**SFU Press Releases Collection**

These archival copies have been generated from web press releases maintained and originally written by SFU Communications and Marketing. Where possible, an effort has been made to preserve the public comments left on the website as well as any included photos or other images. All textual content should be faithful to the original press releases; contact numbers have been removed but they have not otherwise been altered in any way. However, this collection of documents spans multiple generations of web authoring software and not all formatting will be exact.

MEDIA RELEASE

# High school student scores big with mentoring

May 08, 2014



**Contact:**
Mark Brockman (East Van. resident), 778.782.5583, mark_brockman@sfu.ca
Gursev Anmole (Burnaby resident), 778.782.8889, gsa26@sfu.ca
Nicole Ticea, nicolet016@yorkhouse.ca
Cecilia Kalaw, health sciences faculty, 778.782.7037, ckalaw@sfu.ca
Carol Thorbes, PAMR, 778.782.3035, cthorbes@sfu.ca

*Note: Due to her extremely busy schedule Nicole may not be able to respond to email immediately. Interviews with her can be arranged through Gursev and Cecilia. Media could also reach Nicole through her mother Cremona by calling her cell number: 778.838.0513, or by email: cticea@shaw.ca.*

**Photos:** http://at.sfu.ca/MmQKjJ

When Gursev Anmole, a Simon Fraser University graduate student, saw what a high school student he was mentoring for a regional competition had achieved, he was as elated as her. Anmole knew Nicole Ticea, a grade 10, York House independent school student, is destined for great things.

Ticea's project to develop an early-stage HIV infection test that is nearly as simple as a pregnancy test has clinched her first place in the 2014 B.C. Regional Sanofi BioGENEius Challenge. After beating 16 other provincial contestants, she now moves onto the Sanofi BioGENEius Challenge Canada (SBCC) at the National Research Council's headquarters in Ottawa on May 22.

"What Nicole has accomplished gave me a bigger picture on my own work, which involves analyzing immunity controlling T-cell receptors to see how they can be used in developing an HIV vaccine," explains Anmole.

"Nicole's work really made me realize what a big difference a fast easy-to-administer test for early stage HIV infection could make in prolonging, if not saving, thousands of lives in developing countries."

The test could be invaluable in remote regions, such as Africa, where there are little or no sophisticated lab facilities.

The SBCC is a national version of nine regional competitions that test the genius of high school and CEGEP students across Canada in making life-changing biotechnical discoveries. Regional winners, such as Ticea, are catapulted into the national final, for which the 2014 winners will be announced on Friday, May 23 at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre.

The top two individual national winners will go on to the International BioGENEius Challenge on June 22-25 in San Diego, California. The international first place winner receives a US$7,500 cash award.

Ticea, who is already passionate about health sciences and dreams of making discoveries that improve people's lives, conceived of her SBCC project last summer. A SBCC review committee deemed her entry—*Isothermic Nucleic Acid Amplification System for Point-of-Care HIV Diagnosis*—a worthy regional competition entry.

Ticea was eventually matched up with two SFU researchers to help her hone her project for presentation to a panel of judges from B.C.'s scientific, education and biotechnological communities, as part of the regional competition.

Mark Brockman, an associate professor of molecular biology and biochemistry and a health sciences faculty member, and his graduate student Anmole helped Ticea prove her invention works in lab experiments.

Under Brockman's and Anmole's supervision, Ticea proved that a test she developed could potentially analyze a pinprick of blood on a tiny lab chip to identify quickly whether someone has been recently infected with HIV.

For Ticea, juggling hours of scientific research and lab experiments, alongside schoolwork, athletics, extracurricular activities, and giving up her social life, was well worth her victory in the lab and competition.

"Being in the lab really reinforced what I already knew," says Ticea, "that scientific research involves dedication, determination, long hours and a deep-rooted love for the field that makes sacrifices worthwhile."

**Background:**

The York House student will also be one of 12 Team Canada members at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair on May 11-17 in Los Angeles, California.

