News

- **The Michael Smith Laboratories welcomes a new Director**
  July 4, 2017

  The Michael Smith Laboratories is delighted to announce the newly appointed Professor Peter Zandstra as its Director. Zandstra is a pioneer in the field of stem cell bioengineering, applying engineering principles to stem cell biology. His research group aims to understand the complex communication networks between stem cells and their progeny and how they affect self-renewal and differentiation. Zandstra's research has led to the design of novel technologies capable of controlling cell fate and improving growth and differentiation of stem cells. This work has direct application to the fields...
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- **MSL celebrates faculty promotions for Drs. Joanne Fox, Christian Kastrup and Nobuhiko Tokuriki**
  June 29, 2017

  The Michael Smith Laboratories celebrates the successful promotions of three MSL Faculty members: Drs. Joanne Fox, Christian Kastrup, and Nobuhiko Tokuriki. These promotions are the result of rigorous reviews both internal and external to UBC, and are bestowed in recognition of the outstanding academic contributions and achievements of these faculty members. Dr. Joanne Fox Professor of Teaching – Michael Smith Laboratories and Microbiology & Immunology. Dr. Fox completed her PhD in Genetics from UBC, and was then appointed Head of support and training at the UBC Bioinformatics Centre. She...
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- **Celebrating Prof. Jim Kronstad's tenure as the MSL Director (2008-2017)**
  June 2, 2017

  Prof. Jim Kronstad was honoured on Thursday May 4th in a celebration commemorating his 9 years as the MSL Director. In the words of his predecessor, Prof. Phil Hieter, the event was for a man "with a lot of honour and integrity". These heartfelt sentiments resonated throughout the afternoon as Prof. Kronstad received praise for his creativity, wisdom, strength, hard-working nature and leadership as Director of the MSL. Each of these were reflected in the presentation of a traditional First Nation talking stick, carved by artist Jim Yelton of the Coastal Salish Nation. The talking stick bared...
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- **Use of a microfluidic chip for whole genome library preparations of single-cell DNA without preamplification**
  June 1, 2017

  Hans Zahn, a PhD student in the research lab of Dr. Carl Hansen, and Adi Steif, a PhD student in the BC Cancer Agency, are the joint first authors on a recent publication in Nature Methods: “Scalable whole-genome single-cell library preparation without preamplification”. The protocol describes a direct library preparation (DLP) method for downstream sequencing that is robust, scalable and reliable. The described method uses nanoliter-volume transposition reactions for single-cell whole genome library preparation without preamplification. Tumors consist of heterogeneous cell populations....
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- **Innovative researcher honoured as Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors**
  May 2, 2017

  Dr. Terrance (Terry) Snutch was recently inducted as a Fellow in the National Academy of Inventors, receiving the highest professional distinction accorded to academic inventors in recognition of his work as a “luminary of innovation and invention.” Dr. Snutch, Director of Translational Neuroscience at the Djavad Mowafaghian Centre for Brain Health and Canada Research Chair in Biotechnology and Genomics – Neurobiology, holds 28 US patents and 87 foreign patents licensed to biotech and pharma companies and has made pioneering contributions to molecular neurobiology. “In addition to Dr. Snutch's...
Dr. Harry Brumer receives prestigious UBC Killam Research Prize
April 17, 2017
Prof Harry Brumer, Department of Chemistry and Michael Smith Laboratories, was recently awarded a prestigious UBC Killam Research Prize for his outstanding work on carbohydrate enzymology. Prof. Brumer was recruited to UBC in 2011 from the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden. Since then his lab has grown to a team of 20, with significant funding support from CIHR, NSERC, Engage/Engage Plus, Strategic Network, NCE and Genome Canada. Throughout his career, Prof. Brumer has maintained an interest in the intersection of synthetic chemistry and biological problems. Currently, the... Read More

Leonard Foster awarded the 2017 Genome BC Award for Scientific Excellence
April 28, 2017
Dr. Leonard Foster, Professor in the Michael Smith Laboratories and Interim Head of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, has been named the recipient of the 2017 Genome BC Award for Scientific Excellence. The formal presentation of this award took place during the Annual LifeSciences BC Awards ceremony. This award honours an individual, group or company in B.C. whose work has had a significant impact on advancing the fields of genomics, proteomics, bioinformatics or systems biology. Dr. Foster’s research is focused on quantitative proteomics using LC-ESI-MS to study... Read More

Screening of the Pathogen Box reveals promising antifungal compound against Cryptococcus and Candida species
April 24, 2017
Dr. Francois Mayer, a Postdoctoral Fellow in Dr. Jim Kronstad's research lab, is the lead author on a recent publication in mSphere: “Discovery of a Novel Antifungal Agent in the Pathogen Box”. The study identifies a promising compound from a chemical library with strong antifungal activity against Cryptococcus neoformans and Candida albicans under nutrient-limited conditions. Read the full article here. Human fungal pathogens cause over 2 million infections per year and are major drivers of morbidity and mortality, especially in immuno-compromised patients. Currently only a limited number of... Read More

Dr. Leonard Foster receives the 2017 Ken Standing Award
April 4, 2017
Congratulations to Dr. Leonard Foster on receiving the 2017 Ken Standing Award presented at the Enabling Technologies (ETP) Symposium in Ottawa. The award honors the career of Ken Standing who was a major figure in the development of time-of-flight mass spectrometry for bioanalytical applications. The award is presented biennially to honour a young scientist who has made a significant contribution to technology development in support of research in the life sciences. Dr. Foster's is being recognized for his work on the development and application of protein correlation profiling... Read More

Researchers identify genes that give cannabis its flavour
March 29, 2017
UBC scientists have scanned the genome of cannabis plants to find the genes responsible for giving various strains their lemony, skunky or earthy flavours, an important step for the budding legal cannabis industry. “The goal is to develop well-defined and highly-reproducible cannabis varieties. This is similar to the wine industry, which depends on defined varieties such as chardonnay or merlot for high value products,” said Jörg Bohlmann, a professor in the Michael Smith Laboratories and faculty of forestry at UBC. “Our genomics work can inform breeders of commercial varieties which genes to... Read More

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