RESEARCH & TEACHING CONNECTIONS EDITION

FALL 2012

SHOWCASE

LEADING-EDGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH AT TRENT UNIVERSITY

Involving **Students in Research** at Trent

Research Brings Course Material to Life

Language Research Speaks Volumes to Students

For Dr. Nancie Im-Bolter, associate professor in Trent University's Department of Psychology, introducing her research into the classroom is a way to animate her teaching and bring course material to life for her undergraduate students. By combining teaching and research, she hopes to make the course more enjoyable for them and increase their enthusiasm for the subject material.

"It's a form of story-telling," explains Professor Im-Bolter. "I'm trying to bring the words in a two-dimensional text to life, much like a movie. Students are looking for real-world applications, so by talking about my research we can take the discussion of human behaviour out of the classroom and make it relevant to situations that the students can relate to."

Prof. Im-Bolter's research looks at the integral part that language plays in our lives and examines the importance of language competence for different aspects of functioning. "Every aspect of human behaviour involves some aspect of language," says Prof. Im-Bolter. "We think about and understand the world around us using language, and we use language to help us solve our problems whether they are personal, interpersonal or social."

The Importance of Language to Human Functioning

Much of her research focuses on children. "Children demonstrate significant communicative skills, even at an early age," says Prof. Im-Bolter. "They are trying to understand and make sense of the events they experience and the way the world works. Language helps children to express their thoughts, ideas, and wants to others and can help them verbally mediate their actions. For example, if they are trying not to touch something, they may repeat to themselves: 'Don't touch, don't touch!' Children with language impairments can't use their language skills in the same way and this affects different areas of their life."

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Dr. Nancie Im-Bolter involves students in her research to enhance the learning experience

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Nancie Im-Bolter engages students in her research on language and human behaviour

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By engaging students in her research, Prof. Im-Bolter has enhanced the learning experience for students like Ashley Toohey. Prof. Im-Bolter used her research and that of former students to bring a perspective into the classroom which sparked an interest in the student. Then, while taking Prof. Im-Bolter's course, Development of Individuals with Exceptionalities, Ms. Toohey had an "aha" moment. "I was planning to become a lawyer, but now my goal is to become a clinical child psychologist," she says.

Trent University Oshawa student Ashley Toohey was exposed to research that brought psychology to life

Student Kathie Bailey also speaks highly of the impact of combining research with teaching. "In classes and in private sessions, Prof. Im-Bolter would discuss aspects of her research that were relevant to the classroom material being covered. This made the subject comprehensible and interesting to learn," says Ms. Bailey. Like Ms. Toohey, Ms. Bailey's experience in Prof. Im-Bolter's classes influenced her career choice. She is currently a graduate student in Trent's Psychology Department. "The reason I'm pursuing graduate studies in psychology today is because I was exposed to research that brought the subject to life," says Ms. Bailey.

Enhancing the Learning Experience through Language Research

Both students were further able to engage in Dr. Im-Bolter's research through the Department of Psychology's Research Practicum. "I took three practica with Dr. Im-Bolter, which exposed me to all aspects of her research, from data collection and analysis to testing children and writing reports," says Ms. Toohey. The value of engaging in a professor's research through a practicum is echoed by Ms. Bailey, who says, "The practica gives undergraduate students the opportunity to see the whole spectrum of the lab, and to gain the type of learning that you can't get from a text book." ■

GRADUATE STUDIES

Digital Media and the Changing Face of Research

Paradigm Shift Has Implications for Future Teaching

The digital age has precipitated a paradigm shift in how people are thinking, and is altering our concepts about research, according to Dr. Davide Panagia, Canada research chair in Cultural Studies. "We are sitting on the cusp of change which has implications for future teaching and research in the field of media studies," says Professor Panagia. "In turn, this will impact the use and the development of the Cultural Studies Media Research Lab at Trent."

Located in the Principal's Lodge at Traill College, the Lab was developed in 2004 as a physical space for interdisciplinary and collaborative research in the field of cultural theory.

Teaching Crosses Over into Research

Prof. Panagia points out that it has served as a unique environment in which teaching has crossed over into research and vice-versa. "Courses that I have taught, including my Culture of Cool undergraduate class, and various graduate classes such as Aesthetic Theory and Political Theory, have taken place in the Media Research Lab," says Prof. Panagia.

"This has allowed me and my students to experiment with media in our learning, not just with respect to using media, but in having to come to terms with the kinds of environments and worlds that our handling of media enables vis-à-vis our reflections on contemporary culture and politics."

Jeremy Leipert, a Ph.D. student who has attended Prof. Panagia's classes, agrees that the study of new media provides opportunities to bring research and teaching together because the novelty of the technologies means there are few concrete answers. Mr. Leipert, whose research involves digital media and video games, suggests that professors can enhance their own research by bringing their unanswered research questions into the classroom, thereby allowing the instructors to learn with, and from, their students.

Aesthetics and Politics

Prof. Panagia's own research, which explores the relationship between aesthetics and politics, has also benefitted from the existence of the media lab. "I could not have developed the research interests and the corpus of publications that I have over the years without a dedicated space that allows someone like me to explore the intellectual and creative opportunities that new media enliven," says Prof. Panagia. One such research venture is the international cultural and political theory journal, *Theory & Event*, to which Prof. Panagia was elected editor in 2010. Launched in 1997, *Theory & Event* is the first-ever exclusively online journal in the humanities and social sciences.

The Rise of the Digital World

The rise of the digital world has implications for the type of research that the media lab will facilitate. "We need to explore how new and traditional media interact, and importantly, how digital technology allows us to think differently about our own research," says Prof. Panagia, citing open access publishing as an example of a new way to disseminate research findings.

"We have yet to explore the potential contributions of cinema, photography, and digital culture to research animation," continues Prof. Panagia. Those explorations represent the next phase of research of the Media Research Lab. ■

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"We are sitting on the cusp of change which has implications for future teaching and research in the field of media studies."

Dr. Davide Panagia, Canada research chair in Cultural Studies and Ph.D. student Jeremy Leipert challenge media concepts with undergraduate students

WORLD OF TRENT ALUMNI

Research Provides Tangible Results for Local Economic Development

"We learn best when we do – and there are many opportunities at Trent. You just have to look for them and take a risk," says Shalico Christian, a B.B.A graduate who was one of Trent's international students from the Cayman Islands.

A highlight of his final year, Mr. Christian was part of a fourth-year course in strategic management that partnered with the Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation (GPAEDC) to provide research for community profiles in the region.

Alumnus Shalico Christian was inspired by Dr. Tom Phillips' passion for community research

Project Scope a First for the Community

"I don't think any community has tried anything like this before," says Dr. Tom Phillips, a professor in Trent's Business Administration program who was a co-coordinator on the course. In total, more than 80 students were involved. The project was divided into 13 sub-projects: one for each of the eight townships in Peterborough County; two focused on the City of Peterborough; and three on sectors for potential development, namely tourism, aerospace and aviation, and the water sector.

