



# Research Awards Initiative Report

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Impact Report



The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6).

The University of Calgary is situated on land Northwest of where the Bow River meets the Elbow River, a site traditionally known as Moh'kins'tsis to the Blackfoot, Wîchîspa to the Stoney Nakoda and Guts'ists'i to the Tsuut'ina.

**On this land and in this place, we strive to learn together, walk together, and grow together “in a good way.”**

# A Message from the President

Over the past decade, UCalgary has pursued more opportunities to recognize the achievements of our astounding scholars. I feel humbled to have been a part of this initiative that began in 2015 and to have seen it evolve. Through a coordinated, university-wide effort, we're creating the conditions that support researchers in achieving recognition on the local, national and global stage.



This work aligns closely with the vision and priorities outlined in *Ahead of Tomorrow*, reflecting our shared commitment to advancing research excellence and amplifying impact. Recognizing and celebrating research excellence is part of what fuels our remarkable trajectory from a young institution to one of Canada's top research universities in under 60 years. Research awards reflect not just individual excellence, but the strength of the scholarly community that surrounds and supports it.

Since its inception, the Research Awards Initiative has grown through collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to excellence. We've seen a notable increase in nominations and awards, greater collaboration across units, and a growing culture of peer recognition. These achievements are a testament to the dedication of our scholars, staff, and leadership.

Looking ahead, we aim to build on this momentum. Through the next phase of the Research Awards Initiative, we are focused on sustaining high levels of nominations and awards while expanding support for early-career scholars and increasing our presence on the international stage. We will continue to strengthen our nomination pipeline, enhance faculty mentorship, and ensure that our processes reflect our commitments to inclusive excellence and equitable research assessment.

This report highlights the collective efforts of our academic community and the impact of our shared vision. Research awards help tell the story of our academic mavericks, including their ambition, creativity, and contributions to a better future. We're proud to share just a few of the stories that reflect the depth and diversity of excellence across our university.

I invite you to explore the progress we've made and join us in celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of our scholars.

**Ed McCauley, PhD, FRSC**

President and Vice-Chancellor  
University of Calgary



A wide-angle photograph of a modern university campus. In the foreground, a wide, light-colored paved walkway curves through a green lawn. Several young trees are planted in landscaped beds along the path. In the background, a large, multi-story glass building with a distinctive curved facade and a glass-enclosed upper section stands prominently. Other campus buildings and trees are visible in the distance under a clear blue sky.

# The Vision

Recognizing the critical role research awards play in advancing excellence, the University of Calgary has made them a key priority in our strategic plans. In 2015, the university increased our focus on research awards, which led to the formal launch of the Research Awards Initiative in 2017.

What began as a series of small steps to increase the number of nominations of UCalgary scholars has grown into a coordinated, university-wide effort. This has coalesced into a Presidential initiative that encourages scholars to actively nominate their peers for prestigious research awards, enhancing visibility of these scholars and their research and driving other meaningful outcomes, such as attracting research talent and funding.

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“The goal of the University of Calgary Research Awards Initiative is to develop a culture in which scholars actively work to nominate their peers for prestigious awards. By working closely with members of the academic community, we will establish a network committed to excellence promotion. Significant efforts will be made to ensure the international recognition of the outstanding achievements of our scholars.”

— *Research Awards Initiative, March 2017*

“Research and scholarship are so often focused on the latest problems, research trends, local and regional demands, that the times where and when awards are celebrated are also an opportunity to ‘lift up one’s eyes’ to reflect on larger movements and traditions in academia. It’s also a time to take stock: are we still going in the right direction? Do we see the many who are contributing to the state of research and education while this happens? Do we allow for reflection about the wider social and political implications of what we are doing? Science and scholarship need these moments, such as we humans need air to breathe.”

— **Dr. Frank Stahnisch**, Professor,  
Faculty of Arts and Cumming School of Medicine



The Research Awards Initiative is part of UCalgary’s ongoing effort to foster a culture of research excellence. The local, national and international recognition generated from research awards helps attract and retain top researchers, unlock greater funding and strategic partnerships, and further reinforce that culture of excellence.

A decade later, we’re proud to share the progress made. At the heart of this work is a commitment to developing a strong culture and infrastructure for recognition and celebrating and sharing the excellence of our scholars, whose achievements reflect the depth, diversity and impact of research across our institution. »





# The Starting Point

The implementation plan was led by the Vice-President (Research), with strategic oversight provided by a Steering Committee of Deans chaired by the Vice-President (Research) and vice-chaired by the Provost.

