

UBC REPORTS



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History Profs Boldly Re-make Program

First-year general survey courses replaced, undergrads to do original research

BY LORRAINE CHAN

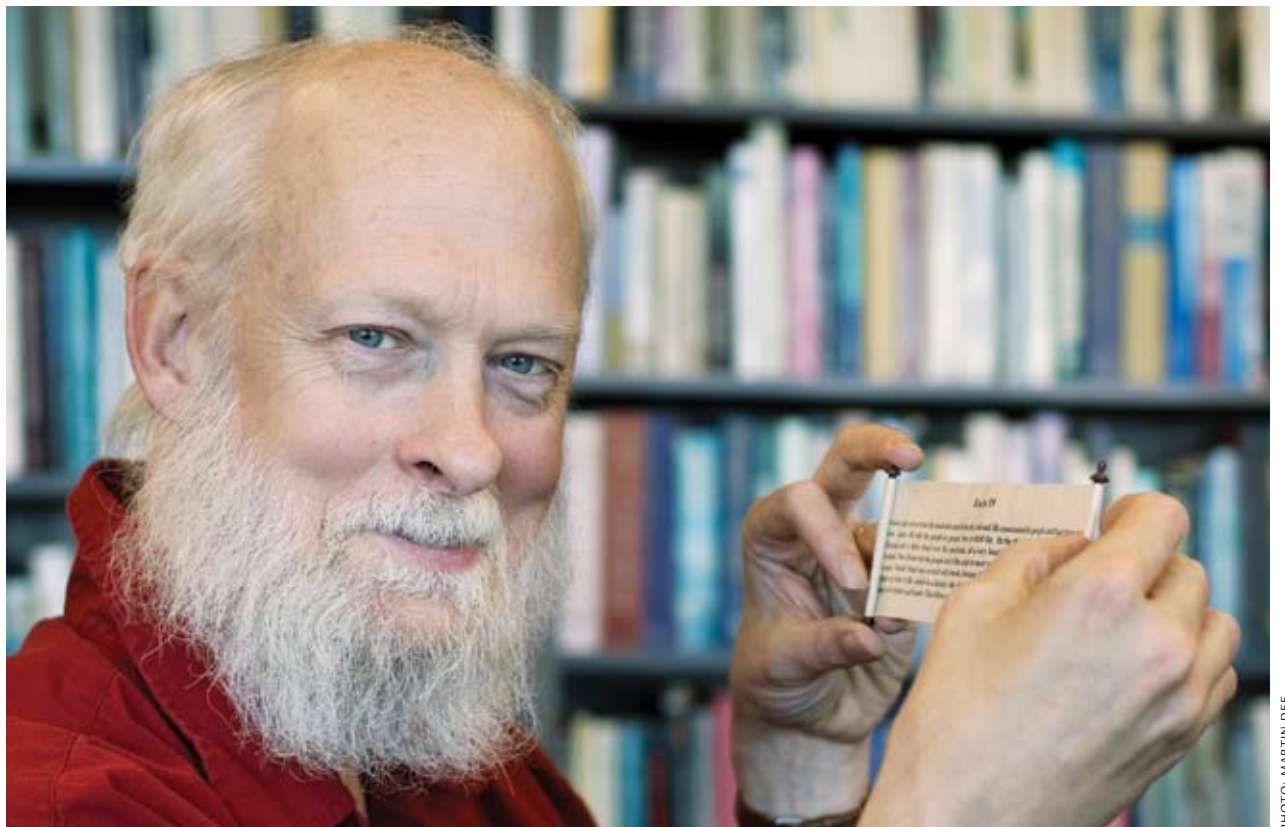
They say history is written by the winners. At UBC, it's also written by undergraduates.

Starting this September, all fourth-year history majors will have a chance to conduct original research in small group seminars.

These students will learn to design projects and then bring them to fruition through empirical research, logical reasoning and literary production. This departs from past fourth-year experience where students would attend lectures and produce papers based mainly on the writings of modern historians.

"The idea is to bring the practice of leading-edge scholarship into the classroom, and to engage students to do history for themselves," says History Dept. Head Daniel Vickers.

Previously, the Dept. of History could only provide graduate and honours students – about 10 per cent of the



Profs' contact hours will increase by 20 per cent and grading by 10 per cent, but his colleagues were all game, says History Dept. Head Daniel Vickers.

“I have never encountered anything like it at any other university at which I've taught. If I had suggested this at the California university where I was head until last year, there would have been a riot.

annual enrolment of 200 history majors – the luxury of this type of learning.

"That meant 90 per cent didn't get this kind of

attention," says Vickers, "and we felt that had to change.

"We want to reverse the trend seen during the past few decades in most public universities toward large lectures,"

continued on page 4



Teacher and course evaluations, UBC students' primary means of voicing kudos and kvetches, have received a major overhaul.

A Better Way to Evaluate Teaching: UBC brings student feedback system into the 21st century

BY BASIL WAUGH

UBC students may not recognize their teacher and course evaluation forms this year.

That's because a group of students, faculty and administrators spent over a year giving these documents – students' primary means of voicing kudos and kvetches about their education – the largest overhaul in


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THIS ISSUE OF UBC REPORTS HAS A BACK-TO-SCHOOL THEME, HIGHLIGHTING SEVERAL NEW TEACHING AND RESEARCH INITIATIVES, THE THOUGHTS OF AN INCOMING STUDENT (AND THE RESPONSE OF A FOURTH-YEAR STUDENT), AND A Q & A ABOUT THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE WITH UBC'S NEW PROVOST AND VICE PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC.




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IN THE NEWS

Highlights of UBC Media Coverage in July 2007. COMPILED BY BASIL WAUGH & HAN NAH KIM

'Polar madness' Grips People in Remote Areas

The Boston Globe, Reuters, MSNBC, Scientific American and Canada.com reported on a study on "polar madness" by UBC Psychology Prof. Emeritus Peter Suedfeld.

Half of the people working in the North and South poles may experience depression, anger, sleep disruption, weakened cognition and irritability, according to Suedfeld and a U.S. colleague.

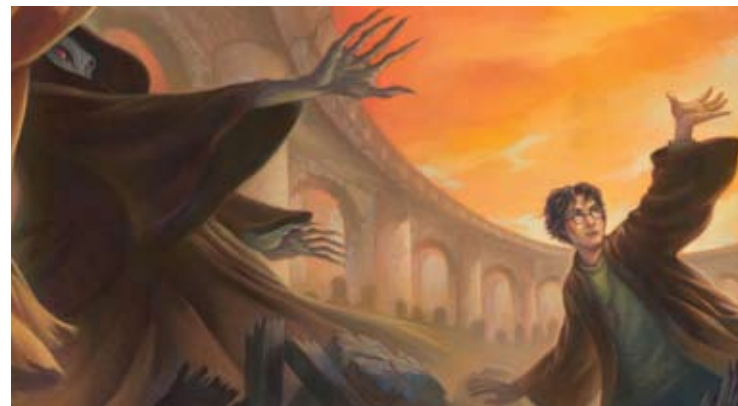
Five per cent endure psychological disturbances severe enough to merit treatment with medication or therapy.

"People on polar expeditions generally undergo psychological changes resulting from exposure to the extreme environment," said Suedfeld. Other causes include isolation and confinement, gossip and the frequent absence of privacy.

New Drugs Improve Breast Cancer Survival

A UBC study has found that newer chemotherapy drugs increase the survival of women with metastatic breast cancer, cancer that has spread from the breast to other areas of the body.