Mr. Shalico's research team focused on the aviation sector, in which he is an expert, having fifteen years experience as a manager of airport operations with Cayman Airways and Spirit Airlines prior to his time at Trent. He is also a pilot – one of his personal passions – of small planes like the Cessna 172 or Piper Navajo.

"The purpose of the research was to look at the aviation and aeronomics sector in the Greater Peterborough Area," explains Mr. Christian, "to see what companies were doing, where they could grow and how they could capture more investment – not just in Canada but from around the world."

"In addition to the hands-on experience in the practical business skills of time management, goal-setting, teamwork, research and reporting, these students got to engage their more creative side. They had to do some hard work to get the data together, but it really did inspire them to make some bold propositions about how to grow these communities," says Prof. Phillips.

Mr. Christian remembers spending the summer before his fourth year in Hong Kong on a Justin Chiu Internship with Cheung Kong Holdings, where he was a market researcher working out of the sales department – another example of a valuable research experience for him at Trent.

"I love being a Trent Business grad," he says. "We see the way of doing business differently and, to be honest, I think that we are progressively ahead. What I have learned so far is that the way business is done anywhere in the world should be through a holistic approach. I have had several opportunities to interact with business students all over Canada and internationally and there really is a Trent difference." ■

Undergraduate Students File Patent through Biomaterials Research

Getting published in a journal, or receiving a patent for an invention, is very unusual at the undergraduate level. But Bruce Darling and Mark Baker accomplished both, as undergraduate students conducting research at the Trent Centre for Biomaterials Research (TCBR). They are amongst a number of undergraduate students who have benefitted from unique research opportunities at the TCBR.

Mr. Darling and Mr. Baker were both recently part of a team that discovered a family of compounds which suppresses the gel point of biodiesel, making it more useable at lower temperatures.

Lowering the Carbon Footprint

"This discovery has profound implications, both commercially and environmentally," says Dr. Suresh Narine, a professor in the Departments of Physics & Astronomy and Chemistry, and director of the TCBR. "Europe and other temperate countries are having difficulty meeting their biofuels target because biodiesel gels in cold weather. This fuel additive can increase the uptake of biodiesel and make a contribution towards lowering our carbon footprint."

"… undergrads work side-by-side with graduate students and professors and interact with industrial partners …"

A patent was filed in April, naming Mr. Darling and Mr. Baker as co-inventors, along with other researchers. Both are also named as first authors in a paper to be published later this year. "It's quite unique, especially for an undergraduate who has only spent one year on a project, to publish in a recognized journal," says Professor Narine.

Mr. Darling, who was a fourth-year physics student at the time, credits Trent's culture and small size with providing unusual opportunities for undergraduate students. "Trent students are able to develop one-on-one relationships with mentoring faculty," says Mr. Darling. "This can lead to research projects that are usually undertaken at a higher level."

Mr. Darling also points out that the TCBR exposes students to an exceptional research and learning environment. The TCBR is a 7,000 sq. ft., state-of-the art research and technology development facility that focuses on the creation of petro-chemical replacements and biomaterials, from lipids.

"The TCBR is a world-class facility," says Mr. Darling. "It contains all the instrumentation necessary for researchers to conduct complete and thorough examinations. But more than that, undergrads work side-by-side with graduate students and professors and interact with industrial partners who are interested in the research. You can't get that learning experience in the classroom."

Mike Floros, currently a graduate student at Trent, adds, "At the TCBR you get access to lots of equipment and supplies. But you also get great support from staff and the chance to learn from experts in the field."

Undergraduate Student Publication Addresses Artificial Joints Made from Petroleum

As an undergraduate student, Mr. Floros was published in the journal *Polymer Degradation and Stability* for his part in addressing the issue of human body rejection of products made from petroleum, such as artificial joints. Mr. Floros collaborated with researchers from Brazil, using nanocellulose derived from bananas to create a product that has strength and durability.

Shawna Miles, a fourth-year chemical physics student describes the TCBR as "a scientist's heaven." As a third-year student, Ms. Miles received a NSERC grant to study why glassy, complex fluids, such as lubricants, don't crystallize at certain low temperatures. Her research may make it easier to manipulate lubricants to increase their utility, which will have high impact in specialized uses, such as satellites.

"It's quite unique, especially for an undergraduate who has only spent one year on a project, to publish in a recognized journal."

Chris Anzenberger is a forensic science and chemistry student who received a NSERC grant in his third year to conduct research on waxes, which could lead to a patent. "I was given a great opportunity to join a research team which was looking at alternatives to petroleum-based waxes," says Mr. Anzenberger. "This led to my work involving metathesis to research applications for new non-petroleum waxes. The result could be the development of waxes which are environmentally-sustainable."

Brandon Harilall is a University of Waterloo undergrad who is on a co-op placement at Trent. "Trent students have a close relationship with their professors," observes Mr. Harilall. "There is a sense of teamwork in the lab which I'm happy to be part of."

Dr. Suresh Narine and students at the TCBR where undergraduate and graduate students work together on research

Working with the Who's Who in Industry

Prof. Narine points out that it's unusual to have an internal research centre at a university that is as well-equipped and which works closely with the who's who of industry. It's even more unusual for third and fourth-year undergraduate students to participate in leading-edge research. "Trent students have the opportunity, at an early stage in their academic careers, to be involved in projects of potentially significant impact on the environment and on commercialization of new business ideas, which could additionally lead to authorship, patents or other career opportunities," says Prof. Narine.

Calling his time spent at the TCBR "an amazing experience," Bruce Darling adds, "The lab becomes a classroom that you're excited to go to everyday." ■

Trent Students Dig up History and Inspiration in Central America

Dr. Paul Healy involves students Arianne Boileau and Kendall Hill in archeological research

Teaching Students Field Research Leads to Exciting Discoveries in Belize

Trent University has been conducting archaeological research in the Maya lowlands, especially Belize, since the 1970s," reports Dr. Paul Healy, professor of Anthropology and Archaeology. "We've offered students truly rare opportunities almost annually to participate in Maya research at one thousand year-old sites such as Pacbitun, Caledonia, Caracol, Cahal Pech, and for the past 15 years, at Minanha, under the direction of Dr. Gyles Iannone.

Participation and Observation

Students learn how research is done through participation and observation. In our case, through fieldwork mapping, excavation, lab analysis, and report writing," asserts Prof. Healy. "I have had grad students and undergraduates participate on my own research in Belize resulting in them being co-authors with me on peer-reviewed journal publications in archaeology. Many of these students went on to advanced (doctoral) studies and are now working as professionals in the field, in museums, universities, and at research centers."