The strategy was supported by a Working Committee composed of Associate Deans Research and Faculty award leaders, and a Working Group of staff who translated strategic priorities into coordinated action, setting concrete targets for nominations, awards and prestigious recognitions.

## » Milestones



Discussions begin within the Vice-President (Research) portfolio about developing an institutional research awards and honours strategy.



2015

Initial phase of strategy development, including consultation on goals, governance, and foundational planning.



2015–2017



The Research Awards Initiative is formally approved by the Executive Leadership Team, launching a university-wide commitment to pursuing external research awards to garner further recognition for academic staff.



March 2017

A pilot equity, diversity, and inclusion plan for research and teaching awards is developed in collaboration with Teaching & Learning and the Office of the Provost to identify and address barriers and challenges within award communication, canvassing, nomination, and assessment processes.



May–July 2021

All three institutional targets — nominations, awards, and prestigious awards — are met for the first time in the same year. Due to the pandemic's disruption of research activity, the 2022 targets are extended through 2024 to sustain momentum and align with long-term goals.



2022



The pilot phase for the EDI Awards Plan concludes and is formally adopted by the EDI Awards Plan.



July 2022



Performance measures and priority areas are established by the Steering Committee, setting a strategic direction for the initiative.

A five-year implementation plan, including University-wide nomination and award targets, as well as a resourcing strategy to support sustained growth, is approved by the Steering Committee.

The central SUPPORT: Research Awards Committee is created to enhance the quality and competitiveness of prestigious award nominations through peer review.



November 2018



December 2019



May 2020

After working closely on the EDI Plan for Research and Teaching Awards and strengthening collaboration between the research and teaching and learning portfolios, the Steering Committee's role is expanded to include strategic guidance on teaching awards.



The Steering and Working Committees evaluate the impact of the first phase of the Research Awards Initiative and, recognizing its success, approve its renewal into a second phase to continue advancing research recognition at the University of Calgary.

A second five-year implementation plan is developed by the Working Committee, approved by the Steering Committee, and presented to the General Faculties Council.



January 2023



2023–2024



2024–2025

# Research Awards Targets

Benchmark data from 2016 to 2018 highlighted a gap between our potential and our performance in securing research awards.

The 2019–2024 implementation plan set ambitious targets, which were not only met but exceeded.

Every Faculty and the Vice-President (Research) invested considerable resources to increase nomination activity and strengthen the quality of UCalgary research award nominations, increasing the number of awards received. Targets were set by each Faculty and for the institution.

Targets were set by each faculty and for the institution:

- 1

to double the annual number of research award nominations by 2022 (later extended to 2024)
- 2

to increase by 50% the annual number of research awards received by 2022 (later extended to 2024)
- 3

to increase by 50% the annual number of prestigious research awards received by 2024

