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Dr. Olga Kovalchuk to be awarded 2019 University of Lethbridge Speaker Research Award

Recognized as a pioneer in the study of radiation biology, cancer and epigenetics, Dr. Olga Kovalchuk has been named the winner of the 2019 University of Lethbridge Speaker Research Award.

Kovalchuk, a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, Board of Governors Chair in Epigenetics of Health and Disease, and Canadian Institute of Health Research Chair in Gender and Health, has created one of the most robust research programs in the world. She is respected internationally for her groundbreaking discoveries, her volume of research and her proficiency at translating that research into community impact.



“Dr. Kovalchuk is an outstanding researcher on many levels,” says Dr. Claudia Malacrida, the University’s associate vice-president (research). “Her productivity is remarkable and she is one of our best at identifying interdisciplinary collaborations with colleagues from across campus, such as in neuroscience and biochemistry. She truly is at the leading edge of her field and her ability to translate that research into clinical and industrial directions is impressive.”

Kovalchuk’s groundbreaking work discovered that males and females respond differently to radiation, with females exhibiting more radiation effects. Further, Kovalchuk analyzed the effects of chemotherapy on the brain and discovered the existence and molecular nature of what is called chemo-brain and tumor brain phenomena. These findings have serious repercussions for the development of sex-specific radiation diagnostic and treatment plans, as well as sex-specific strategies to prevent and mitigate cancer treatment side effects on the brain.

Most recently, Kovalchuk led the first-ever study using big data to dissect the effects of smoking on biological aging.

She will be presented with the Speaker Research Award at the 2019 Spring Convocation Ceremony I at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 30, 2019 in the 1st Choice Savings Centre gymnasium.

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/dr-olga-kovalchuk-be-awarded-2019-university-lethbridge-speaker-research-award>

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