Western eyes strategic plan renewal

By Jason Winders

Western administrators have kicked off the process to renew the university’s strategic plan. And they are turning to the university community for help.

“Developing our strategic plan will be very important from an engagement and consultation perspective,” said Amit Chakma, Western’s president. “When it’s done, I’m confident there will be no surprises, because we will be drawing from the collective thinking of the entire campus community, and building on our institutional strengths, which are based on the solid foundation laid in past strategic plans.

“This is our opportunity to be masters of our own destiny and choose the course we wish to pursue for the benefit of our university and global community we aspire to serve.”

Western rolled out its first-ever strategic plan, Leadership in Learning, in 1995. That was followed by Making Choices: Western’s Commitments as a Research-intensive University in 2001 and, most recently, Engaging the Future in 2007. Engaging was updated in 2010.

At Friday’s Senate meeting, Janice Deakin, Western’s provost and vice-president (academic), started laying the groundwork for the latest document’s renewal.

“The planning process we are undertaking will allow all members of our campus community to help shape how we articulate Western’s institutional aspirations and suggest some strategies for how we might achieve those goals,” Deakin said. “When completed, the plan will serve similarly to how its predecessors have served: as a touchstone that guides our decision-making on all academic and budgetary matters.

The renewal is an opportunity for the university to decide if the principles set down in Engaging are to continue forward, and whether new ones should be added. Also up for discussion are some key priorities established in Engaging, including maintaining and enhancing the best student experience at a research-intensive university; expanding graduate enrolment and graduate programming; internationalizing the campus; and increasing research intensity.

Deakin asked the Senate Committee on University Planning (SCUP) to take the lead in soliciting advice from members of the Western community on what priorities need to be addressed in a renewed strategic plan. That advice will come via formal and informal means until December.

“This is our opportunity to be masters of our own destiny and choose the course we wish to pursue for the benefit of our university and global community we aspire to serve.”

-Amit Chakma, Western’s president
Coming Events
OCT 25 – 31

// THURSDAY
19TH ANNUAL MURRAY BARR LECTURE
Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology hosts Jeffrey Corr, Lee E. Limbird Professor Pharmacology and Director, Vanderbilt Center for Neuroscience Drug Discovery, Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Allistic modulators of GPR12 as a novel approach to treatment of CNS disorders.
9:30 a.m. Auditorium A, 3rd floor LHSC, University Campus.

WESTERN GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL FAIR
11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Western Student Recreation Centre, 4th floor gym. For more details visit success.uwo.ca.

CENTRE FOR TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE
Jonathan Dewar, Algoma University. Searing Survivors and Community through Residential Schools Healing, Truth and Reconciliation Research and Education...

// FRIDAY
DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC
Violin masterclass given by Vasile Bełușka, violin professor at Bowling Green State University. 5:30 p.m. von Kuster Hall.

FACULTY MENTOR PROGRAM
Research Support. Beyond the Three Councils. Program details and registration available at uwo.ca/mentor.
1:30-3:30 p.m. Teaching Support Centre, Weldon Library, room 122.

EARTHC SCIENCES COLLOQUIUM

DEPARTMENT OF ANATOMY AND CELL BIOLOGY
Richard E. Brown, Psychology Department and Neuroscience Institute at Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. The translation of research from mouse models of neurodegenerative diseases to humans: What can go wrong and how can it be fixed?
12:30 p.m. MSB 282.

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL
Mount Royal at Western. 7 p.m.

// SATURDAY
WOMEN’S HOCKEY
York at Western. 7 p.m.

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL
University of Victoria at Western. 11 a.m.

DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC
Our Song – a Choral Celebration highlighting music by our Western alumni and performed by all the faculty’s chairs. Tickets available at The Grand Theatre. 519-672-8800 online at ticketsgrandtheatre.com. $15/10. 3 p.m. St. Peter’s Cathedral Basilica.

WOMEN’S HOCKEY
UofT at Western. 4 p.m.

// MONDAY
STAFF AND FACULTY CAMPUS FLU CLINIC
No appointment required. Bring your health card.
9 a.m.–3 p.m. Student Health Services, UCC.

Ingeborg Slade
B.A., M.A., LL.B., Barrister & Solicitor
WESTERN ALUMNUS, DONOR & PARENT

CANADIAN BLOOD DONOR CLINIC
New donors and walk-ins welcome.
10 a.m.–3 p.m. UCC Student Lounge.

NEUROSCIENCE SEMINAR
Amy Poremba, University of Iowa. Auditory recognition memory in primates: Neurophysiology and behavior. 11:30 a.m. Fisher Room, RRI.

