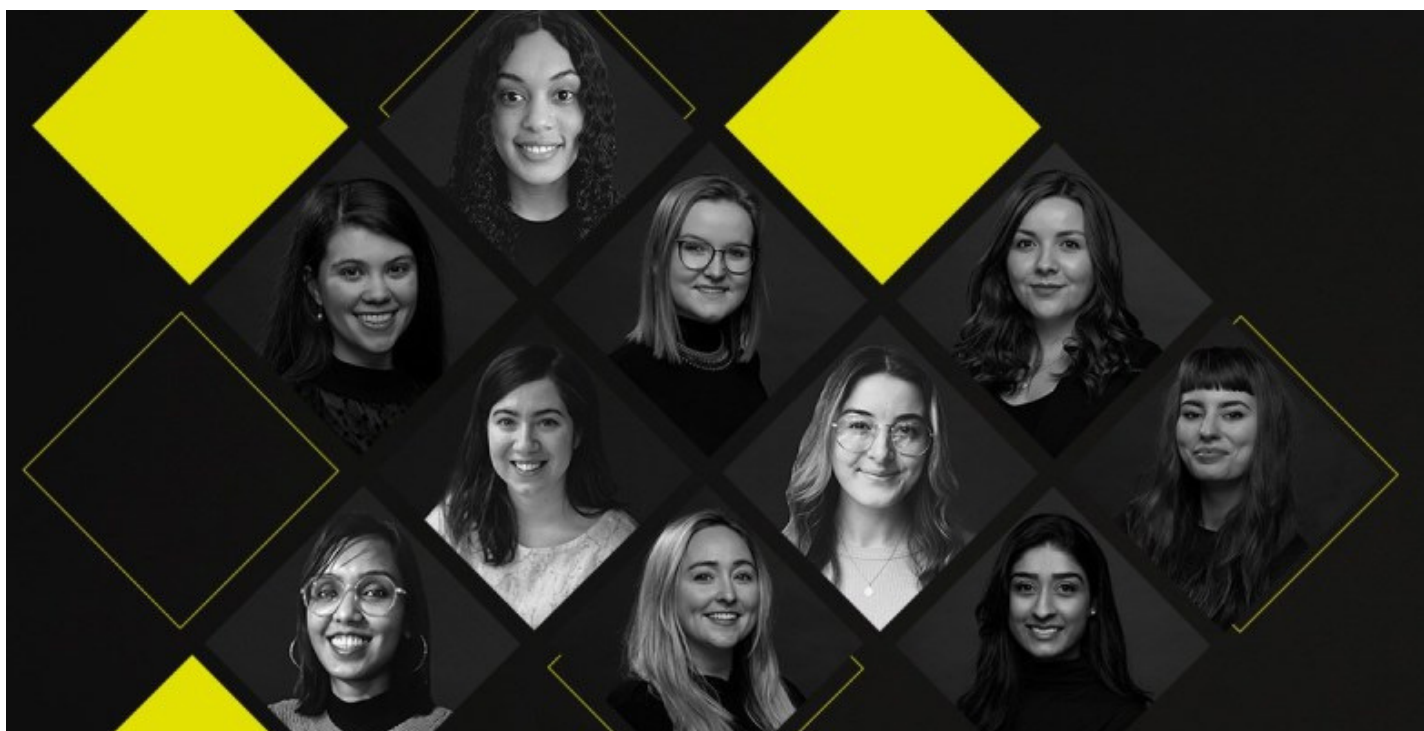


THE (PETRI) DISH

Faculty of Science Newsletter



The Gazette marked Feb. 11, the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, with an all-student celebration of Memorial University's women scientists. [Read](#)

In the News

20 questions with Science alumnus and NL's 2021 Rhodes Scholar **Jevon Marsh**. [The Telegram](#)

Science alumna **Bethany Downer** takes on a new position as chief communications officer with the Hubble Space Telescope. [VOCM](#)

Computer Science student **Jacob Critch** has been making his way up the Czech pop music charts. [The Telegram](#)

Dr. Steve Piercey, Earth Sciences, is getting lots of attention for his talk on Canada's role in the green economy at the Association for Mineral Exploration's Remote Roundup 2021 - one of the largest mineral exploration and mining meetings in the world. [The Northern Miner](#)

Dr. Philippe Belley, Earth Sciences, weighed in on whether the viral photo of an agate that looks like Cookie Monster is real. [CBC Kids](#)

Psychology major **Ife Alaba** is an accomplished musician. While juggling full-time studies, she's also recorded three singles and co-hosted CBC NL's food segment, Stuffed. [CBC](#)

Dr. Amilcar Soares, Computer Science, was part of a team of researchers recently named as runners up in RoboCup, the largest international AI soccer simulation competition. [CS-Scan](#)



DEAN'S MESSAGE

With reading break behind us we have less than six weeks of learning/instruction left in the semester. I hope everyone found time to do something different over the reading break to re-energize.

