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MEDIA RELEASE

Beakerhead school for science communicators blasts off

[Calgary, Canada] — Cirque du Soleil has a school. The National Ballet has a school. Now Beakerhead has a school.

The renowned Banff Science Communications program is moving to Beakerhead and growing into a program that offers courses for scientists and communications professional across the country.

“The pressure on scientists to be strong communicators is growing, and their appetite to share their research with the public is increasing too. So we will be offering courses across the country with our focus, as always, on thinking of the audience first,” says Jay Ingram, chair of the program, dubbed SciComm.

The two-week Banff summer intensive held in Banff for the past 10 years developed a reputation for being both challenging and transformational. Part of the program’s success is attributed to the faculty members, rated among the best science communicators in the world. The new school will work with the same faculty members and offer shorter courses across the country. The legendary two-week intensive in Banff will continue to be held every three years and the next is scheduled for August 2018.

“After taking the program, I thought differently about things – my brain just didn’t work the same way. It completely flipped the way I talk to the public as a scientist, and it has been very liberating. The only way to describe the impact is profound,” says Rob Thacker, physicist and Canada Research Chair at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, and now a part-time radio host.

Funding for the Beakerhead Science Communications program is provided by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). Additional support is provided by the host institutions and scholarship sponsors. The launch of the program coincides with Science Odyssey, ten days of discovery of Canadian science organized by NSERC.

“NSERC is proud to be leading the charge on Science Odyssey, a new national celebration of science, technology, engineering and math. Fostering a science culture in Canada is one of NSERC’s priorities and Science Odyssey will help make science part of the conversation around the dinner table. Our excellent partners like *Beakerhead* are bringing science out of the labs and directly to Canadian youth. We hope to see many families out enjoying events in their communities,” says Dr. Mario Pinto, president of NSERC.

Most Beakerhead Science Communications courses are four-day intensives, and require participants to stay in residence for the duration. A maximum of 20 participants are accepted. Details can be found at beakerhead.com/scicomm.

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