

UBC REPORTS

4 DIGGING FOR CLUES 5 BOYS DON'T CRY 7 REHAB ROBOT 9 WALK THE TALK 10 SMART FORMS 11 ICE-AGE MEGAFLOOD



UBC PhD candidate T. Todd Jones (above) custom fits a leatherback sea turtle with its own soft harness.

PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Harnessing Turtle Power

Giant leatherbacks have avoided study, face extinction

By Brian Lin

They have been around for more than 100 million years and survived the extinction of the dinosaurs. But human activity and ignorance in the past 50 years has left only 40,000 leatherback sea turtles swimming in our oceans,

and as bycatch from fisheries activities, they could be extinct as early as 2015 in the Pacific Ocean.

Now a UBC research biologist may have found the key to saving these quietly charismatic animals from the brink of extinction – with the help of some rubber hose and fishing line.

At 250-550 kg and about the size of a Volkswagen Beetle®, an adult leatherback turtle is a sight to behold. But few people have the privilege in their lifetime to witness these critically endangered animals due to their enigmatic lifestyle and interactions with fisheries.

“Leatherbacks are oceanic-pelagic animals,”

continued on page 3



Katriina Ilves on a school visit where she demonstrates scientific experiments.

Volunteers Foster Science Fun in B.C. Schools

By Brian Lin

Young scientists at UBC are donning their lab coats in elementary schools and showing kids how fun – and rewarding – science can be.

Established in 1996, the UBC Let's Talk Science Partnership Program (LTS) matches UBC science students with elementary and high school teachers across B.C. to augment their curriculum with hands-on science experiments and one-on-one mentorship.

With more than 250 undergraduate and graduate student volunteers, the UBC program is the largest in Canada and last year reached a record 7,218 students in 70 B.C. schools.

continued on page 6

PHOTO: DARIN DUECK



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IN THE NEWS

Highlights of UBC Media Coverage in March 2007. COMPILED BY BASIL WAUGH

Researchers Debunk Belief Species Evolve Faster in Tropics

Scores of international news media, including the *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported on a UBC study that says, contrary to common belief, species do not evolve faster in warmer climates.

Jason Weir, a Zoology PhD candidate in the Faculty of Science, and his mentor Prof. Dolph Schluter, director of the UBC Biodiversity Research Centre, found that speciation – the process in which one species splits into two – takes place faster in temperate zones than in the tropics. Their findings were published in the journal *Science*.

Study Urges Hong Kong to Reel in Fishing Industry

Reuters and *Agence France Presse* reported on a UBC study that says Hong Kong would reap economic and environmental benefits if it pared down its fishing fleet and introduced no fishing zones.

The report, prepared for the World Wildlife Fund by UBC's Fisheries Centre, says fish stocks in Hong Kong have been depleted by poor management and pollution and urges its government to use a budget surplus to take action.

“The gains are big enough to cover the loss and costs we see in the few sectors,” said UBC Prof. Rashid Sumaila.

Prof Named Poet Laureate of Vancouver

The *Globe and Mail* and *Vancouver Sun* reported on the naming of UBC Professor Emeritus George McWhirter as Vancouver's first poet laureate.

During his honorary two-year term, McWhirter will work to raise the status of poetry, language and the arts in the everyday consciousness of Vancouverites.



A UBC study urges Hong Kong to reel in its fishing industry.

A former head of UBC's creative writing program, McWhirter is a recipient of the Commonwealth Poetry Prize, the Killam Prize for Teaching and the Sam Black Award for Education through Art.

In an interview with the *Globe and Mail*, the sixty-eight-year-old said he is planning a series of readings, a civic web page for poetry and a “poetry map of the city” – an anthology of local poetry about Vancouver's streets, alleys and other geographic features.

Can Animals Predict Natural Disasters?

Australia's *The Age* and the U.K.'s *New Scientist* reported on research by UBC Psychology Prof. Stanley Coren that suggests some animals have the ability to provide advance warning of natural disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis.

In a 2001 study of 200 Vancouver dogs, Coren found that roughly 50 per cent of the canines exhibited increased anxiety the day prior to a Washington State earthquake about 240 kilometres south of Vancouver. **R**

LETTERS

What is the heart and soul of UBC?

In his article *Celebrating Research* (UBC Reports, March issue), Vice President of Research John Hepburn states “Research is the heart and soul of a great university.” Colloquially, heart refers to courage or bravery while soul is the centre of our moral/ethical being. For those involved in human and animal research, the ethical review boards provide these services. Specifically, they ensure the experiments are ethical and are not too courageous or perhaps foolhardy. For those involved in more traditional research such as the analysis of history or literature, the creative task is to provide a more insightful understanding that is consistent with the known facts.

However, Vice President Hepburn inadvertently poses a good question, namely, what is the heart and soul of a university? Answers to this question would provide a valuable insight to the administration for developing a truly great university. For example, one might argue that the library system which stores and retrieves the knowledge base of our civilization allows the student and faculty to achieve their educational and research goals. If one takes this position, then the library system would be a resource that is strongly supported. Similarly, the achievements of undergraduates after graduation, reflects, in part, the success of our educational programs. For example, President Petch of the University of Victoria once argued that the undergraduate students are the true *raison d'être* of a university. Clearly, the number of potential answers is large and as elusive as the soul, but suggesting one area of university activity is the heart and soul is at best presumptive. Perhaps we would all benefit from broader view of our community.

Campbell Clark
Professor, Department of Psychiatry

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PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

T. Todd Jones has spent the last two years looking after a pair of leatherback sea turtles 24-7.

says T. Todd Jones, a PhD candidate in the Dept. of Zoology, “which means that they are programmed to swim continuously in open waters and are known to swim the entire Pacific Basin to reach their nesting beach – that’s 13,000 km one way.”

“Unlike the other six species of sea turtles, which forage along the coast or in the reefs, leatherbacks, named after their rubber-textured ‘soft’ shells, have no concept of barriers or boundaries. If you keep them in a tank, they would keep swimming into the walls or dive into the bottom.”

For this reason, researchers have

eats a day, the equivalent of 20 per cent of its body mass. Volunteers even jiggle the jelly strips underwater to simulate jellyfish movement, which attracts the turtles over to the food.

As a result of these innovations, Jones and his team have achieved the near impossible – they have raised two healthy leatherbacks from hatchlings since July 2005. At almost two years old and weighing in just under 30 kg, the pair marks the first time more than one leatherback has been raised in captivity, providing crucial comparative data for research and conservation.

leatherbacks could reach sexual maturity in as little as seven years, compared to 15-30 years for other sea turtles, provided that food sources are abundant. What he has learned about leatherback behaviour, diet and physiology in the past two years will also help create protocols for rehabilitating adult leatherbacks that are caught in fishing nets.