Reuters, United Press International, Scientific American, MSNBC and The Denver Post reported on the study, led by Dr. Stephen Chia of UBC's Medical Oncology Dept. Chia's research will appear in the September edition of the journal *Cancer*.



At their core, J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels are about literacy, said UBC Prof. Kevin McNeilly.

"To our knowledge, this is the first study that demonstrates a significant improvement in survival over time," said Chia, "[which] appears to be caused by the availability and use of newer, more effective systemic agents for the treatment of metastatic breast cancer."

Is Obesity Contagious?

Dr. Laird Birmingham, a UBC medicine professor, featured prominently in media coverage of a U.S. study that suggests obesity is "socially contagious."

According to the study – published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* – a person's chances of gaining weight are higher if they have overweight friends and family.

Birmingham called the study's conclusions oversimplified and "incredibly dangerous," noting that obesity is a disease with many causes, from rare illnesses

to medications, and can be treated clinically.

Birmingham's comments appeared in *The National Post, Montreal Gazette, Vancouver Sun* and *Canada.com*.

Potter-mania: Magic for Readers

In a *Globe and Mail* preview of the final Harry Potter novel, UBC English Prof. Kevin McNeilly comments on the publishing and cinematic juggernaut.

McNeilly, who uses Harry Potter in classes on pop culture, believes that, at its core, the series is about literacy.

"Students tend to discover it's about reading, why people have to have books," McNeilly says, citing books as the characters' main source of knowledge about magic. "The kids in Harry Potter don't have mass media, the telephone, the Internet." ■

LETTERS

Dear Editor:

I am writing in reference to your article [GMOs Next Global Lightning Rod Issue, July 5]. While I was delighted to see the GM foods issue highlighted in your article, I was disappointed to see that, in my opinion, the article was completely one-sided.

Only one person was quoted (a political scientist) and no counter-arguments were provided by GM experts. Many of us, importantly right here at UBC, think that there is a very bright future for GM plants and food products, moving from technologies that benefit producers to those that also benefit consumers – so-called 'functional foods.'

With all respect, I suggest that it would be great in the future if a more balanced article on GM agriculture and food production could be provided for UBC Reports readers in order to represent the breadth of viewpoints on this issue at UBC and elsewhere.

Steven T. Lund, Assistant Professor of Viticulture/Plant Omics

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Executive Director **Scott Macrae** scott.macrae@ubc.ca
Editor **Randy Schmidt** randy.schmidt@ubc.ca
Designer **Ann Goncalves** ann.goncalves@ubc.ca
Principal Photography **Martin Dee** martin.dee@ubc.ca
Web Designer **Michael Ko** michael.ko@ubc.ca
Contributors **Lorraine Chan** lorraine.chan@ubc.ca
Brian Lin brian.lin@ubc.ca
Bud Mortenson bud.mortenson@ubc.ca
Hilary Thomson hilary.thomson@ubc.ca
Sarah Walker public.affairs@ubc.ca
Basil Waugh basil.waugh@ubc.ca
Advertising **Sarah Walker** public.affairs@ubc.ca

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Co-op Programs Grow In Popularity

Nearly 3,000 students participated last year



PHOTO: COURTESY DENE-ZA ANTOINE

*This summer, UBC co-op student Jessica McIntyre reported on rockers *The White Stripes* and appeared on national newscasts for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.*

“For students, co-ops provide important real world experiences outside the classroom, a network of professional contacts, and an average salary of around \$35,000 over four four-month work terms.”

BY BASIL WAUGH

Lights, camera, beaver meat!

Having taken a bite out of our national rodent, you could say Arts student Jessica McIntyre’s summer UBC co-op placement with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) left a unique taste in her mouth.

“I’m First Nations, but I had never heard of anyone eating beaver until recently on the food channel,” says McIntyre, who is just completing a four-month stint with APTN’s national news bureau in Yellowknife, N.T. “I took part in a beaver and bannock feast on my first assignment. I actually really liked it.”

McIntyre, a member of the Northwest B.C. coast Musgamaug Tsawataineuk First Nation, is one of a growing number of students at UBC choosing to extend their studies by a year for the chance to gain valuable work experience through co-op placements.

Last year, UBC led the province for the first time in co-op participation, with nearly 3,000 students taking part.

McIntyre, 20, says the beaver “incident” was just one of many firsts she experienced this summer. “My previous summer jobs were ‘typical boring student jobs’ – like eight hours of data entry. So it was really exciting to have a job that was challenging and interesting every day.”

The aspiring journalist began her four-month placement by archiving video footage and researching stories. But within a week her new employers began sending her out on assignment. Soon she was doing all aspects of a broadcast news story: conducting interviews, filming, editing, writing, voicing – even appearing regularly on the APTN’s national evening news.

Some of the stories McIntyre has covered include Aboriginal National Day of Action, ocean conservation issues, and local reaction to a visit by American

rockers *The White Stripes*.

“Not many big name acts come this far North, so the town was pretty excited when *The White Stripes* were here,” says McIntyre. “My crew got to play paparazzi, chasing the band around and interviewing their crew and residents. It was really fun.”

Julie Walchli, Director of UBC’s Arts Co-op Program, calls experiences like McIntyre’s “win-win for both students and employers.” For students, co-ops provide important real world experiences outside the classroom, a network of professional contacts, and an average salary of around \$35,000 over four four-month work terms.

Co-ops are “extended job interviews,” where employers can scout out fresh talent and staff for special projects or busy periods, says Walchli. “Employers hire for attitude and then train for specific skills. They are looking for people who are motivated, can learn quickly and fit well with their team.”

Last year, UBC put students in dozens of international placements in China, Singapore, Mexico, the United States, Germany and Switzerland. Walchli says these are by far the most popular jobs with students. “Fifteen per cent of our jobs in the Arts Co-op Program are based outside Canada and another large portion is also international in scope,” she says. “These are always the first positions to be snapped up.”

Five UBC faculties currently

offer co-op programs: Arts, Science, Engineering, Forestry, and the Sauder School of Business. Once accepted, students perform three to five work terms, starting after their first or second year of study. In addition to job placements, the co-op programs provide students with a variety of training workshops and community building activities.

Overall, UBC co-op participation grew by more than 13 per cent last year, with the largest growth in Engineering, where co-op enrolment jumped

25 per cent.

As her first co-op work term comes to an end, McIntyre gives her experience two thumbs up. “I really encourage students to take this opportunity. I’m much more confident in my abilities thanks to this experience, and met a lot of students with similar interests in the process. I can’t wait until my next work term. I’m going to try for something in Asia or Africa next.”

For more information on the APTN, visit www.aptn.ca. **R**

Employers looking for UBC co-op students this year include:

- Google
- Microsoft
- Apple
- Procter and Gamble
- Shell Oil
- The Dept. of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
- Industry Canada
- Vancouver Olympic Committee
- California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
- Ministry of Forests/BC Timber Sales
- Teck Cominco
- Weyerhaeuser
- HSBC
- Research In Motion
- Vancouver Coast Health
- Library and Archives Canada
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HISTORY *continued from page 1*

says Vickers. “Yes, they can be valuable. They’re certainly more affordable, but it has made student learning much too passive.”

The seminars are weekly, two-hour sessions with no more than 15 students. Leading these are full-time faculty, who designed the seminars to intersect with their areas of expertise.

“One of our historians specializes in history of Judaism,” says Vickers, “and will teach a seminar on the comparative history of genocide. So it’s not a chore for him. It’s something he wants to do, although it does represent more work because students hand in multiple drafts of a paper.”