"We have several professors conducting research and involving Trent students at different locales in Belize. It's almost unique in the world to have this faculty strength, and it means that Trent is not only exceptional for the breadth and depth of its research expertise in Maya archaeology in Canada, but on an international level as well."

"It's an experience that you can't put a value on," says undergraduate student Amanda Sinclair. Ms. Sinclair was the first Trent student from the Oshawa campus to join the student team led by Dr. Helen Haines at the site of Ka'Kabish, Belize.

Getting Your Hands Dirty

"You learn the art of finding dig sites, of laying your grid, of organizing your materials. It sounds simple enough, but until you actually do it, you don't have that experience," she says.

"I don't think you get a true idea of what archeology is about until you get into the field," says Kendall Hill, a Trent University field supervisor and Anthropology M.A. candidate. "You have to get your hands dirty. It is one thing to learn theory from a book or lecture – it is truly another to be at a site and view the reality of how data is collected, as well as the unique challenges of each different dig."

Most recently, at the site of Ka'Kabish, Belize, Professor Haines' team made the exciting discovery of an Olmec Jade Spoon, the only one yet to be found in a secure archaeological context.

Prof. Haines explains that "previous discussions on the pieces theorized that this type of object dated to the Middle Formative period (ca. BC 800-600), but as they all lacked context this couldn't be proven until now. Because our spoon was found in a secure context, it means that we can confirm the dating of these pieces," she asserts.■

"It's almost unique in the world to have this faculty strength, and it means that Trent is not only exceptional for the breadth and depth of its research expertise in Maya archaeology in Canada, but on an international level as well."

Student discovery of an Olmec Jade spoon in Ka' Kabish, Belize

TRENT SPEAKS – HOW IS TRENT UNIQUE IN PROVIDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TEACHING AND RESEARCH?

Alumni Perspective
Matt Dyce
B.A. History and Canadian Studies

Undergraduate Research Through the Trent Centre for Community Based Education

Going into the third year of my undergraduate degree in History and Canadian Studies, John Wadland suggested I head over to the office of the Trent Centre for Community Based Education (TCCBE). There I found lists of local community groups and businesses who hoped to have some form of research conducted and, according what program you were in, they would facilitate you to work on one of the projects for a full university credit. The project that attracted me most was locating and interviewing 'heritage storytellers' for a commemorative video of Haliburton County. A final requirement for the credit was an academic component. For this I had to find a faculty member to supervise and ensure there was a scholarly element to the research and establish what reports and essays I would write. The project was immense by the end and, being placed in this position, I learned for myself what I was capable of and was really happy with the results.

Reflecting on it now, I see that there were a number of special things about Trent that made that possible and that reflect the values of the school. I can recognize now how that is part of a dual commitment to serving the local community and the development of high standards of academic research. Experience like this makes a difference on grad school and job applications, proving that you can handle independent work required for thesis writing and self-directed projects. The experience resonated with me and, now as a professor in my own courses, I approach community involvement outside the university not as an option or new idea, but as a cornerstone of teaching and learning research itself. ■

Faculty Perspective
Dr. Rory Coughlan
Department of Psychology, Trent University Oshawa

Conversations Lead to Research

When students or their parents ask me what sets Trent apart, the first thing I think of is that interested students can visit their professors and sit and talk with them about their ideas. Often these conversations lead to student requests to sign up for research practicum classes and possibly a research thesis. At Trent, undergraduates can accelerate their learning – by gaining practical training and experience – applying academic knowledge with professors and graduate students in laboratory and/or community application.

At Trent, undergraduates can accelerate their learning – by gaining practical training and experience – applying academic knowledge with professors and graduate students in laboratory and/or community application.

The professor-student mentorship program in Psychology is a mutually valuable arrangement. Students gain knowledge that is hard to acquire elsewhere and professors benefit by training students and gaining practical help with their projects. Students who are able to accelerate and consolidate their academic training in third- or fourth-year practicum are better prepared for thesis projects, and many contribute to the point where they can become co-authors of published research papers. This further encourages many students who may never have started with any such ambitions when they embarked on their undergraduate career to continue on with their studies at the graduate level and I have experienced this first-hand. We are very proud of our contribution to the research trajectory of our young rising stars in the field. We believe that student contribution to laboratory and community-based research at the undergraduate level is very valuable to help create a better world. ■

Student Perspective
Farah Sultani
Fourth-year Psychology, Trent University Oshawa

Research Participation Results in Critical Thinking Skills

The professors at Trent University Oshawa are very easy going and approachable which makes it easier for students to succeed. As I progressed through the years I realized that all the hard work on research made me a better student, a better writer, a better reader, researcher, and most importantly – taught me how to think critically, which I have learned is a very powerful tool.

Currently, I am a psychology major in my fourth year at the Thornton Road Campus. I have been fortunate to work alongside Dr. Beth Visser to complete a research practicum, giving me great knowledge and experience. The research was on sexual attitudes, behaviour, and personality. I reviewed literature, developed and maintained a study on SONA, assisted in developing specific hypotheses, downloaded and analyzed data, and was involved in another project where I assisted in applying a coding scheme to specific data. Doing my practicum with Professor Visser opened up many doors for me and has benefitted me in many ways. For instance, I was first author on a poster presentation at the Guelph Sexuality Conference and am second author on the actual study!

I am proud to be a student at Trent who is involved in active research and who is kept up-to-date on the current research and literature. I look forward to doing another practicum and gaining even more knowledge and experience this winter. ■

MEET THE INNOVATORS

Dr. Yee Nurtures Young Talent in the Lab

Undergraduate Students Break Ground in *Giardia Lamblia* Research

Standing in a corner of Dr. Janet Yee's busy lab, undergraduate students Jennifer Brown, Elizabeth Walden and Katie Horlock-Roberts have the happy but slightly bewildered air of lottery winners who still can't believe their luck. All three students are recipients of Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Undergraduate Student Research Awards that funded them to work in the labs of Prof. Yee and her collaborator, Dr. Steve Rafferty. Two of the students – Ms. Brown and Ms. Walden – have just finished the second year of their Biochemistry B.Sc. degrees.

The students studied proteins from *Giardia lamblia*, a protozoan parasite often found in freshwaters worldwide, and the subject of Professor Yee's ongoing research. Prof. Yee is interested in learning more about the basic biology of this parasite in order to find better treatments and to develop more sensitive detection methods. The students in the lab determine the properties of Giardia proteins by using UV-visible spectroscopy, mass spectrometry, and high-performance liquid chromatography or, as the students casually refer to it, HPLC. "We get to use ALL the instruments," vouches Ms. Brown, clearly impressed by the array of technology that surrounds them in the crowded lab.

"We're doing research here that no one in the world has ever done before."

