

**BROCK UNIVERSITY
MEDIA RELEASE**

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Brock takes the lead as province funds \$2.86 million for climate change research for grape and wine industry

As vineyards struggle to survive the damages inflicted by increasingly erratic weather, the Government of Ontario has given \$2.86 million so a team of scientists can better understand how climate change is impacting Ontario's grape and wine industry.

Brock University Professor Gary Pickering will lead a team of 19 researchers conducting extensive research in a number of climate-related disciplines that have become a threat to Ontario grape growers.

The announcement was made today at Brock by Glen Murray, Ontario's Minister of Research and Innovation. The funding comes from the Ontario Research Fund - Research Excellence program, which helps cover the cost of conducting groundbreaking, internationally significant research.

The government has said that supporting Ontario research is part of its strategy to create the next generation of jobs and make innovation a driving force of economic growth for the province. Ontario's grape and wine industry contributes close to \$1 billion annually to the province's economy.

"Dr. Pickering and his team at Brock are making discoveries that will prepare our grape and wine industry for the challenges of climate change," Murray said at today's announcement. "Our government is proud to support innovation in the Niagara region, and to support researchers who fuel our economy with new ideas."

Pickering, a biological sciences professor who is also a researcher in Brock's Cool Climate Viticulture and Oenology Institute (CCOVI), said the evidence is "irrefutable".

"Adapting to climate change represents arguably the single most urgent challenge facing the world," he said. "Today's announcement will allow the grape and wine sector in our province to be in the best position possible over the coming years to successfully respond to current and future challenges through innovative research and networking."

Brock president Jack Lightstone said this new research initiative fits squarely within the university's relationship with the surrounding community and with the private sector.

"Brock is committed to being a partner that helps strengthen our broader community in many ways, including economically," said Lightstone. " We are grateful for this investment by the Ontario government that enables us to play a key role in a research initiative that supports our grape and wine industry."

Pickering, the recipient of numerous research awards, is passionate about wine and wine education, and is working on a number of books. He is also North American editor of the Journal of Food, Agriculture & Environment and a member of the Honorary Editorial Board for the International Journal of Wine Research.

Today's announcement is part of a larger investment that will support 248 researchers across the province. Including today's investment, Ontario has committed \$556.6 million for 140 projects under the Ontario Research Fund - Research Excellence program, and leveraged more than \$1.1 billion in commitments from more than 650 industry and other partners.

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