

COUNCIL OF
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PRESS RELEASE

Six universities win chairs in public policy research

Provincial government invests \$25 million to address key policy issues

Toronto, February 15, 2006: Six Ontario universities have been awarded endowments for eight chairs in public policy. The winners of the government-sponsored chairs were selected from 37 proposals submitted by 14 Ontario universities.

The winning universities, which were selected by an arm's-length Selection Panel, and the fields for which they won are as follows:

- McMaster University, Educational policy and at risk students;
- Queen's University, Bioethics;
- University of Toronto (awarded three chairs), Biomarkers in disease management; Health policy and system design; and Postsecondary education policy and measurement;
- University of Waterloo, Environmental policy and renewable energy;
- University of Windsor, Cross-border transportation policy; and
- York University, Economics and cross cultural studies.

“Our universities play a vital role in helping unlock Ontario’s creative potential,” said Premier and Research and Innovation Minister Dalton McGuinty. “Creating Ontario Research Chairs demonstrates our government’s commitment to helping make our province a leading innovation-based economy.”

The winning universities have already begun their searches for distinguished candidates for the new chairs, and it is expected that the merits of this investment will be visible within the next two years. All six institutions plan to supplement the endowment with their own resources, which means that appointments of the highest calibre can be expected.

“Ontario needs to continue to be a world leader in research to strengthen Ontario’s economic advantage and create a culture of innovation in the province,” said Chris Bentley, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. “With the new Ontario Research Chairs, we are increasing the number of leading-edge researchers at our universities and investing in the next generation of graduate students who will help us unlock our potential for the future.”

David Strangway, Chair of the Ontario Research Chairs Selection Panel, noted that Ontario universities responded brilliantly to the request for proposals: “Only eight chairs could be funded; the choices were very hard. The panel concluded that no fewer than 19 proposals were so meritorious that they would unreservedly qualify for funding.”

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“We are confident that work done in these eight key policy areas will be of crucial benefit to Ontarians over the next decade and beyond,” said Ian Clark, President of the Council of Ontario Universities. “We salute the government for reaching out to universities to contribute to the policy process.”

Funding for the eight new Ontario Research Chairs in Public Policy was announced in the 2005 May Budget. For more information on the chairs program and project capsules, see the attached backgrounder and visit the web site at <http://orc.cou.on.ca>.

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ONTARIO RESEARCH CHAIRS

PROJECT SUMMARIES

Funding for the eight new Ontario Research Chairs in Public Policy was announced in the Ontario Budget of May 11, 2005. The provincial government has provided \$25 million to endow new faculty chairs for research and the improvement of graduate education. The Council of Ontario Universities arranged for an arm's-length Selection Panel to award the endowments. In addition to Dr. Strangway, Panel members are Dr. Art May, Judith Maxwell and Dr. Harold Shapiro. The Secretary of the Panel is Dr. Harry Swain.

Proposals were received in all of the eight fields specified in the Request for Proposals. **Environmental policy and renewable energy** and **educational policy and at risk students** were the most popular, followed by **health policy and system design, urban policy—crime or transportation, economics and cross cultural studies, biomarkers in disease management, bioethics** and **postsecondary education policy and measurement**.

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Ontario Research Chair in
Educational Policy and At Risk Students

While research has indicated that academic underachievement in Canada has not worsened, the consequences of such underachievement have worsened significantly. Over the last 25 years, there have been major increases in inequality in all developed countries, especially in the distribution of earned income. The debate concerning the importance of various causes remains unresolved, but what is not in doubt are the implications for the least schooled and least skilled members of the labour force.

The problem of educational underachievement poses a challenge not only for the individuals directly affected and their families, but also for those public programs that provide for the economic and social needs of Ontarians with the least economic self-sufficiency. Consequently, there is great need for research and policy debate that addresses the underlying mechanisms of educational underachievement.

