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Dean's Round-up: May 2018

Faculty Highlights



The Faculty of Science hosted another successful [Science Rendezvous](#) at the Markham Farmers' Market. Thank you to all of the staff, students and researchers who participated in making the event a hit!



Registration opened for the Faculty's summer camps. Details about this summer's programs were highlighted in [yFile](#).

Congratulations

Sapna Sharma (Biology) received the York University President's [Emerging Research Leadership Award](#). This is the fourth consecutive year that a Science faculty member has received either the President's Research Excellence Award or the Emerging Research Leadership Award.

Alex Mills (Biology) published the book [Biology of Sex](#) with the University of Toronto Press.

The following researchers were highlighted in this year's [York University Research Leaders booklet](#): **Peter Backx** (Biology), **Thomas Baumgartner** (Chemistry), **Chris Caputo** (Chemistry), **Paul Delaney** (Physics & Astronomy), **Eric Hessels** (Physics & Astronomy), **Raymond Kwong** (Biology), **John McDermott** (Biology), **Chun Peng** (Biology), **Sapna Sharma** (Biology), **Gary Sweeney** (Biology), **Jianhong Wu** (Mathematics & Statistics), **Cora Young** (Chemistry).

Laurence Packer (Biology) was elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Entomological Society of London.

Adjunct Faculty member **Michael Organ** (Chemistry) received the [NSERC John C. Polanyi Award](#).

The Association of Graduate Students in the Biological Sciences held their [annual symposium](#). This year's poster award winners included **Gil Yerushalmi** (1st place), **Malcolm Glennie** (2nd place), **Nahid Vaghardfard** (3rd place), and **Nora Dannah** (Ryerson) and **Lidia Misyura** as runners up.

Recent graduate alumnus **Brock Harpur** (Biology, supervised by **Amro Zayed**) accepted an Assistant Professor position at Purdue University.

Other News

Research by **Huaiping Zhu** (Mathematics & Statistics) on the mathematical modelling of west Nile virus transmission was highlighted in the [Brainstorm](#) edition of *yFile*.

Laurence Packer (Biology) was a consultant on Canada Post's new [bee stamps](#).

Professor Packer also displayed an exhibit at the SciArt Gallery at the University of Toronto during Science Rendezvous, with more than 500 people participating in his lab's quiz about bees vs flies. In addition, he presented "Bees, Other than the Domesticated Western Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*)" at the Halton Peel Naturalist Club.

Paul Delaney (Physics & Astronomy) delivered a presentation on Cassini mission highlights at RASC Hamilton, and on the search for life at the Markham Library Speakers Hub.

Paula Wilson (Biology) co-organized the Annual Conference for the Ontario Consortium of Biology Educators. At the event, Professor Wilson also co-led a workshop on “Metacognition,” and **Tamara Kelly** led a workshop titled “Teaching for Mastery.”

Hélène Mialet (Science & Technology Studies) presented “Bodies, Machines and Dogs: Reflection on a new kind of Assemblage” as part of the series “For Whom the Medium Matters” at the McLuhan Center for Culture and Technology.

PhD student **Paige Whyte-Fagundes** (Biology, supervised by **Georg Zoidl**) published [A Potential Compensatory Role of Panx3 in the VNO of a Panx1 Knock Out Mouse Model](#) in *Frontiers in Molecular Neuroscience*. She also presented “Forebrain electrophysiological Recording of Seizure Activity in Genetically Modified Zebrafish Larva” at the 2018 Krembil Research Day.

The Technologies for Exo-Planetary Science (TEPS) CREATE program, directed by Dean **Ray Jayawardhana**, hosted a summer skills workshop at the University of British Columbia.

YFile profiled the upcoming [Insect Biotech Conference](#), which is being organized by **Jean-Paul Paluzzi** and **Andrew Donini** (Biology).

Research Highlights

[miRNA-590-3p promotes ovarian cancer growth and metastasis via a novel FOXA2-versican pathway](#) – *Cancer Research*

- **Chun Peng** (Biology) and her team determined the expression and function of miR-590-3p in epithelial ovarian cancer (EOC). Their findings demonstrate that miR-590-3p promotes EOC development via a novel FOXA2-VCAN pathway.

[Quantification of methane sources in the Athabasca Oil Sands Region of Alberta by aircraft mass balance](#) – *Atmospheric Chemistry and Physics*

- PhD student **Sabour Baray** (Chemistry) and his supervisor **Robert McLaren** published a paper that quantifies the total amount of fugitive methane being released from the Athabasca Oil Sands Facilities north of Fort McMurray.

Media

PhD student **Thomas Onuferko** (Biology, supervised by Laurence Packer) identified 15 [new species of stealthy cuckoo bees](#). The study received coverage in the [BBC](#) (by journalist Matt McGrath, former York Science Communicator in Residence) and [Science Update](#) (produced by AAAS).

Sapna Sharma (Biology) spoke to the [BBC](#) about a new climate feedback loop discovered in freshwater lakes.

Dean **Ray Jayawardhana** spoke to [NBC News](#) about a new device that could be used to spot planets around nearby stars.

Paul Delaney (Physics & Astronomy) spoke to *Sirius XM* and *CHML900* about the Insight launch, with *AM640* about planetary nebula and exoplanet mountains, as well as with *Global TV* about Canadian astronauts' future missions.

Upcoming events

August 7: Summer Undergraduate Research Conference, at 8:30 am – 3:30 pm in the New Student Centre, 2nd Floor, Convention Centre.

August 14-16: Astro Workshop 2018: Professional Development for Teachers of Astronomy. Register at <http://astro2018.science.yorku.ca>