



## McLaughlin Research Chair renewed for Biology Professor John McDermott

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Biology Professor John McDermott's appointment as McLaughlin Research Chair in the Faculty of Science has been renewed for a second five-year term. McDermott has held the Chair since 2012.

“John has demonstrated sustained research excellence and established himself as a world leader in cell signaling and differentiation,” says Ray Jayawardhana, dean of the Faculty of Science. “It gives me great pleasure to congratulate him on the successful renewal of his Chair.”

The Chair, funded by a \$1 million donation from the McLaughlin Foundation, supports world-class life sciences research within the Faculty of Science at York University. McDermott focuses on the mechanisms that cause a simple cell to become more specialized. This work is primarily undertaken using cardiac, skeletal and smooth muscle cells and neurons as model systems, and it is aimed at understanding the role of specialized proteins that bind to DNA to orchestrate gene expression. McDermott is particularly interested in studying the basic regulatory mechanisms involved in muscle cellular differentiation.

“It’s a real honor to continue in this capacity as McLaughlin Research Chair,” says McDermott. “This is a fascinating time to be involved in the field of cellular differentiation, with so many advances being made in the understanding of molecular events and the application of this knowledge in the biomedical sphere. In the area of cardiovascular disease, this may prove particularly important because of the health and economic burden of pathologies affecting the heart. I look forward to continuing this work with my group at York and, importantly, integrating this knowledge into teaching and mentoring our students.”

McDermott publishes regularly in top-tier scientific journals and is invited frequently to present his research findings at premier international conferences, including the Gordon Research Conference on Myogenesis in Italy, the EMBO workshop on Muscle Development and Regeneration in Italy and the International MADS conference in New York. In addition, his research program has attracted outstanding trainees that have gone on to pursue successful careers in academia and industry.

During his tenure as the McLaughlin Research Chair, McDermott has also demonstrated an impressive success record in consistently securing external research funds. He currently holds two CIHR operating grants, an NSERC Discovery grant, and a Mitacs Accelerate Grant.