The groundbreaking work earned him the Archie Carr Biology Award, named after the father of sea turtle conservation, at a recent gathering of scientists and conservationists in South Carolina.

At 250-550 kg and about the size of a Volkswagen... an adult leatherback turtle is a sight to behold. But few people have the privilege in their lifetime to witness these critically endangered animals.

had trouble keeping and studying the turtles to find the secrets to their conservation.

Jones came up with an ingenious – and deceptively simple – solution. He custom-fitted hatchlings with harnesses made of soft rubber hoses and attached them to the top of the pool with a fishing string, reminiscent of a Jolly Jumper®. Immersed in filtered seawater heated to a perfect 24 degrees Celsius – the same temperature as their Subtropical nursing waters – each leatherback is given its own “infinity pool.”

“As far as they’re concerned, they’re swimming freely in the ocean,” says the Orlando, Florida native, who grew up surfing, snorkeling and fishing the beaches where five species of sea turtles breed and nest.

He also pioneered a recipe to satisfy the leatherbacks’ discriminating appetite. “They eat jellyfish almost exclusively, which is quite different from all other sea turtles,” says Jones. “We blend human grade squid and vitamins with gelatin to create jelly strips that are similar in consistency to jellyfish.”

It takes a half-dozen undergraduate volunteers working seven days a week to clean, prepare and hand-feed the four kg of food that each leatherback

Researchers around the world have attempted to raise leatherbacks in captivity since 1936. Only two other researchers have been able to maintain a leatherback for more than a year. In 1988, Vincent Bels, a researcher with the Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle in France raised a leatherback for more than three years.

By feeding the juvenile leatherbacks to satiation and meticulously keeping track of their diet and growth, Jones has been able to determine a female leatherback’s maximum growth rate. He has found they need 3.3 million kilojoules (or more than 800 million calories) of energy to reach sexual maturity.

Based on Jones’s findings,

“My goal as a scientist is to find out as much I can about these critically endangered animals so we can inform the most effective and appropriate conservation efforts,” says Jones, who has worked with sea turtles for more than a decade.

His message to humans? “We now know the amount of energy it takes for a leatherback to reach adulthood. If we continue to over-use, over-fish and contribute to global warming, there simply won’t be enough resources in the ocean for them to sustain themselves and survive the population decimation due to fisheries practices.

“Everything we do could be affecting a leatherback turtle somewhere,” says Jones. **R**

Quick Facts About Leatherback Sea Turtles

» A sexually mature female leatherback returns to the beach where she was hatched to breed and nest every two to three years. She could lay as many as 65-85 eggs and then disappear into open ocean until she is ready to breed again.

» The hatchlings, small enough to fit in the palm of the hand, must brave predators both on land and at sea, and typically swim non-stop for 36 hours using only nutrients stored in their underbelly. Those who survive are often never seen again until they return as first-time mothers. These are called the “lost years,” because up to now, scientists didn’t know for sure how long it takes for them to become sexually mature or where they went for nursery grounds.

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» In the wild, one in 1,000 hatchlings make it to adulthood due to a combination of natural causes and human activities.

» Fisheries bycatch is the number one cause of death for adult leatherbacks in the wild.

» Leatherbacks are the only species of sea turtle with a “soft” shell, which is black with white dots. Each leatherback turtle has a unique pattern, which expands as it grows.





Zhichun Jing studies the dynamics between humans and the environment over several millennia to find sustainable models. He holds a replica of a 1,200 BC ivory cup from the Shang Dynasty of China's Bronze Age.

PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

environmental conditions,” says Jing, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Asia-Pacific Archeology and will be launching a new study to further integrate archeological and ecological data.

He says that as the world's most populous country, China faces severe environmental problems – far surpassing any other. But to meet immediate needs, China, like many nations, will often go ahead with projects like dams that end up destroying homes, history and the irreplaceable ecology of flood plains.

“The long-term perspective may help us better understand and evaluate current environmental debates, interpretations and even policies,” says Jing. “If there is vivid data presented, we can convince people to act for long- instead of short-term benefits.”

At present, scholars who grapple with sustainability issues usually have access to data that cover one or two centuries. In contrast, archeological records span thousands of years, says Jing.

His study will peel away the layers of China's 6,000-year history of human and environmental interactions, focusing on the Yellow River valley where Anyang numbers among many early settlements.

Starting 8,500 years ago, China's early people witnessed the rapid growth of agricultural communities followed by the development of urban centres. Jing will assess the archeologically visible consequences of these cities, their operation as political and economic centres and their decline during China's Bronze Age, the period between about 2,000 and 771 BC.

“We'll be studying the people's responses and strategies to environmental changes, either climatic or human induced,” says Jing. “We'll also investigate the changing biodiversity.”

Using an interdisciplinary approach,

continued on page 5

Prof Digs for Clues to our Survival

By Lorraine Chan

In the **Yellow River valley** of northern China, Zhichun Jing digs through the remains of long-ago cities to find insights for modern survival.

Over the past 10 years, Jing has been

excavating the cities of the late Shang Dynasty. Flourishing between 1,200 and 1,050 BC, the Shang was one of the first literate civilizations in China and East Asia. Its last capital city was Yinxu, where the present-day city of Anyang now stands.

An assistant professor in the Dept. of

Anthropology, Jing studies the relationship between human and ecological systems in early China to investigate why certain civilizations rise or fall.

“The past can shed light on how we tackle present and future problems like the sustainability of human societies and

POLICY #117 CALL FOR COMMENTS

Background

Policy #118 *Records Management* was approved in 1994 and minor changes were made in 2005 to accommodate the opening of UBC Okanagan. This policy requires the University to maintain a standard records management program in order to permit the efficient maintenance and retrieval of information and to meet the University's obligations under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. This policy identifies the Vice-President, Academic and Provost, the Vice President, Administration and Finance, and the Vice-President, Students as the responsible executives.

Policy #117 *Records Retention and Disposition at UBC Vancouver* was approved in 1996 and minor changes were made in 2005. This policy provides practical guidelines for the application of the general principles enunciated in Policy #118. In addition, it ensures that any destruction of records is carried out in accordance with an appropriate retention schedule developed by the University Archivist and approved by the University Records Disposition Committee. Finally, this policy identifies all Vice-Presidents as the responsible executives.

Proposed Draft

The revised Policy #117 amalgamates current Policies #117 and #118 into one comprehensive Records Management Policy with the following features:

- a coordinated institutional records management program;
- published record retention schedules;
- clarification of the responsibilities of University officers and employees; and
- direction of departments and administration units to the University Archives for guidance.

The proposed draft identifies the Vice-President, Administration and Finance as the responsible executive. The proposed draft would apply to all departments and administrative units at both campuses of the University, to all University records, and to all University officers and employees.

