We’re bringing research to life

University of Manitoba recognizes U of M researchers for patenting new technology

University of Manitoba researchers aren’t just making new discoveries, they’re learning how to put those discoveries to use.

On Thursday, March 16, president Emőke Szathmáry formally recognized 27 researchers who have successfully patented new technologies.

The patents cover a wide range of applications, from potential new treatments for cancer, heart disease and diabetes, to improvements in spectrometer design, robotics and wireless communications.

“We are very proud of these outstanding researchers, not only for developing new technologies and techniques, but for successfully patenting them,” Szathmáry said.

“These are all important innovations that have the potential to advance our technological capabilities and improve the lives of people in Manitoba, Canada and around the world.”

The event was hosted at the Bannatyne campus by the university’s Technology Transfer Office, one of the most successful university technology transfer programs in Canada. It provides a wide range of intellectual property services to the university community, including: Canadian and international patent prosecution, copyright registration, technology commercialization and start-up launches.

“This event showcases the high level of innovation at the University of Manitoba,” said Technology Transfer executive director Gary Breit.

“It also highlights the importance of making such important platform technologies available to the industries that can fully develop them. In doing so, these researchers are making a vital contribution to Manitoba’s economic growth and competitiveness.”

The researchers honoured were:

MICHELLE ALFA
medical microbiology
For inventing an artificial fluid for testing and cleaning studies of medical devices, including endoscopes and other difficult-to-clean apparatuses.

JUDY ANDERSON
human anatomy and cell science
For discovering a basis for muscle regeneration that has potential applications in treating muscular dystrophy and muscle atrophy.

GILBERT ARTHUR
biochemistry and medical genetics
For developing a number of new anti-cancer compounds that can discriminate between cancer cells and normal cells.

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U of M works on 2006/07 budget

The March 6 provincial budget offered good news for the University of Manitoba, but not a complete solution for the funding challenges facing the university.

The good news was that the budget offered a 5.8 per cent funding increase in the university’s operating grant for 2006/07, with minimum increases of 5 per cent promised in each of the following two years. Knowing what it will receive over the next two years allows the university to do more long term planning than the traditional system of announcing funding on a year by year basis ever could.

However, the problem is that the university had asked for an 8.9 per cent funding increase this year just to maintain the status quo.

Vice-president (administration) Debbie McCallum said the 8.9 per cent request includes $6.9 million – about 3.4 per cent – that the university had built into its budget last year through three ancillary fees approved by the Board of Governors in May, 2005. The fees were not implemented when the province stepped in with a special one-time $6.9 million funding grant.

However, while the funding might have been a one-time measure to the province, it was filling an ongoing shortfall for the university. Instead of dealing with the shortfall, the one time grant merely moved the shortfall forward a year.

“At a result, significant financial challenges remain and work continues on developing possible solutions to fill the gap,” McCallum said. She added, “We’re pleased with the three year funding announcement because it does enable us to plan. If we can figure a way out of our problem this year, it will help us to know the level of funding we’ll receive in 2007/08 and 2008/09.

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Smartpark welcomes “Power 30” member Sam Katz

Winnipeg mayor Sam Katz with University of Manitoba vice-president (research) Joanne Keselman following Katz’s interview at Smartpark as one of the “Power 30” of Winnipeg.

Researchers develop patents for research innovations

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CHARLES BERNSTEIN internal medicine
For developing a non-invasive method for detecting the presence of colorectal cancer and colon polyps.

LOHNE BRANDES internal medicine/Manitoba Institute of Cell Biology
For inventing a new drug, now in a final phase III trial in metastatic and recurrent breast cancer, which could potentially be used to treat a wide range of aggressive cancers.

AIVARO BRAS Pharmacy DANIEL SITAR pharmacology & therapeutics
For developing a diagnostic test that could be used to detect the presence of cancer in general, and potentially to detect specific types of cancer.

KRISHNAMURTI DAKSHINAMURTI biochemistry and medical genetics NARANJAN DHALLA physiology/institute of cardiovascular sciences RAJAT SETHI physiology/institute of cardiovascular sciences
For developing a treatment for hypertension, as well as new compositions and methods for treatment and prevention of hypertrophy, hypertension, congestive heart failure and ischemic heart disease.

KENNETH DOYINCHUK surgery
For inventing a therapeutic treatment for scar tissue.

WERNER ENS physics and astronomy VICTOR SPICER physics and astronomy KENNETH STANDING physics and astronomy
For a number of patents for improved spectrometer design, which are key components of spectrometers produced by MDS Sciex and used by proteomics researchers worldwide.

ROBERT HILL plant science
For discovering a method for detecting specific types of cancer.

LUIS OPPENHEIMER surgery
For developing a method for detecting pulmonary edema.

ALEC SEHON immunology GLENN LANG pediatrics and child health
For developing a method for specifically suppressing the immune response in a mammal receiving gene therapy.

NARIMAN SEPHERI mechanical and manufacturing engineering
For inventing a method and apparatus for accurate position control of hydraulic robots, and a controller that compensates for flow deadbands in hydraulic valves.

LOTFOLLAH SHAFAI electrical and computer engineering
For developing mathematical models for electromagnetic phenomena to design and improve the performance of antennas and the software that controls them.

MARIA VRONTAKIS human anatomy and cell science
For developing a new transgenic mouse model for the study of neurological disorders.

MAGDY YOUNES internal medicine
For developing the proportional assist ventilator (PAV), a critical care device that responds to the breathing needs of the patient.

Budget will go before the Board of Governors in May

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McCallum said the university will be working on its budget over the next two months and will make its budget presentation to the Board of Governors on May 25. The university’s overall operating budget works out to about $850 million with about $220 million coming directly from the provincial operating grant and the remaining amount through tuition fees and other sources of income.