Students will be able to choose from a slate of 13 themes, among them “The Medieval Family,” “First Contacts in the Pacific World,” and “Sages and Statecraft in China.”

Vickers says fourth-year students will be able to delve into primary sources such as public records, diaries and travelers’ accounts. “The seminar teaches them how to read newspapers with the eye of a historian, to be sensitive to biases in memoirs and look at what is not said – what the person isn’t writing down.”

These small groups will hone students’ methodology and also foster confidence about putting their ideas on the line.

At the end of the year, students will present and discuss their papers “much the way professional historians present papers

at conferences,” says Vickers.

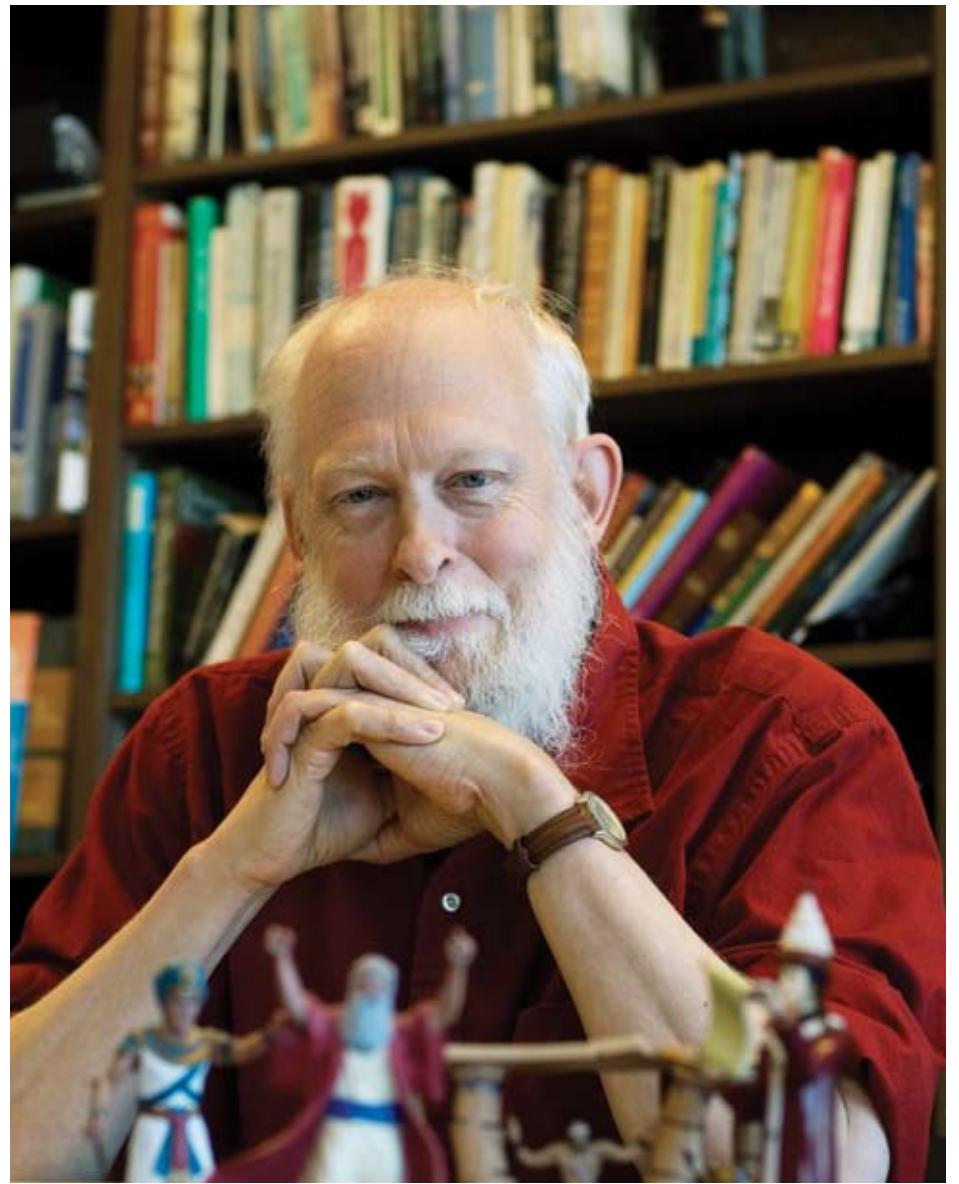
These seminars follow on the heels of other changes the department has made to enhance student-centred learning. During 2006-07, the department introduced a new first-year curriculum, replacing the general survey courses focused on the history of a single country. The new courses provide global histories on topics such as the environment, cultural exchange and the relationship between the global and the local in past times.

Re-jigging fourth-year curriculum to promote independent inquiry looked daunting at first. But his colleagues devised a “reasonable and efficient” solution “that blew me away,” says Vickers.

“I have never encountered anything like it at any other university at which I’ve taught. If I had suggested this at the California university where I was head until last year, there would have been a riot.”

To keep preparation time manageable, 26 professors decided they would each lead a seminar every two years, then teach the material to two cohorts. With each accommodating 15 students, the 13 seminars would provide 375 seats.

Professors’ contact hours would go up by 20 per cent and grading by another 10 per cent. However, “grading 30 papers in a subject that’s of interest to you is a lot easier and less stressful than grading 70 papers that would be all over the map,” says Vickers. **R**



Historian Daniel Vickers in his office with diorama action figures.

PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

EVALUATE *continued from page 1*

nearly 40 years.

Not only do evaluations include a new subset of university-wide questions. For the first time, students’ assessments will be shared with other students, upon the consent of faculty members. Greater emphasis will be placed on mid-term evaluations, and for up to 12,000 students, the paper-intensive process will move online.

The initiative has resulted a new UBC Senate policy on student evaluations of teaching, and a modular structure that will help faculties, departments and instructors

to ask questions to better assess and improve teaching.

These changes come at a time when universities are grappling with how to make better use of student data and continually improve their overall educational experience, says Anna Kindler, Vice Provost and Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs.

“Student feedback is very important especially for instructors who can use it to inform and improve their teaching practice, but also as a means for assessing teaching quality at the institutional

level,” says Kindler, who co-led the modernization effort with Joy Johnson, Chair of the Senate Teaching and Learning Committee.

Kindler says the university-wide questions look at the instructors’ performance in four main areas: how effective they are in communicating course objectives and content, encouraging student active learning, implementing appropriate assessment strategies and establishing a good rapport with the students.

“We worked with students to ensure

potential to significantly increase student participation. This experience laid the foundation for a larger rollout in the Fall.

“There are several advantages to a web-based system,” says Lamberson, who led the project. “Students are already comfortable online, plus they have more time to construct thoughtful answers, and a paperless system is better for the environment and easier to administer. Student comments about the system reflected these strengths.”

“One other concern expressed by a few students was confidentiality. ‘Will

“ Not only do evaluations include a new subset of university-wide questions, for the first time, students’ assessments will be shared with other students. ”



New teacher and course evaluations give UBC students an alternative to RateMyProfessors.com.

PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

that the university-wide questions cover the information they need most,” says Kindler. “And by making student evaluations of teaching consistent in their general format and frequency of administration we will now be in a better position to systematically keep track of our performance over time.”

Giving students access to the assessments of their peers is a huge advantage, says Jeff Friedrich, President of UBC’s Alma Mater Society (AMS).

“It helps students choose courses and instructors that fit their learning style best,” says Friedrich, who represented students in the process. “It allows students to become better informed as consumers and gives them a trustworthy alternative to websites like RateMyProfessors.com.”