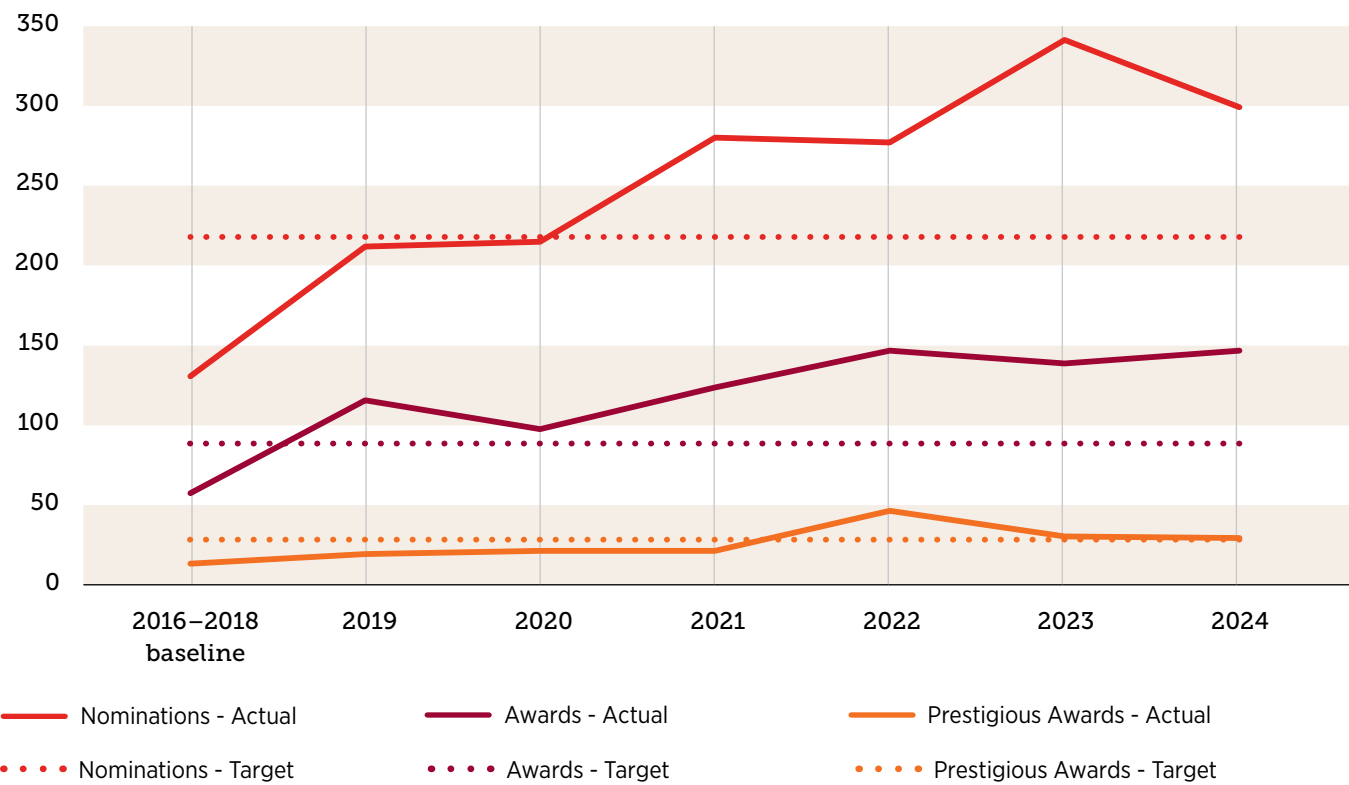
In addition to setting targets, the Working Committee recommended:

- 1

aligning efforts with the University’s commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion
- 2

investing resources, such as a budget for external professional writers to assist with nominations, and creating a SUPPORT Committee to provide expert feedback and internal review

Research Awards Progress: 2019–2024







"Awards aren't really about one person: they're about the team. Every recognition reflects the collective effort of colleagues, trainees and collaborators. Awards are a great tool to help build the spirit of the university, draw attention to meaningful work, and can even bring in resources that let us do more research, more training for students, and have more impact. Nominating your colleagues for awards is more than a nice gesture, it's a way to lift the whole community."

