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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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Milind Kandlikar Photograph

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Highlights of UBC media coverage in March 2011

Compiled by Heather Amos

UBC RESEARCH

'Clean fuel' not always successful

As reported by the *New Scientist*, *United Press International* and the *Vancouver Sun*, UBC researchers say a program in New Delhi, India, to switch vehicles to clean fuel has not significantly improved harmful emissions in more than 5000 vehicles.

— In New Delhi's 5,000 auto-rickshaws with two-stroke engines, the conversion to "clean fuel" was making the vehicles dirtier, producing emissions that have a negative impact on climate change.
— "Our study demonstrates the importance of engine type when adopting clean fuels," lead author and UBC post-doctoral fellow **Conor Reynolds** said.

Swapping fecal bacteria

Pathogen microbiologist **Brett Finlay** has shown that, in mice, resistance to a deadly *E.coli*-like bacterium depends on their gut microbes, reported *Nature* and *Science*. Finlay explained that those microbes can be swapped around by effectively feeding the mice each others' feces.

— "When 100 people at a wedding eat the potato salad, only a few get sick," says Finlay. He thinks these results might help to explain why. "Resistance to many diseases could be from our microbiota."

UBC SPORTS

Volleyball, basketball championships

The *Globe and Mail*, *Vancouver Sun*, *The Province*, the *Daily Courier* and others reported on the success of UBC athletic teams the Thunderbirds and Heat.

— The T-birds won the CIS women's volleyball championship for the fourth consecutive year. With eight national titles, they are the most decorated team in the league. The T-birds took home the bronze in the men's basketball CIS championship in Halifax.

— UBC's Okanagan campus men and women's Heat volleyball teams took gold in the BCAA championship, in their last year as members of the CCAA. The men's team took home silver at the CCAA National Championship, while the women came in fourth.

UBC EXPERTS COMMENT

Japan's Triple Disaster

Faculty, staff and students quickly responded to the disaster caused by the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis in Japan.

— Stories by the *BBC*, *Canadian Press*, *CTV*, *CBC* and others featured members of the UBC community responding to the disaster. **Joseph Caron**, **Jessica Main**, **David Edgington**, **Carlos Ventura**, **Perry Adebar**, **David Measday**, **Solomon Tesfamarian**, **Mika McKinnon**, **Barbara Lence**, **Michael Bostock**, **Julian Dierkes**, **Kenneth Elwood**, **Andrew Riseman** and others provided expert commentary to the media.

— "Most of the neighbourhood was congregating outside and the older residents noted that this was more severe than anything they had ever experienced," said **Christina Laffin**, an assistant professor in UBC's Department of Asian Studies who was in Tokyo during the earthquake.

— "The fundamental issue is not going to be funding, it's going to be reassuring Japanese people that the government is in control and that they need not panic," said **Paul Evans**, director of the Institute of Asian Research, about the recovery process.

KUDOS

Michael Hayden wins Wightman Award

Dr. **Michael Hayden** has received the Canada Gairdner Wightman Award.

Hayden, a professor in the Faculty of Medicine and director of the Centre for Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics, is the most cited author on Huntington disease in the world and best known for developing a predictive genetic test for Huntington disease.

— Nineteen of the last 26 Nobel Prizes in medicine or physiology in the past 10 years have gone to past Gairdner Award recipients. The only other British Columbian to receive a Gairdner was the late Michael Smith, who went on to win the 1993 Nobel Prize for Chemistry after receiving the Gairdner International Award in 1986.

Hayden is the 15th recipient of the Wightman Award and the first British Columbian to be bestowed this honour.

Martin Dee Photograph



Lending a voice

UBC's Crane Library provides students with audio recorded materials. It is sustained by volunteers like Mary Taitt

By Heather Amos

Mary Taitt has volunteered with UBC's Crane Library for over 41 years. This year, she was recognised for her dedication with the Slonecker Award for Outstanding Volunteer Contribution.

and as an activist for protection of B.C.'s natural environment.

"I've been very active in ecological and environmental work and I've made choices about my professional career so that I've always been able to volunteer," says Taitt. "Volunteering is a very important part of my life."

Having been a volunteer with the Crane Library since it opened, Taitt has seen the library evolve. "We used these giant reel-to-reel tapes and you could hear the machines whirling away in the background of all the recordings."

The Crane Library now has eight recording booths, each with its own computer, recording software and microphone.

Today's digital recordings are produced to US National Braille Association standards. The production of audio materials follow established standards on everything from pronunciation, to how to read a text box, and when to break and read a caption.

"The library has really evolved into a remarkable professional resource," says Janet Mee, the director of Access and Diversity. "It's extremely rewarding to be able to provide such a quality service for our students, faculty and staff with print disabilities."

"To have real voices talking to me, I can't explain it, it means a lot to me that people are volunteering to do this," says Katie Hobson, a UBC education student who deals with chronic pain that makes it difficult for her to stay in one position and read for a long time. "The voices are passionate and interested in the material."

For many facilities, the cost of producing human voice audio recordings is too expensive. As such, the demand for audio books is high and as a member of the Canadian Association of Educational Resources for Alternate Format Production in Education, Crane Library is able to share these resources with students across the country.

"We can afford to do this because we have such a long tradition of volunteers," says Mee. "If it weren't for the dedication of people like Mary, who show up at least once a week for a reading shift, it would be impossible to offer this service."

"I deeply appreciate Mary for all the volunteer service as a narrator, without whose work I would not have been able to carry out my academic journey at UBC that I dreamed for," says Won Kim, a PhD student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, who has a visual disability.

But Taitt argues that she volunteers as much for herself as for those who listen. "If the week has gone well or if it hasn't gone well, you know you've done something useful," she says. "Personally, it's very satisfying." ●

"To have real voices talking to me, I can't explain it, it means a lot to me that people are volunteering to do this."

University students spend hours reading every week. Whether it's a novel, research paper or class assignment, for someone with a print disability, meaning they have difficulty seeing, comprehending or physically holding a book, access to materials in alternative formats is critical to staying on top of schoolwork.

