

Malaspina University-College
NEWS RELEASE

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Malaspina receives \$2.5 million for research

Malaspina University-College will receive \$2.5 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) for two exciting new research projects.

The CFI announced Monday that Malaspina will receive \$1.6 million under the Innovation Fund program for construction of the new International Centre for Sturgeon Studies on the Nanaimo campus, and \$900,000 to establish The Centre for Shellfish Research Field Site near Deep Bay on the east coast of Vancouver Island.

"This is fantastic news for Malaspina and the entire region," said Rich Johnston, president of Malaspina. "It's another example of how the CFI is supporting the rapid development of world-class research capabilities at Malaspina."

Malaspina faculty member Dr. John Morgan is leading the sturgeon project while Dr. Bill Pennell is heading the shellfish research field site project.

Dr. David Thomas, vice-president of instruction and research at Malaspina, said "B.C. Universities received CFI funding for a total of 14 projects, so Malaspina did extremely well to receive two awards. Across Canada, 57 institutions received 126 awards.

"This was a very competitive round of applications and Malaspina owes a debt of gratitude to Dr. Morgan and Liz Hammond-Kaarremaa, director of Malaspina's research & scholarly activities office. Their work has been outstanding. We are now eligible to apply for matching monies from the Province's British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund which will mean a total of \$5 million for applied research."

Malaspina University-College has been a leader and innovator in sturgeon research in B.C., and is the only academic institution in western Canada to have captive white sturgeon broodstock.

Due to Malaspina's efforts in the 1990s, a commercial white sturgeon culture industry has begun in B.C. "Much research is required, however, so that the industry can continue to develop in an environmentally responsible manner," said Dr. Morgan.

The \$1.6 million CFI investment for the International Centre for Sturgeon Studies will be used to provide laboratory space to support ecological studies on wild sturgeon and recovery initiatives involving conservation hatcheries.

"White sturgeon have recently been classified as an endangered species in Canada and this centre will work to ensure the conservation and protection of this and other endangered sturgeon species worldwide," added Dr. Morgan.

"The CFI investment will greatly increase Malaspina's ability to develop its excellent potential for sturgeon research at provincial, national and international levels," he said.

Dr. Bill Pennell and his colleagues are equally elated that CFI approved their proposal for The Centre for Shellfish Research Field Site.

The \$900,000 CFI investment "will help us complete the infrastructure required to grow the shellfish industry in a sustainable manner," said Don Tillapaugh, director of the Centre for Shellfish Research at Malaspina.

The Centre for Shellfish Research is currently under construction on the Nanaimo campus, and due to be completed in July. "The field site will be an important extension of the on-campus centre," said Tillapaugh.

"The CFI funds will be used to develop a field site that will serve as a platform for research and development, training and technology transfer and public education," he added.

Dr. Pennell said the field site will allow Malaspina researchers and students to conduct highly controlled research in both a field lab and research farm in the ocean. The new infrastructure "opens a whole new plateau for Malaspina," he added. "We're quite well known for our Fisheries and Aquaculture research and programs, but thanks to this significant CFI investment, we will certainly enjoy a lot more international exposure."

Dr. David Strangway, president and CEO of the CFI, said Canada is fast becoming a place "where world-class researchers want to be."

"The CFI investments will further development Canada's global reputation as a place where outstanding research and training is being conducted."

The investments in Malaspina research projects were approved by the CFI Board of Directors and awarded through the Innovation Fund enabling institutions to strengthen their research infrastructure in all areas of research, including the social sciences and humanities.

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is an independent corporation created in 1997 by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure. The CFI's mandate is to strengthen the ability of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and other non-profit institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development that will benefit Canadians.

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