We are now seeking advice and comments from the University community.

For the full text of the proposed Policy #117 follow the link at <http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/news/index.html>.

Please submit feedback to the Office of the University Counsel at university.counsel@ubc.ca. All feedback should be submitted by 4:30 pm on Wednesday, April 18, 2007.

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It is expected that, subject to feedback from this public consultation process, the proposed policy will be submitted to the Board of Governors with a request for final approval at its regularly scheduled meeting in May of 2007.

Big Boys Don't Cry

By Hilary Thomson

It's a tragic paradox – more women report being depressed, but more men kill themselves.

Two UBC researchers want to find out what lies behind this alarming puzzle, a phenomenon seen in most western countries.

John Oliffe, an assistant professor of Nursing and John Ogrodniczuk, an assistant professor of Psychiatry, have teamed up as principal investigators in a pilot project that will examine the relationship between depression and masculinity.

“We want to learn about young men's experiences of depression and identify what works and doesn't work for them in terms of getting help,” says Oliffe. “The answers will help create more effective, gender-relevant interventions.”

Suicide rates are four times higher among men than women in Canada, with men aged 20-29 having the highest rate of suicide, according to Health Canada. Among Canadians of all ages, four out of every five suicides are male, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada. Statistics Canada reports that in 2003, the last year for which data is available, more than 2,900 men committed suicide.

The relationship between men's low rate of reported depression and high suicide rates generates many questions about men's beliefs, their mental health “literacy” and behaviours and how their complaints of depression symptoms are being regarded by general practitioners, say the researchers.

In the only study of its kind in Canada, the researchers will begin by recruiting 15 men from UBC, or other universities or colleges, with more participants added as the project develops. Participants will be of diverse backgrounds, aged 19-25, with access to mental health care services and who have been diagnosed or have self-identified as being depressed.

Oliffe and Ogrodniczuk want to find out how these men interacted with services, their own coping strategies, and the characteristics of their

depression. Some factors that can contribute to depression in college-age men include academic competition, social isolation, cultural pressures and issues around sexual orientation. Unhealthy coping mechanisms can include violent behaviour, risky sexual behaviour and over-drinking.

Commonly described masculine ideals such as stoicism and self-reliance and expected roles as protector and provider are well known to influence men's health-care experiences, says Oliffe.

“Society says men are supposed to be robust – to risk rather than promote their health to demonstrate physical and sexual prowess,” adds Ogrodniczuk, who is also a member of the UBC Institute for Mental Health and Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute (VCHRI). “They tend to operate on a performance-based model of health.”

The perceptions can lead to denial of illness, self-monitoring of symptoms and reluctance to go to the doctor, meaning symptoms are often severe when attention is finally sought.

“There is also stigma associated with having depression with implications for attracting a partner and for success in work and study. So, some men might not want the diagnosis,” Ogrodniczuk says.

A key aspect of the research is to look at mental health care services from a client perspective and to give men an opportunity to provide feedback on how services do and do not work for them. The researchers expect that pilot data will help develop an improved screening tool for men in distress.

For example, typical diagnostic questions about crying frequency may be irrelevant to a man's experience of depression and therefore not a reliable criterion. Also, the researchers hope to produce gender-appropriate treatment approaches that may include workshops, coaching, mentoring or online chat rooms and support.

Following the pilot, Oliffe and Ogrodniczuk will apply for research funding for a multi-site



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Helping young men get help for depression calls for gender-relevant strategies, say researchers.

province-wide project that will look at depression in men aged 20-29 in the general population.

For more information on the pilot study, contact Oliffe at oliffe@nursing.ubc.ca. Participants will receive an honorarium of \$30 to

acknowledge the 1-1.5 hours spent completing a confidential questionnaire and individual interview.

The project is funded by the B.C. Mental Health and Addictions Research Network.

VCHRI is the research body

of Vancouver Coastal Health and the fourth largest research institute in Canada. In academic partnership with UBC, VCHRI brings innovation and discovery to patient care, advancing healthier lives in communities across B.C., Canada and beyond. **R**

Suicide facts:

- » 4,000 Canadians commit suicide each year
- » For men, suicide rates are highest in the 20s and after 60
- » In Canada, suicide rates are highest in August and late July
- » Of people with severe depression, 15 per cent commit suicide
- » Suicide accounts for 24 per cent of all deaths among Canadians aged 15-24; 16 per cent for those aged 25-44

Sources:
Mood Disorders
Society of Canada;
Dr. Ciaran Mulhollan.

Potential depression symptoms:

- » Reduced energy and diminished activity
- » Poor self-esteem or self-confidence
- » Decreased interest in sex
- » Crying for no reason
- » Poor appetite
- » Ideas of guilt and unworthiness
- » Pervasive low mood
- » Poor concentration
- » Disturbed sleep

Suicide risk factors:

- » Age
- » Unemployment
- » Social isolation
- » Chronic illnesses

DIGGING FOR CLUES *continued from page 4*

Jing and his team will employ archaeology, geology, paleography, isotope chemistry and palynology (the study of pollen and spores). Tools such as high-resolution pollen analysis of lake sediments and paleobotanical study of plant remains will augment an archaeological survey of prehistoric settlements. From this, Jing says they'll be able to witness the cycles and consequences of social and natural actions over several millennia.

“The archaeological record encodes hundreds of situations in which societies were able to develop sustainable relationships with their environments, and thousands of situations in which the relationships with their environments were mutually destructive.”

Deciphering the worldview and mindset of a specific time and place can also reveal important clues, says Jing. For example, the material evidence turned up from Shang

excavations reveals that in the early years, the first cities were going gangbusters creating new technology and arts.

“The Shang people invented writing, possibly for communication among different ethnic groups. They imported horse-driven chariots from the Near East or Central Asia, and rapidly absorbed ideas from other cultures.”

However, after a century the Shang vitality slackened. The initial diversity and creativity

devolved into a dull sameness. “By the end we see that things like their pottery, architecture and artwork had become standardized and simplified.”

Jing says this phenomenon in the archaeological record suggests that people had less freedom to express their individuality and became less creative.

“When a society becomes rigid and homogeneous, there's greater potential for collapse.”

Jing's study has received

support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, the B.C. Knowledge Development Fund, the National Science Foundation in the United States and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholar Exchange. International partners for his project include the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. **R**

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SCIENCE FUN

continued from page 1

“One of the biggest frustrations for any scientist is seeing scientific information mis-communicated or misrepresented,” says David Kent, a PhD candidate studying stem-cell biology and an LTS coordinator since 2004.

“The best way to tackle this problem is to educate youth, giving them the knowledge and tools necessary to make their own decisions.”