At UBC, there is a long tradition of producing human voice audio recordings of school materials through UBC's Crane Library, part of Access and Diversity. Currently there are more than 130 volunteers who spend an average of 7,350 hours each year narrating and recording all the audio materials needed.

UBC's Access and Diversity facilitates accommodations for students, staff and faculty with disabilities, which include alternate format materials like Braille,

electronic text, PDF and audio. Crane Library houses an extensive collection of alternate format materials and is one of the largest producers of human voice audio in Canada.

At UBC, volunteers read everything from an undergraduate psychology textbook to a complex philosophy paper for a PhD student's dissertation. And Mary Taitt, who has been volunteering with the Crane for the past 41 years, has read it all. This year, Taitt was recognized for her dedication and was awarded the Slonecker Award for Outstanding Volunteer Contribution to UBC.

"To be able to do something useful and pass on information to all these folks is a great motivator," says Taitt, who believes that with all her education and expertise, she should help give back to the community.

Crane was established in 1968 as an informal reading room with a gift of some 10,000 volumes of Braille books from the family of the late Charles Allan Crane, who was both deaf and blind and had been a UBC student in the 1930s. A few readers were hired, production of audio recordings began and volunteers were recruited when extra help was needed.

Taitt began volunteering in 1969 and continued volunteering while working on her PhD in Zoology, and then as an alumnus and UBC employee. Over the years, Mary has worked as a UBC Research Associate, an environmental consultant, an ecotourism whale watching guide, and is an active volunteer for local environmental organizations. Taitt now works as a faculty member at Thompson Rivers University's Open Learning Division

Creating a theory and a degree

Rajdeep Singh Gill's ideas won't be put in a box

By Heather Amos

For his PhD, Rajdeep Singh Gill has developed a philosophical and practical outlook on the interrelationship of creativity, ethics and justice.



Amartya Sen

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen will receive an honorary degree from UBC at a ceremony on April 21. Sen won the 1998 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for his research on welfare economics, human development theory and famine.

Sen's research crosses several disciplines but he is best known for his work to understand the causes of famine. This work led to the development of new policies and solutions for preventing and minimizing the effects of food shortages.

The honorary degree is being presented to Sen as part of the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program's 40th anniversary celebration and as part of the Institute of Asian Research's celebration of the 150th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, who was Asia's first Nobel Laureate and who deeply influenced Sen. Born on Tagore's university campus, it is believed that Tagore gave Sen his name, Amartya.

As part of the ceremony, Sen, who is currently the Thomas W. Lamont University Professor and Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University, will give an Address. ●



Martin Dee Photograph

Celebrating 40 years

This year, UBC's Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program (ISGP) is celebrating its 40th anniversary and the work of more than 300 students who have graduated from the program. Alumni and current students of the ISGP have studied a wide range of topics including:

Urban Renewal, Drug-Related Disorder and Displacement: Implications for Health and HIV Risk Behaviour among Injection Drug Using Populations

Storefronts, Tent Cities, and Squats: The Forms and Meanings of Dwellings Constructed by Persons who are Homeless

Early Childhood and War: Exploring Child Development in Post Conflict Northern Uganda

The Role of Aboriginal Artistic Expression in Aboriginal Community: Politics in Vancouver's Lower Mainland

Psychiatric Disorders and Patterns of Mental Health Services Utilization According to Ethnic Differences in Juvenile Detainees in British Columbia

Acoustical Characterization of Green Roofs: Contributions to Building Ecology and the Urban Soundscape

Topologies and Design Methods of Folding Structures: Expanding the Architectural Paradigm

Impact of International Drug Policy: Social and Structural Influences on Health Outcomes and Health Care Access among Injection Drug Users in Bangkok, Thailand

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Interdisciplinary Collaboration: The Interface of Art & Science

Cultural Resilience in the Upper Athabasca River Valley: The Role of Traditional Leadership in a Modern World

Le Corbusier and the Politics of Postcoloniality

Heidegger in the Poetry and Poetics of Octavio Paz

UBC student Rajdeep Singh Gill is tall, expressive and passionate and his mind works fast. For the past five years, he's been trying to channel this energy and his thoughts into a PhD dissertation that could only be described as expansive.

Gill's PhD research engages the fields of fine art, art history, philosophy, science, media and technology, cultural studies, indigenous studies, law, history and sociology.

A Trudeau scholar, he has developed a philosophical and practical outlook on the interrelationship of creativity, ethics and justice in a dissertation entitled, "Transforming Curatorial Practice: Transdisciplinarity, Plural Worldviews and the Creative Universe."

To Gill, creativity is the "multidimensional human and non-human capacity to transformatively participate in the world." He grounds such an exploration of creativity in a wide range of examples, from cultural contributions of crows to the technologies of plants, from Sikh philosophy to social movements.

Within that framework Gill explains how creativity is integral to ethical responsiveness and the gathering and pursuit of a more comprehensive sense of justice in a diverse and interconnected world.

"Creativity is an essential part of human flourishing," says Gill. "We don't normally see creativity as part of justice but it is a good measure of whether and how we may feel free and just in the world."

Taking the time to explore and pull so many different ideas and disciplines together into a thesis has only been possible because of opportunities found in the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program (ISGP), in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at UBC. Gill is typical of the students in the program who study in nearly 40 departments and 11 research centres and institutes across UBC.

"The world is complex and my theory is complex and this program has given me the room to be imaginative and for my ideas to come together organically," says Gill.

This year, ISGP is celebrating its 40th anniversary and is still producing research that integrates theory and practice across the disciplines. More than 300 students have graduated from the program and have moved onto careers in law, medicine, academia, architecture, business, science, the arts and government.

"One of our graduates lived in solitude on an island off the coast of Chile for a year as part of his studies which integrated philosophy, psychology and forestry," says Hillel Goelman, chair of ISGP. "This program encourages students to take ownership of their work. They decide what and how to study."

Every student has an individualized program of study and the program has no required courses that all students must take. Students who want to bring

together ideas from various fields don't have to look for a program that fits their interests. They design their own program.

"They are the centre of their program," explains Goelman. "In consultation with their interdisciplinary supervisory committee, they decide which classes to take, what their research will look like and whom they consult as an expert." "ISGP encourages you to have integrity over your vision and your project," says Gill.