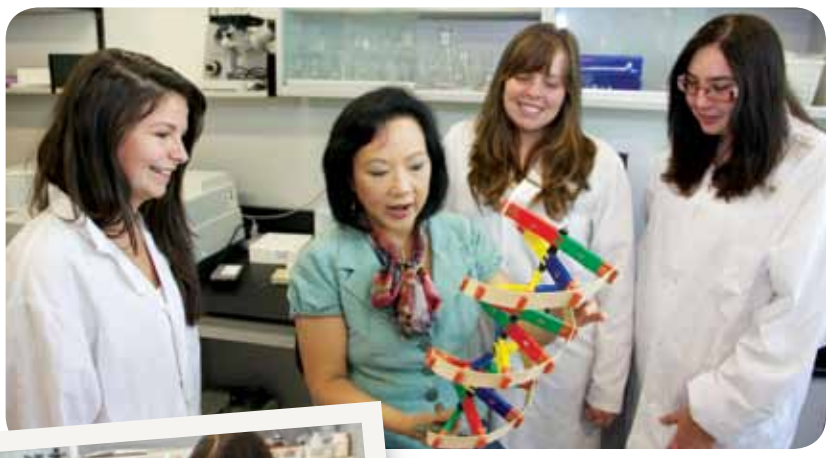
Ms. Horlock-Roberts – who is heading into her fourth year – is taking on a double-credit, biochemistry-thesis course in the fall to pursue her own research. Not only will I be learning hands-on about all the different instruments," she affirms, "but I will also be learning how to think on my own, and how to problem solve."

While the students may count themselves lucky, there is no doubt about their qualifications. "These are some of my top students," Prof. Yee notes. "Getting them into the lab early on is mutually beneficial. Because these are very bright students and it is their first time in the lab, they bring with them a curiosity and enthusiasm that you can see in their eyes as they prepare their first gel, or successfully extract DNA for the first time. It brings you back to why this work is so exciting."

Students Contribute to the Field and Publish Original Research

Prof. Yee's dedication and enthusiasm for her students translates into an extraordinary number of HQP or Highly Qualified Personnel. These are students who go on to present at conferences and publish original research that adds to the field, as Prof. Yee's students frequently do. The development of HQP is a key criterion of NSERC's Discovery Grant Program, for which Prof. Yee has recently received her second renewal for a full five-year term. As Isabelle Blain, vice-president of Research Grants & Scholarships at NSERC explains, "Training HQP has always been an important element in NSERC's assessment of the merit of an application because NSERC understands that these trainees will make important contributions to research and innovation as they go on to careers in academia or the public or private sectors."

"Dr. Yee's NSERC record is impressive in that she initially got her first Discovery Grant as a contract employee, based on her exceptional high-impact research productivity," adds Dr. Neil Emery, Trent's vice-president of Research & International. "She retained that grant through two more cycles and now has cranked it up to one of the highest NSERC Discovery Grants at Trent."



Dr. Janet Yee and undergraduate students benefit from working together on research studying Giardia lamblia

Back in the lab, Ms. Brown, Ms. Walden and Ms. Horlock-Roberts, three HQP in the making, are enjoying the here and now. "We're doing research here that no one in the world has ever done before," says Ms. Walden. At this, the three students pause to look around them and, shaking their heads, share a disbelieving laugh. ■

http://goo.gl/brMir

SPOTLIGHT ON ATHLETICS

Olympic Spirit to Inspire Students

Silver Medallist Ashley Brzozowicz Named Trent's First Scholar/Athlete in Residence

What do you do upon winning an Olympic Silver medal? If you are rower, Ashley Brzozowicz, you head to Trent University for an entirely new challenge.

Fresh from her London 2012 accomplishments, Ms. Brzozowicz arrived at Trent in the fall of 2012 as the University's first-ever scholar/athlete-in-residence at Champlain College. The position will have her providing mentorship to students, attending college events, and meeting regularly with students, in both formal and informal settings.

"It's going to be exciting," she says of the post. "Both for me, and hopefully for the students and community members. It will be an opportunity to bring some of the spirit of the Olympics to a university setting and to help inspire a new generation of athletes."

Mentoring Students One-on-one in Defining their Career Path

For Ms. Brzozowicz, who holds an undergraduate degree in History from Yale University, this means taking time to become a true member of the Trent community.

"I'm looking forward to taking part in regular meetings, meals, and events – with as wide a segment of the University as possible," she says. "I really believe that interaction will provide a shared process of encouragement for our athletes and for all people interested in taking part in sport at Trent."

Head of Champlain College, Dr. Michael Allcott is honoured and excited to be playing host to the newly minted medalist.

"Our college has a rich tradition of hosting scholars in residence," he says. "It provides students an opportunity for mentorship, for one-on-one conversations with leaders in various fields, and for the building of networks of contacts that will help them build and define their careers. This is another wonderful example of this tradition in action."

Carol Love, head coach of Varsity Rowing at Trent, coach for Canada's Row-to-Podium Olympic program, and a former world champion rower herself, believes that Ms. Brzozowicz's presence will be far-reaching.

"It provides students an opportunity for mentorship, for one-on-one conversations with leaders in various fields, and for the building of networks of contacts that will help them build and define their careers."

"Ashley's influence on varsity athletes will be tremendous," she says. "That knowledge of what it takes to win, that Olympic spirit, it goes a long way. But I also see her having an impact on the wider community. I think both Ashley and the scholar/athlete residency will inspire students to try new sports, to get involved in varsity sports and intramural sports, or to just become more active in general."

Inspiring Young Students to Try New Sports

Ms. Brzozowicz will also have the opportunity to speak at several area schools, bringing her motivational message to a host of children and youth and shining the spotlight on athletics at Trent.

"I'm excited for the many young women who will get to interact with Ashley," says Dr. Allcott. "I'm excited for the young girl who has been cut from several teams and who has given up on sport, only to find herself in a racing shell and feeling that first great sense of exhilaration." ■

Dr. Michael Allcott and Ashley Brzozowicz with Champlain College students

Olympic medalist Ashley Brzozowicz

Art Therapy Explores Couple Dynamics

Psychology Professor and Dean Collaborates with Undergraduate Student in Research

Dr. Elaine Scharfe is enthusiastic about Brittany Sirtonski's work. The full-time professor and dean of Social Sciences oversaw the fourth-year psychology student's honours thesis that landed Ms. Sirtonski a place presenting at an international conference while still an undergraduate. Dr. Scharfe was so impressed by Ms. Sirtonski's results that the busy dean will take the time to work with her in the coming year to help her publish her research findings. "This is without a doubt, master's level work," confirms Dr. Scharfe, "and imminently publishable."