The future of Ontario depends on the success of its children and youth at school, and not just from an academic stand. School success has a direct impact on peer relationships, self-esteem and access to proper guidance for choosing a career path.

The Chair will provide essential information to ensure that Ontario's children and youth have the foundation for a successful transition to adulthood. It will look at underachievement from a multidisciplinary perspective—bringing together health, education and social policy—to shed light on the building blocks and to start the process of building.

Specifically the Chair will:

- Lead a cohesive and coherent research program in educational underachievement drawing together experts in epidemiology, sociology, psychology and economics.
- Attract, mentor and train graduate students and develop a graduate course examining the multiplicity and complexity of factors affecting underachievement and their implications for public policy.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with Faculties of Education across the province with the aim to setting research priorities and engaging in research collaborations.
- Stimulate policy research and debate among broad stakeholder groups including local community, school boards, relevant ministries and other universities.
- Examine strategies for bridging the silos among funders and service providers in the child and education sectors including the Ministries of Education, Health and Long-Term Care, Community and Social Services and Children and Youth Services.

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QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

Ontario Research Chair in Bioethics

The Ontario Research Chair in Bioethics has been awarded to the Department of Philosophy at Queen's University for its innovative approach to bioethics. Traditionally, bioethics has centred on the responsibilities of clinicians and the rights of patients, resource allocation and the consequences of new technologies. The successful Queen's proposal argued that the scope of bioethics must be enlarged to examine moral issues at a more profoundly social level. To this end, the Ontario Research Chair in Bioethics will conduct a program of research and teaching at the intersection of medicine, ethics, political philosophy and public policy. Urgent issues include:

- ❑ Health care delivery: We need visions of health care delivery informed by articulate ideals, not just economic exigencies. This raises deep questions about models of patient-practitioner interaction and the roles of hospitals, clinics and new sources of information, such as medical websites.
- ❑ Multiculturalism and health care: How should a public health care system in a multicultural society accommodate culturally diverse conceptions of appropriate medical practice?
- ❑ Social impacts of medical research and practice: Concepts of health and disease evolve significantly so that new methods of diagnosis and treatment change norms of health. Such issues in population health, rarely studied by bioethicists, have crucial implications for health care planning.

To enhance the impact of the Ontario Research Chair, Queen's University has committed an additional new position in a closely allied philosophical sub-specialty, plus initial support for a post-doctoral position. The Chairholder will work with internationally respected philosophers at Queen's, such as Jerome Bickenbach, a leader in disability studies and long-term consultant to the World Health Organization; Christine Overall, FRSC, a pioneer in the field of feminist bioethics; Will Kymlicka, FRSC, a political philosopher who specializes in theories of multiculturalism; and Jacalyn Duffin, Hannah Professor of the History of Medicine. The existing Forum for Philosophy and Public Policy will provide a platform for the Chair. More broadly on the Queen's campus, the Chairholder will interact closely with teaching and research programs in health sciences, rehabilitation therapy and nursing, the Centre for Health Services and Policy Research and the School of Policy Studies. The Ontario Research Chair in Bioethics will establish links with scholars within Canada and abroad to promote collaborative research and to create new educational opportunities for graduate students.

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Ontario Research Chair in Health Policy and System Design

The Ontario Research Chair in Health Policy and System Design at the University of Toronto will have teaching, research and knowledge translation responsibilities. Research has rarely been carried out on the connections between different types of financial arrangements (e.g., taxation, social insurance, private insurance and direct payments) and models of service delivery, including who receives services and, ultimately, the quality of services and the differences among them. The private sector's role in financing redevelopments in health care, as well as the impact of its role in contracting out services in health care delivery is also currently under-examined. The Ontario Research Chair at the University of Toronto will play a critical role through teaching, research and knowledge translation, in linking a wide range of stakeholders in order to develop an innovative program of applied research that explores these relationships in great depth.

