



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

Division of the Vice-President
Research and Innovation

The Connaught Fund Information Session

May 3, 2023

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Professor Leah Cowen

Vice-President, Research and Innovation and Strategic Initiatives



Housekeeping

- This webinar is being recorded & transcribed
- Please mute your audio and turn off your video
- A link to the recording will be sent to all participants after the session
- Presenter slides will also be shared
- We will hold questions until the end
- Please put questions into the chat box

Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates.

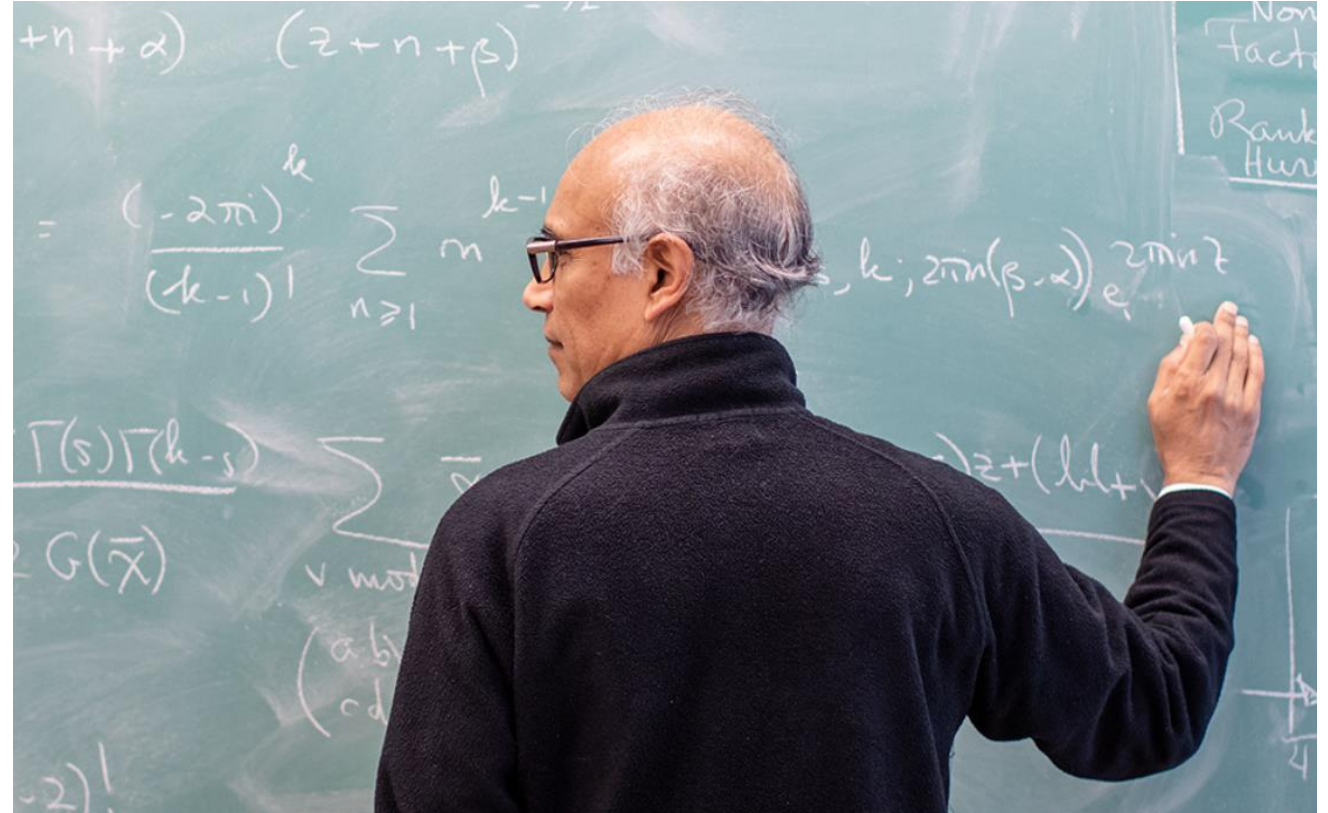
For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.



The Connaught Fund is the largest internal university research funding program in Canada. The Fund supports graduate students, early-career researchers, interdisciplinary teams, and innovators to meet the challenges facing our global society.

The Connaught Fund was founded in 1972 with the sale of the Connaught Medical Research Laboratories for \$29 million. Since then, the Fund has supported thousands of innovative research projects with social impact across the university.