Dr. Scharfe knew little about art therapy when Ms. Sirtonski approached her to toss around ideas for her honours thesis. For Ms. Sirtonski, the thesis was a chance for her to combine her life-long passion for art with her interest in psychology, and after some discussion, they decided to use an art therapy technique known as the "joint drawing task" to find out more about the collaboration levels between romantic partners. "There's not very much research out there that uses art therapy tasks," explains Ms. Sirtonski.

"I think I was one of very few undergraduates who even attended, much less presented at the conference."

Undergraduate Presents at International Conference

Ms. Sirtonski worked closely with Dr. Scharfe and a team of three master's students who helped her collect data, and recently the team went to Chicago together where Ms. Sirtonski reported their results at the International Association for Relationship Research Conference. "I think I was one of very few undergraduates who even attended, much less presented at the conference, so it was a really interesting experience to see and meet all these other scholars, to learn about their research, and to get a little insight into what the field is really all about," recounts Ms. Sirtonski.

The Trent University Exception

As remarkable as Ms. Sirtonski's story is, for Dr. Scharfe, it is not unusual. "In any given year there are about 30 fourth-year students who decide to do an honours thesis," explains Dr. Scharfe, "and of those, I would say there are five or six who complete outstanding honours theses which would be equivalent to an M.A. at any other institution."

Dr. Scharfe credits Trent's small size for the exceptional research coming from undergraduates in the Psychology Department. "This is one of the things that is really different at Trent," elaborates Dr. Scharfe. "For many students, one of the great advantages of going to Trent is that you get to work with a faculty member. It's not like at a larger university where if you worked in somebody's research lab you would probably be supervised by their master's student, who might be supervised by a Ph.D. student, who might be supervised by a post-doc… At Trent you work with a faculty member," she says, adding, "many faculty really depend on their undergraduate students. In other institutions they would depend more on their Ph.D. students or their post-docs, but at Trent, undergrads really do get a great opportunity to get involved in research."

Not that the road is easy – acceptance into the honours thesis program is competitive and usually preceded by one or more practicum courses where students work in a laboratory setting doing research for faculty. "I try to get students involved in a research practicum before they do a thesis with me because I think that people often approach research with rose-coloured glasses," says Dr. Scharfe.

From here, Dr. Scharfe intends to help Ms. Sirtonski publish her results. "The work is definitely publishable and this will be a good learning experience – there's so much that goes into putting a paper together for publication that is different than writing the honours thesis. It will definitely be helpful to her in terms of getting into the master's program of her choice."

"When I was an undergrad I was really lucky because I had a couple of amazing faculty who mentored me, and I value that, as a faculty member at Trent, I am able to mentor the students in this way. I really get a lot out of working with the students, watching them develop and grow and take pride in pursuing their own work." ■

Dean of Social Sciences, Dr. Elaine Scharfe works with talented undergraduate student Brittany Sirtonski on her honours thesis

INVESTING IN TRENT

Students Aboard the Ice Breaker on Summer Research in the Arctic

Connecting with a Canada Research Chair's Project in the Field

Trent University provides the opportunity to connect with professors during the early years of an undergraduate degree, both in the classroom and through summer research opportunities. In Chad Cuss's case, Dr. Céline Guéguen, Canada research chair in aquatic sciences and biogeochemistry provided him with the opportunity to travel on board the CCGS icebreaker Louis St. Laurent as part of the 2007/08 International Polar Year.

"The research trip was oriented around the collection, analysis, and tracing of Dissolved Organic Matter (DOM) from various depths and locations in the Canadian Arctic Ocean," Mr. Cuss explains. "Without the leadership and mentorship of Professor Guéguen, it is likely that I would not have considered graduate studies. She has continuously inspired and challenged me to develop in my role as a researcher and in my leadership roles as a doctoral student working with undergraduate students and other fellow researchers."

Hands-on Research Detects Changes in Vegetation

"It's essential that undergraduates understand the why behind what they're learning. Hands-on research experiences help deliver that understanding and clarity," she says.

Take the work of Mr. Cuss as an example. In Canada, the tree line is moving further north. Because of climate change there's less ice and snow. As a result, trees can cope and survive, which in turn is leading to a change in vegetation and landscape. Chad tries to detect the change in vegetation by examining water samples.

DOM is found in all natural waters and originates primarily through the degradation of plant and animal matter. As the source of most dissolved organic carbon and aquatic nutrients, DOM plays a vital role in global carbon cycles and as the primary food source at the base of aquatic food webs. Mr. Cuss's research is focused on unearthing the relationships between DOM's particle size, light absorption/emission properties and impact on environmental functions. Towards that end, his initial undergraduate thesis and continuing graduate investigations require input and guidance from multiple parties.

Interdisciplinarity Crucial to Solving Environmental Problems

Because current methods for the study of DOM require the analysis of large data sets, the Mathematic Department's Dr. Michelle Boué was "both inspiring and very helpful" in Mr. Cuss's pursuit of chemometrics-related statistical methods and fundamentals. Mr. Cuss also worked early on with Dr. Peter Dillon from the Departments of Chemistry and Environmental & Resource Studies/ Science, Dr. Shaun Watmough, associate professor in Environmental and Resource Studies/Science, and Dr. Eric Sager in the Ecological Restoration program.

Ph.D. Candidate Chad Cuss and Dr. Celine Guéguen, Canada research chair in aquatic sciences and biogeochemistry, collected and analyzed organic matter in the Arctic

"The environment is so complicated. Working in your lab alone, you won't make much progress. Working in collaboration is where you make gains," notes Prof. Guéguen.

Beginning during his undergraduate education, Mr. Cuss was provided with hands-on theoretical and practical research experience. "The multidisciplinary nature of research in the Environmental Life Sciences program also allows me to take an innovative, trans-disciplinary approach to learning, teaching, and research while promoting personal interaction with respected researchers in multiple fields of study," Mr. Cuss adds.

Connecting research with teaching comes at a costly expense. That's where funding support from the likes of the BMO Financial Group's Future Green Leaders Fund plays an enormous role. Through this fund, Mr. Cuss has had the fortune of receiving matched support from the Ontario Graduate Scholarship program. "I am grateful for this support which has allowed me to focus my attention on research, while continuing to provide mentorship to future researchers. The financial freedom provided by BMO's generous donation permitted me to invest time and effort into these important activities." ■

"The environment is so complicated. Working in your lab alone, you won't make much progress. Working in collaboration is where you make gains."

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The opportunity for Trent University undergraduates to contribute to applied research both in the lab and out in the field delivers important insights

Controlling Invasive Species through Community Research

Undergraduate student Gail Crowell works with Dr. David Beresford and graduate students in the lab

Fourth-year Environmental Sciences student Gail Crowell has always enjoyed observing the world around her, so when she came across the Trent-Fleming Ecological Restoration program, she knew she had found the program for her. "I've always been a hands-on person, even before I went to university. I would go off in the bush and observe what I could. What Trent University gave me was the ability to put those observations into a scholarly context, so that my observations can contribute to the scientific field."