Last year, students in select psychology and distance education courses tested *CoursEval*, a web-based evaluation tool designed for post-secondary institutions. Questions and reminder messages were sent via email and students had two weeks to compose their anonymous responses.

According to Michelle Lamberson, Director of UBC Office of Learning Technology, the results reflected the

my prof know what I’m saying and will it affect my mark?’ The system is designed so that personal information and survey data are stored separately and encrypted, protecting students’ anonymity. In addition, the results will not be released until grades are submitted,” says Lamberson.

While instructors never know the names of students who respond, *CoursEval* allows them to send an e-mail to respondents. As a result, instructors can “close the loop,” outlining how they plan on addressing students’ comments.

UBC’s Centre for Teaching Academic Growth (TAG), which works to enhance the teaching skills of faculty and graduate students, will partner with student leaders this September to promote the revamped evaluations and importance of student feedback.

“We are working to create a culture where students expect to be engaged and feel comfortable giving instructors constructive feedback,” says Gary Poole, TAG Director. “Not just at the end of term, but throughout the term.” **R**



Entering university CAN BE EXCITING AND STRESSFUL. UBC REPORTS ASKED FIRST-YEAR STUDENT MICHAEL SINGH TO SHARE HIS QUESTIONS ABOUT CROSSING THE COUNTRY TO ENTER UBC – AND WE ASKED CURRENT FOURTH-YEAR STUDENT LISA WAGNER TO RESPOND.

How Will I Adjust from a Small City to a Big Campus?



“With so much independence it seems that becoming distracted... would be quite easy. Another question...is how to make the jump from being fed notes in high school to taking notes during lectures.

By first-year student, Michael Singh
Hometown: Charlottetown, PEI

Imagine a place where “downtown” and “the country” are a mere 10-minute drive apart. A place where it’s nearly impossible to make a trip to the grocery store without seeing at least one person you know. Welcome to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

You might be asking yourself why I chose to give up this style of life to come to a campus with a population the size of my home city; talk about getting tossed out of your comfort zone.

Much of my inspiration to attend UBC comes from the fact that my father also went there. Having first-hand descriptions of the calibre of programs, beauty of the area and opportunities available was more than enough to cement my decision. Being a snowboarder, and

B.C. being as renowned as it is for incredible skiing and snowboarding, I also thought this would be a great chance to get some serious riding done. The chance to truly test and grow my independence while living in residence at Place Vanier is also something that excites me.

Although a lot of high school students go into university concerned about things being too hard compared to high school, I’m happy to say that I don’t share this view. In fact, I’m incredibly excited to start new work and dive into my courses. But university isn’t just about academics. Getting involved in clubs and sports teams, meeting new people from around the world, and exploring the campus and city are also things that make me thrilled to start the new school year.

In spite of my confidence, there are several questions I hope to find the answers to over the course of my studies. Chief amongst these is finding a balance between work and

play. With so much independence it seems that becoming distracted would be quite easy. Another question I am pondering is how to make the jump from being fed notes in high school to taking notes during lectures.

A final aspect of the university experience I am a little hazy about is that of actually getting around campus. Coming from such a small place, the idea of getting around such a massive campus is rather daunting. I’m not exactly sure how the transit system works in B.C. and UBC in particular.

Moving to a new place is never easy. There are always thoughts like, “I won’t know anybody,” or “what if I don’t like the location,” but in the end the success you experience is completely dependent upon how much effort you put in.

Tap into Campus Resources to Make the Most of Your Education



“On campus, there are tons of resources available: free tutoring, academic advising, and some of the best libraries of any university.

By fourth-year political science student Lisa Wagner
Hometown: Calgary, Alberta

Coming to UBC was, in a way, one of the most impulsive decisions I’ve ever made. Originally, I decided that I would take a year off to work and travel before going back to school. Then, UBC won my heart over after I attended a college fair in support of a friend. I applied, was accepted, and registered in the Arts One program. Next, I applied to residence, and all of a sudden I was on my way to Vancouver – my first time ever living away from my hometown of Calgary, Alberta. Like Michael, I had no idea what to expect upon my arrival – though I did at least have the experience of already living in a big city.

Looking back, I can hardly recognize myself: then I was a timid first-year student who felt like she had no idea how to study, how to make friends, or even how to make her own bed. I had similar apprehensions to many first-year students coming to UBC. What if I didn’t get along with my roommate? How different was university from high school, anyway? UBC is huge – would I be lost in a sea of numbers never to emerge as a real person with a university degree?

Well, UBC is large, and can be overwhelming at first, but it also offers its students a wide variety of resources

and opportunities which make it less so. Moving into residence at Totem Park definitely gave me a chance to test my own boundaries and learn a few things about myself, and I’m sure a similar experience awaits Michael at Place Vanier.

While Totem provided me with an abundance of people and activities that could distract me from my studies, it also encouraged academic success by allowing residents to network with people in similar classes through a program called iStudy, and attend programs helping students to adjust to university learning (such as note-taking workshops), and by providing designated study areas. On campus, there are tons of resources available: free tutoring, academic advising, and some of the best libraries of any university.

UBC also promotes academic excellence in other ways – by encouraging students to take a break and have fun every now and again! UBC Rec organizes events like *Day of the Longboat* and *Storm the Wall*, which have become classics around campus, and also manages the intramural leagues for competitive and non-competitive sports lovers. There are also student-run clubs for just about any interest you could possibly imagine, from the Coin and Stamp Club to the Organ Donation Club to the Ski and Board Club (especially useful for those like Michael who are

unfamiliar with the local sites). These all help students connect with others who have similar interests around campus.

And of course, living in residence offers a mountain of fun activities such as floor dinners, dances, trivia nights, and mock casinos, all the while fostering strong relationships between students. It is easy (and quick, once you learn the shortcuts) to get anywhere you need to be on campus by walking or biking, and there’s good bus service around the university and off campus. Vancouver transit has exceptional service to UBC, and all UBC students receive a bus pass, known as the U-Pass, with their student fees.

Your biggest concern might be finding your way around Vancouver once you’ve left the safety of campus, but visiting the Translink website www.translink.bc.ca can really help with your trip planning!

The university experience is most definitely what you make of it, and keeping the fabulous resources UBC has to offer in mind, I want to encourage Michael and all other new students this year to take advantage of every opportunity possible to not only get the most of their education but also to have the time of their lives along the way – I know I have. **R**

First Nations Entrepreneurs:

Innovative program starts second year



Ernest Armann (left) and Vivian Bomberry are among the first graduates. The program involves group work and a challenging team project.



PHOTOS: COURTESY DEREK MOSCATO

“ We looked for other Aboriginal-focused programs and found nothing close to this in terms of either the blend of Aboriginal focus and business, or program length.

BY DEREK MOSCATO

For aspiring entrepreneur Vivian Bomberry, the irony of the term *cohort* – used in education circles to define a group of students in the same class year – wasn't lost when she began her studies in the Ch'nook Advanced Management Program at UBC last November.

“When I heard the word, I didn't know what it meant,” said Bomberry, speaking of the first gathering of students in the program, which is geared to future First Nations business leaders. “I looked it up and found the definition: Band of warriors. Well, that was us!”

Seven months after her foray into coursework devoted to marketing, finance, business strategy and operations, Bomberry would be one of twelve students to complete the Aboriginal business program in its inaugural year. Originally from the Six Nations Band in Ontario, she now resides in Surrey, B.C., where she is focused on starting her

own jewelry business.