Connaught Leadership

Connaught Committee

- Chaired by the Vice-President, Research & Innovation, and Strategic Initiatives
- Membership comprises senior academic administrators, faculty members, and other University community representatives spanning all disciplines and campuses
- Overall management, strategic direction, and stewardship of the Connaught Fund and related funds, including program design and final decision on all Review Panel funding recommendations

Connaught Review College

Standing review panels comprising U of T faculty members

- Humanities
- Physical Sciences & Engineering
- Social Sciences
- Life Sciences: Molecular, Cellular, and Integrative Biology
- Life Sciences: Social, Cultural, Environmental, and Population Health Research

Competition-specific panels with external experts as required

Connaught Secretariat

Led by the Assistant Vice-President, Research Services, with support from RSO staff

- Administers Connaught grant competitions
- Coordinates committee & adjudication meetings
- Establishes and monitors funded award accounts

Financials

The Connaught Committee approves over **\$5 million** to over **200 awards** each year employing the following funding sources:

Connaught Endowment

- Current market value: \$143.8 million

Average annual payout:

\$4.51M

Past 5-Year Average

I'Anson Fund

- Current market value: \$3.9 million

Average annual payout:

\$130K

Past 5-Year Average

McLean Endowment

- Current market value: \$2.1 million

Average annual payout:

\$66K

Past 5-Year Average

Invention Revenue

- The Inventions Policy establishes revenue distribution models for commercialized IP; portions of the resulting net revenue are distributed to the Connaught Fund when an invention's revenue exceeds \$500,000

Annual range:

\$100,000 to \$7.3 million

10-Year range

Funding Opportunities



People

International Doctoral Scholarship

PhDs for Public Impact
Fellowship Program

New Researcher Award

McLean Award



Partnerships

Community Partnership Research
Program

Community Partnership Research
Program – Indigenous Stream

Global Challenge Award

Major Research Challenge for
Black Researchers



Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Innovation Award

U of T Early-Stage Technology
(UTEST)

International Doctoral Scholarships and PhDs for Public Impact Fellowships



International Doctoral Scholarships

- **Purpose:** Cost-sharing initiative to assist graduate units in recruiting and supporting top international students.
- **Eligibility:** International applicants not currently registered in a UofT degree program
- **Value:** \$10,000 top-up; annually renewable for 4-5 years
- **Submission timeline:** Winter 2023

PhDs for Public Impact Fellowships

- **Purpose:** Supports research that makes meaningful contributions to the public through a range of possible activities, including describing work in a public forum to partnering with a school, community, or cultural institution in an ongoing two-way exchange of knowledge and practices.
- **Eligibility:** Open to all registered PhD/SJD students at UofT
- **Value:** \$12,500 for one year (\$10K top-up; \$2.5K toward project expenses and/or professional development)
- **Submission timeline:** Winter 2023

PhDs for Public Impact Fellowship Awardees - 2022



Andrea Román Alfaro, Department of Sociology



- Studies dynamics and politics of violence in urban marginalized neighbourhoods through the experiences of women in the Puerto Nuevo neighborhood of Callao, Peru.
- Engages community youth in research to help with managerial responsibilities and learn job skills. Currently working toward establishing a youth-led community centre and constructing a community archive. Has initiated arts and boxing classes for children and organized food baskets and a Christmas party.

Jaime Grimm, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology



- Studies salmon pathogen community composition and spread associated with salmon farming in coastal British Columbia.
- Building relationships with fisheries managers who work for the Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, and Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nations to understand their needs while developing research questions and conducting field work together. Plans to hire First Nations artist to graphically represent research for broader knowledge dissemination.

McLean Award



- **Purpose:** To support an emerging research leader conducting basic research in physics, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, engineering sciences and the theory and methods of statistics.
- **Eligibility:** Applicants must be nominated by their division heads (Dean/Chair/Principal) and must be within 12 years of having completed their PhD.
- **Value:** \$125,000; 1 award annually (jointly funded by the McLean Endowment & the Connaught Fund)
- **Submission timeline:** Annually in January

McLean Awardees – 2022



David Curtin, Dept. of Physics, CRC in Theoretical Particle Physics



Photo credit: Raul Cunha

Prof. Curtin is co-founder and co-leader of the experimental collaboration MATHUSLA, the Massive Timing Hodoscope for Ultra-Stable Neutral Particles. The experiment will operate at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in Switzerland.

Sophie Rousseaux, Dept. of Chemistry



Prof. Rousseaux focuses on catalysis and synthetic organic chemistry critical in the production and harnessing of key molecules important to our everyday lives. A key focus of her lab is the development of processes that are environmentally and economically sustainable, such as new “green chemistry” processes to reduce negative impact.