I know we are all disappointed with the return to COVID alert level 5. I am confident and hopeful that we won't be here for long as the province seems to be following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer.

Faculty, especially those early in their careers, are anxious about how this is affecting their research programs. Equally concerned are graduate students at all stages of their programs.

I am optimistic the pause in research activity will be short-lived and that research activities will begin to scale up soon. Our graduate and undergraduate students, staff, and faculty remain quite active despite this temporary setback.

On behalf of the Faculty I'd like to offer a special congratulations to the student and faculty award winners you see in this issue.

I also want to wish all of our students well. Please know that faculty and staff are working very hard and share in your goal of the successful completion of your courses. Work hard! What you get out of your courses is proportional to the work you put in.

APPOINTMENTS

Dr. Chris Parish, Interim Head, Ocean Sciences
 Dr. Ian Fleming, Deputy Head (Grad Studies & Research),
 Ocean Sciences
 Dr. Kurt Gamperl - Associated Director, Ocean Science Centre

NEW FACULTY & STAFF

Jason Crawford, Physics



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Dr. Alwell Oyet, a professor in Mathematics & Statistics, and his family were featured by Lieutenant Governor Judy Foote during Black History Month. [Read](#)

TOWN HALLS

Dr. Travis Fridgen and Dr. Sharene Bungay hosted two virtual town halls for undergraduate students.

The first event, aimed specifically at first-year students, allowed the newest members of our science community to ask questions and raise concerns based on their own unique perspective. It took place Feb. 9.

The second town hall welcomed all science undergrads, including first-year students, and took place on Feb. 12.

The sessions were recorded and the videos are available for viewing [here](#).

In addition, Drs. Neil Bose, Ray Gosine, Travis Fridgen and Jacqueline Blundell held a town hall for all science faculty, but primarily early career researchers, on Friday, Feb. 26. This was an opportunity for early career researchers to ask questions and raise concerns about their research program going forward.

This session was also recorded and is available [here](#).

PROGRAM COMPLETION

Tadiwos Getachew, PhD, Biochemistry

Ruchira Senadheera, PhD, Food Science

Yuting Li, PhD, Biology

Jingyu Liu, PhD, Biology

Devin Cochrane, PhD, Biology

Catherine Little, PhD, Biology

Bella Richmond, M.Sc., Biology

Kelsey Menard, M.Sc., Chemistry

Faculty Awards

Dr. Yolanda Wiersma (Biology), along with Jeffrey Parsons (Faculty of Business) and former PhD student Roman Lukyanenko, won the AIS college of Senior Scholars Best Information Systems 2020 Paper Award and the MIS Quarterly 2020 Paper of the Year Award for their paper, Expecting the Unexpected: Effects of Data Collection Design Choice on the Quality of Crowdsourced User-generated Content.

In the Gazette

Danielle Nichols and the Ocean Science hands-on lab program for high school biology students was featured in a Gazette Teaching Tuesday profile. [Read](#)

It may have taken him a while to get there, but the wait to participate in the regional Three Minute Thesis competition was worth it for Dr. Olatunji Anthony Akerele - he won first place! [Read](#)

Jordan Ford discovered a B.Sc. majoring in physics was one route to achieving his dream of becoming a meteorologist. Support and encouragement from local weather experts and Memorial's physics and math departments have gotten him well on his way. [Read](#)

The Bonne Bay Marine Station and public aquarium, located in Norris Point, N.L., is now officially part of Grenfell Campus. [Read](#)

Biochemistry doctoral student Modeline Longjohn has been awarded \$35,750 over two years by the Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute to support her childhood cancer research. [Read](#)

A recent paper by Dr. Kara Layton, a former post-doctoral fellow with the Ocean Frontier Institute, has been published in Nature Climate Change. In it, she outlines evidence linking climate change to a decline in Arctic char, a cold-water fish found in many northern locations including Labrador. [Read](#)

Faculty of Science instructors and students are adapting to the remote teaching and learning environment and finding some of the changes will have value for years to come. [Read](#)

Student Awards

Hong-Dien (Anthony) Phan, Kyla Walsh & Raniru Randunu (Biochemistry) - Barrowman Biochemistry Graduate Travel Award

Sean Ezekiel (Biochemistry) - Dr. Kevin Keough Graduate Scholarship in Biochemistry Award

Shreyasi Sarkar & Anthonydura Madhushika Silva (Biochemistry) - Dr. Patrick J.A. O'Doherty Graduate Award

Valesca De Groot (Ocean Sciences) - International Women Divers Hall of Fame - Advanced Dive Training Grant

Yanitza Trosel (Physics) - Biophysical Society 2021 Poster Award

EVENTS

Celebrating Indigenous Women in Physics, 2:30 p.m. NST, March 8. This unique and engaging virtual event will combine talks, interactive activities, musical interludes, artwork and science conversations. [Registration required.](#)