

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Grant Ensures St. Mary's University College Continues to Offer Innovative Science Program to City Youth

Calgary, AB (February 15, 2011) – Junior high school students across Calgary will continue to benefit from fascinating and innovative hands-on science labs at St. Mary's University College thanks to a three-year \$18,800 grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

St. Mary's hosts between 40-50 junior high school children annually for Discovering Science, many repeat attendees, in over a dozen hands-on, evening lab sessions covering science topics like electrochemistry, polymers, luminescence, thermodynamics, radio, forensics and nature. These safe, fun and exploratory labs are open to all Calgary and area junior high school students for a nominal fee.

Launched in 2009, Discovering Science was conceived and created entirely by St. Mary's science faculty to turn kids on to science at an early age. It is the first program of its kind offered in Calgary throughout the school year for students in grades 7-9. The program's objective is to encourage youth to study the sciences in high school and university. Another unique aspect of this program is that it provides an opportunity for St. Mary's Bachelor of Education students to co-teach with PhD scientists, allowing them to improve their basic knowledge of science and increase their comfort level with hands-on labs.

"We're delighted with the grant!" said Dr. Mary Ann Mclean, a biology professor at St. Mary's University College. "It will allow us to continue to turn kids on to science for another three years and formalize how we mentor St. Mary's education students to teach science. Starting next fall, we will hire several education students to work closely with us throughout each semester. This way, they will gain experience with a variety of activities in biology, chemistry and physics."

About the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)

NSERC aims to make Canada a country of discoverers and innovators for the benefit of all Canadians. The agency supports university students in their advanced studies, promotes and supports discovery research, and fosters innovation by encouraging Canadian companies to participate and invest in postsecondary research projects. NSERC researchers are on the vanguard of science, building on Canada's long tradition of scientific excellence.

About St. Mary's University College

St. Mary's University College is a Catholic post-secondary, liberal arts and sciences teaching and research institution open to all faiths and traditions. St. Mary's offers Bachelor of Arts degrees, a Bachelor of Education (Elementary) degree and university courses in 33 academic subjects. In 2011, St. Mary's celebrates its 25th anniversary. For more information, visit www.stmu.ca

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