Observing an Invasive Species

In this case, Ms. Crowell has been observing *Rhamnus cathartica*, or the Common Buckthorn, that has invaded the drumlin behind Trent University in recent years.

Not only is the plant dangerous to dogs and humans, it is considered an invasive species that takes over an area, wiping out native species in its path. But, according to Ms. Crowell's thesis supervisor, Dr. David Beresford (assistant professor of Biology at Trent), the proliferation of Buckthorn brings with it both potential benefits as well as ecological dangers. "It is a good news/bad news problem," explains Professor Beresford. "It is very widespread, and can live in polluted areas, broken concrete, industrial sites and railway lines, so it provides emergency food for birds, growing where nothing else would be able to grow. At the same time, it alters the soil by promoting high earthworm numbers which helps spread its seeds in the soil, can fill a forest understory, spreads along fence rows on farms, invading habitat and out-competing native plants like highbush cranberry, and alters these ecosystems."

"What Trent University gave me was the ability to put those observations into a scholarly context, so that my observations can contribute to the scientific field."

Field-based Study in Trent's Nature Areas

Last year, under the auspices of the Trent Centre for Community-Based Education (TCCBE), Ms. Crowell embarked on a field-based study of various methods of Buckthorn eradication including cutting, covering and the use of herbicides. The project, initiated by the Trent Nature Areas committee, identified Buckthorn as a major threat because of its ability to overwhelm newly growing forests that grow on old farm sites such as the drumlin.

According to Todd Barr, executive director for the TCCBE, these types of hands-on, community-based projects benefit everyone involved. "Students test classroom theory, learn valuable skills and gain applied experiences that employers, entrepreneurs and graduate schools are looking for, while faculty use community engagement to connect course material with student passions for learning."

For Ms. Crowell, the project gave her a chance to tackle the specific question of Buckthorn eradication, but also larger scientific questions of how we deal with invasive species in general and to what extent humans are able to control the environment around them. "We don't control nature," she theorizes, "it controls us, and if we don't respect that, we've got a problem." ■

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MATTER OF COURSE

Exploring What It Means To Be Disabled

Gender & Disability in Canada
CAST/ SOCI/WMST 4551H WI13
Professor: Dr. Sally Chivers

Dr. Sally Chivers works closely with her undergraduate students

"Concepts of disabilities are contextual and constantly changing," says Dr. Sally Chivers professor in the Departments of Canadian Studies and English Literature. Undergraduate students attending the Gender & Disability course may have their eyes opened to what it means to be disabled in contemporary society.

Gender & Disability in Canada is a fourth-year, interdisciplinary course, cross-listed between the Departments of Canadian Studies, Sociology and Women's Studies. The course looks at disabled people as a social group with a shared history of oppression and expression.

"The course is an introduction to the field of disability studies," says Prof. Chivers. "We examine concepts of disabilities by looking at policies, film, and fiction. We analyze all the places that disabilities show up and explore how and why they should be changed."

Prof. Chivers' Gender & Disability course was born out of research on disability in the Canadian public sphere, which has since involved students from Prof. Chivers' class. "One very talented Canadian Studies student, Ariel Sharratt, worked as my research assistant after the course," explains Prof. Chivers. "She gathered sources from the media about disabled veterans returning from Afghanistan. This research led to a peer-reviewed article in the *Canadian Review of American Studies*."

The weekly, two-hour seminar is focused on readings with presentations and discussions of the topic at hand. There are no lectures. In addition to the readings, students view cinema and other media which help them understand and question how the disabled are represented in society. The class builds towards a final project in which students must present using materials that appeal to more than one of the senses. In past years, some students have included sculptures or video as part of their presentation.

"We are all affected by issues of disability and accessibility, whether through personal experience or through those of our family and friends. Understanding those issues is the first step towards making change that improves the lives of people with disabilities." ■

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$1 Million in Funding Announced
for Two Canada Research Chairs at Trent University

Funding Allows Researchers to Rethink Agricultural Production Systems and Support Continued Research in Wildlife Conservation

Dr. Mehdi Sharifi and Dr. Paul Wilson, two Trent University professors have been named Canada research chairs (CRC) in an official announcement made Friday, October 12, 2012 by the Honourable Gary Goodyear, minister of State (Science and Technology).

Dr. Mehdi Sharifi has been newly appointed Trent's CRC in Sustainable Agriculture, and Dr. Paul Wilson was renewed for a second, five-year term as Trent's CRC in DNA Profiling, Forensics and Functional Genomics.

Dr. Mehdi Sharifi, the new Canada research chair in Sustainable Agriculture works to improve environmental sustainability

New Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Agriculture, Dr. Medhi Sharifi

As the new Canada research chair in Sustainable Agriculture, Professor Sharifi will receive $500,000 over five years for his research on refining nutrient management practices within agroecosystems to improve environmental sustainability, as well as protecting the quality of soil and water. This innovative research program will place Trent University on par with leading sustainable agricultural research centres nationally and internationally.

"Meeting the food demands of a global population will require major changes in agricultural production systems," Prof. Sharifi says. "Sustainable agricultural systems can maintain acceptable crop yields while reducing the environmental impacts of farming and enhancing food quality. Improving nutrient management is necessary to increase crop productivity without further degrading soil and water resources."

Canada Research Chair in DNA Profiling, Dr. Paul Wilson

As the renewed Canada research chair in DNA Profiling, Forensics and Functional Genomics, Professor Wilson will receive $500,000 over five years to continue his research on the impacts of human modifications to the landscape and climate change on the population structure and the biodiversity of genes in sensitive species. Dr. Wilson has received over $1,000,000 in NSERC funds during his first term as a Canada research chair, to study caribou and Canada lynx across the country, polar bears in Hudson Bay and moose in the southern range in and around Algonquin Provincial Park. In addition, research funds from the CRC program have allowed Dr. Wilson to design and implement longer-term collaborative studies, testing the impacts of climate change on the genes of flying squirrels and deer mice as model species working with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

"We have demonstrated the proof-of-concept of our research through the DNA profiling of thousands of caribou listed as threatened, without handling an animal …" says Prof. Wilson,

"…This information provides a significant amount of data from the individual level, to herds, populations, ecotypes and subspecies. The additional value added of non-invasive genetic profiling is proving to be a viable alternative to the more invasive collaring of caribou for obtaining telemetry data."