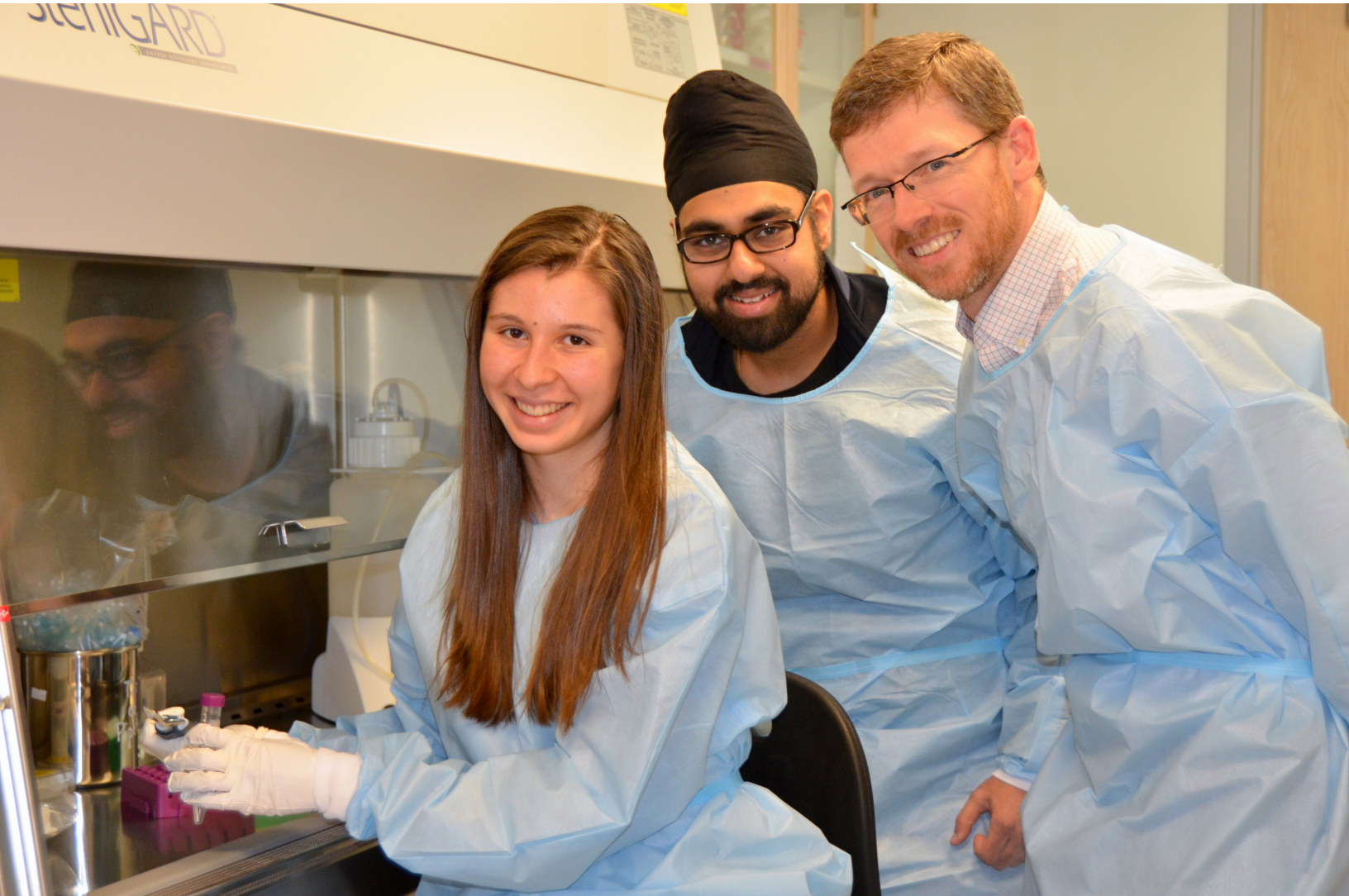
The fair is the world's largest pre-college celebration of science. It brings together more than 1,500 students globally to compete for more than $4 million in awards, scholarships, tuition grants, internships, scientific field trips and grand prizes, including a US$75,000 college scholarship.

Simon Fraser University is consistently ranked among Canada's top comprehensive universities and is one of the top 50 universities in the world under 50 years old. With campuses in Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey, B.C., SFU engages actively with the community in its research and teaching, delivers almost 150 programs to more than 30,000 students, and has more than 125,000 alumni in 130 countries.

-30-

*Simon Fraser University: Engaging Students. Engaging Research. Engaging Communities.*

- About SFU
- SFU News


STERILGARD