University of Lethbridge

NEWS RELEASE

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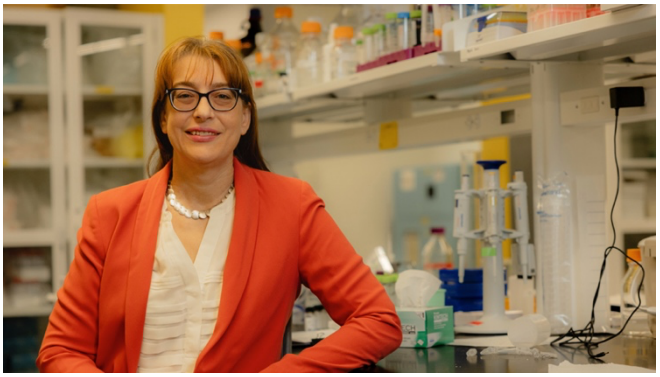
Dr. Gerlinde Metz honoured with Chair in Neuroscience

University of Lethbridge neuroscience professor Dr. Gerlinde Metz has been named the Dr. Bryan Kolb Chair in Neuroscience.



The professorship honours the legacy of Kolb (DSc ’15), one of the most influential figures in establishing the study of neuroscience and the University of Lethbridge’s Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience. The chair provides a seven-year, research-focused term with the option for reappointment once to a second seven-year term.

“The University of Lethbridge is thrilled to bestow this tremendous honour on Dr. Gerlinde Metz,” says Dr. Dena McMartin, vice-president (research). “Gerlinde’s research is making impacts on both fundamental understandings of the brain, as well as applied analyses and identification of key biomarkers regarding stress impacts and how intergenerational trauma response is transmitted across generations. She is widely viewed as a leader in her field and a highly sought-after expert worldwide.”

“I am deeply honoured to be named the Dr. Bryan Kolb Chair in Neuroscience,” says Metz. “This recognition is especially meaningful to me, given Dr. Kolb’s extraordinary legacy in shaping the field of neuroscience and his role in building the Canadian Centre for Behavioural Neuroscience. I am humbled to carry forward this legacy through research that advances innovation and translational impact in neuroscience, both in Canada and internationally.”

Metz’s research investigates the influence of experience and environment on behaviour and brain plasticity, and how the effects of stress can be effectively prevented. Her work has shown that stress affects the motor system, and that adverse experiences can become predisposing factors for motor system diseases such as Parkinson’s and stroke.

Many groundbreaking insights have emerged from her research, including a study that found touch therapy helped the brain recover from stroke and that male experimenters make female rats uneasy.

Working with a rat model, Metz and her team have become internationally recognized as pioneers in studying how prenatal stress can affect health over a lifetime. Metz discovered that the effects of prenatal stress can also be transmitted from one generation to the next, influencing the health of future generations. Her research has examined the impact of war trauma on biological health in the next generation, and the long-term health effects of natural disasters like Quebec's ice storm in 1998 and the Calgary flood in 2013. Recently, she has been studying the effects of space flight on astronauts. This research is leading to the discovery of chemical signatures for risk prediction and early diagnosis of common human diseases.

Metz is also an adjunct professor with the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta. In 2023, she was named a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences, a first for a ULethbridge professor. In addition to being a neuroscience professor, Metz held a Board of Governors Research Chair in Healthy Futures and is one of the founders of the Southern Alberta Genome Sciences Centre.

After completing a BSc at the University of Giessen in Germany, she pursued graduate studies, earning a PhD from ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) in Switzerland. She also completed her habilitation in medicine at the University of Jena in Germany. Habilitation is the top level of higher education in Germany and some other countries; it qualifies individuals to independently teach and conduct research in the context of a university professorship.

Read online.

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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.