This student-directed format worked perfectly for Gill because it gave him the freedom to choose how to carry out his research and where.

For the first four years of his PhD, Gill lived and worked from the Gulf Islands where he began forming his research ideas. He also spent time managing the organization Creativity

Commons Collective and Press, traveling internationally for research, teaching at Emily Carr and interacting with interdisciplinary thinkers, policy makers, artists, and public intellectuals through annual Trudeau Foundation events.

Gill believes that we should not separate our commitments and understandings into compartments.

"The world doesn't work by disciplines, and the way I conduct my life acknowledges this interconnectivity," he says. "The indivisibility of justice necessitates that we learn to think creatively and relate across worldviews." ●

To learn more about the ISGP and anniversary events: www.isgp.ubc.ca

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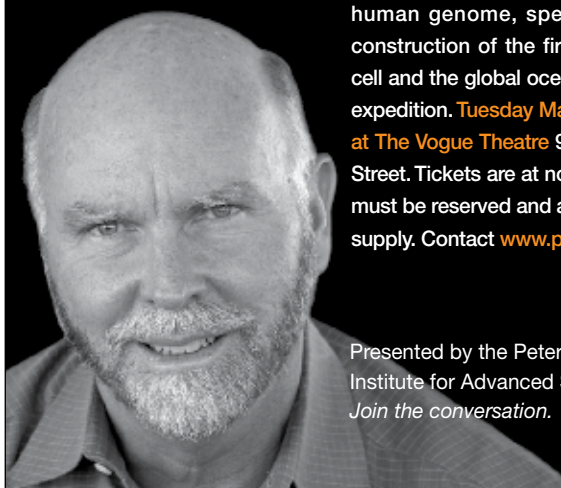
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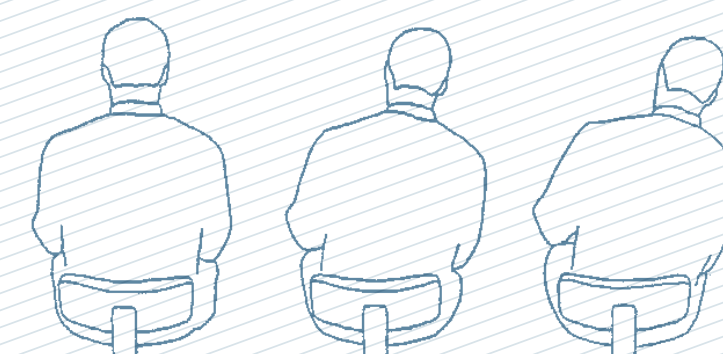
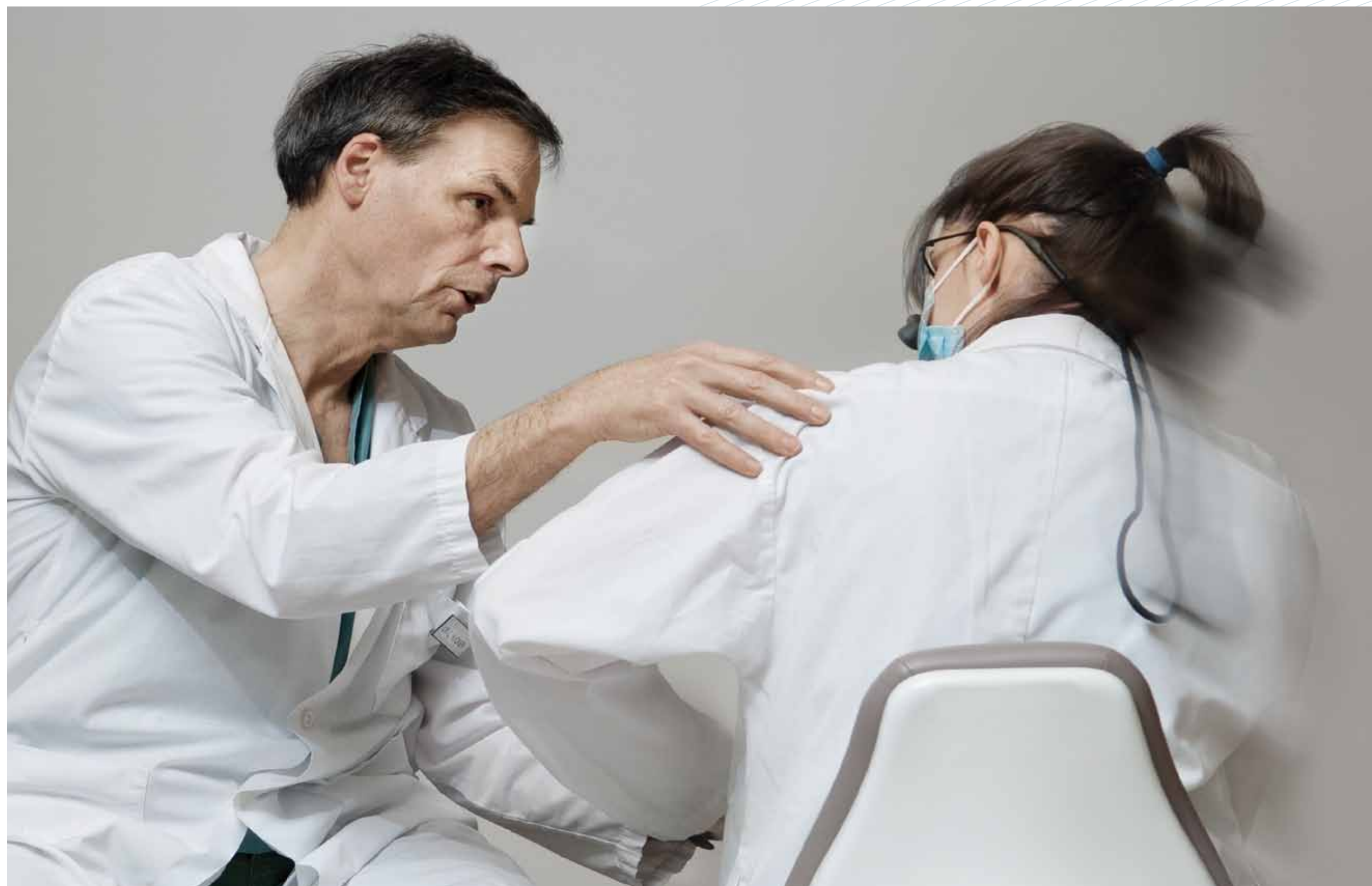


Improving dental ergonomics

You're in the chair, but your dentist feels the pain. The UBC Dentistry program is changing that

By Lorraine Chan

The key is to develop muscle memory for working in balance, says Dr. Lance Rucker.



