

Three UNB Scientists to be in Networks

Department of Public Relations and Information

Three Scientists at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton have been selected to be in the federal government's new \$240 million Networks of Centres of Excellence.

Biologist Margarida Krause, physicist Ronald Lees and chemist Ajit Thakkar are three of the nation's top researchers in the natural and medical sciences and engineering participating in projects approved through this new approach to promote excellence in Canadian research. Their fundamental and applied enquiry over the next four years will be funded over two of 14 successful networks.

The networks are not physically located in any university or city. The program leader for the network in which Dr. Krause will conduct her research is Gerard Wyatt of Queen's University. In their \$9 million network, entitled Biotechnology for Insect Pest Management, the 18 principal participants located in 10 universities coast-to-coast, will be organized under five area leaders.

Both Dr. Lees and Dr. Thakkar will be working in chemical physics for the Centre of Excellence for Molecular and Interfacial Dynamics. In their \$18.5 million network, each of the more than 45 principal and associate researchers at 15 different universities is slated to receive \$75,000 a year for operating costs.

Each network involves anywhere from five to 20 institutions and companies. The networks represent a unique opportunity for top researchers to work together in a co-ordinated, multiyear effort, which is integrally linked to Canada's long term industrial competitiveness. The networks mark the first time the researchers will have a critical mass of funding over an extended period of time.

In addition to passing on to industry new technical knowledge and boosting Canada's performance in science and technology, the networks will develop world class engineers and scientists. Tackling together the same problem, but from different aspects and disciplines at several institutions, will also inaugurate a new era of collaboration and

networking among researchers.

The competition for the networks' funding, which is the biggest funding undertaking over in the country, was run by staff recruited mainly from the three

national granting councils: the Medical Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The Networks

of Centres of Excellence program will be administered over the life of the program by the granting councils on behalf of the federal minister of state (science and technology).



Chemist Ajit Thakkar, biologist Margarida Krause and physicist Ronald Lees

Photo by Joy Cummings-Dickinson

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