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**MEDIA RELEASE**

# Backgrounder: Finegood to head Michael Smith Foundation

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Simon Fraser University professor **Diane Finegood** will become president and CEO of the **Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research** effective March 1, 2012.

A professor in SFU's **department of biomedical physiology and kinesiology**, Finegood is internationally known for her research on the development of both juvenile and adult diabetes.

As a scientific director at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, she was pivotal in guiding Canada's diabetes, obesity and chronic disease prevention research agendas.

Finegood is also the executive director of the CAPTURE project (Canadian Platform to increase Usage of Real World Evidence), which aims to support continuous system learning to improve the primary prevention of chronic disease.

To date, she has been principal investigator or program director on more than \$13 million in operating research grants and contracts, and co-investigator on another \$12 million.

As a mentor, she inspired dozens of new investigators on key health issues and served on numerous health and research related boards. She continues to be a popular health and science communicator among media.

Finegood spent much of the past decade (2000-2008) steering the CIHR's **Institute of Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes** as scientific director, focusing its resources on Canada's obesity epidemic, including its impact on diabetes.

"I'm excited by the opportunity to work with the Board, staff, volunteers and many stakeholders of the MSFHR," says Finegood. "I've already had the privilege of working at the national level to advance strategic health research agendas, and I look forward to applying this experience to help British Columbians have the best health and health care system possible."

"Throughout her career, Diane has worked to narrow the gap between health research and real-world applications," says SFU **President Andrew Petter**. "In the process, she has significantly enhanced our understanding of some of society's most pressing health issues. On behalf of the entire SFU community, I applaud her appointment to the Michael Smith Foundation

and wish her continued success in her new role."

Finegood earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering ([University of Michigan](#)), a master's in biomedical engineering (Northwestern), and a PhD in physiology and biophysics ([University of Southern California](#)).

Combining her talents as a chemical and biomedical engineer with those of physiology, Finegood used sophisticated mathematical models to track the turnover of cells in the development of diabetes.

"I didn't plan to specialize in diabetes research, but my supervisor was applying mathematics to the study of glucose metabolism and kinetics - that sparked my interest in diabetes and connected me to diabetes researchers," she recalls.

In 1987 she joined the [University of Alberta](#)'s department of medicine. Ten years later, she started work in SFU's kinesiology department.

Finegood says she is privileged to be involved in work that advances research and knowledge translation that can potentially help the millions of Canadians affected by diabetes.

#### Other milestones:

- Finegood received the 2011 [EW Crampton Award](#) from [McGill's Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences](#), in conjunction with its [Nutrition and Food Science Centre](#), in recognition of distinguished service in fields dealing with nutrition and food.
- This year, she also received the [Canadian Obesity Network's](#) Mentorship award. In 2009, she was given their Distinguished Lecturer award for outstanding contributions to the obesity research community in Canada.
- The [Canadian Diabetes Association](#) honoured Finegood in 2008 with its prestigious [Frederick G. Banting award](#) for her contributions to the study of obesity and diabetes. The award, named after the Canadian Nobel laureate who co-discovered insulin, recognizes contributions to preventing diabetes and chronic disease in Canada or improving the quality of life of individuals affected by the disease.
- Finegood received Canada's [Top 100 Women Award](#) in 2006, recognizing her "trailblazing and trendsetting" work.
- In 2003, a nationwide environmental survey of researchers, policymakers and stakeholder organizations concluded that the Institute of Metabolism, Nutrition and Diabetes, under Finegood's lead, should direct \$15 million in research funds to a range of national research projects reflecting a strategy to combat obesity.
- Finegood received a [YWCA Woman of Distinction](#) award in 2002 and in 2001, SFU's [B.C. Sugar Achievement Award](#), for bringing distinction to the university and B.C.
- In 1999, Finegood and a team of researchers received \$2.7 million towards diabetes research from the [Juvenile Diabetes Foundation of Canada](#) and the Medical Research Council to set up a national network of top researchers whose goal was to determine how to prevent beta-cell death.
- Finegood received the Canadian Diabetes Association's Young Scientist award in 1995.

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