Some of the more extensive programs that LTS runs have volunteers devoting anywhere from two to 40 hours a week, and involve volunteer visits to schools from Vancouver’s eastside to rural communities as far away as Houston, B.C., to carry out hands-on science experiments. For example, the Scientific Method and Research Training (SMaRT) Skills program runs in four East Vancouver schools taking Grade 6 and 7 students through exciting science experiments involving DNA extraction, electricity and magnetism, plant biology and chemistry magic shows.

“The students are so enthusiastic and inquisitive, they make all the hard work worthwhile,” says Bez Toosi, a fourth-year biology student who began volunteering two years ago.

“It forces me to relay what I have learned at the university level in a way that everyone can understand, and reinforces the idea that one should always look at the big picture.”

Toosi was inspired to pursue a career in science while attending high school in Squamish, B.C. “I was fortunate enough to have teachers who emphasized hands-



PHOTO: DARIN DUECK

The UBC Let’s Talk Science program reached more than 7,000 school kids last year.

students one-on-one in Science Fair projects. “They would give fellow students feedback on their project presentations and ask all the important questions.

“As research scientists we acquire so much expertise in our own areas that it’s easy to forget what it’s like to go through the

scientific method all day and do experiments with them and some kids will get it. But LTS reaches out to some of the other kids I don’t reach.”

“Scientists aren’t neutral players,” says Ilves. “So many important public policy decisions – from stem-cell research to

...the UBC program is the largest in Canada and last year reached a record 7,218 students...

on experiments and now I have the opportunity to do the same with the students.”

Toosi’s graduate student partner was fueled by the same desire to give back. Katriina Ilves, a zoology PhD candidate studying fish evolution, has been a volunteer for almost four years and was one of the original designers of the SMaRT modules, which teach children the basic protocols in research.

“It always amazes me how much – of the material they pick up – and how quickly,” says Ilves, who has also mentored

process of learning the basics. Interacting with the students – and their teachers – really puts things into perspective for me.”

Thomas Craik, a Grade 6 teacher at Laura Secord Elementary School in East Vancouver, says LTS volunteers enrich the curriculum.

“The students get to hear from a real researcher, learn the concept of creating research questions and methodically testing and applying solutions,” says Craik, who has worked with Ilves since January.

“I can tell them about

climate change – rest at least in part on scientific data.”

“Whether the kids pursue a career in science or not, they’ll most certainly be affected by science,” says Kent. “Equipping them with the necessary tools and a critical mind will help them become better leaders of tomorrow.”

LTS will be holding its second annual All Science Challenge on May 25, 2007. 250 students in Grades 5-7 will participate in hands-on and academic challenges at UBC’s Vancouver campus. For more information, visit <http://www.ubclts.com/AllScience>

KUDOS

The **Let’s Talk Science** program is one of three to receive this year’s Helen Macrae Award, presented annually to an Alma Mater Society, Graduate Student Society or UBC Student Services initiative by the Campus Advisory Board on Student Development in recognition of exceptional contributions or improvements to the student experience and learning at UBC. The other two winners in this category are **SCI Team** and the **UBC Farm and Centre for Sustainable Food Systems**.

The Alfred Scow Award for exceptional contributions from an undergraduate program went to the **Mech 2** (Faculty of Applied Science) program and the **Global Resource System Program** (Faculty of Land and Food Systems).

The Margaret Fulton Award for individuals went to **Tim Louman-Gardiner** (third year, Law), **Winnie Cheung** (Office of the AVP International) and **Johanna Waggot** (Housing).

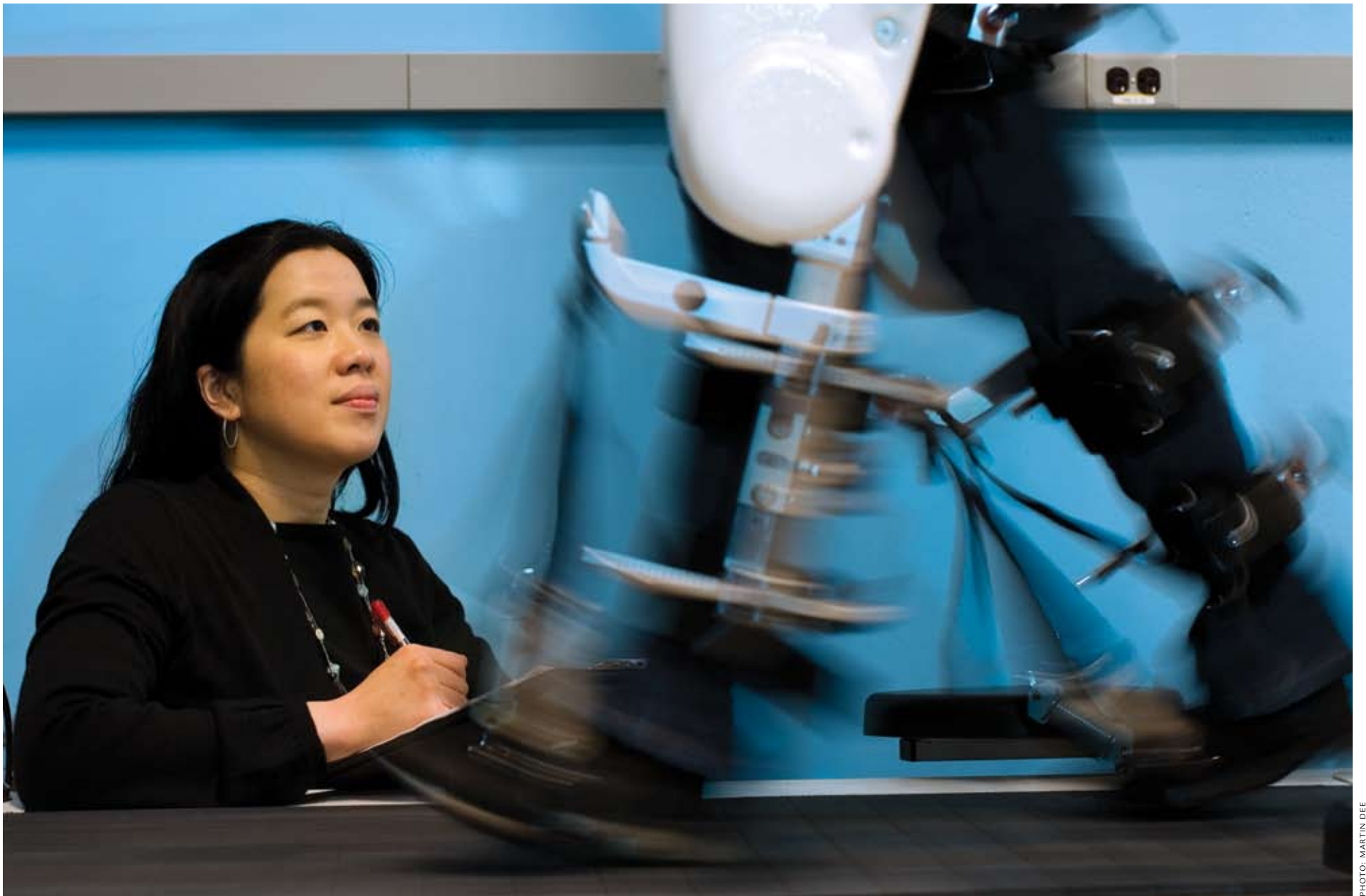


PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Tania Lam is looking closely into how robotic gait devices like the Lokomat® can assist patients with stroke or spinal cord injury recover mobility.