Balance range for back: Vertical spine in balance at 0° (left) slightly out of balance at 10° (centre) and strained out of balance at 15° (right)

Students are taught to always check five key factors for ergonomic dentistry:

- 1 The clinician's seat is stable and at the correct height for balance.
- 2 The patient's oral cavity should be at clinician's heart height and centered in front of the clinician.
- 3 The patient's headrest must be adjusted so that the patient's maxillary plane (upper jaw) is vertically positioned for best access.
- 4 There is clearance around the supine patient's head to allow unimpeded operator access from the 10 o'clock position to the 2 o'clock position.
- 5 The overhead operating light beam is within 15 degrees of the clinician's eye-line.

"We've heard from many of our students that one of the reasons they've decided to come to UBC is for the integrated clinical ergonomics."

develop specialized teaching equipment. "We've heard from many of our students that one of the reasons they've decided to come to UBC is for the integrated clinical ergonomics," says Rucker. "The word on the street is that our graduates do not undergo the same wear and tear as graduates from other universities." Indeed, a 2001 B.C. Workers Compensation Board survey showed that UBC-trained dentists and dental hygienists—about half of those working

in the province—were statistically less likely to suffer low back pain. Rucker explains that from the outset, UBC students develop muscle memory for working in balance—rather than contorting their bodies—while wielding the required instruments and accessing the necessary areas to operate in the patient's mouth. Students also learn how to optimally adjust equipment, from tilting the patient's headrest to controlling the angle of the operatory light.

"Although most modern dental equipment is designed with basic ergonomics in mind, I always tell students, if the setting isn't working for you, then you're working for the setting," says Rucker, who also specializes in operatory design concepts. He recently took part in a World Health Organization initiative to provide enhanced simulation training for oral health care workers in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. And over the past five years, he has consulted on the design and construction of many new educational and private clinic facilities in North America, including Jamaica's first oral health training facility in Kingston, which just opened for patient care in September 2010. To further spread the ergonomics message, Rucker is working with

longtime research collaborator Dr. Michael Belenky, former professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore Dental School, to produce an online manual for clinical ergonomics assessments and tools. Working with oral health professionals throughout North America, Rucker provides ergonomic practice assessment that first identifies the factors that contribute to the ergonomics risk profile of the clinician. He then provides practical solutions to prevent further musculoskeletal injuries and to reduce risk factors linked with musculoskeletal symptoms. "Within four to six weeks after a few retraining sessions, most motivated clinicians can re-educate their muscles to operate in balance as a matter of habit," says Rucker. ●



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Wrongful conviction

A legal expert is examining how factors like improper expert testimony may derail the justice system

By Simmi Puri

UBC Law Prof. Emma Cunliffe researches wrongful convictions of murder against mothers.



“From the early 1990s to 2005, there were at least 18 wrongful convictions of parents in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.”

Martin Dee Photograph

On May 21, 2003, Kathleen Megan Folbigg was found guilty of killing her four children who died over the course of a decade. She was later sentenced to 30 years imprisonment. The widely publicized case sparked a global debate around her innocence. Was Folbigg Australia's worst female serial killer or was her case a serious breakdown of the justice system, in which a bereaved mother had been wrongfully convicted of murder?

It's a question that resonated with UBC Law Prof. Emma Cunliffe, whose ground-breaking work focuses on the factors that led to the wrongful accusations of murder against mothers in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom.

“From the early 1990s up until 2005, there were at least 18 wrongful convictions of parents in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom,” says Cunliffe. “It's a distressingly high number and I wanted to understand why this happened in three jurisdictions at about the same time.”

Much of Cunliffe's research focuses on homicide trials. Specifically, she looks at the way in which experts, such as pathologists who provide medical evidence about an infant's death, provide testimony.

“One of the extraordinary things I find is that academics

and doctors who publish their research in peer-reviewed journals tend to be extremely careful about the limits of their knowledge,” she says. “They identify what they can be sure about and where they are uncertain. But when these same experts come into a courtroom to give testimony they are often much less careful. They run the risk of misleading courts about their capacity to diagnose the causes of an infant's death.”

Her critical assessment of the relationship between medical research and expert testimony is the only one of its kind. Cunliffe advocates that courts should look closely at the differences between research and testimony and be more critical of experts who have become partisan.

“In my research I saw cases where the expert initially said that a death might

about the confidence with which they could diagnose murder. In these circumstances, Folbigg is entitled to the benefit of the doubt.”

Cunliffe also recommends that courts examine the cultural assumptions made by these same experts.

“There are cultural stereotypes of what good parenting looks like that play into the diagnosis of murder. Some experts, lawyers and police operate on the belief that murder happens in certain sorts of families. As a result, they unfairly perpetuate a stereotype that families from certain economic or cultural backgrounds are more likely to commit these crimes. Frankly, there is no medical research that suggests that this is a fair way to proceed.”

During the time of Folbigg's trial, Cunliffe (originally from Australia) was pursuing her Master's degree at the UBC Faculty of Law. She joined the faculty as a tenure track professor while completing her PhD.

In May last year Cunliffe, together with UBC Law Prof. Christine Boyle, was awarded a research grant of \$101,893 by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for a three-year research project called “Reconsidering Child Homicide: Investigation, evidence, and fact determination in Canadian cases, 1990–2010.”

The project has produced a survey of child death and child homicide prosecutions in Canada as background to a study of the transcripts of a series of criminal trials. Cunliffe will use this research to identify strategies for improving investigation and fact determination in child homicide cases.

