

New initiative focuses on mining innovation and training

BY SCOTT LARSON, THE STARPHOENIX APRIL 12, 2014

About \$600,000 is being put forward to create the Mitacs Industry Executive in Residence-Minerals (MIER-Minerals) at the University of Saskatchewan.

"The objective is to increase the capacity of education and training, and research and development in the province," said Engin Ozberk, who will assume the top position of MIER-Minerals.

MIER-Minerals is being funded through a partnership between Saskatchewan's International Minerals Innovation Institute (IMII), the national research and training organization Mitacs and University of Saskatchewan. The goal is to support innovation, research and training to enhance the global competitiveness of these industries and encourage collaboration between companies and universities across Canada.

Ozberk, who is also IMII executive director and senior technical adviser, will focus on eight areas of importance to the minerals industry: Workplace health and safety, environmental sustainability, exploration, mining, processing, social licence, policy research and economics of global commodities.

Ozberk will also work with other Saskatchewan and Canadian postsecondary institutions to build relationships and multi-disciplinary projects across the country, as well

as internationally in these priority areas.

The two-year pilot project will include at least 10 student internships, a post-doctoral fellow position and international exchanges. Depending on the number of projects involved, combined investment by IMII and Mitacs could exceed \$1 million over two years, Ozberk said, adding it gives them the capacity to do more work at the university.

U of S president Ilene Busch-Vishniac said government, industry and the university working together will spur innovation. "It is important that the province's largest educational institution works alongside government and industry to identify and create new research initiatives that will lead to innovation in the mineral sector," Busch-Vishniac said.

The MIER-Minerals is the first of several such positions Mitacs will support nationally across various industry sectors.

"This first MIER will create a blueprint for forging new industryuniversity collaborations, while training the next generation of skilled innovators these industries need to compete in the global minerals

marketplace," Ozberk said.

"This partnership among the University of Saskatchewan, the IMII and Mitacs will play a leading role in supporting innovation within Canada's mining and minerals sector," added Arvind Gupta, Mitacs CEO and scientific director.

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