

## U of S Awarded \$30-M Canada Excellence Research Chair to Create Global Water Security Institute

May 17, 2010

Today the University of Saskatchewan was awarded \$10 million over seven years from the federal government and a matching \$10 million from the Saskatchewan government to establish a prestigious Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Water Security and a world-leading research and training institute focused on solving critical challenges for domestic and global water security.

The partnership investment also includes a \$10-million commitment from the U of S to be met with the help of its friends and supporters, as well as in-kind contributions from both Environment Canada and the Saskatchewan Research Council. The U of S is one of only 13 universities in the country to be awarded a CERC through a highly competitive selection process that aims to attract world experts to Canada.

The U of S CERC recruit is British scientist Howard Wheeler, one of the world's foremost experts in hydrology and sustainable freshwater resource management, who will lead the new water security institute. A total of 85 new positions will be created at the institute including six faculty, 20 post-doctoral fellows, 24 PhDs, 24 master's students, and 10 support staff.

"Thanks to this unique partnership investment, Prof. Wheeler's stellar international reputation, and our unparalleled combination of water-related expertise and facilities, we will establish a pre-eminent institute for water security research—addressing both water quality and quantity issues—with potential to transform how the world uses and manages water," said U of S President Peter MacKinnon.

"The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of supporting world-class research," said Saskatoon-Humboldt MP Brad Trost. "The CERC program helps to position Canada as a global centre of excellence in research and higher learning. The cutting-edge research conducted by these global leaders will spur innovation in Saskatchewan and contribute positively to Canada's competitiveness and future prosperity."

"This is an unparalleled opportunity for Saskatchewan and Canada to make a leading contribution to the science of water security, thereby helping local, national and global communities," said Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour Minister Rob Norris. "It also directly contributes to our government's vision of a more diversified, knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy."

The new water security institute will be co-located with Environment Canada's National Water Research Centre at Innovation Place, providing opportunities for collaborative research and training.

Wheeler, who will assume the CERC position in October, has extensive international experience in advising on water management issues, is vice-chair of the World Climate Research Programme's GEWEX initiative, and leads UNESCO's arid zone water resources program. He will assume a full-time position in the new U of S School of Environment and Sustainability.

He will lead development of a new science—ecotoxicohydrology—that will improve water use and management, advance water policy, and provide new tools for environmental risk assessment and remediation applicable to all types of natural resource development.

"By bringing together ecology, toxicology and hydrology, we will develop a new science and the risk assessment tools needed to understand and manage the complex interactions between water, land use and climate change," said Wheeler. "Through our new global water institute, we will train the next generation of water scientists to better ensure a secure future for the world's water supplies."

U of S Vice-President Research Karen Chad noted the CERC will build upon a unique breadth of existing water-related expertise among more than 65 faculty researchers across campus, including five Canada Research Chairs, and will create unprecedented learning and training opportunities for U of S students and researchers.



Dr. Howard Wheeler

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"This prestigious new chair will advance one of our leading areas of research and help place the U of S among the most distinguished universities in Canada and among the very best in the world," she said.

The federal CERC program was created to strengthen Canada's ability to be at the leading edge of breakthroughs in priority research areas expected to generate social and economic benefits for Canadians.

For more information about the U of S water research group, visit: [www.usask.ca/water](http://www.usask.ca/water)

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For more information, contact:

Kathryn Warden  
Director, Research Communications  
University of Saskatchewan  
(306) 966-2506  
[kathryn.warden@usask.ca](mailto:kathryn.warden@usask.ca)

Herman Hulshof  
Director, Marketing and Communications  
Advanced Education, Employment and Labour  
(306) 787-9715  
[herman.hulshof@gov.sk.ca](mailto:herman.hulshof@gov.sk.ca)

Taylor Paxton  
Media Relations  
Canada Excellence Research Chairs  
[taylor.paxton@chairs-chaire.gc.ca](mailto:taylor.paxton@chairs-chaire.gc.ca)  
(613) 944-1758  
Cell: (613)-286-0012

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