In addition, she conducted a survey of expert evidence in the B.C. Supreme Court and Court of Appeal, with funding from the Law Foundation of B.C. The survey analyses all decisions on the admissibility of expert evidence between 1994 and 2009 and is the first comprehensive study of this kind in Canada. The goal is to identify which types of expertise are most likely to be disputed at trial, and to understand more about the basis on which objections are made.

As for Folbigg, she remains in prison and continues to assert her innocence. Cunliffe's forthcoming book, *Murder, Medicine and Motherhood* (Hart Publishing, June 2011), provides a detailed case study of Folbigg's murder trial and the appeals and explores how legal process, medical knowledge and expectations of motherhood work together when a mother is charged with killing infants who have died in mysterious circumstances. Cunliffe argues that Folbigg was wrongly convicted. ●

Cunliffe has carefully studied cases such as Folbigg's, and the medical research on which these cases depend. She found that most pathologists agree that they cannot reliably distinguish between smothering and natural causes of death in very young children.

“No one can be sure how the Folbigg children died,” says Cunliffe. “But our law says that a person is innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Some of the experts in Folbigg's case misled the court

Learn more about UBC's Faculty of Law at www.law.ubc.ca

High school students solve UBC murder mystery

By Ashley Turk

A researcher is found dead hunched over her lab bench, and seven suspects are in custody. Now it's up to 30 high school students to determine who killed her.

That's the premise for “CSI at the LSI,” a murder mystery-based science outreach program for high school students. The program, designed to get students interested in science as a career, is hosted by UBC's Life Sciences Institute (LSI).

Students from Grade 10-12 are invited to the LSI, where graduate students and post-docs set the scene: a female graduate student has been found dead at her bench, and the students must use basic scientific techniques to test evidence collected from the scene and find her killer.

A workbook provides additional background, and includes mug shots and possible motives for each suspect. The workbook also contains methodology for the experiments the students will be performing, along with prepared samples of blood, skin, hair, and saliva.

Students are broken up into groups and assigned one of four samples, which they evaluate using DNA analysis, protein analysis, fluorescence imaging techniques, or classical microbiology procedures.

After completing their workshops, students are asked to reconvene to share their results and use deductive reasoning to rule out suspects one-by-one.

Students must use basic scientific techniques to test evidence collected from the scene.

“It was a lot more interesting than I thought it would be,” one student from Eric Hamber Senior Secondary said in his post-workshop feedback. “It was cool to see how the electron microscope worked.”

“Everyone was really helpful,” said another. “We learned how to use a pipette and how bacterial cultures are grown. It was great to do the experiments ourselves in a real lab.”

“These students are a motivated bunch,” says their teacher Brenda Dowle, head of the science department at Eric Hamber. “Still, being part of CSI at the LSI was a real eye-opener.”

“I could see the passion and excitement in their eyes while they were doing the workshops.”

Initially designed as part of Celebrate Research – UBC's week-long celebration of research and its impact on the society – the program has been popular with students, teachers and now has received attention from academia and government funders.

The program's methodology was published in the December 2010 issue of the *Journal of Microbiology and Biology Education* and was recently awarded \$14,500 from Year of Science, a Province of B.C. initiative that encourages youth to explore the world of science.

The grant will allow LSI to host an extended, two-day version of the program for schools outside the greater Vancouver area and cover the cost of meals, transportation and overnight accommodation for students, teachers, and chaperones, as well as an expanded number of hands-on activities.

The expanded program will also build in more time for students to spend with graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, as well as a panel session with members of the LSI who will share their educational experiences.

“At the end of the day, the students gather to use the results from the workshops to determine the killer,” says Santiago Ramon-Garcia, co-creator of the program. “It's great to see them collaborate and share what they've learned.” ●

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Rob van Adrichem UBC Photograph



Dr. Jennifer Parker is among the first cohort of MD's from UBC's distributed medical education program who chose to work in Northern BC.

Card was accepted into the inaugural class of the Northern Medical Program, hosted by the University of Northern British Columbia. He and his 23 classmates experienced the same curriculum as their fellow UBC students in Vancouver and Victoria, with many classes conducted by videoconferencing.

Now, having completed four years of medical school and two years of postgraduate training (or "residency") in family medicine, Dr. Card is one of the first family doctors produced by UBC's distributed medical education program.

He has stayed in Prince George, filling in for physicians who are vacation or maternity leave, or helping out in the Emergency Department of the University Hospital of Northern BC. But he also ventures around the province, performing "locums"—short stints—for weeks or months at a time, at clinics or hospitals. He has worked in the northern town of Mackenzie (pop. 4,500), the bustling maternity ward of Surrey Memorial Hospital, and even his home town of Maple Ridge.

"It's a neat way to see the province," he says. "I like the variety."

Some of Dr. Card's former classmates have chosen a less peripatetic path since completing their family practice residencies—and true to plan, they have settled in the North.

Jennifer Parker, who dreamed of being a doctor since the age of six, is tending to patients in Fort St. John, a 480

kilometre-drive north from Prince George. A Cree Metis who was raised in the northern B.C. towns of Chetwynd and Fort Nelson, she was intent on returning to the region as a doctor.

So after earning her MD, Dr. Parker also opted for a residency in the north, in Ft. St. John. Before long, she was thinking about settling there.

"The medical community here is very friendly, welcoming, accepting and very supportive of one another," she says. "I just got to do so much in that space of time, and everybody was so excited to teach me."

She is one of the few B.C. born-and-raised physicians in town; most of the others are transplants from South Africa, the U.K., Australia and other Canadian provinces. Her days are long and varied, and can easily include delivering babies, assisting in surgery, seeing patients in the family practice she has joined, and working in the hospital's emergency room. She also travels to outlying towns, such as Hudson's Hope, every month.

"This was sort of what I had envisioned to begin with, and being in

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However, with public concern for the environment growing, Richardson says the pressure is mounting on government, business, and the financial sector to adopt more environmentally friendly business practices, investment policies and regulations.

"The environmental protests that once occurred in front of bulldozers are now occurring in banks and corporate locations," says Richardson, naming Alberta's oil sands as Canada's most pressing environmental issue. "They are drawing attention to the seminal role that financial institutions play."

