

Fessenden Professorship in Science Innovation (2024)

McGill's Faculty of Science is a very strong promoter and supporter of the discovery-to-innovation continuum. However, the transformation of a discovery into a sound technology requires considerable resources and expertise that are not commonly available to academia. The Faculty is fortunate to be able to muster such resources through the vision and generosity of one of its most devoted benefactors, Dr. John Blachford, PhD (Chemistry).

Inspired by the scientific contributions and inventions of his great uncle, Québec-born Reginald Aubrey Fessenden, Dr. Blachford created the **Fessenden Professorship in Science Innovation Award** in 2007. Reginald Fessenden pioneered radio technology and wireless speech transmission in the early 1900s and went on to hold more than 500 patents while working with the Edison Company. The award was established in the Faculty of Science to accelerate the validation and technology transfer of promising concepts (technology, methods, material and design) that are in the early- or mid-stages of development, and bring them closer to a commercial product and market.

The award provides researchers in the Faculty of Science with the financial funds to: **(i)** enable further exploration or proof-of-principle of a novel concept within the university, thereby adding value and definition to the concept being explored; **(ii)** articulate the most promising concepts in the form of intellectual property (inventions); and **(iii)** promote the transfer of the intellectual property to a new or an established company to generate benefits for Canada. It is neither expected nor necessary for an applicant to cover the entire range of objectives. Instead, the applicant can choose to focus on one or more of these objectives.

Since 2007, Fessenden Professorship in Science Innovation awards, coupled with technology transfer expertise, have served as entry points to government innovation programs such as the NSERC Idea to Innovation (I2I) program, the NSERC-CIHR Collaborative Health Research Projects (CHRP) program, and Government of Québec Industry Partnership programs. Applicants are thus encouraged to think about this award as a stepping stone into other funding opportunities and competitions to further develop their research concept.

Areas of interest

Every discipline in the Faculty of Science is considered an area of interest for this award. The competition seeks to identify and support projects for a proof-of-principle, prototyping, or process validation, and which will position it to be effectively transferred to the many innovation/pre-commercialization vehicles available outside the university sector. Applicants whose research is well positioned for prototyping or proof-of-principle demonstrations are encouraged to apply.

Eligibility

Applicants must hold a tenure track faculty position in the Faculty of Science.

Application format

Applicants must use the template provided to submit their proposal, accompanied by an NSERC Personal Data Form 100, CCV, or equivalent. The CVs of collaborators, if any, should be included.

Specific information as to what to include in the proposal is provided in the proposal template.

Value

Applicants submitting a proposal should include a budget request up to a maximum of \$90k over 2 years. A text-based justification for the funding requested is required. Only 1 or possibly 2 proposals may be awarded, depending on overall budget requests.

The Award may be used to pay all or in part of: (i) research personnel, (ii) travel, (iii) materials and supplies, (iv) market intelligence reports, (v) patent filing.

Duration of Award

Up to two years.

Selection

Proposals are reviewed by a Selection Committee. The Committee will present its recommendations to the Dean of Science, who will make the final decision.

Reporting Requirements

If an applicant is selected for funding, the concept (invention) should be disclosed to McGill's Office of Innovation by filing an online Report of Invention (ROI). The electronic ROI is filed confidentially.

Award recipients will give two presentations to the Dean of Science or delegate to summarize progress and outcomes. Presentations are expected around the mid-point and at the end of the award period. Recipients may also be invited to present to members of the Faculty Advisory Board, and/or at other functions as requested by the Dean of Science.

A written final report is expected within 30 days following the end of the award period.

Questions

If you have questions on the application process, eligible expenses, or would like to discuss the Fessenden Professorship in Science Innovation award in more detail, please contact John Stix or the Research and Grants Office: research.science@mcgill.ca.