Rehab Robot Does Heavy Lifting

By Lorraine Chan

Over the past few months, the School of Human Kinetics' Tania Lam has been keeping close company with the Lokomat®, one of only two rehab robots in Canada.

The Lokomat, a \$300,000, robotic gait device, uses cutting-edge Swiss technology for body

produced by the legs during walking.

"When patients have been able to recover, it's not always clear what changes or adaptations have occurred in the nervous system to enable functional improvements."

Lam says that UBC is in a unique and strategic position to investigate these types of

"swing phase," says Lam.

"Each time we take a step, lift our leg over obstacles or climb stairs, we need to ensure the flexor muscles are properly activated. Someone who doesn't have enough strength during the swing phase will stumble or drag their feet."

Lam can program the Lokomat software to vary the motor's

controlled motors and sensors allow for standardized treatments for research, which wouldn't be possible with therapists whose strength or speed may vary with each session.

In Canada and the U.S., 300,000 people are living with spinal cord injuries and there are 11,000 new cases each year.

About half these patients have "incomplete" spinal cord injury which means they still retain some sensation and function and may be able to recover mobility through rehabilitation.

Lam's research has received support from the Canada Foundation for Innovation. **R**

"It would mimic the feeling of walking under water to give sensory input to flexor muscles."

weight-supported treadmill training (BWSTT), a promising treatment strategy following neurological injury.

"I'm hoping to develop new rehabilitation strategies for patients with stroke or spinal cord injury," says Asst. Prof. Lam. "The partial or complete loss of walking ability is probably one of the most debilitating consequences of neurological damage."

Lam explains that neurological injury interrupts signals from the brain. Her work probes the subtle interplay of neural commands, muscle response and sensory input required for walking.

The Lokomat works by suspending the patient in a harness attached to an overhead frame to stabilize balance. The legs and feet are held within two metallic arms attached to a frame suspended over a treadmill. Computer-controlled motors in each joint of the arms produce walking motions for the patient. The Lokomat uses sensors to measure the position and force

questions thanks to the arrival of the Lokomat and collaborative links with the International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries (ICORD).

Her study will use customized software to regulate and monitor the action of muscles and joints of the legs, the speed of the treadmill and the amount of body weight support.

"My approach is to help augment the activity of the neural circuits through sensory input from the legs," explains Lam, who trained as a post-doc with Prof. Volker Dietz, one of the original developers of the Lokomat, at the Spinal Cord Injury Centre at the University of Zurich's Balgrist University Hospital.

In the only study of its kind, Lam is exploring ways to better activate the flexor muscles. Flexor muscles cross the foot in front of ankle, in front of the hip and behind the knee. These muscles are used to lift the foot up and forward and are pivotal for walking safely during the

resistive force against the patient's leg movements during the swing phase. "It would mimic the feeling of walking under water to give sensory input to flexor muscles."

She will then assess how effective this approach is for improving patients' muscle function. To date, rehabilitation of flexor muscles has depended on using an L-shaped leg brace to keep the foot up so it doesn't drag or using electrical stimulation to encourage muscles to flex the foot.

Lam says BWSTT has gained increasing favour as a way to help people with stroke or incomplete spinal cord injury regain use of their legs. But therapists find that manual BWSTT has its limitations since it requires numbers and heavy physical work.

"One therapist stabilizes the patient's pelvis, while another one to two therapists manually move the person's legs in a stepping motion," explains Lam.

With the Lokomat, a sole therapist could facilitate a patient's BWSTT. More importantly, the computer-




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By Hilary Thomson

A group of UBC med students wants to do more than stand on the sidelines when it comes to delivering health care in developing nations.

That's why they organized the UBC Students' Global Health Initiative (GHI).

"Students involved in GHI are passionate about global citizenship and want to find a way to live it," says second-year student Siu-Kae Yeong, who helped found GHI in 2006.

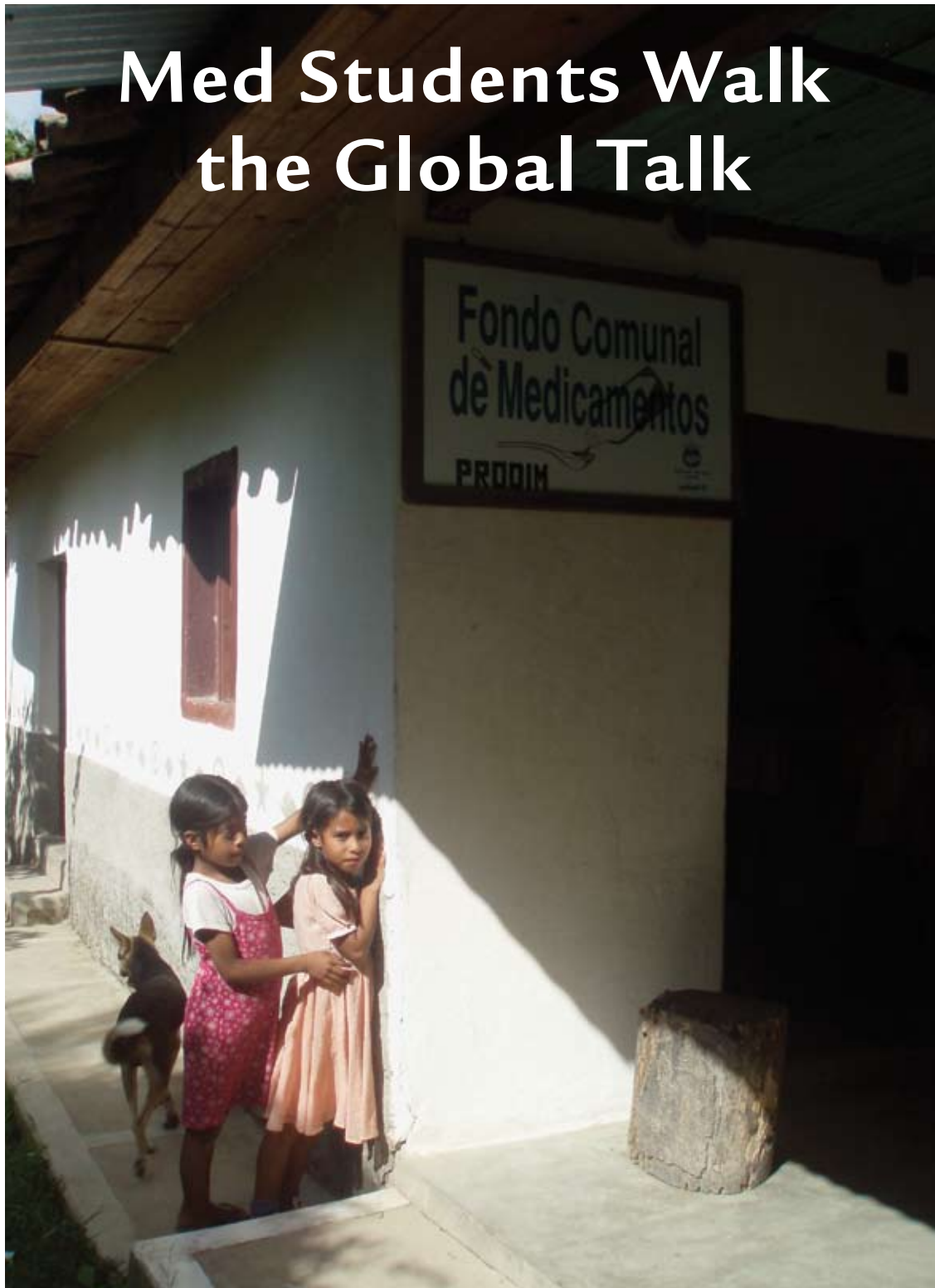
Last year, the group worked with founding faculty advisors, Pediatrics Prof. Andrew Macnab and Dr. Videsh Kapoor, a UBC clinical assistant professor, along with local partners to launch health workshops in Vancouver and run pilot programs in Uganda, India and Honduras.