The Ch'nook Advanced Management program, launched last November, combines Aboriginal values with business skills and entrepreneurship education in part-time studies. Classes are led by a group of distinguished First Nations leaders, senior faculty members from Sauder School, as well as entrepreneurs who share their stories of success and failure. The program comprises team projects, assignments, and class discussions.

According to Ch'nook advisor Chief David Walkem of Cook's Ferry Indian Band, expectations for the inaugural 2006-2007 program were high. “Our goal as we developed the certificate program was to create the best Aboriginal business education program ever offered,” he said, emphasizing the curriculum would need a vigorous mix of top-flight Aboriginal leadership and coaching with relevant content and the best instruction available. “We can now say with confidence that the ‘best ever’ goal is being met.”

Program leaders are hoping to make an impact on the future of economic development for First Nations.

“It is very clear to the First Nations Leadership Council that focusing on economic development by itself does not pave the road to self-reliance,” said Grand Chief Ed John, who spoke at the Ch'nook program graduation in June. “However, when economic development is combined with strong business management education,

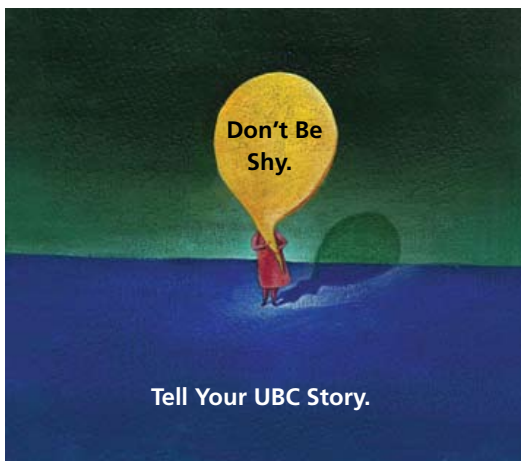
then we have the equation that equals Aboriginal success.”

Unlike traditional business education programs, this one integrates the insights of Aboriginal leaders in a setting that its participants can easily relate to. Visitors to the program include business and finance firms such as Odium Brown, Tale'awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation, VanCity and Kryton Group.

“We looked for other Aboriginal-focused programs and found nothing close to this in terms of either the blend of Aboriginal focus and business, or program length,” says program director and Sauder School of Business professor emeritus John Claxton. “The program is intense. There are a lot of new ideas, lots of group work and a challenging team project. But it is absolutely worth the effort. The classes were always a great mixture of enthusiasm, effort and fun.”

“This has been one of the real highlights of my UBC career – and now we're all looking forward to November and the next cohort.”

The Ch'nook programs are a collaborative effort between UBC First Nations House of Learning and the Sauder School of Business at UBC, and include business diploma and degree options and scholarships. The Ch'nook name is a variation on the word Chinook, which was the local jargon language used for trade between First Nations, particularly up and down the West Coast. ■



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In addition to its Advanced Management Executive Education Program, the Ch'nook initiative at UBC is home to the Ch'nook Scholars Program – supporting full-time business diploma and degree studies for First Nations students in British Columbia. The four major components of this program are financial support, Aboriginal-focused coursework, career mentoring and internships.

This summer, Ch'nook student Jarnael Payer – a student of Langara College in Vancouver – is cutting his teeth with one of Canada's oldest independent investment management firms – Phillips, Hager & North, which manages over \$65 billion in financial assets. Jarnael's internship with PHN involves conducting research devoted to investments on the New York Stock Exchange. In addition, he'll have the chance to experience the workings of a fast-paced investment firm.

For more information contact John Claxton, Ch'nook Program Director, at 604 822 8323 or visit: www.chinook.ubc.ca

Q & A with David Farrar

Incoming Provost and Vice President, Academic



As Vice-Provost, Students, at the University of Toronto, David Farrar focused on removing barriers between curricular and non-curricular learning.

“My desire to join UBC started with the University’s many initiatives aimed at improving the teaching and learning experience.

Q *UBC and the University of Toronto share some key attributes, including large size, commuter campuses, and research intensity. What are the challenges and the rewards of the student experience at such universities?*

First of all, there isn’t one student experience; each student has his or her own unique experience. The opportunities for students at large, research-intensive universities are many and varied. In addition to a broad array of challenging programs in current fields, there is also the opportunity to work with the world’s best scholars on interesting research areas, and access to outstanding research facilities and libraries.

Both universities have large student bodies that reflect Canada’s diversity. Students at both universities encounter the other students, staff and faculty from very different backgrounds; that diversity strengthens the inside-the-classroom experience and stretches their minds outside of the classroom. This creates a rich environment where students can push the limits of their abilities and learn to deal with challenging and important questions.

The challenge is that many students do not find their place in these large universities and never reap the benefits of studying at an internationally ranked university. There is a need to create pathways or roadmaps to help these students connect with the university.

Q *What were you able to do during your tenure as Deputy Provost and Vice-Provost, Students, to improve the student learning experience?*

During my time as Vice-Provost, Students, the University of Toronto’s first priority was to improve the student experience. I focused on removing barriers between curricular and co-curricular learning. While I initiated important changes to the student life programs, many members of the University community contributed to these initiatives. The number of international exchange opportunities for students increased significantly. We started two new co-curricular programs, the Centre for Community Partnerships and the Multifaith Centre, providing students with community and inter-disciplinary opportunities that support a stimulating learning environment.

In the area of space improvements, I am very proud of the Chemistry Courtyard Garden that I started working

on as the Chair of the Chemistry Department; it was completed during my term in the Provost’s Office. We opened two new daycare facilities, the Early Learning Centre and the Charles Street daycare, while I was Vice-Provost, Students. These centres greatly increased the affordable and accessible childcare spaces for student parents. I was active in supporting anti-racism, LGBTQ initiatives, assessment initiatives, and U of T’s student portal project.

Q *Some people think the reward structure for research invariably disadvantages teaching. What are your views on this?*

I view research and teaching as mutually supportive. The structures that reward outstanding teaching and scholarship will grow naturally if the university community equally values both. UBC’s stated goal to attain the same excellence in providing a world-class education that it has attained in research is an important step forward. My desire to join UBC started with the University’s many initiatives aimed at improving the teaching and learning experience, and I look forward to being actively involved in this area.

Q *What was the single-most effective teaching improvement program/initiative with which you were involved? Why was it successful?*

I became very involved in improving the teaching and learning environment in U of T’s Chemistry Department during my term as Undergraduate Associate Chair. The three areas I focused on were curriculum reform, the balance between teaching and research, and improving the laboratory experience including major space enhancements.

The combination of a renewed approach to the subject material, our best research-active faculty working with teaching faculty who focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning, and great space, has resulted in first-year chemistry receiving very high course evaluations by students. The chemistry programs that build on the first-year experience also have been renewed and these programs now attract record numbers of students. Outstanding departments start with exceptional undergraduate programs that attract the very best students and provide the foundation for internationally recognized scholarship. ■

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Who Will Take Care of our Boomers?

Therapists, priests and engineers are taking a UBC certificate course



PHOTO: MARTIN DEE

Ruth Hughes (left) and Clarissa Green gave Wayne Cousins the confidence to bring up end-of-life issues with his parents.

BY LORRAINE CHAN

Everyone ages. People just have different start dates.

And as the baby boom generation starts turning 65 in 2011, the greying of Canada's population will only speed up. By 2026, the projected number of seniors will top 21 per cent – doubling their current share of the population to eight million.

"When you think of these demographic changes, it's clear we need people in every sector who understand how aging is changing how our world is structured," says Clarissa Green, an instructor for UBC's *Certificate in Working with an Aging Population Program*.

