

INTRODUCTION



*Department Head,
Dr. Leonard Foster*

Welcome to the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology!

For more than fifty years, we have played an active and important role at UBC and in the greater scientific community.

Home to many internationally recognized researchers, work in the department is focused on subjects of great interest to the general public. Researchers in the Department study many important diseases including cancer, diabetes, blindness, heart disease and inflammation. Together with others in the Departments who focus on drug research, they are working both understand these issues and develop treatments and cures. Other major aspects of the Department's research focus on developing new antibiotics: this is an urgent priority since resistance to existing drugs is so prevalent around the world. Several members of the Department are working to understand how the function of genes is controlled. The excellence of our research is amply demonstrated by the fact that several members of the Department have been recognized by major research prizes.

The graduate program at the Department of Biochemistry provides advanced education with a goal of preparing students for an independent career in research. Research within the department attracts excellent funding from a range of external sources. This funding supports a strong graduate and postdoctoral program, currently involving more than 65 trainees at the MSc and PhD levels.

In association with the Faculty of Science and the Co-operative Education/Science Co-Op Programs, the Department manages a large undergraduate program. Members of the Department teach several third and fourth year biochemistry courses which average a total yearly enrolment of ~1500. Over the years, Biochemistry undergraduates have distinguished themselves in competitions for university and national awards, creating a tradition of academic excellence within the Department. The undergraduate science curriculum now includes an internship (Co-op) program in biochemistry to provide students with valuable work experience in academic research and industrial laboratories.

The Department actively participates in the medical school program. Many members of the Department serve as tutors in the Problem Based Learning component of the new curriculum. Dr. Bruce Tiberiis, a senior instructor in biochemistry, helped craft the new curriculum and provides training for PBL tutors.

Since its move to the new Life Sciences Centre, the department has become an even more exciting environment in which to research, learn, work, and collaborate. This multidisciplinary research centre has brought the Biochemistry department together with the departments of Cellular & Physiological Sciences and Microbiology & Immunology, as well as independent researchers from Medical Genetics and Zoology. By working with members of other departments in this highly interactive environment, the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology continues to grow and develop in its role as one of the leaders in the field.