"Trent University welcomes this announcement of two significant Canada research chairs in Sustainable Agriculture and DNA Profiling," says Dr. Steven E. Franklin, president and vice-chancellor. "Trent hosts a significant number of Canada research chairs for a University of its size and these announcements reinforce a solid reputation in research productivity, especially in our key signature areas of Sustainability & the Environment and Life & Health Sciences." ■

Dr. Paul Wilson, Canada research chair in DNA Profiling, Forensics & Functional Genomics continues important research in wildlife conservation

TALK ABOUT TEACHING

Dr. Sarah Keefer shares her research with undergraduate student Sarah Miller

Pop-Culture A Tool to Teach Ancient Texts

Dr. Sarah Keefer's students take a rather unique journey on their way to learning about Old English and Medieval literature. Some of them will follow Frodo the Hobbit through the Middle Earth of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Others will ride shotgun with Captain Kirk as the Enterprise explores the "final frontier." Still others will battle their way through the complex and sprawling online role-playing game World of Warcraft.

While the notion of using pop-culture tools as a means of teaching ancient texts might seem odd at first, it definitely works for the nationally-acclaimed instructor.

"Students are overwhelmed by technology, by being constantly plugged in, by the immediacy of the global village," says Professor Keefer. "As a result, they crave the unknowable, the other, the alien."

Prof. Keefer whets student appetite by starting them off with more accessible media before pulling them back into the past.

"I'll have students read the *Lord of the Rings* – an incredibly fantastical work where Tolkien borrowed heavily from Old English literature – and then introduce some of the literature that Tolkien read and referenced."

"Students are overwhelmed by technology, by being constantly plugged in …"

And she is usually amused by the response. "The students are amazed," she laughs.

"Essentially, I'm teaching students about source study, an important field of critical theory," she says. "I'm giving them a peek at what different cultures in different times borrowed from the past – what was and what is culturally trending. When we look at what the 16th Century borrowed from antiquity, and what we borrow from both, then we are getting to the heart of what these societies liked and craved – what we like and crave. These are pretty important tools for students who are looking for careers in marketing, communications, and business."

In 2009, Prof. Keefer was awarded a 3M National Teaching Fellowship – one of the highest teaching awards in Canada. In 2001, she won the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations Teaching Award. She is a former Symon's Teaching Award recipient (2000), and a multiple Merit Award winner for Excellence in Teaching (1997, 2003, 2008).

"Old English and Medieval literature is the source of an incredible amount of wonder," she notes. "It is a faerie land, a land of dreams. It is a place where every night is Hallowe'en. The secret is getting students ready and prepared to accept that."

When they do, it is magic. They dial right in. ■

http://goo.gl/8TXv4

Trent's Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Arts and Literature Animates Learning through Performance

Professor Marrie Mumford connects students, elders and the community to her living research

"Dream it, work towards it, and begin to see it happen." It may sound like a modest mantra, but Professor Marrie Mumford is someone who dreams big.

Prof. Mumford arrived at Trent in 2004 as the Canada research chair in Indigenous arts and literature with a mandate to animate the newly-built Nozhem theatre with international Indigenous performances.

Referring to her "living research" program, Prof. Mumford works with 'restorative aesthetics' to renew, activate, teach, perpetuate and archive Indigenous teachings through creative expression throughout generations and communities, not only in Canada, but worldwide.

The First Peoples Performance Space as Laboratory

Since the First Peoples Performance Space, Nozhem at Trent University would be her laboratory, students invariably are not only learning from her knowledge base and research, but contributing to it.

Coming from the Banff Centre in Alberta where she had been the artistic director of the Aboriginal Arts Program, Prof. Mumford began to develop a curriculum for Indigenous Performance in Trent's Indigenous Studies Department.

After a few months shadowing her Elders and forebears at the University and getting a sense of the degree of cultural ownership in the greater community, Prof. Mumford jumped into her research with both feet, bringing her students along with her.

The program is such that anyone taking Indigenous theatre or performance classes gets the opportunity to work alongside the international performers who come to share their cultures, languages and knowledge.

Russell Johnston entered the Indigenous Studies diploma program and admits it was the most challenging class of his year. "Marrie focuses on the growth of the individual using self-awareness to discover what we're capable of – and by that I mean absolutely anything. I grew in leaps and bounds," says Mr. Johnston.

He considers himself lucky to be part of Prof. Mumford's living research and acknowledges that the momentum is catching on around campus.

Choreographing Knowledge

Trent student Keith MacFarlane, on behalf of the Trent Dance Team, wrote a letter of thanks to the Indigenous Studies Department in which he explained how the Indigenous environment contributed to the choreography used in their own outreach programs.

"These dances," writes Mr. MacFarlane, "featured a variety of themes and messages that were directly and indirectly inspired by Indigenous teachings. Hence, the dance team's presence in various local and trans-provincial performance peices helps spread the prevalence of Indigenous ways of knowing to various communities."

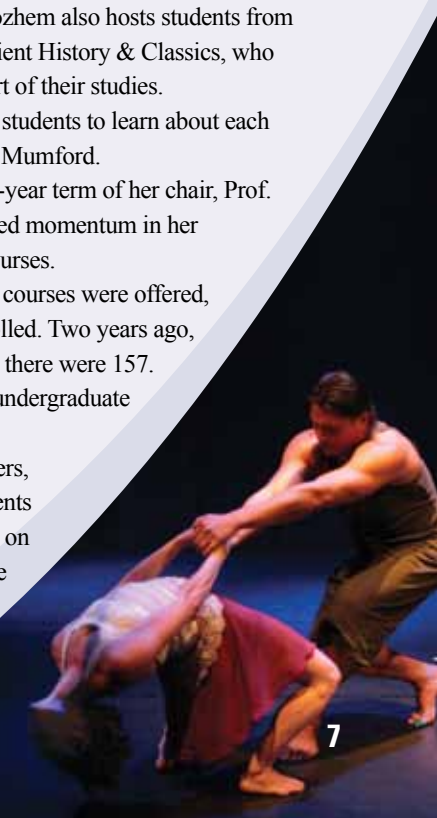
This is the sharing that Prof Mumford understands can transfer knowledge. sharing that Prof. Mumford understands can transfer knowledge. Nozhem also hosts students from other departments like Ancient History & Classics, who deliver performances as part of their studies.

"It's an opportunity for students to learn about each other's cultures", says Prof Mumford.

Now in the second five-year term of her chair, Prof. Mumford is seeing continued momentum in her Indigenous performance courses.

In the first year that the courses were offered, there were 15 students enrolled. Two years ago, there were 60 and last year, there were 157. All but nine of those were undergraduate students.

"I'm working with Elders, Indigenous artists and students who are passionate to carry on the work. We're lighting the eighth fire for the seventh generation." ■



MEET A TRENT STUDENT

Susanne Luehr
B.A. Psychology/Sociology
Trent University Oshawa

Professor Inspires Student's Sociological Perspective

New Passion Leads to Peer Mentoring and Volunteering

Initially Susanne Luehr thought she would pursue a Psychology major, but exposure to a broad spectrum of subjects revealed a passion for sociology. A double Psychology/Sociology major emerged.

