



University of
Lethbridge

NEWS RELEASE

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Leader in RNA and protein biophysics research earns University of Lethbridge 2023 Speaker Research Award

A research leader in RNA and protein biophysics who regularly uses his expertise to engage in science outreach and communication activities, Dr. Trushar Patel has been named the 2023 winner of the University of Lethbridge's Speaker Research Award.

Patel's research on how RNA interacts with proteins and how proteins interact with other proteins, has made a substantial contribution to the overarching goal of uncovering events at the heart of diseases such as viral infections, covering everything from Hepatitis B to COVID-19.



"The quality and impact of work from Dr. Patel since arriving at the University of Lethbridge is exceptional. He consistently demonstrates leadership in his field of study, as evidenced by the many awards with which he has been recognized and peer reviewed publications he and his team have produced," says Dr. Dena McMartin, ULethbridge vice-president (research). "In addition to the valuable research his lab undertakes, Trushar continues to utilize his expertise as an engaging science and policy communicator and champion of outreach initiatives that inspire the next generation of scientists. He's richly deserving of this award."

The Speaker Research Award recognizes the importance of research, scholarship and performance to the philosophy and goals of the University.

Patel will be presented with the Speaker Research Award at Spring 2023 Convocation, Ceremony I, on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. in the 1st Choice Savings Centre gymnasium.

Dr. Trushar Patel

Globally, viral infections and associated cancers are responsible for millions of deaths and impose a severe financial burden on health-care systems. Dr. Trushar Patel, a professor in the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry, heads a multidisciplinary program aimed at providing critical insight into the host protein-viral nucleic acid interactions that are of fundamental importance for viral replication.

Patel came to ULEthbridge in 2016 as an independent researcher and earned a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in RNA and Protein Biophysics in November 2017, which was subsequently renewed in 2022. Patel graduated with BSc (2000) and MSc (2002) degrees in biotechnology from India. He joined the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom for his PhD (2007) and later worked at the Universities of Manitoba and Birmingham.

Patel's lab, based out of the Alberta RNA Research and Training Institute, has earned extensive funding support as it investigates a variety of viral diseases covering everything from Hepatitis B to COVID-19. His research program has attracted over \$8.5 million from provincial, federal and international funding agencies since joining ULEthbridge.

The calibre of Patel's research as a leader in RNA & Protein Biophysics is demonstrated by his early career productivity. He has published 86 peer-reviewed articles in top-tiered international journals, with 23 as the first author and 42 as a senior author, as well as 34 editorials.

Patel has demonstrated scientific leadership and excellence in community engagement. He is co-director of DiscoveryLab, which links companies and investors. He was a participant in the first Science Meets Parliament program, which unites scientists, members of Parliament and senators to discuss science and science policy, and he has played a key role in organizing subsequent meetings. He was co-Chair of the EDI committee for the Canadian Society for Virology. He is an executive member of the Biophysical Society of Canada (BSC), Chair of the Communications and Publications Committee and Councillor at the Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences (CSMB), and an incoming Chair of the Early Careers Committee of the Biophysical Society (USA).

Patel lent his experience as an informed voice throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and, for his work as a key member of the Return to Campus Committee, was awarded the 2022 ULEthbridge Volunteer Award. He has also been recognized with the 2022 BSC Young Investigator Award, the 2022 New Investigator Award from CSMB and the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal. In 2022, he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/leader-rna-and-protein-biophysics-research-earns-university-lethbridge-2023-speaker-research>

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Our University's Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.