

Publications of the Week

A Binary Self-Amplifying Expression Platform Enabling Lipid Nanoparticle-Free Vaccines and Nanomedicines

First Author: Wilfred Jefferies (*pictured*) | Senior Author: Cheryl Pfeifer
Nature Communications | Vancouver Prostate Centre, Vancouver General Hospital, and UBC



Conventional mRNA vaccines played a crucial role in mitigating the COVID-19 pandemic but remain hampered by many factors. This study describes the Gemini platform, an expression system with a bifunctional eukaryotic–prokaryotic promoter that can be deployed as either a self-amplifying RNA or as a self-amplifying DNA replicon, enabling robust amplification and expression of genetic cargo.

[Abstract](#) | [Press Release](#)

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Awards

Dr. Anna Blakney and Team Receive \$8.4 Million USD Grant for Immune Cell Engineering

UBC Michael Smith Laboratories



Dr. Anna Blakney's (*pictured*) team has partnered with STRM.BIO and Ginkgo Bioworks on a grant that will allow them to further explore and develop a delivery platform for immune cell engineering. Awarded through the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health's Engineering of Immune Cells Inside the Body program, the team received a total of \$8.4 million USD to support their work.

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2026 PCFC Grant-in-Aid Winners Announcement

Prostate Cancer Foundation Canada (PCFC)



The 2026 Prostate Cancer Foundation Canada Grant-in-Aid Award recipients have been announced. Each research proposal undergoes rigorous evaluation from both leading scientific experts and members of the Foundation's Patient Advocacy Panel. This year's winners from Vancouver include Ishana Lodina (*pictured*), Christopher Dusek, Dr. Rafailia Beta, Andrew Murtha, and Vahid Yekehfallah.

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Local News

Dr. Stirling Bryan Appointed Interim Executive Director, VCHRI & Associate Dean, Research, UBC Faculty of Medicine

Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VCHRI)



Dr. Stirling Bryan (*pictured*) has been appointed as Interim Executive Director at VCHRI and Associate Dean Research, Faculty of Medicine at UBC, effective February 1, 2026. Dr. Bryan is a renowned health economist whose work has shaped health system policy in British Columbia and internationally. His leadership experience spans academic, health system, and provincial research organizations.

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UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences Welcomes Dr. Henry Kilgore, Assistant Professor in Nanomedicines and Chemical Biology

UBC Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences



Dr. Henry Kilgore (*pictured*) has joined UBC's Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences as Assistant Professor in Nanomedicines and Chemical Biology. Dr. Kilgore brings an innovative interdisciplinary research program to UBC that bridges chemical and computational biology to explore fundamental questions about cellular organization and therapeutic development.

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Top Citations and Online Media Engagement Showcase SFU's Exceptional Research Contributions in 2025

SFU News



Every day, SFU scholars engage in invaluable work that enhances the social, cultural, environmental, and economic landscape of our communities. They measure research impact in a number of ways, including through citations and engagement with scholarship through traditional and social media. SFU is one of Canada's fastest growing research-intensive universities with sponsored research income growing by 144% in a decade to \$286 million last year.

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UBC Faculty of Medicine Creative and Communications Team Wins Top AAMC Award for Bringing Brain Science to Life

UBC Faculty of Medicine



Pathways, the UBC Faculty of Medicine's print and digital magazine, has earned international recognition with a Gold Award in the AAMC Group on Institutional Advancement Awards for Excellence competition, claiming top prize in the Single or Special Issue Publications category. The award-winning issue of *Pathways* focuses on brain health across the lifespan.

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A Year in Review: Celebrating Cutting-Edge Research and Milestones in 2025

Centre for Advancing Health Outcomes



The Centre for Advancing Health Outcomes has reflected on the key moments from the past year and looking forward to a productive 2026. In that spirit, they kicked off their first editorial of the year with a look back to some important stories and announcements from 2025. This includes the 100th edition of *Evidence Speaks* and stories by Drs. Amanda Slaunwhite and Amy Salmon.

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A Conversation with Dr. Stephen Wright, New Principal Investigator at the HLI

Centre for Heart Lung Innovation (HLI)



Dr. Stephen Wright (*pictured*) joined the HLI as a new Principal Investigator in May, 2025. He completed his training in exercise and circulatory physiology, and now researches the mechanisms of how the lungs and heart adapt to functional changes across the health spectrum and life span. More specifically, he focuses on how one's heart and lung work together.

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Upcoming Events in Vancouver

January 28
6:00 PM

Reimagining the Mind: Innovations in Mental Health Research and Care
UBC Robson Square

January 28
8:00 PM

Kiuryaq
Chan Centre

February 7
10:30 AM

Nature Club: Fish
Beaty Biodiversity Museum

February 12
6:00 PM

After Dark: The Science of Love and Sex
Science World

February 13
12:00 PM

Peter W. Hochachka Memorial Lecture with Dr. Charles Darveau
Michael Smith Laboratories

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Science Jobs in Vancouver

Senior Scientist, Product Development
biolytical Laboratories

Research Development Coordinator, Clinical Validations
Canada's Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Machine Learning for Genomics, Transcriptomics, and Bioinformatics
UBC

Research Project Manager 1
BC Cancer

Staff Scientist, Infectious Diseases Immunology & Research Infrastructure
Simon Fraser University

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STEMCELL Jobs in Vancouver

Customer Support Associate
STEMCELL Technologies

Manufacturing Technologist, Clean Room
STEMCELL Technologies

Material Handling Coordinator
STEMCELL Technologies

Quality Engineer, Instrumentation
STEMCELL Technologies

Material Handler
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