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New Canada Research Chairs Announced

Four researchers from The University of Western Ontario are being honoured today as the Government of Canada announced its newest Canada Research Chairs. The funding value of the four Chairs announced for Western totals \$3.8 million.

The four Western researchers are:

Norman Huner, Biology - Canada Research Chair in Environmental Stress - Tier 1 - Renewal - \$1,400,000

Lars Konermann, Chemistry, Biochemistry - Canada Research Chair in Protein Folding and Biological Mass Spectrometry Renewal - Tier 2 - Renewal - \$500,000

Amanda Moehring, Biology - Canada Research Chair in Functional Genomics - Natural Sciences and Engineering - Tier 2 - New - \$500,000

Peter Rogan, Biochemistry, Computer Science - Canada Research Chair in Genome Bioinformatics - Tier 1 - New - \$1,400,000

"This is vital funding for Western scientists and it recognizes the excellent work under way by four exceptional researchers and their teams," said Ted Hewitt, Vice-President, Research & International Relations. "Innovative research requires a strong funding commitment and the Canada Research Chair program provides that essential investment."

The University of Western Ontario is now home to 67 Canada Research Chairs.

Infrastructure funding from the **Canada Foundation for Innovation** was also announced. This funding is matched by the Province of Ontario and commercial vendors:

Peter Rogan - Chromosomal and Point Mutation Discovery and Interpretation in the Post-Genome Sequencing Era: Tools for Bioinformatic and Genomic Analysis - \$374,063

Description of Dr. Rogan's work:

Peter Rogan, Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Genome Bioinformatics, is developing new ways to identify and interpret genetic variations so patients can get personalized, individual molecular diagnoses, and possibly avoid or fight disease. His software will be used to evaluate the impact of millions of variants on genes, helping researchers to understand and predict their severity in common diseases. His team will test these predictions in the lab. Rogan also developed single-copy DNA probe technology, a technology used to diagnose human congenital and acquired genetic disorders such as leukemia. These probes can precisely analyze abnormalities in chromosomes. "Many patients have chromosome abnormalities that are too small for existing commercial probes to detect," Rogan says. "Our probes should allow doctors to fine tune their diagnoses. Our goal is to introduce these DNA probes into clinical laboratories to benefit patients throughout Canada and around the world."

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