"We need people who will make changes, such as longer walk signals at intersections, buildings designed to be 'senior-friendly,' communication styles that embrace

to learn how baby boomers can have conversations with their parents about important issues like future living arrangements and health matters.

"With life expectancies increasing," says Cousins, 46, "the 'sandwich generation' will spend more years caring for their aging parents than years spent raising their own children."

Midway through the program, Cousins broached his parents about end-of-life care. The talk brought relief to both sides. "Many older people are willing to discuss these things," says Cousins. "It's their adult children who may be nervous about discussing end-of-life planning. Maybe some people are afraid they'll jinx their parent's good health if they bring up the subject."

Cousins' parents assured him that after enjoying 80-plus good years, they were ready to discuss matters that many

Dad, on the other hand, doesn't think it's such a pleasant thing to talk about but he's open to planning for it."

The non-credit program typically accepts about 20 students each term and expects participants to function at the third- or four-year university level. Also teaching the program are JoAnn Perry, an associate professor of Nursing who specializes in gerontological nursing and family caregiving, and social worker Beryl Petty, an expert on community gerontology programs.

To promote cross-generational discussions, the program also invites seniors to provide their perspective. Ruth Hughes, 94, has been a guest lecturer since 2006. She brings wit, energy and a depth of experience that floors younger students, says Green.

"There's a huge difference between the world view of a 25-year-old and that of a 94-year-old who has been

“ People in the program want to be more intelligent in how they understand and communicate with older individuals.

changes in hearing and sight, policies that respect seniors' needs," says Green.

Offered by the Life and Career Centre at UBC Continuing Studies, the seven-month program equips participants with knowledge and skills they can apply to both professional and personal needs. The program is aimed at professionals who work with older adults, students in the health disciplines, community service providers, caregivers and family members. Curriculum addresses the physical, psychological, social, spiritual and community aspects of aging.

Green says enrolment is "extraordinarily eclectic," with recent cohorts including engineers, massage therapists, rabbis, priests, engineers, retired teachers, financial advisors, accountants and a leader from the Sikh community.

"People in the program want to be more intelligent in how they understand and communicate with older individuals," says Green, a UBC associate professor emerita of nursing and a therapist who works with families in crisis and transition.

Green designed the program in 1999 as a community resource for what was then the UBC Women's Resource Centre. She made sure it would "engage both the heart and mind."


"At the end of the course, students tell us, 'I'm a very different person,'" notes Green. "Students leave the course with more acceptance of others and themselves as they age."

Wayne Cousins, a retail accounts manager at BC Hydro, says one of the reasons he signed up for the course was

families consider too delicate or taboo. "They said they'd preferred talking about all of this while they're in good health and not during a crisis when it would put a lot more stress on me and my brother."

In fact, Cousins' mother asked him to help her plan her funeral service. "It sounds strange, but my mother enjoyed it because she gets to plan what her funeral will look like.

around for a very long time and knows a lot a younger person can't know. We want students to value and respect that difference."

The next certificate program begins January 2008 at UBC's Life and Career Centre – Continuing Studies at Robson Square. For information, call 604-822-0138, or visit: www.lifeandcareer.ubc.ca/aging 



Cultural Barriers for Diabetes Care:

Chinese-Canadians have new Internet tool



iCON will give Chinese-Canadians customized diabetes information to help them manage the disease or prevent it.

By Hilary Thomson

Chinese-Canadian diabetes patients will soon have access to customized health information with the launch of a Chinese language web site designed to reflect their unique diet and culture.

Called Chinese Online Health Network (iCON), the two-year project is co-led by UBC Faculty of Medicine Associate Dean Dr. Kendall Ho, director of the Division of Continuing Professional Development & Knowledge Translation; and Dr. Francis Ho, a UBC professor emeritus of Family Practice. The project is patient-driven and aims to create and distribute accurate and quality health information in Chinese for prevention or active self-management of diabetes.

“It’s vital to engage patients as partners in co-managing

reach out to and partner with these patients to help address their unique needs and situations.”

Reliable Internet health information is not necessarily reaching middle-aged and older Chinese-Canadian adults because of affordability of technology, low Internet skills, English language dominance on the Internet and online credibility of sources of Chinese health information, he adds.

From September 2006 to May 2007, the two physicians worked with Dr. Thomas Ho (none of the physicians are related) and Dr. Raymond Mah, along with second-year UBC medical students to create a pilot web site, in partnership with Chinese diabetes patients.

Each of the four students, originally from Hong Kong and Taiwan, visited three patients to ask them about their health and diet and evaluate their knowledge sources and

to teach family members how they can help patients manage their disease.”

Third-year medical student Emily Pang says patients were eager to be part of the project, but it was hard to convince non-computer users to adopt the Internet.

“They did not yet realize its potential as an educational and interactive tool,” she says. “I hope this project can change that.”

An interest in the psychosocial aspects of chronic disease is what motivated third-year med student Edmond Chau to get involved.

“Being fluent in Chinese, I saw the project as an opportunity for me to make a difference for these patients,” he says, adding that it was sometimes challenging to translate medical terms into Chinese to answer patient queries.

“Reliable Internet health information is not necessarily reaching middle-aged and older Chinese-Canadian adults.”

their disease with their doctor, both to reduce suffering and the significant health-care costs related to diabetes,” says Kendall Ho.

Chinese web-based health information does exist, but there are significant dietary and cultural differences for Chinese-speaking individuals living in Canada, says Ho. A more affluent life in Canada can mean larger meal portions and more processed, high-carbohydrate foods along with traveling via car rather than walking. In addition, elderly Chinese-Canadians may be living alone and experience significant barriers in shopping and preparing their own meals, a situation less common in China or Taiwan.

“Despite Vancouver’s large Asian population, these patients can be quite marginalized,” he says. “We need to

understanding of the disease. They also asked about access to the Internet, their opinion of the usefulness of Chinese-language health information currently available online and perceived barriers to using online information for their own disease self-management.

The interviews were part of course work for the Doctor, Patient and Society block of the medical school curriculum.


Patients also provided feedback on the mock web site and their tips on diet and exercise have been incorporated into site information. An interactive section posts Q&As from patients and physicians and allows for peer-to-peer communication.

“Many patients are unaware of early symptoms of diabetes. They need to take care of themselves – their destiny is in their hands,” says Francis Ho. “We also want

“I interviewed patients whose Internet skill ranged from almost non-existent to proficient,” says Chau. “Both groups were interested in using iCON.”

The researchers will be holding a town hall meeting next month to promote the web site and will communicate with physicians via journals and presentations. After further evaluation and development, they hope to collaborate with University of Hong Kong and Fu Dan University in Shanghai to make the web site appropriate for Chinese patients.

“These are exciting opportunities and I’m very grateful that UBC has given us a chance to explore them,” says Kendall Ho.

The web site can be found at www.iconproject.org. 

UBC Okanagan Faculties and Programs Grow

BY BUD MORTENSON


Among the new programs at UBC Okanagan this year are undergraduate degrees in Human Kinetics and Health Studies, and several new graduate degrees.

In September, the Faculty of Health and Social Development will launch a Bachelor of Human Kinetics program and a Bachelor of Arts in Health Studies in collaboration with UBC Okanagan’s Irving K. Barber

School of Arts and Sciences.

The Faculty of Creative and Critical Studies will offer interdisciplinary graduate studies (IGS) Master of Arts programs in Studies in Cultures and Text as well as Critical Studies in English, and an IGS Master of Fine Arts program that interweaves visual arts, creative writing, and performance studies. The faculty is also developing Canada’s first undergraduate degree program in devised performance, drawing from a wide variety of world

performance traditions including theatre, dance, music, visual arts, new media, circus, story-telling, folklore, and ritual.