— **Dr. Michael Hill**, Professor,  
Cumming School of Medicine



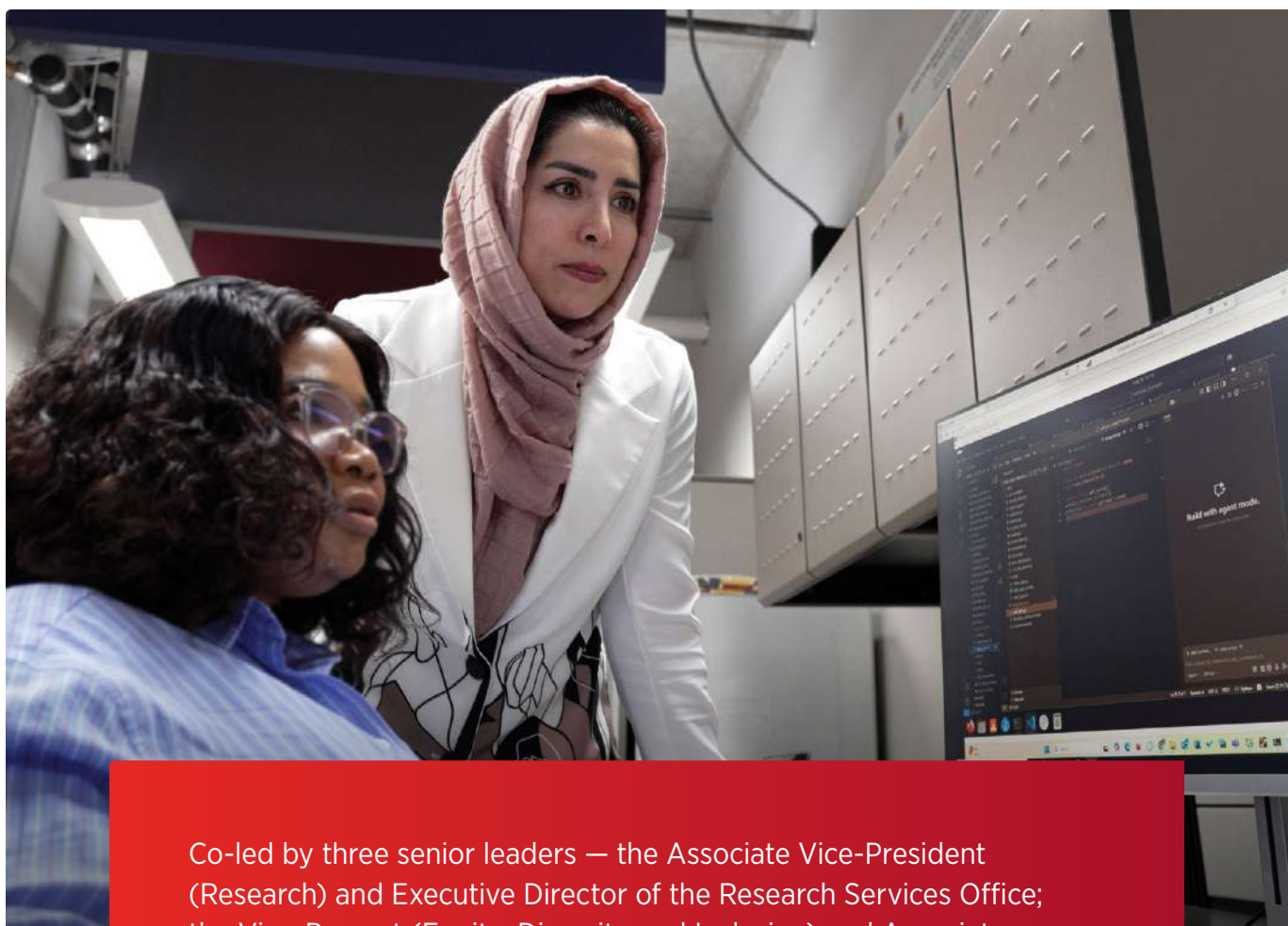
The targets were intentionally ambitious, reflecting our commitment to meaningful progress. Formally launched just a few months before a global pandemic, our first two targets — initially set for 2022 — were extended to 2024. Through collective efforts, we reached these goals ahead of schedule and sustained a high level of performance over the course of the implementation plan.

**The numerical targets were met through a variety of strategies, guided by the Steering and Working committees. Highlights include:**

- **Establishing a centralized SUPPORT:** Research Awards peer review committee to enhance the quality of research award nominations via feedback from award-winning colleagues;
- **Enhancing collaboration and knowledge sharing** between Faculties and central units;
- **Establishing a central matching fund** to hire external writers and editors to increase the quantity and quality of research awards nominations;
- Several Faculties launching **new internal award programs** and forming awards committees;
- **Developing communications strategies** to highlight the success of UCalgary awardees;
- **Improving data collection and reporting.**

During the initial Research Awards Initiative implementation period, UCalgary scholars gained significant recognition for both themselves and the university. **We observed a notable increase in collaboration across units** and made substantial progress towards fostering a culture where scholars actively nominate their peers for awards. »





Co-led by three senior leaders — the Associate Vice-President (Research) and Executive Director of the Research Services Office; the Vice-Provost (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) and Associate Vice-President (Research-EDI); and the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) — the plan was developed by a drafting committee of 20 staff members from 14 units and shaped through 22 internal consultations over two years. »

**The plan provides a UCalgary-specific framework for embedding equity, diversity, and inclusion into external award nomination processes, and is intended for Faculty awards committees, senior leaders, and staff involved in nominations and evaluations.**

Drafting committee of

**20**

staff members

across

**14**

units

through

**22**

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over

**2**

years





# Creating Pathways to Prestigious Recognition

At an individual level, “scaffolding” the candidate by establishing a consistent history of accomplishments and recognition is often key to a successful nomination and greatly enhances the chances of winning major research awards. This concept of scaffolding faculty towards increasingly prestigious awards is foundational within the Research Awards Initiative.

## Advice to potential nominees:

“Individuals who receive prestigious awards often have a long track record of previous awards.... Try and establish such a record by pursuing disciplinary awards — i.e., those offered by professional, perhaps national organizations in which you might be a member. These can be highly varied — new investigator, mentorship, outreach, etc. — but all provide evidence of excellence and recognition that enhance your academic record.”