Beyond public pressure, a growing body of research suggests there sometimes are financial advantages to investing socially responsibly, Richardson says. The problem is a mismatch between financial and environmental "returns": the social and environmental benefits tend to accrue over the long-term, while fund managers must demonstrate financial returns in the near-term.

Richardson is working with a number of stakeholders—oil, mining and investment companies, investors, fund managers, First Nations and international NGOs—to understand barriers to socially responsible investment (SRI) and to determine where inroads are most likely to succeed.

One area well-positioned for advances is pension funds, he says. "It is an untenable position for any organization that aspires or claims to be socially responsible to hold investments that contribute to environmental degradation or human suffering," says Richardson, who injured his right eye as a teenager and wears a patch.

He offers Norway's Global Pension Fund as an important global precedent. The fund has an SRI policy and actively divests from companies that harm the environment. In contrast, Canada's Pension Plan has a less stringent requirement to engage in "dialogue" with the polluters in its portfolio of over 2,000 companies, he says.

Ethical mutual funds are another force for SRI. Richardson says a number of reputable funds now exist on the market, including in Canada—a far cry from their

antecedents, which lacked rigorous investment strategies and sometimes suffered from low returns.

Despite these inroads, moving SRI from niche status to the mainstream will require regulations, Richardson says. "You can outline myriad reasons for institutions to change—ethics, public opinion, the business case, research evidence—but some will still refuse," he says. "We need informed public policy and legal intervention, because the market alone isn't going to do it. There needs to be a level playing field and mechanisms to discourage 'greenwash.'"

Richardson traces his connection to the environment to a pivotal moment in his youth. "When I was a boy we lived in a rural village in England, where I was appalled how some of the local kids would look for bird nests, pilfer the eggs and smash them as a hobby," he says. "I have always been deeply connected to the environment, but that was one of my transformational experiences."

Richardson sees much progress since observing that hostility to the environment. "We have environmental laws today that would have been unimaginable years ago," he says. "Back in the 1980s and '90s, Margaret Thatcher and other leaders were incredibly hostile to the idea of carbon tax. But in 2001, the UK created the climate change levy, which has a similar purpose. And in 2005 the European Union introduced a regional cap and trade scheme for carbon polluters—so we are definitely moving forward." ●

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The buck stops here

Prof studies environmental accountability of financiers

By Basil Waugh

Should banks and investment firms be held accountable when they bankroll corporations that harm the environment?

That's a question being tackled by Benjamin Richardson, UBC Canada Research Chair in Environmental Law and Sustainability, who is exploring how to advance socially responsible investing in the financial sector.

Richardson, who joined UBC's Faculty of Law in January, says that many corporations that cause environmental degradation and climate change are enabled by the "unseen polluters" that finance their ventures, including banks, investment firms, mutual funds and pension plans.

"For many people, the financial sector is simply a transactional mechanism: people lend money, buy shares and hope for returns," says Richardson, who joins UBC from York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, following stints at the University of Auckland, and the University of Manchester. "In fact, the investment or lending decisions banks and other financiers make can have huge downstream impacts on the environment, in addition to social consequences, such as for human rights."

But while environmental laws exist to hold corporations accountable for their impacts, these don't normally extend to the financiers that support them, says Richardson, a native of Sydney, Australia. "Financial institutions therefore might have little incentive to consider the environmental implications of their decisions," he says.

"Environmental laws exist to hold corporations accountable for their impacts, but these don't normally extend to the financiers that support them."

Richardson says the financial sector can have major impacts—good or bad—on the environment.

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Milestones in socially responsible investing:

18th Century

Quakers refuse to participate in the trans-Atlantic slave trade

20th Century

Ethical investors led by religious groups boycott companies in South Africa during Apartheid

21st Century

Norway's Global Pension Fund starts divesting from mining giant RioTinto and Wal-Mart on environmental or labour grounds



Benjamin Richardson says the financial sector can have major impacts—good or bad—on the environment.

Courtesy Benjamin Richardson Photograph

Richardson's projects include:

The role local governments can play as climate change regulators while bottlenecks occur in law-making at international and national levels

The role of socially responsible investors in improving Canadian extractive industries

Hosting conferences and workshops that will examine issues of financier and corporate environmental responsibility

Planning a new global environmental internship program at UBC's Centre for Law and the Environment, which Richardson directs, that will place UBC and visiting law students with organizations for real-world experience dealing with environmental regulation and policy problems

A home that doesn't need heat

Building a B.C. version of a European home that stays warm without a furnace

By Heather Amos

Kell Hansen (left) and Robert Fürst are working to make a B.C. version of a home that requires no extra energy to heat.



Martin Dee Photograph

As the story goes, when the three little pigs built their houses out of straw, sticks and brick, it was only the house of bricks that was strong enough to stand up to the big bad wolf. But the Faculty of Forestry is working on a house of sticks to prove that wood can be just as good, at least when it comes to energy use.

Using B.C. wood products, the Centre for Advanced Wood Processing (CAWP) and the Department of Wood Science, are working with a B.C.-based Brash Ventures Ltd. to build a passive energy home, a home that needs almost no external source of energy to heat.

"We have to do things like this because the cost of natural resources like oil and gas are going up and we're consuming too much of them," says Robert Fürst, a senior instructor in the Department of Wood Science, who is leading UBC's side

of the project.

Passive houses stay warm without a furnace because they are so well insulated that they trap in heat created in the home. They do this through walls much thicker than normal and with breathable insulation. Items like the oven, an electrical hot water heater and people, generate enough warmth to keep the home cozy. When required, solar energy and heat exchange pumps can be used to bridge any additional need for energy.

Because of their ability to minimize energy consumption, the passive home market is growing rapidly in Germany and other parts of Europe. Despite all the forests and wood available here in Canada, the passive home idea has not taken off. Now Brash Ventures Ltd. is working to build a "Canadianized" model of the German passive home.

At 12 inches thick, the walls are double the thickness of most walls in British Columbia.