This year, they estimate that approximately 200 students will attend the workshops and more than two dozen first- and second-year med students will work in those sites, starting next month.

"We lack curriculum to deliver global health skills to students," says Macnab, also a Distinguished Scholar in Residence at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at UBC. "We need to prepare the next generation of doctors to be skilled advocates for global health and to translate their experiences into curriculum development."

To address that concern, the GHI offers skill-building workshops, with assistance from mentors from Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders and the departments of Pediatrics and Surgery at BC Children's Hospital.

About 50 students attend workshops held every month during the academic year. Experienced field workers present cases, and students use the



In collaboration with Honduran partners, UBC students will help set up community health centres.

problem-based learning model to create solutions and get feedback from instructors.

Topics include ethical decision

making, project development and cross-cultural communication.

The free workshops are open to students from all disciplines, and

students and faculty from Makerere, the group delivered oral health education to almost 600 elementary school-

the child's first and replacing a 'chew stick' or piece of wood frayed at the end – and assisted with fluoride treatments.

The Brighter Smiles Africa project grew from a similar partnership Macnab established in the Aboriginal community of Hartley Bay, B.C. The successful oral health program there led to other community health issues being addressed and the same outcome is anticipated in Uganda, says Macnab.

Ten students will travel to Uganda this year (students pay their own travel costs) to evaluate and expand the Brighter Smiles Africa Program and 12 students will work at the Spiti Munseling School in northern India.

Together with Kapoor and the Canada-based TransHimalayan Aid Society, students have responded to community requests to establish a health centre for children, train local women as health-care workers for the centre and develop a health curriculum for school and community. In addition, they will help develop health promotion and disease prevention programs at the school. UBC students will collaborate with a local non-governmental organization (NGO) as well as Vancouver and Dutch NGOs working in the same area.

Second-year med students Adam Watchorn and Jessica Chiles will lead a project in Honduras, along with four students and UBC Clinical Instructor Dr. Tammy Attia. In collaboration with Honduran Program for Development of Infant and Mother, the group will work on installing community-run health centres and offering educational programs on public health issues.

Participants and faculty are challenged to find time to work

Taylor helped survey the children's oral health, teach them about cavities and dental hygiene, handed out toothbrushes – often the child's first and replacing a 'chew stick' or piece of wood frayed at the end – and assisted with fluoride treatments.

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students from other universities and colleges. In addition, students returning from field experiences are expected to transfer their knowledge via mentoring and presentations at medical school seminars, lectures, conferences and other venues.

Key to the whole program and what makes it unique in Canada is the partnership between students, UBC faculty and global partners, says Macnab. Partners identify the health-care needs of their community, request collaboration from UBC and decide how the care program should be delivered and sustained locally.

Second-year med student Linzie Taylor was one of five UBC students who worked in Uganda for eight weeks in 2006 as part of the Brighter Smiles Africa Program. Together with a pediatrician and pediatric resident, they responded to a request from the Dept. of Dentistry in the Faculty of Medicine at Makerere University. Along with 12 Ugandan dental

aged children in four rural communities.

"I have an interest in public health promotion so this experience was perfect for me," says Taylor. "I was able to meet my learning objectives and the team I worked with were fun, great people. The kids were adorable."

Taylor helped survey the children's oral health, teach them about cavities and dental hygiene, handed out toothbrushes – often

with GHI students and partners, to secure funding to keep the program going and find ways to weave the learning into curriculum, says Macnab.

"There's a huge synergistic benefit here for everyone involved – we want to formalize the program so the spirit and intentions of the university's vision are embedded in learning."

BC Children's Hospital is an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. **R**



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Employee Innovation Spins off as Smart Forms



PHOTO: ©iStockphoto/addrase

By Brian Lin

A UBC staff innovation that has drastically cut the turnaround time for expense claims is now the basis of the university's latest spin-off company.

Smart Forms Software Inc. was established last fall by former UBC Financial Services Director Neil Kelly with help from the University Industry Liaison Office (UILO). It is only the second spin-off company (out of 120 to date) arising from an invention by staff.

Frustrated with mountains of paperwork and duplicate procedures – which led to faculty, staff and vendors having to wait as long as three months for their expenses to be reimbursed – Kelly and five colleagues from Financial Services put their heads together and developed software specifically tailored to meet

the needs of a large academic institution.

“Our full-time staff of seven, typically supplemented by one or two temps, used to handle approximately 10,000 cheque and travel requisitions a month by reviewing hard-copy claims and entering the information into the Peoplesoft Financial System,” says Kelly. “Smart Forms allows employees to enter their expense claims directly on the web and it automatically checks for errors and initiates direct deposits into the claimant’s bank accounts.

“Funds can now be returned to claimants – in some cases, students who don’t have a lot of wiggle room in their monthly budget – within a week, not to mention the environmental benefits of a paperless process.”