— *Dr. Quentin Pittman, Professor Emeritus,  
Cumming School of Medicine,  
Member, SUPPORT: Research Awards Committee,  
Member, Cumming School of Medicine Awards and Recognition Committee*

# Impact of Killam Trusts

UCalgary's Killam Awards represent a distinguished suite of honours that celebrate research excellence while advancing Dorothy Killam's vision and the Killam Trusts' enduring commitment to advanced study. Within this suite, some awards serve as premier recognitions of achievement, while others provide targeted support at pivotal career stages, helping researchers build momentum and visibility when it matters most. Together, they strengthen individual trajectories, ensuring that exceptional scholars are recognized for work that shapes knowledge and drives impact globally. Offered at UCalgary and other leading Canadian institutions, these awards continue to uphold a legacy of excellence. »

The Research Awards Initiative has built institutional capacity to encourage and prepare award nominations, especially at the faculty level, which helps researchers navigate this progression. We support scholars in identifying and applying for awards that build recognition and strengthen future nominations, creating a foundation for long-term success. **Key planks in this scaffolding strategy are pursuing internal awards and awards at an early career stage,** which validate and motivate a promising researcher, develop skills in writing persuasive nominations, and build the track record that will impress future selection committees.





# Looking Ahead (of Tomorrow): Maintaining the Momentum

Building on the success of the initial implementation plan, the Steering and Working committees revised the plan for 2025–2029.

Over the next five years, UCalgary will focus on supporting and expanding nominee pools, particularly among early-career scholars. To further elevate our nationally recognized faculty, we will also look to international awards to garner recognition on a broader stage.

“To those who might apply but feel uncertain, I would suggest finding mentors who can help guide you and have experience with supporting people to be successful. We have a tremendously successful and supportive research community where people genuinely want to see others succeed, and in my experience, most people are more than happy to help you put an application together.”

— *Dr. Pamela Roach, Professor,  
Cumming School of Medicine*



Photo credit: Marnie Burkhart





**The 2025–2029 implementation plan commits to maintaining high levels of nominations and awards through defined targets,** while increasing focus on award opportunities for early career researchers and expanding engagement with international award opportunities. It also focuses on sustaining strong support for award nominations, ensuring a steady flow of quality submissions and the necessary resources and committees to support these goals. »

## Areas of Focus: 2019–2024

### Targets

- Target 1: Build on recent (2021–2023) nomination rates
- Target 2: Build on recent (2021–2023) award success rate
- Target 3: Increase nominations for early-career researchers
- Target 4: Enhance efforts for international award nominations

### EDI Data Collection and Analysis

- Further strengthen our EDI commitment through better data collection and analysis
- Develop a plan for data collection (2025)
- Collect pilot data (2025–2026)
- Analyze data and determine next steps (2026–2027)

### Equitable research assessment

- Continue advancing UCalgary's commitment to the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)
- Advance DORA in internal awards processes
- Advocate with agencies to incorporate DORA in their selection processes

### Celebrate and Recognize Awardees

- Develop an institutional awards recognition event
- Revise research awards communication strategy

### Maintain resources

- Maintain staffing and support for research awards
- Continue collaboration across campus
- Continue building disciplinary awards knowledge

# Awardee Highlights



## Dr. Suzette Mayr (Faculty of Arts)

Dr. Suzette Mayr is a decorated literary scholar and a 2024 **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada**, one of the highest honours for Canadian academics. Her groundbreaking novel *The Sleeping Car Porter* won the **W.O. Mitchell Book Prize**, the **George Bugnet Award for Best Fiction**, and the 2022 **Scotiabank Giller Prize**. Also named a 2023 **UCalgary Killam Annual Professor**, Dr. Mayr continues to shape Canadian literature while mentoring emerging writers with insight, generosity, and care.

## Dr. Frank W. Stahnisch (Faculty of Arts/ Cumming School of Medicine)

Dr. Frank W. Stahnisch is a distinguished historian of medicine whose book *A New Field in Mind* was awarded the **Royal Society of Canada's Jason A. Hannah medal** in 2021. His book offers deep insights into the interdisciplinary and transnational evolution of modern neuroscience and psychiatry. In 2024, he received an **Honorary Fellowship from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada** and in 2025 was named a **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada**. Dr. Stahnisch's work has expanded both academic and public understanding of global medical history.