The Ontario Research Chair will be appointed to the University of Toronto's Department of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation (HPME), in the Faculty of Medicine. It will interface with the University of Toronto's faculties of Nursing, Pharmacy, and Law; the Rotman School of Business; and with the Faculty of Arts and Science through individual faculty members presently involved in health policy research. The Chair will also have linkages with:

- ❑ The Collaborative Program in Health Services and Policy Research—A consortium of six Ontario universities involving the University of Toronto (HPME, Nursing, and Pharmacy), Lakehead University, Laurentian University, McMaster University, University of Ottawa and York University.
- ❑ The Training Program in Health Law and Policy—A co-operative venture involving the faculties of Law at the U of T, Dalhousie University and the University of Alberta.

Within the first five years, accomplishments of the Chair are expected to include:

- ❑ The development of an innovative research focus on health policy and system design, involving policy- and decision-makers.
- ❑ Consolidation of multi-disciplinary and multi-university linkages with ready access to the indicator data of performance costs and methods of service delivery.
- ❑ A 20% increase in the number of the international students at the University of Toronto pursuing studies in health policy and system design.
- ❑ Publication of papers that examine the relationships between financial levers and the effectiveness of particular service configurations within Ontario, Canada and OECD countries and their potential applications for health policy development.
- ❑ A relationship with the media and public education, which contributes to policy development, policy networks and public discourse on related policy topics.

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
*Ontario Research Chair in
Postsecondary Education Policy and Measurement*

In his recent review of postsecondary education in Ontario, the Honourable Bob Rae noted that research on the postsecondary sector is inadequate and poorly publicized. The Chair in Postsecondary Education Policy and Measurement at the University of Toronto will play a leadership role in creating programs of research that will focus scholarship and policy discussions about the quality, efficiency and accessibility of postsecondary education in Ontario and evaluate the degree to which individual institutions, programs and the system as a whole are meeting the needs of the province.

The Chair will be appointed to the Higher Education Program in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). This program at OISE/UT is the only higher education program approved by the Ontario Council of Graduate Studies in Ontario and the only such program of significant size in Canada.

The Higher Education Program seeks to develop a virtual research network in Ontario that will link higher education researchers and encourage the emergence of synergistic clusters of scholars working on common research themes. In 2004-2005, almost 150 students at OISE/UT were enrolled in one of four higher education graduate degree streams, over half in doctoral work. Eight dedicated faculty and over two dozen others with partial appointments support studies of community college, university and other tertiary educational settings, with interests ranging from comparative higher education, higher education and the professions, to accountability or social diversity in higher education.

The goal of the Chair is to enhance the performance of the province's colleges and universities, and contribute to the work of the emergent Higher Education Quality Council. He or she will be expected to:

- Disseminate findings through national and international scholarly journals;
- Contribute to provincial policy discussions and the broader public debate;
- Develop and teach specialized graduate courses;
- Attract and supervise two new doctoral students each year, with an anticipated supervision load of between 8-10 doctoral students at any one time;
- Increase collaborative research opportunities for colleges and universities; and
- Facilitate the creation of productive linkages among scholars, students, institutional leaders, provincial associations, and the provincial policy community.

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
*Ontario Research Chair in
Biomarkers in Disease Management*

Through the Ontario Research Chair in Biomarkers of Disease the University of Toronto aims to recruit an innovative scientist who will lead an interdisciplinary research program in protein biomarkers that features cutting-edge basic research linked to clinical application, public education and policy. The burgeoning field of proteomics is poised to deliver on the promise of the human genome project—still largely unrealized—to revolutionize the prevention and treatment of disease through the discovery and validation of protein biomarkers for clinical and research applications. Biomarkers provide actionable information about a test subject regarding disease progression, pharmacology or safety and that can be used as a basis for decision-making in treatment and drug development.