The company turned to CAWP to collaborate through its Business Innovation Partnership program. When CAWP was created, its objectives included working with businesses to make the knowledge and expertise at the university accessible to industry. It works with companies to get unique ideas off the ground.

"Whether it's building a prototype, a business plan or showing a company how it can best manufacture a product, we have the expertise to help," says Iain Macdonald, managing director of CAWP. "Our students get to work on these real-world projects and it really enriches their opportunities."

The goal of the industry-university project is to create a prototype of a B.C. passive home. As this is the first attempt to build a passive home in Canada, the cost hasn't been established. In Germany, passive houses are approximately 15 to 20 per cent more expensive to build than regular homes.

The structure of the house is made of lumber and the insulation is made from excess waste products generated in the manufacturing process. Instead of releasing the carbon found in wood back into the atmosphere by burning it or letting it decompose, the carbon is sequestered in the building for decades. Passive homes are not only

Green features come to life

A campus building that will model new environmental technologies nears completion

By Lynn Warburton



Rainforest canopies with their tall trees and vines are amazing sources of energy. They regulate the climate for people, plants and animals living below.

In April, UBC's Centre for Interactive Research on Sustainability (CIRS), expected to be the world's greenest building when it opens this fall, will create its own version of a forest canopy across the top two stories of its three-story exterior west facade. The lush green wall will be planted in front of windows with a fast-growing vine, Virginia Creeper, to create a comfortable interior climate.

In summer, its dense green leaves will provide shade and protection from the heat of the sun. In autumn, the leaves turn a spectacular flaming red and then drop so the sun can filter through the glass. Inhabitants won't be the only ones to benefit from the green wall. The plants' blue-black berries are a winter food source for birds.

The plants will appear to be growing from the building but are actually supported on a steel frame that stands alone. "It's actually a simple system," says Alberto Cayuela, associate director of the UBC Sustainability Initiative. The sun's heat is blocked by shade to cool temperatures and as temperatures drop, shines through windows creating heat when it's needed."

The vegetated wall, which will advance the idea of cost-free control of indoor climate, is one of the many ways CIRS will be a living laboratory for sustainability. ●

environmentally sustainable but also support healthy living. Homes are built from natural products such as wood and wood-fibre insulation panels and water-based finishes are used.

"European passive homes are treated like a living organism. They call it 'building biology,'" says Kell Hansen, a fourth year Wood Products Processing student who is working on the passive home for a co-op placement.

"Unlike most Canadian homes where the insulation works as a plastic bag, locking everything in, the walls of a passive home are breathable, allowing fresh air to circulate."

At 12 inches thick, the walls are double the thickness of most walls in British Columbia. They're filled with insulation made out of wood fibre and work to filter out dampness and air pollutants.

Despite all the benefits of the passive homes, Fürst and Hansen have run up against some major obstacles in British Columbia. The building codes are different here than those in Germany. In Germany, prefabricated walls and ceiling panels can be used without prior inspection of the building.

"I have never done construction before," says Hansen. "This was a chance to get involved in construction but also to show that maybe we can do this sort of thing in North America, using our products and our knowledge."

"In the long run, these types of projects are about changing people's perspective on wood products, how we use them and how we build," says Fürst. ●

The Peter Wall Solutions Initiative

UBC has launched a unique new program, the Peter Wall Solutions Initiative (PWSI), to support university researchers from across UBC disciplines and their community partners working on innovative ways to develop practical solutions with tangible benefits.

With initial funding of **\$3M** from the Peter Wall Endowment to support projects, the goal is to advance solutions and address issues that matter to society including, but certainly not limited to, sustainability, health care delivery, poverty alleviation, economic policy, community wellness, diversity, natural resources, and other unique ideas that come forward.

UBC researchers are invited to submit Letters of Intent by **31 May**

For more information visit:
www.research.ubc.ca/vpri/ubc-peter-wall-solutions-initiative

Heart disease high among immigrant group

Study aims to find better ways to promote cardiac rehabilitation

By Lorraine Chan



Researcher John Oliffe looks at the complex links between masculinity, culture and health.

South Asian men—those who originate from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal or Sri Lanka—are amongst the largest groups of immigrants in B.C. However, little is known about their health behaviours, experiences of illness, or how they relate to and engage with Canadian health care services.

Seeking to change that is School of Nursing Assoc. Prof. John Oliffe, whose work looks at the complex links between masculinity, culture and health, with previous studies on prostate cancer, smoking, depression and immigrant men's health.

Oliffe recently led a research team to develop more effective ways to promote healthy heart and cardiac rehabilitation (CR) programs among South Asian Canadian men.

"There is a high rate of heart disease among South Asians that is seen worldwide," explains Oliffe. "South Asian men tend to experience cardiac disease much earlier in life and in greater numbers than those of European, British or Chinese ancestry—even if risk factors such as hypertension or smoking are the same."

Researchers have not yet been able to discover the causes, he says. "However, health professionals are emphasizing secondary prevention programs such as

The research team worked with a cohort of 30 Canadian men of Indian ancestry, all Punjabi-speaking, who had experienced a recent heart attack.

CR, which can reduce the risk of early death by about 25 per cent."

CR measures include changes to diet and exercise and sessions with health specialists, among them nurses, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Across all Canadian communities, the sign up rate for CR programs is low, about 20 to 30 per cent. However, the participation rate among South Asian Canadians falls even below that, says Oliffe.

To find out why, the research team worked with a cohort of 30 Canadian men of Indian ancestry, all Punjabi-speaking, who had experienced a recent heart attack. Over a 12-month period, the researchers conducted

interviews with the study participants, both those who had attended CR and those who hadn't.

"Knowing what facilitated or prevented their CR participation can help us recommend more effective healthcare strategies," says Oliffe.

For some of the men, factors such as language or lack of transportation presented barriers to CR. Others described strong beliefs and practices that influenced their health decisions. The Sikh spiritual tenet *dharam dee kirat karnee*, for example, stresses self-reliance and care for oneself.

These and other spiritual beliefs could feature in culturally specific health outreach programs, says Oliffe. "The tenet *dharam dee kirat karnee* can also support seeking out medical care and participating in CR."

