

**TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY
STRATEGIC RESEARCH PLAN SUMMARY**

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INTRODUCTION

Trinity Western University aspires to be a small, academically strong university that prepares students to seek the well-being of their fellow citizens and to engage world needs. As a small university, TWU strategically promotes research by: 1) encouraging faculty to develop collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches to research that enable them to pool limited resources and bring together diverse interests in a creative manner; 2) identify research niches where TWU faculty can engage in innovative, internationally recognized research that maximizes limited resources.

PLAN OBJECTIVES

With particular attention to development of its strategic research themes, Trinity Western University will advance national and international academic research by:

- 1) providing a competitive research and teaching environment that promotes research of national and international significance and effective integration of research and teaching, and that attracts and retains productive researchers and highly qualified personnel;
- 2) assisting faculty members to develop sustained programs of disciplinary and interdisciplinary research through comprehensive research services and establishment of more research chairs, university research institutes/centres and research groups, collaborative research networks, and industry, business and community research partnerships;
- 3) encouraging and facilitating broad collaborative investigation, dissemination of research results, and cultivation of research networks through upgrading information technology and communications, and hosting conferences, workshops, and symposia and academic journals;
- 4) improving research capacity in the natural sciences through infrastructure expansion and graduate program development;
- 5) developing highly trained personnel through including research in the university's recruitment brand, fostering integration of research and teaching, providing up-to-date, rigorous research methods curriculum, routinely engaging students across the spectrum of faculty research activities, facilitating research internships and other opportunities for student research training, and encouraging students to undertake further studies and apply for scholarships.

MAJOR RESEARCH THEMES

1. Interdisciplinary Studies in Religion, Culture and Ethics

The theme of "Religion as Social Capital: Interdisciplinary Studies of Religion, Culture and Ethics" is central to the identity of the University and continues to be a productive focus for research. The Canada Research Chair in Interpretation, Religion, and Culture has provided a productive focus for collaborative research initiatives. Significant advancement of this research theme has resulted from the establishment of the Religion in Canada Institute and the Gender Studies Institute, where researchers from diverse disciplines across campus bring their perspectives and methodologies to common research questions. Over the next three years we will continue to develop and extend interdisciplinary studies in religion as social capital.

2. Texts and the Historical Development of Judaism and Early Christianity

TWU recruited a core group of internationally renowned scholars who collaboratively research the historical, sociological and cultural context of Jewish and Christian religious texts, and who include the Canada Research Chair in Dead Sea Scrolls. The member scholars of the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute, the Septuagint Institute and the holder of the Brooke Foss Westcott Chair in New Testament Textual Criticism, Hermeneutics, and Greek Studies and their students conduct ground-breaking collaborations with with colleagues around the world. TWU is developing a proposal for a PhD program in Biblical and Theological Studies to retain these researchers in Canada, provide greater opportunity to developing scholars to biblical and theological studies, and ensure the continued strength of the university in this niche area.

3. Biotechnology

TWU has focused on attracting a cluster of researchers within three specific areas of research related to biotechnology: medical biotechnology, synthetic chemistry, and plant chemical ecology. The faculty undertaking research in these areas have developed a number of collaborative relationships with researchers at other universities and within the biotechnology industry. Advancement of this strategic research theme includes recruitment of an internationally known biology researcher to lead the Faculty of Natural Sciences, a Canada Research Chair in Developmental Genetics and Disease, increased national grants, construction of new biology labs which include animal care facilities, and access to graduate students through adjunct appointments at UBC and SFU. TWU's biotechnology researchers are proposing to partner with their health sciences colleagues to establish a research centre for chronic diseases and aging.

4. Health and Its Determinants

This theme promotes research underway in the history, development, and cultural bias of health-related policies and practices, social and environmental determinants of health and wellness, and individual factors affecting physical and psychological health status. As they investigate personal, social and environmental determinants that contribute to disparities in health status and access to health care services, TWU's health sciences researchers are increasingly developing internal and external interdisciplinary research collaborations that attract national funding and result in publications, and research awards. Their productivity is increased by research oriented graduate programs, including the MA in Counselling Psychology program and the recently introduced Master of Science in Nursing program. TWU recognizes health and its determinants as a developing area of research strength and seeks to promote its advancement.

5. Ecosystem Health and Dynamics

TWU possesses a rich land base for ecosystem studies including both the Ecosystem Study Area (ESA) in Langley, BC and the TWU Crow's Nest Ecological Research Area (CNERA) on Salt Spring Island. Areas of study in which TWU ecosystem researchers are increasingly forming collaborations, winning grants, publishing articles, and involving students in research and publication include endangered species, community ecology and restoration, environmental history and policy, and spatial dynamics. In keeping with this research theme, TWU is seeking to utilize its on-campus river ecosystem to research salmon habitat restoration in partnership with regional First Nations.

RESEARCH CHAIR ALLOCATION

TWU's criteria for selection of research chair candidates are: 1) proven disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary research productivity at a high level; 2) recognized as a leader by peers and students; 3) strong research and teaching integration; 4) demonstrates collegiality in community; 5) seeks to develop national and international research collaborations; 6) able to advance the TWU Strategic Research Plan. TWU is anticipating including the proposed John Williams Wevers Chair in Septuagint Studies and other new chairs related to the Strategic Research Plan in its upcoming 50th anniversary capital campaign (2012).

To date, the TWU Canada Research Chairs have been awarded by competition internally. The Chairs have shown the members of the TWU academic community that dedicated researchers in small universities can achieve major research awards, and raised the level of expectation for research productivity and rigour generally. TWU will, however, recruit chairs externally if necessary to maintain its strategic research objectives.

TYPE	AREA	TIER	DISCIPLINE	AGENCY	THEME
Canada Research Chair	Dead Sea Scrolls	1	Religious Studies	SSHRC	Texts
Canada Research Chair	Interpretation, Religion and Culture	2 Special	English	SSHRC	Religion, Culture and Ethics
Canada Research Chair	Developmental Genetics and Disease	2 Special	Biology	NSERC	Biotechnology
Brooke Foss Westcott Chair	New Testament Textual Criticism, Hermeneutics, And Greek Studies		Religious Studies	Donor	Texts
*John William Wevers Chair (anticipated)	Septuagint Studies		Religious Studies	Donors	Texts

OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT

The Office of Research evaluates the achievement of the strategic research objectives annually in April, and presents a report to the Provost, and to the faculty at their annual review day in May. Success in meeting the TWU research objectives, with particular attention to the strategic research themes, will be assessed annually by a faculty survey and quantitative data monitoring research activity and infrastructure.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The TWU Strategic Research Plan emerged as a result of a broader process for the development of the *Trinity Western University Academic Strategic Goals 2000-2005*. The plan is implemented by the Dean of Research, advised by the Research Development Strategic Committee, which is comprised of faculty representatives from across the university. Revisions to the plan are recommended to the Provost, who administers the senior approval process and deposits the revised plan with the University Senate Research and Scholarship Committee.

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