

# ARTSCI *news*

NEWS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO ARTS AND SCIENCE GRADUATES



ISSUE 17

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

**T**he comprehensive operating plan and budget that the Faculty of Arts and Science presented to the Provost's Advisory Committee on the Budget earlier this year identified our three primary goals for the next three years to be: enhancing the student learning experience; achieving financial sustainability; and the strategic renewal of research and teaching strengths. To achieve these goals we identified ten priority initiatives, the majority directed to enhancing the student learning experience.

Last year at this time I wrote about some of the challenges of and approaches to dealing with large classes. This year I will describe some of the other initiatives we are embracing to enhance the learning environment including experiential learning, interdisciplinary collaboration and expanded international opportunities.

Academics are still frequently the target of the accusation that we live in the ivory tower, detached from the concerns of the "real" world. In his recent speech to the Empire Club of Canada the retiring President of the University of Toronto, David Naylor, spoke of the "zombie idea" of the "ivory towers full of fat-cat academics and loopy students asking unanswerable questions". Zombie ideas are "one of those persistent and infectious pieces of misinformation, a meme that shouldn't be alive but just won't die". The "ivory tower mentality" is frequently cited as a criticism particularly of the humanities and social sciences and Dr. Naylor effectively exposed the faulty reasoning underlying such a criticism.

We are not immune to the need to engage with the world outside the ivory tower. A number of Arts and Science courses already have experiential learning embedded in them. These include community projects in a Gender Studies course, internship and research activities in Global Development Studies, and field studies in Biology, Geology, and Geography. Internship or placement opportunities are also offered by Film and Media, Art History and the School of Music while Drama offers a unique opportunity to study at the Shaw Festival. There are also graduate opportunities for experiential learning involving, for example, community work practica in Cultural Studies and field studies in Classics, Biology, Geography, Environmental Studies, and Global Development Studies. We plan to continue to expand the range of such opportunities open to our students.

There is already a strong model of interdisciplinary study in Arts and Science. From the popular Major-Minor and Medial combinations to the highly integrative studies offered by Life Sciences, Global Development Studies, Languages, Literatures and Cultures, and Gender Studies to the liberal intermixing of courses across the curriculum in Classics,



BERNARD CLARK

Languages, History, English and other academic plans, the wide-ranging options available to students provide a solid foundation for interdisciplinary opportunities. Individual courses also bring together the Creative Arts departments and we will continue to build on interdisciplinary and collaborative projects with the completion of the Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts opening in fall 2014. The Faculty is dedicated to

continuing this practice and developing additional interdisciplinary programs, academic plans and courses which integrate study across departmental boundaries. Collaborations among the Language departments has led to the launching of popular Plans such as the World Languages Plan which has proven to be extraordinarily popular and has sustained many courses in the languages which were until recently under-enrolled.

The incorporation and integration of intercultural and international perspectives in the curriculum has been an ongoing priority for the Faculty. There are courses in almost every department which highlight the importance of understanding events, values, and customs in a global context. More formally, the Faculty supports an International Studies Certificate, which provides an official credential for students who wish to enhance their undergraduate degree with a formal international program of study. The certificate is composed of course requirements in language acquisition, cultural and interdisciplinary learning, and includes a study-abroad component. There are also a number of courses that specifically support an international experience including our Fudan Exchange programme, a course on Cuban Culture and Society in Cuba, and the study of Art and Architecture in Venice. Again, we plan to continue building such opportunities for our students.

Much of what we have been able to do is due to the generosity of donors, many of them alumni. I am deeply grateful to you all for this support. In my conversations with alumni I have quite frequently heard the view expressed that unless it is possible to give thousands of dollars a donation will

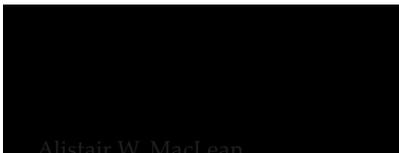
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**Dean's Message** *continued from page 1*

have little impact. Nothing could be further from the truth. Consider for a moment the fact that there are nearly 70,000 Arts and Science Alumni. Suppose that just half of you gave \$1 a day – less than the price of a cup of coffee, this would generate well over \$12 million a year: a sum that would have a significant impact. Every dollar that you can give will help make a difference. We hope many of you will show your support during our Initiative Campaign and help to make a difference to our learning environment in the Faculty.

In this, my last message to you as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science, I want to record my thanks to the many people who have supported me and the Faculty during my tenure. It has been a privilege to lead for the last few years

the team of people who make the Faculty work including the associate deans and office staff of the Faculty Office, my decanal and senior colleagues in administration, and the faculty members, staff and students of the Faculty of Arts and Science. Please join me in welcoming Dr. Susan Mumm as she takes up the post of Dean in August.



Alistair W. MacLellan  
Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

## EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Getting students out of the classroom and engaged in research is one of the best ways to enhance subject learning and basic research skills. **DR. NEAL SCOTT, DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY**

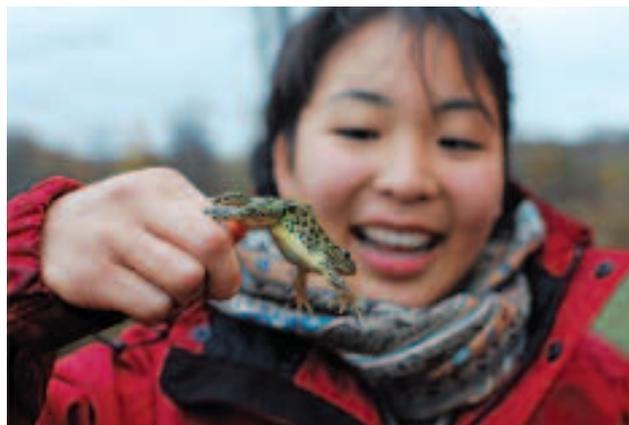


### DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION ON MANITOULIN ISLAND (GPHY-401/417)

**B**ridging a subject learning gap was the goal of Drs. Neal Scott and Anne Godlewska (Geography) when they combined their respective fourth-year courses in physical and human geography to provide students with a unique opportunity to learn basic research skills. By partnering with a multidisciplinary, cross-cultural, arts organization – *4Elements Living Arts* – on Manitoulin Island, Scott and Godlewska developed their field course exploring land-use change around a community-based focus on the arts with strong links with the community.

Following four weeks of preparatory lectures, the class, hosted by local residents on Manitoulin Island, spent eight days

in the town of Sheguiandah last fall carrying out their research projects, which ranged from interviewing local residents who helped to capture “stories” of the past to quantifying indicators of past and contemporary land-use patterns. Students appreciated the benefits of collaborating on the design and implementation of their various projects, especially the valuable opportunities to learn about questions and approaches from both the arts and science sides of Geography.



WILL SCHWENGER

The GPHY 401/417 course to Manitoulin Island was an opportunity to take the knowledge I had gained from my previous courses in both the arts and sciences and bring them together in an interactive learning environment. We were given the opportunity to perform our own research and learn the challenges associated with it, and at the same time learn about the culture, environment, and history of a place to which we may not have otherwise travelled. It was an amazing and very unique learning experience – one that I will fondly remember when recalling my time at Queen's, and one that resulted in friendships for a lifetime. **SARAH SCHMIED, ARTSCI '13**