

THE (PETRI) DISH

Faculty of Science Newsletter



Colourful welcome - Science student volunteers prepare to welcome our first and second year students to campus for the first time. They hosted mini tours of campus and a scavenger hunt as part of [Everything Science 2021](#).

In the News

Research published last month in the Royal Society Open Science journal by Dr. **Amy Hurford**, Math & Stats and Biology, found a direct relationship between the travel ban and the province's COVID-19 caseload. [Peterborough Examiner](#)

Dr. **Fereidoon Shahidi**, Biochemistry, talks about coarse grains and their benefits in this article. [BakingBusiness.com](#)

Psychology grad student **Dalainey Drakes**, discusses the connections between eating disorders and OCD. [Healio.com](#)

Memorial is featuring stories of employees who have risen to the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, including this one from Dr. **Kelly Shorlin**, Physics. [Exemplary Together](#)

A new paper from Biology's **Quinn Webber**, Dr. **Eric Vanderwal**, **Jack Hendrix** and **Alec Robitaille** takes a look at why some caribou swim in the ocean. [Saltwire](#)

Olupathage Chandani Dinesh, a post doctoral fellow in Psychology and course instructor in Biochemistry, says creatine, an energy-providing nutrient, may help mitigate the adverse brain development of preterm babies. [The Conversation](#)

For three years, a team of scientists from Memorial University - including Dr. **Bill Montevecchi** and **Kyle d'Entremont** - has been studying a gannet colony of about 30,000 birds at the Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve on the southwestern Avalon Peninsula. [CBC](#)

August 31, 2021 marks the end of Dr. **Kris Poduska's** three-year term as department head of Physics and Physical Oceanography. She recognizes her faculty and staff for problem-solving their way through a global pandemic. [Exemplary Together](#)



DEAN'S MESSAGE



Well, our first day went off as smoothly as can be expected, considering we are welcoming two cohorts of undergraduate students and new graduate students onto campus, as well two other undergraduate cohorts who haven't been on campus in a year.

Thank you to everyone who made the day go smoothly, especially those brave enough to wear the red "Ask Me" tags. I know our students appreciated it and will probably need the help for the next few days!

It is so exciting to see our campus alive again. Walking outside and in the halls, it is hard not to be giddy when hearing the chatter and laughter, and feeling the confusion, excitement, relief, and a host of other emotions from our students. We're back!

A big thanks to the student volunteers pictured in the header of this issue, who gave up their time over the weekend to give out t-shirts, answer questions, and give campus tours to over 250 students and their supporters. Great job!

This step, bringing students back to campus, represents one toward normality and I, for one, am very optimistic.

I hope everyone—students, staff, and faculty—have a safe and successful semester and that we all have fun along the way.



Dr. Len Zedel, Physics, received the Francois J. Saucier Award today from The Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society for his outstanding contributions to novel applications of underwater acoustics to oceanography in Canada.

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Marco Merkli, Math & Stats, has been editor-in-chief for the Canadian Journal of Physics since May 2021.

A team lead by Dr. Amilcar Soares, Computer Science, won the Robocup Soccer Simulation 2D world championships. It was the first time a Canadian team has won.

Dr. Rachel Sipler, Ocean Sciences, is the new Director of Amundsen Science, the organization responsible for the management of the scientific mandate of the research icebreaker CCGS *Amundsen*.

Dr. Stephen Piercey, Earth Sciences, has been appointed to the advisory boards for the Yukon Geological Survey Minerals Technical Liaison Committee and the Geological Survey of Newfoundland and Labrador Independent Geoscience Technical Advising Committee.

School of Graduate Studies Rockstar Supervisor Award

Dr. Janet Brunton, Biochemistry
Dr. Ian Fleming, Ocean Sciences
Dr. Antonina Kolokllova, Computer Science

Spotlight On: Jessica Whalen, Faculty of Science Career Development Coordinator

All Science students and graduates can book a career exploration appointment with Jessica Whalen, our Science Career Development Coordinator.

These appointments can help students develop career goals and learn more about where their science degree can take them. Other appointments can include resume critiques, employment mock interviews, LinkedIn critiques and job search consultations.

Please check the [Career Advice](#) page on the Faculty of Science website for details on future career workshops, networking events, career talks and job searching clubs. Appointments with Jessica can be booked through the Navigate app, MyMUNLife portal in my.mun.ca or via email at jessica.whalen@mun.ca.

Faculty can also book Jessica to do brief in-class visits.

In the News (cont.)

Dr. Tom Chapman, Biology, says late summer and early fall are a prime time for hungry wasps and those increased numbers can create fear for some people. [Saltwire](#)

Health Canada has given the green light for genetically engineered salmon, which were developed from the work of Dr. Garth Fletcher, Ocean Sciences, to be sold in Canada. [Saltwire](#)

By researching how environmental change affects fish biology, Dr. Kurt Gamperl, Ocean Sciences, and his colleagues aim to make fish farming more sustainable, while ensuring global food security and allowing wild fish populations to recover. [Scientia](#)

STUDENT AWARDS

Dalainey Drakes, Psychology - The Canadian Psychological Association Section for Students Outstanding Graduate Student Representative Award.

Jared Trask, Psychology - 2021 Health Care Foundation Moving Lives Forward Scholarship

Mike LaForge, Biology - Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution Excellence in PhD Research Award.

