

# THE GATEWAY

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KRYSTINA SULATYCKI

**THE ELECTIONS ARE HEATING UP** And nothing is hotter than Poster Slam, the *Gateway's* annual look at how the SU executive candidates don't know how to use Powerpoint. Check it out on page 16.

## Alberta using its wealth to lure medical researchers

Recruitment plan organizers say long-term benefits will be felt across Canada

OLESIA PLOKHII  
News Staff

In an effort to recruit the highest calibre of health scientists to the province, the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (AHFMR) has unveiled a million dollar plan to draw in top talent from around the world to an Alberta university.

The \$10 million accord, called the Polaris Award, will be given over a ten-year period to the most deserving contender. University of Alberta President, Indira Samarasekera, hopes that it will lure a scientist who will provide exemplary research techniques and help motivate interest in health study in future generations.

"[This award] allows us to recruit someone who is truly a top-flight researcher from outside Canada, and I think this would signal to Canadians and the international community that Alberta is serious about the quality of its research," Samarasekera said.

The Polaris Award allows the three main postsecondary institutions in the province—the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary and the University of Lethbridge—to compete against one another to woo international superstars that lead the scientific

research world in innovation.

According to AHFMR President Kevin Keough, the university who attracts the top researcher will then have to match the organization's bid of \$10 million, meaning a total of a \$20 million for a decade's worth of research at the victorious university.

**"We're talking about people who might already be nominated for the Nobel Prize."**

**INDIRA SAMARASEKERA,  
U OF A PRESIDENT**

Keough said that the AHFMR will be involved in deciding who the universities approach.

"We want to make sure that the individual has the ability to build and attract people to the area of work," he said.

Right now, Samarasekera explained, the U of A is in the preliminary stages of the recruitment process, which includes sorting through names of possible Polaris candidates.

"We have good contacts around the world, so were calling out to some of

our alumni who are in very prominent positions. We are getting their advice, getting advice from our faculties, deans, department chairs and researchers," she said.

Samarasekera said that the U of A will be recruiting someone who has already made a name for themselves with "cutting edge" research work.

"We're talking about people who might already be nominated for the Nobel Prize," she said.

"We want to recruit in areas that we are already on the world-class stage for to build on strength," she added, giving the example of neuroscience as being the next frontier in health.

Since brain research is a big focal point of research recently, Samarasekera thinks that progress focuses on the field could be strategically important for the U of A.

Both Keough and Samarasekera agreed that the Polaris Award is important for not only Alberta, but for Canada as a whole.

"There's no doubt this benefits Alberta, but also, when you find a new clinical process, or a new drug, or even if you solve the next step of the puzzle, that information immediately extends outwards," Keough said.

## Cheating statistics can be misleading : Eerkes

NATALIE CLIMENHAGA  
Senior News Editor

In the 12 February issue of *Maclean's* magazine, the feature article drew readers in with a cover-page headline stating that widespread cheating at Canadian universities was tainting "all degrees."

"A recent University of Guelph study has discovered that more than half the student body in Canada is cheating its way through school. And there is no recall," the *Maclean's* article stated.

**"All they say is 50 per cent of students cheat [and that] we're all going to hell in a hand basket—what they don't say is the way the survey is structured."**

**DEBORAH EERKES, OFFICE OF  
STUDENT JUDICIAL AFFAIRS**

However, according to individuals dealing with academic integrity issues here at the University of Alberta, despite the magazine's alarming assertions, it's unfounded to claim that half of the student body is untrustworthy.

Deborah Eerkes, acting director in

the office of student judicial affairs, explained the U of A, along with nine other Canadian universities, had taken part in the Guelph study, but stressed that its results can be misleading.

"All they say is 50 per cent of students cheat [and that] we're all going to hell in a hand basket—what they don't say is the way the survey is structured," she said.

The Guelph study asked students whether or not they had engaged in any of 25 behaviors the authors of the study defined as cheating. However, while serious offences such as buying papers off the Internet and using cheat sheets were listed, other more vaguely defined cheating activities such as collaborating on assignments were also counted.

"These are behaviors that students don't necessarily consider to be cheating behaviors, but they're being counted when the statistics are reported," Eerkes said, noting that one of the significant results of the study actually showed that students are less likely to engage in certain activities if they think they could land them violations of academic integrity.

However, Cathy Gulli, one of the writers of the *Maclean's* article, maintained that the 25 different activities that qualified as cheating in the Guelph study are well outlined.

PLEASE SEE **CHEATING** ♦ PAGE 2

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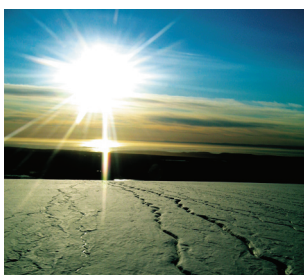
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### Mythbusters!

If you're looking for the low-down on the Coke question, then look no further. Well, you'll have to turn a few pages ...

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### Slippery slope

International Polar Year starts today, as researchers look at the social and environmental issues facing the poles.

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