Given its considerable investment and expertise in proteomics, functional genomics, computational biology and molecular medicine, the University of Toronto is uniquely positioned to attract an outstanding researcher in the biomarker field to an Ontario Research Chair. The Chair will be located in the Terrence Donnelly Centre for Cellular & Biomolecular Research (CCBR), a new research institute adjacent to the medical school and the hospital-based research enterprise. The Centre brings together investigators from the Faculty of Medicine, the Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy, the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering and the Faculty of Arts & Science in an open-concept, laboratory environment. The research environment encourages the integration of biology, computer science, mathematics, engineering and chemistry and spans leading areas of biomedical research.

The Chair's research mandate is to detect, monitor and characterize at the molecular, or even atomic level, those features of proteins and small molecules—prospective biomarkers—present in minute quantities in human clinical samples. Biomarkers are a pivotal issue for the slow introduction of new innovative medicines, their ever-increasing costs, and our desire to realize true, patient-tailored, medical treatments. This interdisciplinary research program in protein biomarkers features cutting-edge basic research linked to clinical application, public education and health policy.

Building on the Chair's linkages to the graduate programs in Molecular & Medical Genetics, Faculty of Medicine; Chemistry, Faculty of Arts & Science; Cell and Systems Biology, Faculty of Arts & Science; Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy; and the Collaborative Graduate Program in Proteomics & Bioinformatics, he or she is expected to make contributions to public policy through:

- ❑ Policy development in biomarker test approval and marketing; and
- ❑ Development of standards for biomarker use in patient treatment and diagnosis.

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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

Ontario Research Chair in Environmental Policy and Renewable Energy

Like many jurisdictions, Ontario is at an energy-emergency crossroads. The solution lies in an integrated energy plan that provides a secure, reliable and high quality supply of energy in a manner that promotes economic growth, competitiveness and environmental performance. The Ontario Energy Conservation and Supply Task Force favored “*a diverse supply mix, and a balanced approach to filling the (demand-supply) gap.*” Renewable energy is a vital part of the future supply mix. The success of sustainable energy policy will require superior renewable energy technology and a sound strategy for integration in the energy supply system. Given the wide demand-supply gap, technologies and management strategies to improve the environmental performance of conventional energy sources are also vital. Electricity transformation will require a fundamental shift in the way in which the power industry is physically laid out and socially structured. The development of sustainable energy systems in Ontario will require an integrated understanding of energy technologies, policy options, risk and reliability, consumer and business interests, and environmental studies.

CHAIR OBJECTIVES

- ❑ Integrate and strengthen interdisciplinary research on the development of renewable energy technology and sustainable energy management strategies (policies)
- ❑ Train a new generation of professionals to facilitate the rapid integration of renewable energy technology within a diverse mix of energy options
- ❑ Engage in partnerships with communities and the private sector to facilitate knowledge transfer and integrated energy solutions

UW STRENGTHS

The University of Waterloo is in a unique position to establish an Ontario Research Chair for several reasons:

- ❑ UW is a North American leader in the development of solar (photovoltaics) and wind energy technology with extensive laboratory facilities and one of North America's largest power systems research groups;
- ❑ The Green Energy Research Institute (GERI) (<http://geri.uwaterloo.ca/>) is being established at UW as a focal point for interdisciplinary renewable and clean energy research activities of more than 25 researchers and four research groups;
- ❑ Waterloo has a well-established foundation of graduate programs in eight academic units across three faculties—Engineering, Environmental Studies and Science and more than 19 graduate courses on planning aspects of energy systems;
- ❑ State-of-the-art research initiatives in power quality & distributions systems, risk and reliability of energy infrastructure, energy economics and policies, energy markets, CO₂ capture and sequestration, and power management planning and policy;
- ❑ New research partnerships with the Municipality of Kincardine and various energy sectors in Kincardine provides opportunities for graduate student training, data sharing, knowledge transfer, establishment of “store front” green energy learning centre; and
- ❑ Innovative community-based outreach (Residential Energy Efficiency Project) and demonstration projects (Solar Technology Education Project) promote awareness of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

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UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
*Ontario Research Chair in
Cross-Border Transportation Policy*



The Chair will be the centrepiece of a new Cross-Border Transportation Studies Institute (CBTSI). Addressing critical cross-border transportation issues is a key Ontario public policy challenge and yet there has been very little systematic policy-relevant research into the unique and multi-faceted challenges of cross-border transportation and trade.

