



For immediate distribution

Helping to increase the number of women in scientific research

L'Oréal Canada and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO award four fellowships to doctoral and post-doctoral students

Ottawa, November 27, 2007 – In an ongoing effort to help increase the participation of women in scientific research, yesterday evening, at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, L'Oréal Canada and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO awarded fellowships to four doctoral and post doctoral students. The fellowships are part of a partnership program between the two organizations entitled *For Women in Science*, which promotes and supports women's contributions to the scientific community.

During the five years that the partnership has flourished, L'Oréal Canada has already granted close to \$500,000. "Research and innovation are two pillars at the very heart of the L'Oréal identity, and we firmly believe that society cannot progress without science," stated Javier San Juan, President and Chief Executive Officer of L'Oréal Canada. "It is for this reason that we hope to contribute to the research advances being made in Canada by supporting these very promising women researchers."

While the total number of women attending Canadian universities has increased, women nevertheless represent only 16% of faculty members in the natural sciences and engineering disciplines, according to a report from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). Moreover, representation by women is in direct disproportion to the academic ladder; women account for 23% of assistant professors beginning a career but just 9% of full professors. It is essential that the representation rate of women in masters and doctoral programs in these disciplines continues to grow in order to ultimately increase the number of women who choose research as a career.

The world needs science...science needs women

"We need to promote a more inclusive science by encouraging participation from as many different groups as possible, notably young women," added Michèle S. Jean, President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. "This is a global problem; in countries around the world, as one moves up the ladder in scientific research, the number of women diminishes. In undergraduate programs, there is parity in 76% of countries. For graduate programs, however, women represent less than 45% of graduates, and at the doctoral level, just 17% of countries reach parity. It is extremely disturbing to see that the imbalance becomes more pronounced as studies and careers advance."

Ms. Jean continued: "When the 2007 Nobel prizes were announced for science, not one went to a woman. Of the 521 scientific Nobel prizes awarded since 1901, just 12 have gone to women, and two of these were awarded to Marie Curie. Given these statistics, it is sad but hardly surprising to learn that less than 5% of science academy members are women."

Internationally, the L'Oréal group and UNESCO joined forces in 1998 to found the program *For Women in Science*, which aims to promote women in the science domains in all regions of the world. Since 1998, 47 L'Oréal-UNESCO Award Laureates have been recognized for their careers, and 105 UNESCO-L'Oréal International Fellows have been encouraged to pursue their scientific vocations.

"We believe that by showcasing exceptional women through our awards and fellowships, we are creating true role models for the next generation and encouraging women to pursue their research projects," affirmed Ms. Jean.

Four fellowships for laureates from the four corners of the country

Research fellowships support major research projects undertaken by women completing post-doctoral studies in Canadian universities. The objective of these fellowships is to reward excellence and allow exceptional Canadian women researchers, selected by a panel of experts, to pursue and enhance their research projects. The 2007 research fellowships have been awarded to candidates in the pure sciences and engineering fields.

The 2007 Research Fellowships have been granted to:

- **Josephine Tsang, from Edmonton**, who is leading a post-doctoral research project at the University of Alberta on the interaction and molecular structure of prions, which are responsible for illnesses such as mad cow disease in animals and humans.
- **Rowan Thomson, from Ottawa**, who has just accepted a position as research associate in the Radiotherapy Laboratory in Carleton University's Department of Physics and who is conducting computer simulations of radiation therapy to develop a mathematical model able to optimize treatment dosages.

Mentor fellowships are granted to women in doctoral programs and encourage them to continue their studies. These laureates also participate in the Actua mentoring program, where they share their experience and passion for science with girls aged 6 to 17 at summer camps and in workshops and clubs.

The 2007 Mentor Fellowships have been awarded to:

- **Véronique Lecault, from Mirabel**, who is preparing her thesis on haematopoietic stem cell regeneration at the University of British Columbia.
- **Erin Mazerolle, from Dartmouth**, who, as part of her doctoral studies, which begin in January 2008 at Dalhousie University, will seek to enrich our understanding of degenerative diseases such as multiple sclerosis by confirming certain hypotheses raised in her Master's thesis.

About L'Oréal

The L'Oréal Group (of which L'Oréal Canada, headquartered in Montreal, is a wholly-owned subsidiary), is the number one cosmetics company in the world. Since the company was founded in 1907 by chemist Eugène Schueller, the effectiveness and reliability of L'Oréal products have relied on research and innovation. Every year, L'Oréal invests more than 3% of its sales in R&D, representing nearly 3 billion euros over the past ten years. L'Oréal's research activities focus on the hair, skin and hair colour, bringing 4,000 new formulas to its customers every year. More than 50% of L'Oréal's nearly 3000 researchers around the world are women.

About the Canadian Commission for UNESCO

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO's mandate is to act as a forum for governments and civil society, and to mobilize the participation of Canadian organizations and committed individuals in UNESCO's mandated areas: education, natural and social sciences, culture, communication and information.

About the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

NSERC is a federal agency whose role is to make investments in people, discovery and innovation for the benefit of all Canadians. The agency invests in people by supporting some 23,000 university students and postdoctoral fellows in their advanced studies. <http://www.nserc-crnsng.gc.ca/>

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