

# NEWS RELEASE

*For immediate release*

## **UWinnipeg to Benefit from Major Boost for Research in Western Canada**

**TORONTO, January 8, 2007** — Researchers from universities across Western Canada, including The University of Winnipeg, will benefit from a groundbreaking \$88 million federal investment in national high performance computing (HPC) resources addressing some of the most complex and socially relevant research problems in the world today.

UWinnipeg is a partner in WestGrid, one of Canada's seven major HPC consortia that together are creating a pan-Canadian network of HPC facilities. A National Platforms Fund (NPF), announced in support of this unified HPC strategy, has been created from \$78 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and \$10 million from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC). Matching funds from provincial and industry sources will bring total NPF funding to nearly \$180 million.

"This announcement is historic for Canadian research," said Jonathan Schaeffer, a WestGrid co-principal investigator who led WestGrid's participation in the NPF proposal. "When combined with provincial and industry matching funds, WestGrid will acquire more than \$50 million of computing infrastructure to support research in areas such as climate modeling and prediction, deciphering the human genome and solving compelling problems in science and engineering."

This investment marks the first time CFI has identified a specific research infrastructure of strategic priority for the country and brought together all stakeholders — universities, provincial and federal funding agencies — to collaborate on the development of a purposefully shared pan-Canadian resource. UWinnipeg is one of more than 60 partners across Canada.

"This investment opens the door for UWinnipeg researchers to have better access to powerful computing resources, allowing them to compete on a more level playing field with the rest of the world," said Randy Kobes, Chair of UWinnipeg's physics department and the University's WestGrid representative.

UWinnipeg will also receive a new high-powered state-of-the-art computer, visualization software, ongoing technical support and funds toward modification of facilities at the University to house the new system. Equipped with web cameras, the new system will enable faculty members and students to participate in video conferencing in real time, facilitate interfacing between HPC facilities and encourage collaboration between universities.

University of Winnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy applauded the sharing of resources among Western Canada's post-secondary institutions. "This approach particularly benefits smaller universities such as The University of Winnipeg by equipping our researchers with the latest technological innovations to facilitate their research capabilities and also ensure UWinnipeg

faculty and students have equal access to the computer technology as those at the larger universities,” he said. “This investment will also complement UWinnipeg’s new Science Complex and Richardson College for the Environment when it opens in 2009.”

The process leading up to the NPF announcement mobilized Canada’s entire HPC community — previously operating as separate regional consortia competing for resources — to work together on the development of a unified HPC strategy for Canada. This major investment will ultimately benefit more than 6,000 investigators performing intensive computationally-based research across the country.

“This represents a major leap forward for Canada’s HPC community,” said Dr. Eliot Phillipson, President and CEO of CFI. “This investment will provide researchers with the tools to solve large-scale computational problems that we could not even have imagined tackling 10 years ago.

The \$88 million federal investment announced today breaks down as follows:

- \$60 million was awarded by CFI under its *National Platforms Fund* (NPF). This new program was designed to provide the Canadian research community with infrastructure and resources that serve the needs of researchers working in a wide variety of research areas at institutions across the country.
- Another \$18 million was awarded by CFI under its existing *Infrastructure Operating Fund* (IOF), which assists institutions with the incremental operating and maintenance costs associated with new infrastructure projects.
- Finally, NSERC has committed a minimum of \$10 million over 5 years to help fund the operating costs associated with the new HPC infrastructure investment.

In addition:

- The \$88 million is expected to be matched by provincial and industry sources to bring the total NPF funding to nearly \$180 million.

*WestGrid (Western Canada Research Grid) operates high performance computing (HPC), collaboration and visualization infrastructure across western Canada. With 14 partner institutions across four provinces, WestGrid is Canada’s largest HPC consortium. Its partners include all universities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba as well as The Banff Centre.*

*The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is an independent corporation created by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure. The CFI’s mandate is to strengthen the capacity of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and non-profit research institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development that benefits Canadians.*

*NSERC is a federal agency whose role is to make investments in people, discovery and innovation for the benefit of all Canadians. The agency supports some 22,000 university students and postdoctoral fellows in their advanced studies and funds more than 10,000 university professors every year. Over the last 10 years, NSERC has invested \$6 billion in basic research, university-industry projects, and the training of Canada’s next generation of scientists and engineers.*

*Located in the heart of downtown, The University of Winnipeg is a compact, diverse, multicultural academic community committed to access and excellence. Home to more than 9,200 full- and*

*part-time students, UWinnipeg has been ranked by our graduates in the Top Ten of all Canadian universities when asked about their “Entire Educational Experience” (Maclean’s Graduate Survey, June 2006). The Globe & Mail 2006 Report Card gives The University of Winnipeg an overall ‘A’ grade in the areas of quality of education, teaching quality, class sizes, faculty-student interaction, and the availability of faculty outside classroom hours. Find out why. Visit [www.uwinnipeg.ca](http://www.uwinnipeg.ca)*

-30-

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