Other new graduate programs include Master of Applied Science and PhD degrees in the School of Engineering, new interdisciplinary graduate programs in optimization, and indigenous studies, MA and PhD degrees in psychology, and MSc and PhD degrees in biology. 



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Getting Around Made Easier at UBC Okanagan

BY BUD MORTENSON

A reduced-cost public transit program for students, a new Bus Rapid Transit service, a new road network on campus, and a \$14.5-million highway “flyover” are changing the look of transportation at UBC Okanagan this fall.

The federal government announced in July an \$11-million transfer of gas tax revenue to the Regional District of Central Okanagan and Kelowna Regional Transit to establish a new Bus Rapid Transit system with buses running from downtown Kelowna to the UBC Okanagan campus in north Kelowna, with only two stops at other terminals along the way.

In November 2006, UBC Okanagan students approved a mandatory U-Pass program, similar to the UBC Vancouver student U-Pass that has been in place since 2003.

Starting in September, all part-time and full-time students will have unlimited access to BC Transit services within the Regional District of Central Okanagan. The cost of the program is \$50 per term, however, the Students’ Union has

negotiated a sliding scale subsidy with the University to keep U-Pass costs as low as possible. The U-Pass cost for students will be \$25 in September 2007, \$37.50 in January 2008, and \$45 in all subsequent terms. It will be assessed as part of tuition fees at the beginning of each term.

“One of the goals of U-Pass is to provide a low-cost sustainable transportation option for UBC Okanagan students as part of a comprehensive, sustainable transportation strategy,” says Carole Jolly, Director of UBC’s TREK Program Centre, which oversees transportation management for UBC. “The U-Pass will help reduce unnecessary traffic to and from campus, while increasing access to public transportation. This will help ease traffic congestion and automobile parking demands as UBC Okanagan’s enrolment grows.”

With major construction underway on the UBC Okanagan campus, several parking lots have been downsized to make way for new buildings. One new 500-space parking lot is being added. However, Jolly says the emphasis is really on improving transportation options and encouraging as many people

as possible to choose public or alternative transportation such as car pooling to and from the campus.

Safety of those arriving and leaving the campus each day -- whether by bus, in their own vehicles, or on bicycles -- has been improved with the construction of a new overpass that will carry traffic over busy Highway 97 onto the campus. Options for a new cycle path from the UBC Okanagan campus to Kelowna’s municipal road network, without routing cyclists onto Highway 97, are currently being explored by UBC Okanagan and the City of Kelowna.

More information about the UBC Okanagan U-Pass program can be found on the web at www.ubcsuo.ca. **R**



PHOTO: MICHAEL HINTRINGER

New Vancouver Study Options

**Forestry:
Global Perspectives Major**

By Brian Lin

Taking time to go abroad won’t be a problem for UBC Forestry students who choose the new Global Perspectives major in the Natural Resources Conservation (NRC) program – in fact, it’s mandatory.

The undergraduate major, to be launched this fall, focuses on the conservation and management of renewable and non-renewable resources, policy formation and planning in the global context. Students are required to conduct international field work, co-op or internship, volunteer or study abroad at one of the Faculty of Forestry’s 25 partner universities in 18 countries.

International case studies are incorporated into a new fourth-year capstone course to give students hands-on experience in integrating various stakeholder considerations when it comes to resource sustainability.

“The Science and Management major in the NRC, which focuses a great deal on regional case studies, is the largest and fastest growing program in the faculty, yet many NRC students were telling us how much they wanted more international experience”

says NRC program director Prof. Scott Hinch.

“Resource management programs around the continent which incorporate international studies are thriving while those that don’t are facing low enrollments or worse. There is a clear market for students to work abroad or for global interests in Canada. We developed this new major based on what students, and the market work place, want.”

**Land and Food Systems:
Master of Food Science**

By Han Nah Kim

The Faculty of Land and Food Systems’ new Master of Food Science (MFS) program will shine a new light on the increasing demand for expertise in the food industry.

The concern for quality control over food imports has been escalating due to recent crises such as the reported 4,000 cases of pet deaths in U.S. related to pet food imports from China, as well as human sickness and death linked to E. coli-contaminated spinach from California. With a new public focus on regulatory compliance and application of the latest technologies, there is a growing need for experts to help regulate

and support the food industry.

The MFS program, a professional degree that can be completed within a 12-month period, aims to make a contribution to secure distribution of top-quality products. “The foremost objectives are to equip students with first-hand scientific knowledge of food safety as it is practiced in Canada, to provide experience in international food systems, and a global perspective on the food industry that will be invaluable to individuals wishing to pursue a career in this increasingly international industry,” says program director, UBC Prof. Tim Durance.

The MFS is a course-based, non-thesis degree designed for those wanting careers in government or industry. It is also appropriate for professionals already working in government, industry or private practices who want to upgrade their skills and knowledge.

In addition to food safety and quality control, students will also develop competencies related to the regulatory requirements for the production, processing and distribution of food.

The program will launch this September with 26 students, half of whom are international students from China and other countries. **R**

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A High-Tech Place to Call Their Own:

Abdul Ladha Science Student Centre



Science students have a new home with 10-metre ceilings and state-of-the-art audio and video systems. (Artist's rendering of the Abdul Ladha Science Centre)

BY BRIAN LIN

UBC science students have become the envy of their peers for their swank new digs, complete with 10-metre ceilings, state-of-the-art audio systems, a four-metre wide video screen and a high-definition projector that would impress even the most discriminating audio-visual enthusiasts.

The \$3.4-million, 661 square-metre Abdul Ladha Science Student Centre, to be officially opened this fall, has been in use since January 2007 and is the first social space exclusively dedicated to facilitating interdisciplinary discussions and collaborations among science students.

Funded in part by the Faculty of Science and with science undergraduate student contributions, the centre was made possible by a \$1.3 million donation from UBC alumnus and entrepreneur Abdul Ladha, who also provided the vision and energy behind the creation of this high-tech facility that includes student computer access and plasma screens in the lounge and conference rooms.

"A common social and study space is vital to the students developing – and taking pride in – their identity as aspiring scientists," says Ladha, President and CEO of Ableauctions.com and founding director of The Canadian Institute for Technological Advancement, an organization dedicated to developing Canada's technological entrepreneurs.

"It also fosters interactions among science students from different fields and stages of their academic career."

A stone's throw from the Student Union Building, the centre is home to the Science

Undergraduate Society (SUS) and student clubs. It has already been used for academic planning workshops, club events and the Science Salon, informal discussions with faculty during

this year's UBC Celebrate Research Week.

"We're extremely proud of our new home," says SUS President Michael Duncan. "For years science students have been

spread throughout the campus in different buildings and facilities making any collaboration difficult.

"This facility is an amazing step forward in unifying science

student life at UBC. We will be building on the success we have already had with the space in the past months to make science students' experience at UBC even more positive." **R**

Faculty of Medicine

Through knowledge, creating health.

Head, Department of Physical Therapy

The Faculty of Medicine, University of British Columbia, invites applications for the position of Head of the Department of Physical Therapy.

We seek an academic leader with proven leadership, interpersonal and administrative skills who will be responsible for directing and developing the teaching, research and service programs of the Department of Physical Therapy.