New Researcher Award



- **Purpose:** To help early-career faculty establish their research programs and increase competitiveness for external funding.
- **Eligibility:** Full-time tenure stream faculty at the Assistant Professor level within five years of their tenure-stream appointment and within ten years of having completed a PhD or equivalent.
- **Value:** Up to \$25,000 (\$5K increase for 2023).
- **Submission Timeline:** mid-December 2023

New Researcher Awardees

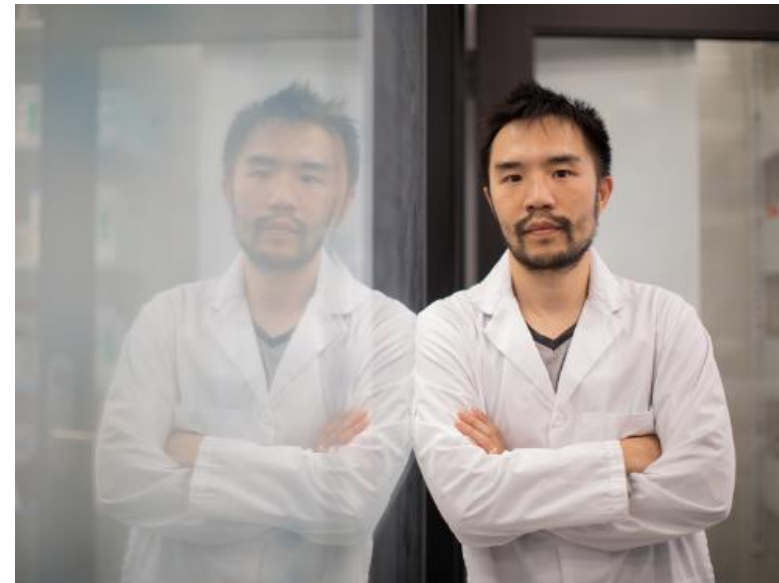


**Lauren Cramer, Cinema Studies Institute,
2019–2020 awardee**



Professor Cramer's work focuses on the aesthetics of Blackness in popular culture and Black spatial practices.

**Leo Chou, Institute of Biomedical Engineering,
2020–2021 awardee**



Professor Chou aims to develop safer alternatives to traditional vaccines, which are based on live pathogens.

Community Partnership Research Program (CPRP)



- **Purpose:** To support new collaborative research partnerships between the University and community partners, that support research driven by needs and priorities identified by community partners. Adjudicated in collaboration with external community partners, these partnerships should show potential to evolve into larger funded research partnerships over time.
- **Eligible community partners:** organizations from the not-for-profit or public sector
- **Value:** Up to \$100,000 (\$50K per year for one to two years)
- **Submission timeline:** NOI - March 15th; Full proposal - May 1st

Community Partnership Research Program Awards – 2022



Prioritizing the Access Needs of Racialized Women who Experience Intimate Partner Violence



Professor Beverley Essue (DLSPH) leads this partnership with the Restoring Smiles Initiative to conduct a case study of dental care supporting economic empowerment.

(Out)side the Downtown Core: A Mixed-methods Research Exploration



Professor Andrea Charise (UTSC) leads this partnership with Scarborough Arts to explore sustainable community arts-wellness programming for Scarborough's 2SLGTBQ+ youth.

Community Partnership Research Program Indigenous Stream



- **Purpose:** To support projects grounded in the priorities and needs of Indigenous communities, with a focus on cooperation and relationship building
- **Value:** Up to \$50,000
- Collaborative proposal development guided by the [Indigenous Research Network](#), which also reviewed each proposal and provided feedback
- Inaugural round (2020/2021) funded 9 projects
 - Led by Indigenous community partner organizations in Manitoba, Nunavut, and across Ontario, in partnership with faculty from 6 academic divisions
 - Topics include community development, food sovereignty, traditional healing and medicine, water quality, and transitions out of the child welfare system
- **Submission timeline:** VPRI is currently in discussions with the Academic Advisor on Indigenous Research regarding future program design



**Indigenous
Research
Network**

Global Challenge Award



- **Purpose:** To address important societal issues by developing **new collaborations** between multidisciplinary UofT researchers and thought leaders from other sectors through symposia, workshops, visiting scholars, etc.
- **Eligibility:** Projects must be led by a UofT campus-based faculty member, represent a minimum of 2 SGS divisions, and meaningfully engage partners in knowledge translation
- **Value:** Up to \$250,000 (approximately 4 awards annually)
- **Submission timeline:** Spring 2023