The software is so easy and efficient to use that within

the first couple of months, more than 500 accounting administrators across campus voluntarily adopted the system and more than 50 per cent of all UBC cheques and financial requisitions are now being submitted and issued electronically.

“There is similar software out there in the marketplace but nothing that quite fit the needs of a large-scale academic institution like UBC,” says Kelly. “Our employees are engaged in unique activities and are funded through various sources. The software is designed specifically with the academic environment in mind and is highly customizable to suit the needs of its users.”

Smart Forms Software Inc. is continuing to develop the software for broader commercial application. **R**

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PHOTO: ROBERT YOUNG

The Dry Falls in Washington's Scablands is a basalt scarp 120 metres high and 10 times wider than Niagara Falls. Earth scientists continue to seek a source of Ice-Age floodwaters great enough to create such gaping formations.

Did B.C. Melting Cause Ice-Age Megaflood?

By Bud Mortenson

Robert Young is stepping into some turbulent scientific waters. The Assoc. Prof. of Geography and Earth and Environmental Sciences at UBC Okanagan is exploring new evidence suggesting an Ice-Age megaflood that created Washington State's Channeled Scablands about 15,000 years ago partly originated in south-central British Columbia, not exclusively from Montana as the prevailing theory suggests.

The megaflood's statistics are staggering. Arriving from the northeast, a wall of water tall enough to leave gravel bars 120 metres high ripped across Washington at 120 kilometres per hour, eroding more than 80 cubic kilometers of earth and rock in two or three days. The torrent left a scoured 25,000-square-km landscape riddled with deep canyons – known as coulees – carved out of the hard bedrock.

"The question of where all that water came from has been hotly debated for decades," says Young. Most think the floodwater came from Glacial Lake Missoula, 400 kilometres away in Montana. As big as Lake Ontario and Lake Erie combined, Lake Missoula was held back only by a dam of ice near the Montana-Idaho border. The long-held hypothesis is that when the ice dam broke, the water poured westward with unimaginable fury and destruction.

Lake Missoula breaching its ice dam may have been impressive, Young says, but probably not impressive enough to account for the Scablands. "Models of dynamic hydrology suggest that floodwaters from the Missoula Basin alone were insufficient to fill the Scabland coulees, much less do all of the work required to produce the incredible landscapes in the region."

Instead, Young is looking for a water source from the north, where the massive Cordilleran ice sheet covered much of British Columbia. His attention is on a lobe that buried B.C.'s Okanagan region beneath nearly three kilometres of ice, terminating almost on top of the Scablands south of the Okanagan.

A cataclysmic chain of events

originating under this southern B.C. ice, perhaps triggered by volcanic eruptions from below and surface meltwater making its way through the immense ice sheet, would change prevailing theories about one of the greatest flash floods of the last Ice Age.

"The Okanagan and surrounding uplands are part of dramatic landscapes, including landforms carved into bedrock like the Channeled Scablands," Young says. "Features such as water-eroded channels that can go uphill, and streamlined landforms caused by fluids flowing turbulently at high velocities, all suggest huge flows came out of the Okanagan Valley and drained south into the Columbia drainage."

He argues that massive volumes of meltwater flowing under the Okanagan ice pushed southward – probably along more than one path. Part exited from the southernmost point of the ice sheet, purging into the Scablands.



More water rushed southeast down the southern Rocky Mountain Trench into Glacial Lake Missoula, and under glaciers emanating from the Purcell range. When the ice dam at Glacial Lake Missoula failed, floodwaters spilled west several hundred kilometres into the Scablands hours or days after the initial onslaught.

Young says the challenge is that, until only recently, sub-glacial reservoirs have not been considered candidates for the kind of catastrophic flooding that created the Scablands.

However, there's evidence today that huge volumes of water do collect under ice sheets and are released in outbursts of flooding.

"Movement of large water volumes of meltwater beneath the Antarctic ice sheets have been reported by several researchers in the last few years," Young points out. "And in Greenland gigatons of water on top of ice sheets have been observed draining through the ice very quickly – in as little as 48 hours."

Over several years, he says, water accumulates under the ice and eventually it can lift or "decouple" the ice and flood through any exit it finds. "In Iceland, this process occurs regularly, and is greatly accelerated when intermittent sub-glacial volcanic eruptions occur, causing the reservoir to overflow, and leading to flows many times those normally seen during regular outburst floods," Young says.

There's evidence of volcanic eruptions beneath the ice sheet just north of the Okanagan – in what today is B.C.'s Wells Gray Provincial Park. "Many of the deposits and volcanoes there bear telltale marks of sub-glacial

eruption, including pillow basalts on mountainsides and flat-topped volcanoes," Young says. "Volcanologists studying the region indicate that three volcanoes erupted sub-glacially during the last glaciation."

Volcanic activity and normal surface melting could eventually produce enough water to decouple the overlying ice and drain catastrophically, says Young.

"With no other sufficient source of water for the Scablands megaflooding, and equipped with several realistic mechanisms for water formation," he says, "we must consider the Okanagan scenario as a valid alternative to Lake Missoula alone accounting for such a catastrophic event." ■

Faculty of Medicine Through knowledge, creating health.

Assistant Dean | Faculty Development

The Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, invites applications and nominations for the position of Assistant Dean, Faculty Development. This position is expected to be filled by an internal candidate and has an expected start date of September 1st 2007 and a three year term.

The Assistant Dean will be directly responsible for the development and implementation of a strategic plan for a broad mandate Faculty Development Program delivered across the province. This will include an assessment of existing and required resources to plan, develop, implement and evaluate the Program on an annual basis. The Faculty Development program ("the Program") for faculty members in the Faculty of Medicine will include faculty educational development to meet the needs of the educational programs of the UBC Faculty of Medicine as well as individual faculty career development. The Program's focus is two-fold: educational and teaching skills, and career development of individual faculty members.

The applicant must have significant experience in and understanding of faculty development, including careers of full-time and clinical faculty as well as leadership skills and evidence of administrative innovation, using best practice frameworks. A Master's in education is desirable. A faculty appointment is required, and skills in working collaboratively are essential.

The successful candidate will report jointly to the Senior Associate Dean, Education and the Senior Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs, Faculty of Medicine and will collaborate with Faculty Development Coordinators within programs across the Faculty. The individual will supervise the Director of Faculty Development and Educational Support, the Program associate, the Program secretary and any other staff in the Program.

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Applications, accompanied by a detailed curriculum vitae and names of three references, should be directed to: **Dr. Dorothy Shaw, Senior Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs, c/o Darcie Prosser, Faculty of Medicine, 317 - 2194 Health Sciences Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3.** (searches @ medd.med.ubc.ca with the subject line ADFED)

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The University of British Columbia is Canada's third largest university and consistently ranks among the 40 best universities in the world. Primarily situated in Vancouver, UBC is a research-intensive university and has an economic impact of \$4 billion to the provincial economy.

