

U of C shortlisted for new national research chair

The University of Calgary has made a shortlist to compete for a prestigious national research chair, under the new federal Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) program.

Hon. Tony Clement, minister of industry, made the announcement April 23, 2009, in Ottawa.

U of C made the grade with a proposal for a CERC Chair in Carbon Capture and Storage. The new chair would provide international scientific leadership for a multi-disciplinary research centre focused on quickly implementing cost-effective, environmentally secure, and publicly supported Canadian carbon capture and storage projects.

U of C's proposed chair is one of 40 selected by the CERC program, from a total of 17 universities across Canada, on the basis of the highest standards of research excellence.

From the shortlist, up to 20 successful chairholders will each be granted up to \$10 million over seven years to establish ambitious research programs in Canada. CERC's goal is to support the development of innovative ideas and cutting-edge research discoveries in Canada.

"The Canada Excellence Research Chair is a prestigious new program that would further our ability to help find real solutions to the critical environmental issues facing our industries and environment. We are honoured to be invited to the final round in the application process," says Rose Goldstein, U of C's vice-president (research).

Through a new centre on carbon capture and storage (CCS), the new CERC chair at U of C would engage the university's broad expertise in CCS to make Canada the global leader in the development and application of this crucial environmental technology.

CCS—one of the few carbon-management technologies compatible with existing fossil fuel infrastructure—could dramatically cut greenhouse gas emissions within the next 10 to 20 years.

The technology involves capturing global-warming carbon dioxide emissions at coal-fired power plants and other industrial facilities and permanently storing the CO₂ underground in geological reservoirs.

"CCS represents one of the best options to meet Alberta and Canada's greenhouse gas reduction goals while also responding to the urgent need to expand the supply of secure energy," says David Layzell, executive director of the Institute for Sustainable Energy, Environment and Economy (ISEEE).

ISEEE spearheaded the CERC proposal in conjunction with U of C's Department of Geoscience and the Schulich School of Engineering.

"This new federal program is an exciting opportunity for us to go out and get the world's best researcher to complement the already significant talent and capacity we have in this area," says Layzell, who attended the announcement in Ottawa.