The newly formed UBC Department of Physical Therapy has evolved from the former UBC Division of Physical Therapy, which is well known for its high standards and excellent faculty. As well as providing an outstanding educational environment, faculty members continue to be involved in diverse research initiatives involving both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. The Department provides education for physical therapists through rigorous scholarly activity, high standards of instruction, creative opportunities for learning, and a strong foundation that supports current and future practice of the profession. Close collaboration with the clinical community and the professional bodies ensures that students are able to access high quality clinical fieldwork as well as being able to participate in professional association and licensing body activities.

The successful candidate should hold certification in the College of Family Physicians of Canada or equivalent, and should have a proven record of scholarly excellence. We expect this appointment will be at the rank of professor and is subject to final budgetary approval. Salary will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. Anticipated start date is no later than July 1, 2008.

Department of Physical Therapy www.rehab.ubc.ca/pt_pro.htm

Applications, accompanied by a detailed curriculum vitae and names of three references, should be directed to:
Gavin Stuart, MD, FRCSC
 Dean, Faculty of Medicine
 c/o Darcie Prosser
 Room 317, IRC, UBC
 2194 Health Sciences Mall
 Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3.

(email: searches@medd.med.ubc.ca with subject line: **Head, Physical Therapy**)

Closing date: **September 30, 2007.**

The University of British Columbia has consistently ranked among the top 50 universities in the world. A research-intensive university with the province's only medical school, UBC is home to more than 50,000 undergraduate, graduate and international students and has an economic impact of \$4 billion to the local economy.

Faculty members, students, staff and alumni in the Faculty of Medicine are actively engaged in innovative, leading edge research, education and community service on university and hospital campuses across the Province. Together we aim to create knowledge and advance learning that will make a vital contribution to the health of individuals and communities, locally, nationally, and internationally.

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UBC Faculty of Medicine

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Senior Associate Dean | Community and External Relations

Applications/nominations are invited for the position of Senior Associate Dean, Community & External Relations. The position is expected to be internal to the University, part-time (.5 FTE), with an anticipated start date of October 1st, 2007. Salary will be commensurate with experience and qualifications.

The incumbent will report to the Dean of Medicine as the leader of one of five key portfolios for the Faculty. He/She will be responsible for providing strategic leadership and coordination for the Faculty's relationships with its broad range of stakeholders, locally, nationally and internationally. Responsibilities include working with other Faculty leaders to enhance and maintain positive and constructive relationships with a) health authorities b) alumni of the Faculty c) special populations d) our international communities and e) other universities and public sector institutions, private sector and community partners. Additionally the incumbent will have responsibility for coordination of alumni activities and communications for the Faculty.

Candidates must have a graduate degree preferably in a health-related discipline and also professional experience working in a complex environment. It is expected that the incumbent will have at least 10 years of experience working in a health environment.

A more detailed position description is available at the Dean's Office for those who wish to review it.

Faculty of Medicine | Dean's Office www.med.ubc.ca/home.htm

Deadline for receipt of applications is August 31, 2007. Please direct your applications along with the names of three referees and nominations to:
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The Faculty of Medicine at UBC, together with its partners including B.C.'s Health Authorities, provides innovative programs in the areas of health and life sciences through a province-wide delivery model. The Faculty teaches students at the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels and generates more than \$200 million in research funding each year. It is home to Canada's first distributed MD undergraduate program.

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PHOTO: provided by JOHNSTON DAVIDSON ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING INC.

Scratching Beneath the Surface:

More courses adopt community service learning



UBC students worked with parents and students at Strathcona Elementary to encourage positive communication and deal with name-calling through posters, video and fence art.

“Students say this kind of real-life experience is what they’ve been missing in education.”

BY SARAH WALKER

This coming year, up to 600 students will have the opportunity to be part of new UBC-Community Learning Initiative (UBC-CLI) courses. The Faculty of Land and Food Systems, the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Civil Engineering will each offer a course using community service learning (CSL) as a central pedagogical tool, thanks to newly allocated funds available to support faculty. In addition, a variety of other courses will offer CSL projects during February’s Reading Week.

CSL is a model of experiential learning that combines voluntary community service with classroom learning. UBC-CLI was recently formed to help the University reach its Trek 2010 goal of developing programs that engage 10% of UBC students in CSL each year. In the UBC-CLI approach to CSL,

students work in teams on short-term projects that link to course content and meet the goals of the participating organizations.

What differentiates CSL from volunteering experience alone is the embedded critical reflection. Margo Fryer, Director of the Learning Exchange and the UBC-CLI and Assistant Professor in the School of Community and

Regional Planning, explains that reflection on the community experience – for example, through journal writing or small group dialogue – generates more powerful and effective learning and allows students to scratch beneath the surface. “Students say this kind of real-life experience is what they’ve been missing in their education,” says Fryer. “They’re making a difference in these projects, and learning about themselves and society.”

The first wave of UBC-CLI projects, launched in February 2007, saw almost 200 undergraduate students work with 14 community organizations on 23 different

projects, including one at UBC Okanagan. Sherina Kanani, a third-year sociology student, and her team worked with YWCA’s Munroe House, a second-stage safe house for battered women in

Vancouver. To help smooth the transition to more independent housing, the team initiated a catalogue of housing alternatives across the city. Over three days, the team prepared a template of pertinent questions and researched about 20 properties, making notes on the houses, neighbourhoods and available amenities. Back in the classroom, the participants wrote reflective papers on the experience and presented their project to the class.

“Those were the three longest days of my life,” says Kanani. “They challenged me in more ways than just time. Doing something that is actually going to be used is really important and exciting.” She hopes to find more CSL opportunities this fall and says she is likely to volunteer in the future. In fact, one student on her project team is now a regular volunteer at Munroe House.

This is the reaction Fryer hopes CSL will evoke. “The beauty of these kinds of projects is there’s something quite magical about students working in teams and the immersion experience,” says Fryer. “People often think three to four days is too short to have an impact, but our experience shows it is enough.”

To prove the point, Fryer and Walter Sudmant, Director of UBC’s Planning and Institutional Research (PAIR),

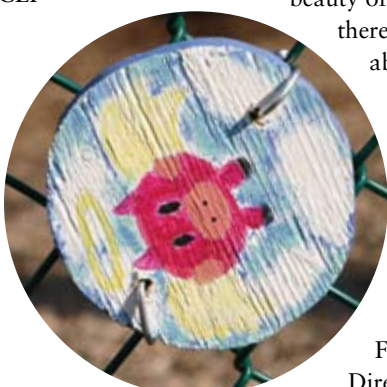
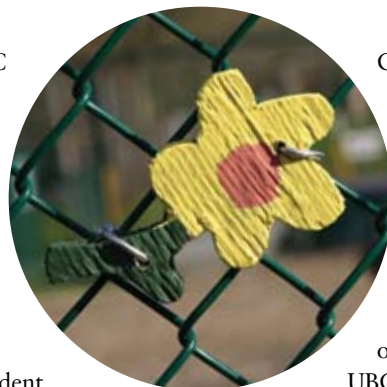
conducted a survey of students in courses offering a

CSL option. Those who participated in CSL options reported significantly higher levels of active and collaborative learning.

The broader UBC community is part of the picture too. UBC-CLI and Human Resources offer a program where staff, graduate students and alumni act as Project Leaders in the UBC-CLI. This will become part of a community leadership certificate, a new professional development opportunity. Brown bag lunches, open to the entire UBC community, also start up this fall at UBC’s Department of Teaching and Academic Growth (TAG). These aim to stimulate discussion around issues related to the integration and evaluation of CSL in academic courses.

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To find out more, visit www.learningexchange.ubc.ca or contact Margo Fryer at 604.822.1602. **R**



Mural at Hastings Elementary depicting a “Health and Wellness” theme.