels areas, bioethanol, biobutanol and biohydrogen derived from renewable raw materials, such as, waste agricultural lignocellulosics, municipal solid waste and new sugar crops that do not compete with the food supply chain.

Townsend tapped for sustainability post

Beverley Townsend wants you to understand we're all in this together.

As The University of Western Ontario's first-ever energy and environment manager (Physical Plant), Townsend doesn't see a university campus as exempt from the global sustainability push "Everyone is affected," she says. "The environment has no boundaries, anyone who is alive and walking is impacted by it."

This position is charged with creating, implementing and sustaining a program designed to achieve savings while contributing to environmental protection by directing focus to energy efficient practices and behaviours throughout Western's facilities.

As for first steps on this long journey, Townsend plans "an intense round of information gathering."

"I plan on meeting with anyone and everyone who has something to say about sustainability and what it means to them at Western," she says. "I want to meet with as many employees, faculty, staff and students as possible to see what it is they would like to see accomplished here so I can try to help them achieve that goal."

In her previous role, Townsend managed the environmental sustainability program at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto. She holds a degree in chemical and biochemical engineering from Western (2005), and a master's in business administration from the Schulich School of Business at York University (2007).

Symposium highlights education

Graduate students in the Faculty of Education recently held the second Research in Education Symposium. Guests from the faculty, the local school boards and the community were welcomed at Althouse College to celebrate the research being pursued by the master's and doctoral students. More than 50 pieces of research were shared in poster, roundtable and paper presentations. Steve Killip, Thames Valley District School Board supervisor of research and assessment, was the invited speaker for the occasion. He reminded students the importance of research was not just its conclusion but also the 'what next' – how is the work being disseminated to a wider audience and influencing policy and practice in education. The symposium was organized and hosted by the graduate students with support from the graduate education office, and the Society of Graduate Students.

Western Notebook

Mechanical and material engineering assistant professor Liying Jiang has been named The University of Western Ontario's Petro-Canada Young Innovator for 2011-12.