Shahinur Islam, Ocean Sciences - Teaching Assistants' Union of Memorial University of Newfoundland Award for Outstanding Contributions to Teaching.

Mary Clinton, Ocean Sciences - NAME-CaNOE Conference Scholarship

Shreyasi Sarkar, Biochemistry - Biochemistry Graduate Teaching Excellence Award

Zack Clancy, Biochemistry - Biochemistry Graduate Teaching Excellence Award

Aldrich Interdisciplinary Conference Best Poster (Full-length) Talk Winners:

Abd Al-Aziz Abu-Saleh, Chemistry
Kyla Walsh, Biochemistry
Kyle Nickerson, Computer Science
Zachary Gates, Earth Sciences

Aldrich Interdisciplinary Conference Best Poster (Short-length) Talk Winner:

Yellow Martin, Psychology

NEW FACULTY

Dr. Karteek Popuri, Computer Science
Dr. Qiang Ye, Computer Science
Dr. Eric Thiessen, Earth Sciences
Dr. Laura Fallon, Psychology
Dr. Chris Quinn-Nilas, Psychology

NEW STAFF

Jessica Whalen, Dean's Office
Carla Yetman, Biochemistry
Frankie Tu, Computer Science
Carolyn Evans, Math & Stat
Kyle Warman, Ocean Sciences
Donna Inkpen, Ocean Sciences
Rachel Brown, Ocean Sciences

In the Gazette

Three doctoral students, including Jillian Kusch in the Department of Biology, are continuing their innovative studies at Memorial this fall thanks to securing prestigious awards. [Read](#)

Dr. Liam Morrissey, an alumnus of Earth Sciences, has recently been offered a job as a research contractor with NASA, thanks to his expertise in harsh environments. [Read](#)

A majestic blue whale skeleton hangs from the atrium of the Core Science Facility (CSF). It looks as if it were swimming, making visitors feel as if they are watching it from underwater. The entire 6,500-pound skeleton measures 25 metres long — about two school buses — and is the centrepiece of Memorial's newest facility. [Read](#)

Atlantic researchers – including those at Memorial University – are receiving \$3.6 million in new provincial and national funding focused on cancer research. The Atlantic Cancer Consortium (ACC), led by Dr. **Sherri Christian**, Biochemistry, is a group of doctors and scientists from leading cancer centres, hospitals and research institutes focused on providing improved cancer outcomes and advancing the quest to deliver precision medicine to cancer patients across the region. [Read](#)

Five projects at Memorial University, including several led by, or involving researchers from the Faculty of Science, are benefitting from more than \$970,000 in funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI). [Read](#)

Senior university leadership, along with members of the provincial and federal governments and donors, were on hand for a sneak peek of the blue whale skull that will be a cornerstone of the Core Science Facility. [Read](#)

Memorial University has announced the recipients of the 40th annual Alumni Tribute Awards. The awards recognize alumni who have achieved distinction in their chosen fields, are committed to their alma mater and have made outstanding contributions to their communities and excelled in their chosen fields. Dr. **Liqin Chen** (PhD'93), who holds a PhD in Chemistry, is Alumnus of the Year. [Read](#)

This summer, units moving into Memorial University's Core Science Facility have been busy packing up and moving equipment and supplies. The 480,000-square-foot building is the university's biggest infrastructure project for the St. John's campus since 1961. [Read](#)



Did you miss our New Faculty Orientation session? Watch it [here](#).

ALUMNI NEWS

Earth Sciences alumnus, **Sherri Dunsworth** shares Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada 2021 Bill Dennis Award. A number of other Earth Sciences graduates also worked on this project. [YouTube](#)

An award-winning photograph taken by Earth Science alumnus **Euri Papanicolaou** has been selected to be part of a special outdoor exhibition on the Plaza Bridge in downtown Ottawa. The photo previously won a 2017 Jury Prize in the Science Exposed competition, organized by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

A feature on **Emily Mardell**, a biochemistry and neuroscience alumna who harnessed her passion for food and nutrition into private practice. She's currently a registered dietitian, the CEO of Food First Nutrition Counselling and the founder of GetJoyfull. [St. Albert Today](#)

Biology and Biochemistry alumnus Dr. **Fred Jardine** hangs up the stethoscope after 32 years of service at his family medicine practice in Conception Bay South. [The Shoreline](#)

Psychology alumna **Stephanie Dunphy** is featured in this article about including people with disabilities in society, including the workplace. [Saltwire](#)

Physics alumnus, Dr. **David Goodyear** and his family are working to become as self-sustaining as possible, motivated by the precarious food production of Newfoundland and Labrador. [CBC NL](#)

Program Completion

Madhushika Silva, PhD, Biochemistry
Sara Jobson, M.Sc., Ocean Sciences

APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Len Zedel, Head, Physics

RETIREMENTS

Mary Flinn, Chemistry

David Murphy, Chemistry

Dr. Manrique Mata-Montero, Computer Science

Rod Byrne, Computer Science

Dr. Miklos Bartha, Computer Science

Dr. Margaret Shears, Ocean Sciences

Dr. Mike Morrow, Physics

FAREWELLS

Jennifer, Friesen, Computer Science

Katie Ann Flood, Computer Science

BIRTHS

A girl, Avery, to Kaitlyn Connolly, Biochemistry

PASSINGS

Terry Harris, Technical Services/Ocean Sciences

John Wells, Physics