The Chair will focus on integrating and building upon the University of Windsor's interdisciplinary research capacity to lead innovative policy-relevant inquiry into cross-border transportation issues of vital policy importance to Ontario, Canada and the world.

The relevant research strengths of the University of Windsor—in logistics, operations research, geographic information systems, automotive and truck engineering, civil and environmental engineering, international law, globalization and social justice—and its extensive public and private sector partnerships constitute a unique base of expertise in cross-border transportation research.

The research program will consist of series of interdisciplinary projects on topics of relevance to cross-border transportation, trade and socio-economic and environmental wellbeing, including:

- ❑ The development of more focused and targeted interdisciplinary research.
- ❑ Interdisciplinary studies to develop dynamic models, including simulations, for various types of cross-border transportation, trade, socio-economic and environmental flows, e.g. cross-border air pollution, “just-in-time” delivery of motor vehicle parts, border point security processes.
- ❑ Research into specific enabling technologies to support the research models.
- ❑ Continuing collaborative research in Geographic Information Systems with the City of Windsor traffic engineering department.
- ❑ Short haul lake shipping as a just-in-time alternative to truck transport for certain raw materials and components in the manufacturing sector—a feasibility study requested by The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation & the Windsor Port Authority.

The Chair will be the catalyst to mobilize the research capacities of the university to take advantage of the university's unique location to work closely with an extensive array of community and academic partners to address policy issues of critical importance to Ontario.

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YORK UNIVERSITY

Ontario Research Chair in Economics and Cross Cultural Studies

The Chair, located within York University's Schulich School of Business, will lead an interdisciplinary research program focused on delivering cutting-edge strategies to increase the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ontario.

Evidence suggests that Ontario is not developing enough multinational, internationally competitive firms, particularly ones with strong research and development (R&D) investments. This situation signals both a worrying underperformance in global terms, as well as possible limitations in innovation and productivity. It is critical that mechanisms be put into place that will allow Ontario's large number of SMEs to develop into internationally competitive companies within an increasingly globalized economy.

To address these challenges, the Chair will collaborate with policy makers, business leaders and academics to identify exemplary policies and practices from other jurisdictions that have been successful in growing their SMEs. This cross cultural research will focus on finding policies that can be adapted to make Ontario SMEs more innovative, productive and competitive in international markets.

The economic and cross cultural nature of the Chair reflects York's renowned interdisciplinary research focus. Its research program will benefit from Schulich's expertise in international business, its global network of partners, and its deep understanding of entrepreneurship and SMEs, as well as from York's broader research strengths in areas such as social diversity, immigration and politics.

The Chair, located at York University in the heart of the Greater Toronto Area, is ideally situated to interact with a community with an increasingly diverse population and an ever-growing number of SMEs in fields such as information technology (IT), medical devices and entertainment technologies. A segment of the Chair's research program will be focused on how to encourage skilled immigrants to contribute to the growth and internationalization of existing businesses, as well as to the creation of new, innovative enterprises. Creating effective policies and mechanisms in this area will allow Canada to maximize the benefits from the multinational cultural, social and economic ties of people who migrate to Canada.

The Chair will also lead research to determine which policies best assist SMEs in strategically accessing expertise and networks within their communities. This will build on the strong research partnership already established between York University and the Town of Markham. This partnership has already led to the creation of the Innovation Synergy Centre in Markham (ISCM) which helps SMEs diagnose their barriers to growth and provides both technological and business management expertise from the local community and the University—a project that has the potential to become a provincial model in support of SME growth. Using established organizations such as the ISCM, the research program, guided by the new Chair, will collect impact measures to assess the effectiveness of actual support delivered to SMEs.

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