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Associate Dean | MD Undergraduate Program (MDUGP), Student Affairs

The Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, invites applications and nominations for the position of Associate Dean, MD Undergraduate Program, Student Affairs. This position will be filled by an internal candidate and has an expected start date of July 1, 2007.

As an advocate for students, the individual will be directly responsible for developing the portfolio of Student Affairs across the MD Undergraduate Program. This includes working with the Assistant Deans, NMP, IMP, and VFMP, Student Affairs; liaison with UBC, UNBC, and UVic; developing a strategic plan for the Office of Student Affairs; ensuring equitable treatment of students and equitable access to student support; referring medical students to academic and personal counselling; supporting student activities including the Spring Gala and Medical Ball and sports activities; implementing policies and procedures; ensuring accommodations for the needs of students with disabilities; and liaison with the Associate Deans, NMP, IMP, and Curriculum and VFMP.

The applicant must have a demonstrated interest and experience in student advocacy and student affairs with leadership skills and evidence of administrative innovation. A faculty appointment is required, and skills in working collaboratively are essential.

The successful candidate will report to the Senior Associate Dean, MD Undergraduate Education and will collaborate with the Associate Deans NMP, IMP, Curriculum and VFMP, Admissions and Equity (Faculty of Medicine). The individual will co-supervise the Administrative Director of the MD Undergraduate Program, and supervise the Secretary to the Associate Dean, Assistant Deans NMP, IMP and VFMP Student Affairs, Career Counsellor, Student Financial Assistance Officer, and Student Affairs Coordinator. The individual will also supervise other administrative staff and faculty leads in the area of MD undergraduate student affairs, and be required to sit on various committees in both voting and non-voting capacities.

MDUGP | Student Affairs

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Applications, accompanied by a detailed curriculum vitae and names of three references, should be directed to: **Search Committee Chair, MD Undergraduate Program, Student Affairs c/o Darcie Prosser, Faculty of Medicine, UBC 317 - 2194 Health Sciences Mall Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3** (searches@medd.med.ubc.ca with subject line: Associate Dean, Student Affairs)

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ISSUE NO.10 APRIL 2007

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SPECIAL DELIVERY*

This issue of UBC Reports is being specially delivered to Utown residents in cooperation with the UNA.

Pleasures of Living and Working in a Real Community

Campus resident Erica Frank, MD, MPH, says she still pinches herself to make sure she is not dreaming.

"I can't believe how fortunate I am to live and work somewhere so beautiful," says Frank, who moved to UBC with her husband Randall White, MD, and her son Ridge Frank-White, 10, a year ago when she was hired as a Canada Research Chair in Health Care and Epidemiology.

Frank says University Town's work-live opportunities and green initiatives such as the Residential Environmental Assessment Program (REAP) – a set of sustainable building practices developed at UBC – allows her family to minimize its ecological footprint.

"When we learned we could be in a community and walk everywhere – to work, school, athletic facilities, restaurants and great cultural spots like the Museum of Anthropology and the Chan Centre – we never seriously considered living anywhere else," she says.

Frank says a vibrant international community embraced her family when they moved from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, to their three-bedroom townhouse in Hawthorne Place's Logan Lane development.

"It feels great to be part of a real community," says Frank, who organizes neighborhood potluck dinners in local green spaces, is on her Community Centre and Strata committees, and enjoys hiking through Pacific Spirit Park or down to the beach with family and neighbours.

Frank says there is "an amazing group of kids" on campus for Ridge to grow up with. He counts a young chess champion and an up-and-coming ballroom dancer among his best friends, she says.

"I absolutely love raising my son here," says Frank. "He says he could spend his whole life on the campus – and this is from a kid with 125 plane trips to his name!"



Campus residents Erica Frank and son Ridge Frank-White are a part of a vibrant international community at UBC.

Reducing the Campus Tireprint

UBC's efforts to manage travel demand continue to produce results, according to the latest Transportation Status Report. The annual report analyzed Fall 2006 travel patterns to and from UBC and concluded that the project to transform the commuter campus at Point Grey into a more complete community is producing reduced travel.

Despite growth in the average daily campus population, the number of person-trips to/from UBC continued to decline for the third straight year. For the first time since travel patterns have been monitored, the UBC campus has generated fewer than two person-trips per day.

Transit retains the largest share of daily travel, thanks in part to 2003 introduction of the student U-Pass. Motor vehicle traffic also declined during the travel survey period.

This annual monitoring is one of the university's commitments related to the official community plan and companion transportation strategy. The University has targeted reductions in motor vehicle travel, especially single-occupant vehicles,

and targeted to shift travel to bus transit.

Since the benchmark year of 1997, motor-vehicle traffic has been reduced by 22 per cent and transit ridership has increased by 118 per cent. In this period UBC added 2,000 new homes to the campus as well as more students and academic buildings that result in a 28 per cent increase in the daily population at UBC.

Construction truck traffic is also monitored. Fall 2006 data indicate that the overall target of 300 heavy truck trips per day was not exceeded. However, the distribution of heavy truck travel was compromised by roadwork on one truck route to UBC (41st Ave), which resulted in the majority of construction trucks using the SW Marine Drive route. Quarterly monitoring of truck travel distribution will be undertaken in 2007.

The full report is available at http://www.planning.ubc.ca/corebus/pdfs/TSR_Fall2006_22Feb07.pdf

University Boulevard Update: Getting the mix just right

The latest designs for Phase 1 of University Boulevard were on display at a public Open House which took place in the Student Union Building in March. An animation of the current design is posted on the University Boulevard web site at: http://www.universitytown.ubc.ca/living_neighbourhoods_universityblvd.php

Seen in the accompanying artist's rendering are the two key structures in the first Phase of the project in the vicinity of the old bus loop. This part of the project includes an underground bus terminal that will bring transit users up onto a University Square in a lively atmosphere of mixed retail services and housing.

A key component of the design work for University Square is the size and location of the ground level retail premises that will frame the public open space and transit terminal entry.

The University is undertaking a campus community consultation on the nature of the retail services that could be provided in the proposed new buildings.



UBC's Proposed University Square

University Boulevard will be the principle point of arrival onto campus – the "front door" of the university – and will convey a strong sense of place, a feeling of having entered the nucleus of a unique, distinct, exciting multi-modal hub of campus life. In addition to an underground transit hub, University Boulevard will include a pedestrian-oriented commercial area and a large plaza for community activities.

The realignment of University Boulevard, the relocation of the underground services and the construction of the tunnel to the Transit Station will begin in June, while the remainder of Phase 1 is expected to be complete by April 2010.