Ms. Luehr credits sociology professor, Dr. Jim Cosgrave, for changing the way she looks at the world.

"I like to show how sociology informs, and makes lively, everyday lives."

"In Introduction to Sociology, along with teaching foundational concepts and theories, I like to show how sociology informs, and makes lively, everyday lives," explains Professor Cosgrave. "I have often brought my research on gambling into the classroom to demonstrate how sociology can illuminate a social phenomenon that is ubiquitous today.

Ms. Luehr's visit to a casino, for instance, found her checking her surroundings from a sociologist's point of view. She noticed the absence of clocks and windows, and took note of how doors were strategically tucked out of sight. Basically all these elements, she observes, "were psychologically designed to keep people in the casino, oblivious to time."

Applying theoretical knowledge in a practical manner is second nature for this aspiring academic. Ms. Luehr is a popular peer mentor on the Thornton Road Campus, known for her inspiration and insights regarding the Introduction to Psychology course. Attendance at her sessions has been so unwieldy she and her group have had to call on the help of an additional mentor to work with the volume of students. This year, her third, she's switching things up a bit for herself and is peer mentoring Sociology.

She takes notes on her laptop from lectures and reading material and turns her summaries over to Disability Services to help out qualifying students.

Basically all these elements, she observes, "were psychologically designed to keep people in the casino, oblivious to time."

Bringing Knowledge to the Community

She's a regular volunteer at Ontario Shores Psychiatric Hospital in Whitby. Every Thursday she runs a drop-in centre where she serves hot chocolate, paints the finger nails of lady patrons, and talks and plays cards with visitors. She can also be spotted in the hospital's vocational department tutoring patients working on their high school credits.

She serves on the Board of the Trent Women's Support Group. Last year she co-organized a seminar for Trent University students about the Durham Rape Crisis Centre.

A self-professed academic junkie who has earned a place on Trent University's Honour Roll for two consecutive years, Ms. Luehr says, "sociology or social psychology is the way to go, though I'd love to become a professor." ■

As Canadian as… the wolf

When Canadians are asked to think of cultural symbols that help define our national identity, most will come up with familiar icons like hockey, the Mounties and Tim Hortons. But Dr. Stephanie Rutherford suggests we should add the wolf to the list. Dr. Rutherford, an assistant professor in the Environmental and Resource Studies Department, is examining the way people have historically thought about wolves and how wolves have been essential to the development of a Canadian national identity.

"Historically, Canadians have had an evolving relationship with the wolf," says Dr. Rutherford. "Originally, they were seen as monsters that threatened hunters and settlers, then as invaders of land and livestock, and more recently as symbols of the Canadian wilderness."

In unearthing the history of wolves, Dr. Rutherford believes we will also gain an understanding of wolves that may have implications on resource conservation policy. "Examining how our ideas about wolves have changed can help us redefine our relationship with the environment in a way that benefits humans and non-humans," explains Dr. Rutherford.

Walruses Risk Sunburn

Who can blame a walrus for lying on an ice flow and catching a few rays? With evidence that the Arctic ozone hole has increased, there is concern that walruses, which spend a lot of time snoozing and breeding in the sun, may be exposed to harmful UV rays which could cause serious skin damage.

"Walruses have very little fur to protect them from the sun," says Dr. Laura Martinez-Levasseur, a post doctoral fellow in Trent's Biology Department. "This makes them susceptible to sunburns that could reduce their immune functions and increase their risk of developing parasitic infections. Infected walruses could significantly impact the health of local Inuit, who rely on walruses as a food source."

Combining scientific methods with local Indigenous knowledge, Ms. Martinez-Levasseur is studying the affect of increased UV exposure on walruses and, ultimately, human health. Her research team, which is funded by a Government of Canada Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship, includes Dr. Gary Burness, associate professor of Biology, and Dr. Chris Furgal, associate professor in the Indigenous Studies Environmental program.

2014-2015 will be a year of celebration, rejuvenation and engagement as Trent University celebrates its 50th anniversary. All members of the community are invited to be a part of it by sharing their meaningful memories of Trent to be considered for inclusion in the commemorative 50th Anniversary Celebration book.

Visit trentu.ca/fifty

TRENT 50 UNIVERSITY 1964–2014

A Glimpse into the Latest Findings at Trent

Research that Hits Home

For international student Helina Kassaye Betre, studying the effects of synthetic fertilizers on the hormone levels of the teff plant is much more than a research project. It's the first step towards making a contribution to the health and food security of her Ethiopian homeland.

Teff is an important grain in Ethiopia, where it is used to make a popular flatbread know as injera. In order to improve teff crop yields, recent policies and practices have emphasized the use of synthetic fertilizers. But, Ms. Betre is concerned that synthetic fertilizers may also reduce the nutritional qualities of the plant, and ultimately, have a negative impact on the health of the Ethiopian people who rely on teff.

"I want to bring a new perspective to Ethiopia of farming using sustainable practices," says Ms. Betre, who is working under the supervision of professor emeritus Dr. Tom Hutchinson from Environmental Resource Studies and Biology professor, Dr. Neil Emery.

Women and the Otherworld

Why are adolescent girls enamored by vampires and werewolves?

According to Dr. Joanne Findon, associate professor in the Department of English Literature, the connection between the Otherworld and the female imagination is one that we may have inherited from the western European story tradition. "I suspect that we can trace a line of descent from medieval stories to certain types of contemporary teen fiction, such as the Twilight novels," says Dr. Findon. "The current popularity of vampires and werewolves suggests that these apparently arcane stories have continued relevance and imaginative force in our world today."

Exploring how medieval tales have influenced contemporary young adult fiction can also help us to better understand how those tales are connected to female identity formation. "Medieval stories provided a way of symbolically talking about women's issues, such as love, sex, childbirth, and sexual violence, that are relevant today," explains Dr. Findon.

Urban Aboriginal Success Stories

More than fifty per cent of people of Aboriginal origin in Canada live in urban centres, but the realities of urban Aboriginal people remain much less understood than those of First Nations peoples and Inuit who live "on reserve."

That's why Dr. David Newhouse, professor of Indigenous Studies, is working with the National Association of Friendship Centres, and various partners in the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, to explore how Aboriginal people who live in cities and towns are building good lives.

"Aboriginal people who live in cities face different challenges than those who live in reserve communities," says Dr. Newhouse. "We want to go beyond examination and analysis of problems and focus on the ways in which people are building institutions and communities in response to the issues and dilemmas of urban life."

A better understanding of how Aboriginals are coping and succeeding in urban environments will help to improve policies, programs and services for urban Aboriginal people. ■

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