## Dr. Michael Hill (Cumming School of Medicine)

Dr. Michael Hill is a leader in stroke research and care who was awarded both the **Margolese National Brain Prize** and the **Health Research Foundation's Medal of Honour** in 2024. In 2022, he was appointed an **Officer of the Order of Canada** for his groundbreaking work in the treatment of acute stroke. A **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada** (2021), Dr. Hill has also received the **American Academy of Neurology's Scientific Breakthrough Award** (2020), and the **Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal** (2022). The major national and international awards were preceded by the 2017 **UCalgary Killam Annual Professor** award. As a key member of the Calgary Stroke Program, internationally recognized for its advancements in stroke care, he continues to drive innovation and improve patient outcomes.

### Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt (Werklund School of Education)

Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt is a Métis scholar whose transformative research integrates Indigenous ways of knowing into Alberta's teacher-training programs. In 2024, she received the **Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3 Lifetime Achievement Award** and was recently awarded a Canada Council for the Arts grant on behalf of the Michif Mischief artist collective. She received the **Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Alan Blizzard Award** (2021) with Dr. Patricia Danyluk for their reconciliation-based research activities. As a **UCalgary Research Excellence Chair**, Dr. Poitras Pratt uses arts-based and experiential methods including digital storytelling, land-based practicums, and community-engaged curricula to combat anti-Indigenous racism and reshape educational frameworks.



#### PERSPECTIVE:

#### Why is early recognition of research excellence important?

We aim to inculcate a culture of recognition in the Faculty of Arts that will encourage emerging scholars from diverse backgrounds to see themselves and their accomplishments as award-worthy earlier in their career. Identifying and celebrating research excellence early can play a significant role in ensuring that later recipients of prominent national and international honours reflect the diversity of the research done in the Faculty of Arts and the richness of Canadian society.

— **Dr. Amelia Kiddle**, Professor and Associate Dean (Research and Communities), Faculty of Arts

### Dr. Pamela Roach (Cumming School of Medicine)

Dr. Pamela Roach is a Métis health services researcher whose work in dementia and Indigenous health has earned her recognition as a leader in her field. She received the inaugural 2024 **Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada Indigenous Health Advocacy Emerging Leader** and the inaugural 2021 **Glenda MacQueen Distinguished Leadership Award** in recognition of her research leadership. She is also the **Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Health Systems Safety**. Her research integrates anti-racism and decolonial frameworks to co-develop culturally safe dementia care models and community-driven strategies that enhance brain health services for Indigenous communities.







## Dr. Nicole Letourneau (Faculty of Nursing/Cumming School of Medicine)

"In preparing most award nominations, you need to carefully consider the potential and real impact of your research. Thinking about who I am trying to help and how, helped me focus my research on actually improving at-risk children's and families' lives. It's been great getting the awards, but achieving focus on making a positive health impact has been the real win."

Dr. Nicole Letourneau is known for her transformative impact on parent and child health. Her research investigates how maternal depression, family violence, and early adversity shape child development and how to mitigate negative impacts. A **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada** (2023) — one of few nurse scientists so honoured — she is also a **Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences** (2014), **Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Nursing** (2022), and **Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing** (2020). She received the **Canadian Nurses Association's Jeanne Mance Award** (2020), Canada's highest nursing honour for career contributions to public health. She has also been honoured globally with the **International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses' Research Award** (2022) and the **International Family Nursing Association Excellence Award** (2025). She is a **UCalgary Research Excellence Chair**.

### PERSPECTIVE:

#### What role does mentorship or peer support play in the awards nomination process?

There is so much groundbreaking and impactful work being done at the University of Calgary. But many colleagues are too humble to see their work as that. They need another person to see the incredible work they are doing and guide them through sharing their accomplishments in an awards nomination package. While no faculty member pursues their research and teaching goals for external recognition, the awards are a reminder to the world that there are incredible things going on at the University of Calgary!

— **Dr. Fiona Clement**, Professor and Department Head, Community Health Sciences, and Chair, Cumming School of Medicine Awards and Recognition Committee



### Dr. Christopher Clarkson (Faculty of Science)

"Receiving these awards has focused me more than ever to do what I can to make sure my team is recognized. I have seen an uptick in the number of invitations to speak externally to the university, and this helps to showcase our research. New opportunities for collaboration have certainly arisen as a result of these invitations."