The men also discussed *seva*, which in Punjabi means selfless service. An example of *seva* would be the free communal meals or *langar*, prepared by members of Sikh *gurdwaras*, which are Sikh places of worship.

"While the local practice is for women to do most of the cooking," explains Oliffe, "the men take part in serving as a way to practice their faith."

Similarly, the men could provide community service by encouraging one

Community health outreach

Assoc. Prof. John Oliffe will moderate "Let's talk about *dhil dheeh sehayth* (heart health)," a free public talk on April 29, 6 pm – 8 pm at the Sunset Community Centre in Vancouver. The panel is part of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Café Scientifique. For more details, visit: www.nursing.ubc.ca/Research/documents/Cafe_Scientifique_Apr29,2011.pdf

At Surrey's Newton Branch Library, Oliffe, Bindy Kang, and Suki Grewal will discuss South Asian Canadian men's health experiences on May 14, 2 pm – 3:30 pm. The free event is presented by the Surrey Public Library, Irving K. Barber Learning Centre and UBC Woodward Library. Space is limited. To reserve a seat, contact 604.827.4366 or ikblc-events@interchange.ubc.ca. A live Q&A webcast of this event will be available at: <http://tiny.cc/oliffe>



Nominee Gage Averill and daughter at the 2011 Grammys.

outtakes

Arts Dean Gage Averill on the Grammy experience

Although I have poked fun at the entertainment industry's obsessively self-congratulatory award shows for years, I have to say that it was a thrill (even if a hypocritical one) to attend the 2011 Grammys.

First, we were able to bring together most of the team that worked on my project, Alan Lomax in Haiti, 1936-37, a 10-CD and DVD boxed set, including engineers, producers, fundraisers and family members. Some of us were meeting in person for the first time after years of phone and e-mail collaboration. At our small luncheon at a Hollywood eatery, former California Governor Grey Davis surprised us with a visit to congratulate the team.

Second, it was a treat to watch the show with my seven-year-old daughter. With a cast from Jagger to Gaga and Eminem to Streisand and even Dylan, it was an impressive smorgasbord of talent with lots of unpredictable moments. Among her favourites were the performance by the British band Muse and the colorful, Muppet-inspired Cee Lo Green duet with Gweneth Paltrow (F*** You).

Of course, there were many celebrity-sightings (a somewhat redundant concept when most of the audience have some claim on celebrityhood): we sat near Elvis Costello and Dianna Krall, had Rihanna and Cyndi Lauper parading below us, and stood at the party with Esperanza Spaulding, the talented winner for Best New Artist.

Although the industry is in its death throes, the Recording Academy puts on a good show and the Grammys are one of the last award shows to cover the gamut of genres. The Academy clearly wanted to link generations through tribute pieces and performances with mentors, and kept the telecast performance-heavy, leaving most of the awards to the earlier, pre-telecast ceremony, where my categories were announced.

Oh, and we lost in our two categories. But it was only about five minutes of disappointment, and then back to enjoying the show. In one category we lost to The Beatles, so who's going to complain?

Gage Averill
UBC Faculty of Arts

Hear Averill discuss his project and nomination at ubcproftalk.blogspot.com

Investigating violence against Aboriginal women

By Jody Jacob

In quiet moments, PhD student Robyn Bourgeois sometimes finds herself wondering what might have become of serial killer Robert Pickton's victims had they escaped the culture of drugs and violence that plagues women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

These questions have helped motivate Bourgeois in her pursuit of both a higher education and activism in the area of violence against women and girls, with a specific focus on Aboriginal women and girls.

"My PhD dissertation is a critical analysis of the native anti-violence movement that has been addressing violence against Aboriginal women and girls in Canada over the last 30 years," says Bourgeois, who is Lubicon Cree.

Bourgeois notes that more than 600 Aboriginal women have gone missing or been murdered across Canada in the last 30 years. Those are the statistics for documented police cases, but she says most experts believe the actual number is much higher.

"The research is disturbing," says Bourgeois. "Eight out of 10 Aboriginal women will experience violence in their lifetimes. Seventy-five per cent of Aboriginal girls under the age of 18 have been sexually abused. To say that Aboriginal women are being targeted in Canada is really an understatement."

Bourgeois says her research not only examines this culture of violence in Canada, but aims to recognize and celebrate the fact that Aboriginal women have been spearheading the anti-violence movement from the beginning.

Bourgeois cites the example an Aboriginal grandmother who, with her own resources, created the website www.missingnativewomen.org—a comprehensive database of missing and murdered Aboriginal women across Canada.

"These individuals, along with groups like the Native Women's Association and Aboriginal Women's Action Network, have kept this movement alive. Now with social media they have been able to reach audiences like never before," she says.

Bourgeois has spent six years immersed in activist organizations all over Canada in order to get a 360-degree view of the Aboriginal women anti-violence movement—how it took shape, who was involved and how it has evolved. She also spoke to many family members related to missing or murdered Aboriginal women and girls, and analyzed key legal cases of missing and murdered Canadian Aboriginal women that were central to her research—including the Missing Women case in the Downtown Eastside and Robert Pickton's related arrest, trial and conviction.

In addition to studying activism, Bourgeois focuses strongly on examining what

Robyn Bourgeois teaches a course on Women and Popular Culture at UBC's Okanagan campus and is researching violence against Aboriginal women in Canada.



Jody Jacob Photograph

role the state plays as perpetrators of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

"We live in a system that really has normalized violence against Aboriginal women. My research shows that the history of colonialism in Canada is entrenched in violence against Aboriginal women," she says.

"And although my focus is on Aboriginal women, I am trying to reinforce that the entire system—this same system that allows native women to be killed—is the exact same system that allows other marginalized people to be killed with relative impunity."

Bourgeois argues that the state could drastically reduce violence against women if it sent a message that it wouldn't be tolerated.

"If we stepped up as Canadians, and the state stepped up and said violence against women is intolerable and we're going to penalize it, we could drastically cut the rates of violence—but we don't," she says. "In fact, my research shows we have a system that is very lenient towards violence against women, especially Aboriginal women," she says.

Bourgeois' doctoral thesis includes a section with recommendations to policy-makers on how to reduce this violence. ●

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