Optional Supplement: **Connaught Global Research Impact Program (C-GRIP)**

- **Purpose:** To support trainee mobility and international exchange; funded and administered by the [Office of the Vice-President, International](#)
- **Eligibility:** Projects must be Global Challenge teams with international partner(s)
- **Value:** \$150,000 (up to 2 awards annually); runs for an additional 3 years to the Global Challenge award term
- **Submission timeline:** Simultaneously with Global Challenge proposal

Global Challenge Awardees



Anver Emon, Faculty of Law, 2020–2021 awardee



- Professor Emon’s work is a multi- and interdisciplinary conversation on the place of textuality in Islamic studies.
- His research focuses on Islamic legal history and theory, premodern modes of governance and adjudication, and the role of Shari’a inside and outside the Muslim world.

Ajay Rao, U of T Mississauga Dept. of Historical Studies, 2022–2023 awardee



- Professor Rao’s research asks: What should humanistic research look like in the post-pandemic world? By uncovering the connectedness of cultures and archives of the pre-1500 world, this research promotes equity in the present by exploring the diversity of the past.
- Also awarded the C-GRIP for student exchange between U of T and Global South universities.

Major Research Challenge for Black Researchers



- **Purpose:** to strengthen U of T's Black researchers' contribution to addressing and proffering solutions to major research challenges through the advancement of knowledge and the transfer and application of solutions
- **Eligibility:** projects must be led by a Black researcher at the University of Toronto
- **Value:** One award of up to \$250,000
- **2023 Submission timeline:** NOI – June 30th
Full proposal – Oct 2nd

Program coordinated with the
[Black Research Network \(BRN\)](#)



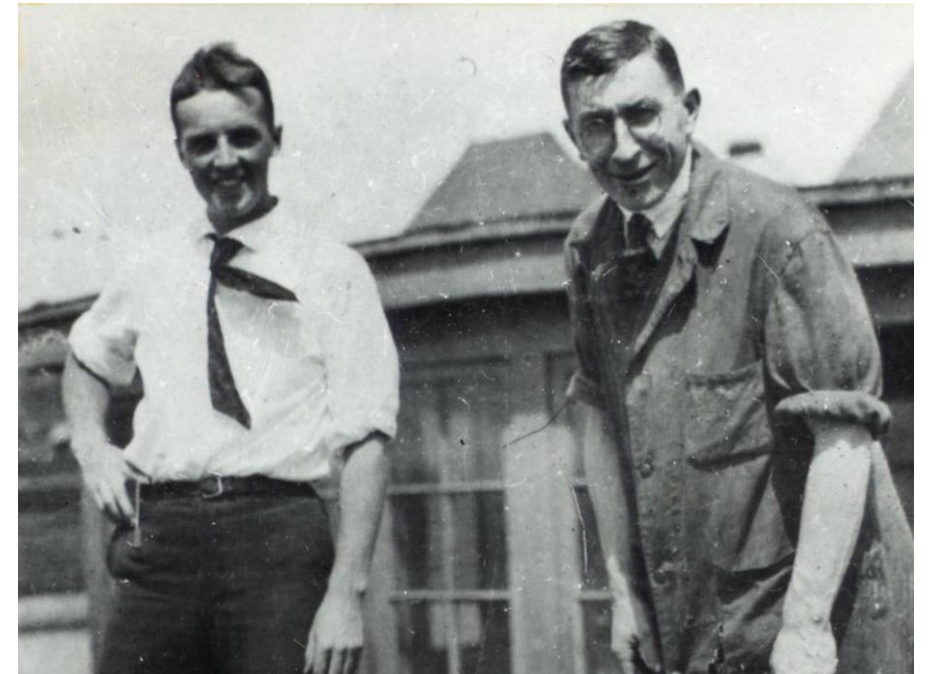
Inaugural Awardee – 2022:

Prof. Notisha Massaquoi from the Department of Health & Society at U of T Scarborough, will bring together scientists and community members to holistically address Canada's racial health gap and develop solutions to change health outcomes in Black communities.

Innovation Award



- **Purpose:** To accelerate the development of promising technologies and to promote the commercialization and/or knowledge transfer of innovations arising from the University of Toronto.
- **Eligibility:** All campus based professorial staff eligible to hold research funding at U of T; The proposed project must be based on an [existing invention disclosure](#) filed to U of T's Innovations & Partnerships Office (IPO).
- **Value:** \$1,000,000 available; up to \$100,000 per project.
- Applicants requesting more than \$50,000 will require strong evidence of industry interest, leveraged funding opportunities, or investment potential.
- **Submission timeline:** NOI September 2023; Full Proposal October 2023



Innovation Awardees



Charlene Chu, 2021–2022 Awardee



- Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing
- Professor Chu’s research led to the development of Nightingale.ai, a smartphone-based application that will increase access to gold-standard rehabilitation after orthopedic surgery.
- Her team will apply data-driven research to increase patient access to rehabilitation, mobilize post-surgery care, and ultimately improve health system efficiency.