Dr. Chris Clarkson is the **Tamaratt Research Professor in Transitional Energy**, and the **ARC/Ovintiv Chair in Subsurface Transitional Energy Pathways (STEPS)**, in the Department of Earth, Energy, and Environment. The Clarkson-led Tight Oil Consortium was awarded the 2024 **NSERC Synergy Award for Innovation**. Dr. Clarkson was also the recipient of the 2024 **ASTech award for Innovation in Energy** and the 2024 **Michael J. Fetkovich Technology Award** from Whitson. He has been the recipient of multiple prestigious awards from his professional society including the 2024 **SPE John Franklin Carll Award** (a major international SPE award), the 2022 **SPE Reservoir International Reservoir Description and Dynamics (RDD) Award**, the 2021 **SPE Regional Formation Evaluation Award**, and the 2016 **SPE Regional RDD Award**.



### Dr. Nigel Shrive (Schulich School of Engineering)

"Most problems in the world are multidimensional and tackling the ones I have been involved with from multiple perspectives has been very beneficial."

Dr. Nigel Shrive is a multidisciplinary scholar in both biomedical and civil engineering. His work on masonry has led to revisions to the masonry design codes in both Canada and Australia, while his discovery of the meniscus's primary load-bearing role revolutionized surgery for the knee. Early in his career, he invented an artificial knee, still implanted worldwide. His robot-based joint testing demonstrated the intricate interplay between mechanics and biology in joints and joint tissues, while studies in cardiac mechanics resolved several unexplained phenomena and revised our understanding of haemodynamics. In 2011, he was part of two teams that won the **UCalgary Killam Interdisciplinary Research Award**. He is a **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada**, and in 2023 he was appointed an **Officer of the Order of Canada** for his translational, multidisciplinary research in structural mechanics.





### Dr. Ann Gregory (Faculty of Science)

Dr. Ann Gregory was named to the 2024–2026 cohort of the prestigious **CIFAR Azrieli Global Scholars program**. This early career talent development program supports emerging research leaders through collaboration, training, mentorship, and support. She is the first UCalgary recipient of this distinction. Her research explores the human virome, the vast collection of viruses residing within and on our bodies. Using both computational and experimental approaches, she maps viral distribution across tissues and cell types, how they interact with the immune system and other microbes, and their impact on health. She is the **Canada Research Chair in Viromics and One Health**.

### Dr. Carolyn Emery (Faculty of Kinesiology)

**"Recognition for research excellence and impact has fostered significant and growing opportunities for transdisciplinary mentorship, collaboration, leadership, and consultation locally, nationally and internationally."**

Dr. Carolyn Emery is a physiotherapist and injury epidemiologist. Dr. Emery was named a **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada** in 2023. She previously received the **Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine Presidential Coin** (2022), **Canadian Physiotherapy Association Centenary Medal** (2021), **UCalgary Killam Annual Professor** (2021), and **University of Bath Global Chair** (2021). Her community-based transdisciplinary work in youth sport has established injury surveillance and prevention strategies, reducing concussion and musculoskeletal injuries and their consequences, informing best practice and policy worldwide. She is the **Canada Research Chair in Concussion**.



### Dr. Sasha Tsenkova (School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape)

Dr. Sasha Tsenkova is the first scholar from the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape elected a **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada** (2022). She is recognized for excellence in social sustainability and urban innovation. She has also been recognized as a **UCalgary Killam Annual Professor** (2024) and is a **Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Planners** (2020). She has led transformative research across 25 countries, advising the United Nations, World Bank, and national governments on inclusive housing strategies and sustainable urban development.



## Dr. Hadis Karimipour (Schulich School of Engineering)

**“Research awards amplify bold ideas, spark collaboration across disciplines, and inspire the next generation to pursue impactful, real-world research.”**

Dr. Hadis Karimipour has received multiple national recognitions, including the **Top 25 Women of Influence Award**, **Canada’s Most Powerful Women: Top 100**, and recognition in **Canadian Security Magazine’s Top 10 Under 40** list. In 2023, she was named one of **Calgary’s Top 40 Under 40** by *Avenue Magazine* and received the **ASTech Best in Sector Award**. Earlier honours include the **Early Accomplishment Award** from APEGA and the **IEEE Communication Society Early Achievement Award** (2022). Dr. Karimipour holds a **Canada Research Chair in Secure and Resilient Cyber-Physical Systems** and was named one of **Canada’s Top 20 Women in Cybersecurity** in 2021. A Senior Member of IEEE, her work focuses on applying artificial intelligence to protect critical infrastructure. As a nationally recognized thought leader in cybersecurity, she is rapidly emerging as one of the most influential voices in the field.



### PERSPECTIVE:

#### **Why is it valuable for faculty to engage in the research awards nomination process?**

It’s been a terrific experience to do what many others also do — nominate faculty members for external research awards. By participating in the nomination support process and learning about that work through reading and supporting nominations, I’ve come to deeply admire colleagues’ scholarship and its impact. Consistently, central to their work is the pursuit of transformative action in seeking to make our world a better place! I’ve further observed that the process of being nominated for a research award can be a contributing step in career progression, but also is a collective recognition of prolific scholarship. This, I believe, contributes to us all being more informed and thus able to celebrate the wide range of tremendous research being conducted here at UCalgary.

**— Dr. David Nicholas, Professor and Acting Dean, Faculty of Social Work**



### Dr. Kathleen Sitter (Faculty of Social Work)

"Research awards do more than recognize individual achievement, they create visibility for new ideas. They give a platform to push boundaries and test what's possible, and it often sparks collaborations that move entire fields forward. They remind us that innovation doesn't happen in isolation: it grows when our work is seen, supported, and shared."

Dr. Kathleen Sitter's research pioneers multisensory storytelling using methods that include tactile maps, smellwalks, and soundscapes to amplify marginalized voices and co-create sensory narratives with disability communities. She is the first UCalgary recipient of the National Killam Program **Dorothy Killam Fellowship** (2024) through the National Research Council of Canada. She is also a **UCalgary Killam Emerging Research Leader** (2023). Dr. Sitter holds the **Canada Research Chair in Multi-Sensory Storytelling in Research and Knowledge Translation**. Dr. Sitter's work reshapes knowledge translation practices by centring the lived experience of persons with disabilities.

#### PERSPECTIVE:

#### SUPPORT: Research Awards Committee

When it comes to the realm of scholarly achievement, most of us duck our heads. Many of the outstanding scholars working here exert far more impact than they believe and deserve recognition. Supporting or nominating exceptional colleagues enhances collegial generosity and amplifies the profile of the University of Calgary. The outstanding nomination package is one that does not follow a template, that avoids generic language, that compels attention through an interesting narrative, and that emphasizes the contributions of the scholar far beyond a list or a metric count.

— **Aritha Van Herk**, Professor Emerita of English, Faculty of Arts,  
Former Chair, SUPPORT: Research Awards Committee



### Dr. Alain Verbeke (Haskayne School of Business)

Dr. Alain Verbeke is a pioneering scholar in international business strategy. His research agenda focuses on the governance of new resource combinations in multinational enterprises. He specializes in headquarters–subsidiary relationships and broader governance challenges of global firms. In 2014, Dr. Verbeke won the **UCalgary Killam Research Excellence Award**. He is the only Canadian to be elected both a **Fellow of the Academy of International Business** and a **Fellow of the European International Business Academy**. In 2024, he became the first faculty member of the Haskayne School of Business to be elected a **Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada**.



### Dr. Jeffrey Biernaskie (Faculty of Veterinary Medicine)

Dr. Jeffrey Biernaskie is a regenerative medicine scientist whose work on skin wound healing earned him the 2021 **Stem Cell Network Till & McCulloch Award**, the only UCalgary researcher to receive the award. He was named a **UCalgary Killam Annual Professor** in 2024 and elected as a **Member of the Royal Society of Canada College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists** in 2019, in recognition of his seminal discoveries in somatic stem cell biology and tissue regeneration. His research program brings together biomedical engineers, cell biologists, veterinarians and clinicians to develop innovative solutions for complex health challenges.



### Dr. Catherine Lebel (Cumming School of Medicine)

Dr. Catherine Lebel is a pediatric neuroimaging expert whose pioneering research employs advanced MRI techniques to chart typical and atypical pediatric brain development. Dr. Lebel has innovated child-friendly scanning methods to study prenatal exposures, brain maturation, and neurodevelopmental disorders. For her exceptional contributions she was awarded the **Steacie Prize** in 2022, one of Canada's most prestigious early career awards. In the same year, she received the **ASTech Social Innovation Early-Career Change-Maker Award**. She is a **Member of the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars** and was recognized with the **UCalgary Killam Emerging Research Leader Award** in 2019. She holds the **Canada Research Chair in Pediatric Neuroimaging**.





# Start something.

[research.ucalgary.ca](https://research.ucalgary.ca)



Learn more about the University of Calgary's Research Awards Initiative by contacting the Office of the Vice-President (Research) at [researchawards@ucalgary.ca](mailto:researchawards@ucalgary.ca)