Shirley Wu, 2021–2022 Awardee



- Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy
- Professor Wu and her research team have developed a “smart” microneedle patch to detect and treat hypoglycemia in diabetics.
- The pain-free design of this first-of-its-kind smart technology will revolutionize the treatment and care for those who have diabetes.

UTEST

- **Purpose:** To create and launch **new companies** based on research from U of T. Supports U of T researchers bringing their discoveries from lab to market through a range of services including intensive entrepreneurial education, advisory support, opportunities to raise capital, and dedicated incubation space
- On a competitive basis, over 20 companies per year are admitted into the 12-month program.
- Financial support from Connaught Fund is used for **seed-stage investments** into select companies from each cohort.
- **Eligibility:** Companies based on U of T research and one or more founders affiliated with U of T. Both faculty (incl. hospital-based researchers) and current/recent students are eligible to apply.
- **Award Value:** Between \$50K-\$150K, awarded in the form of a [SAFE](#) (simple agreement for future equity) is invested in the companies.
- [Toronto Innovation Acceleration Partners \(TIAP\)](#) is a key partner, matching the Connaught UTEST funding and/or providing follow-on investments



UTEST
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
EARLY-STAGE TECHNOLOGY



TORONTO
INNOVATION
ACCELERATION
PARTNERS

Application Timeline 2023

Applications

March 9

- Online application opens
- www.utest.to/apply
- U of T & Affiliated Hospital IP

Selection

June 1- Midnight

- Application deadline

June 13 & 14 - Pitches

- Selected companies invited to 10 minute pitch
- 5 minute Q & A

Cohort launch

Week of June 26

- Kick-off meeting/program orientation
- MaRS Intensive Education begins
- 1x1 meetings scheduled

Example UTEST Awardees



HDAX



- Developing a targeted therapeutics platform for the safe and efficacious treatment of HDAC-driven pathologies such as neuropathies and neurodegenerative disorders
- Trainee-led team from Prof. Patrick Gunning's lab
- Winner of [Medicine by Design's](#) Biotech Venture Pitch Competition for a small molecule technology that can interrupt the development of an Alzheimer's disease-promoting protein.

REEDDI



- Designs and builds hardware and software solutions to sustainably and affordably provide clean energy products and access to poor energy regions of the world
- Launched Africa's first fully insured and secure go-to source for equipment rental – TempOwn
- The compact, portable, and solar-powered Reedi power capsule was named one of the best inventions of 2021 by [Time Magazine](#)




Overarching Considerations in Connaught Funding

- **From the Connaught Fund Terms of Reference:**

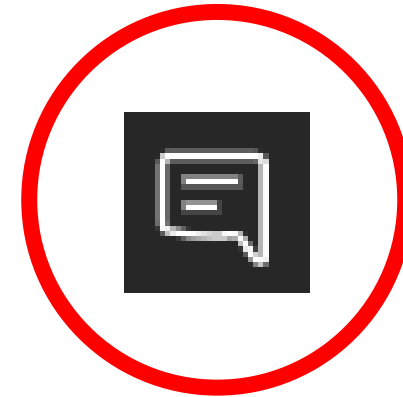
"The primary purpose of the Fund is the promotion of research and the application of professional expertise and resources of the University to matters of public interest in all research fields."

- Rather than duplicate external funding programs, the Connaught Committee seeks to create *niche* funding opportunities that serve to establish or advance research initiatives, making them more competitive for external funding
- The Connaught Committee applies the concepts of equity, diversity, inclusion and Indigenous reconciliation in all aspects of its work, including Committee and Review Panel membership, research funding program design and adjudication, and representation in application and award cohorts

Q & A – How to ask questions

- Please use the chat
- Click on the  icon in the bottom menu to bring up the Meeting Chat pop-out window
- Type your question and hit Enter on your keyboard or click the  button to submit.
- Or, please use the “Raise your hand”  feature to pose your question verbally.

Please note: You may be asked to Unmute to clarify your question



Please Be In Touch!



Please visit our newly designed website (<https://connaught.research.utoronto.ca/>) and feel free to contact us at any time at connaught.secretariat@utoronto.ca