LEARNING SKILLS PRESENTATION
Effective Textbook Strategies. Register at sadc.uwo.ca/learning.
11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Western Student Services, room 3134.

THE CHINESE PROGRAM AT HURON
Anyone wishing to speak Chinese and meet people who study Chinese is welcome.
10:00-1:30 p.m. International Lounge, Huron. Email hw1@huron.uwo.ca.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
Mary Lou Rasmussen, Monash University. Cool Secularism? Reframing “progressive” sexuality education – International Comparisons. 11 a.m. Faculty of Education, room 1010.

THE DOUGLAS AND MARGARET DERRY INTERDISCIPLINARY LECTURE SERIES
Sara Diamond, president of OCAD University. Euphoria and Dystopia: An Experiment in Interdisciplinary Engagement and Boundary Crossing. 5 p.m. Kingsmill Room. Free admission.

// TUESDAY
SENIOR ALUMNI PROGRAM
Andrew Nelson, Department of Anthropology, Western. It Must Be Halloween! Radiological studies, ancient mummification techniques and mummies in the modern world. 9:30 a.m. McKellar Room, UCC.

CONTRASTIVE AND INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS SERIES
Faculty of Education hosts Vilma Paez Perez, Director, Canadian Studies Centre University of Holguin. The emergence and current situation of Canadian Studies in Cuba. 10 a.m. Faculty of Education, room 1010.

CANADIAN BLOOD DONOR CLINIC
New donors and walk-ins welcome.
10 a.m.–3 p.m. UCC Student Lounge.

LEARNING SKILLS PRESENTATION
Writing multiple-choice tests. Register at sadc.uwo.ca/learning.
10:30-11:30 a.m. Western Student Services, room 3134.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM
Study abroad at one of 85 universities in more than 25 countries. Gain global experience, all while paying Western tuition and earning credits. Visit international.uwo.ca/exchange.
3:30-4:30 p.m. Chu International Centre, WSS 2130.

CENTRE FOR AMERICAN STUDIES AND THE CANADA-U.S. INSTITUTE
Obama vs. Romney. A forum on the U.S. Presidential election. 4:30 p.m. Conron Hall, University College, 224.

WESTERN SCIENCE
7–9 p.m. Wolf Performance Hall, Central Library. Free validated parking.

// WEDNESDAY
CANADIAN BLOOD DONOR CLINIC
New donors and walk-ins welcome.
10 a.m.–3 p.m. UCC Student Lounge.

TOASTMASTERS CAMPUS COMMUNICATORS
Build your confidence in public speaking.
12:1 p.m. UCC, room 1478. Visit 9119.toastmastersclubs.org/. Contact Donna Moore, dmnoore@uwo.ca or 85159.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM
Study abroad at one of 85 universities in more than 25 countries. Gain global experience, all while paying Western tuition and earning credits. Visit international.uwo.ca/exchange.
13:30-3:30 p.m. Chu International Centre, WSS 2130.

LA TERTULIA
The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures hosts La Tertulia. Anyone wishing to speak Spanish and meet people from Spanish-speaking countries is welcome.
4:30 p.m. UC 205. Email tertulia@uwo.ca.

www.poshtravelltd.com reservations@poshtravelltd.com
25 – 31
It was 1989 when Virginia Start (on her dad David’s shoulders) and sister Mary Beth strolled through campus following the graduation of their mother Susan. The sisters will each receive their master’s degrees this Friday afternoon at Western’s 300th Convocation ceremony.

BY PAUL MAYNE

IT WAS ALMOST 23 years ago to the day David Start had his 3-year-old daughter Virginia on his shoulder, 6-year-old sister Mary Beth was holding dad’s hand. The two, sporting matching dresses, strolled through campus with their dad following the graduation of their mother Susan 1989.

Flash forward a couple decades, Virginia and Mary Beth will once again look to take a stroll with their dad through campus. However, this time it will be mom and dad watching them cross the stage following the graduation of their daughters’ convocation with us on Friday. My parents, at other times these coincidences just happen by chance.”

Virginia, who works as an information management consultant in Ottawa, completed her undergraduate degree at Queen’s University before moving to ‘rival’ Western for her masters.

The pull of the MLIS program was too great when I found myself as a recently graduated English and Drama major with few job prospects in sight,” she said. “Lo and behold, I found myself back at my mom’s old stomping grounds. “Western really surprised me. I had the idea that I would get in and get out with a degree and call it a day. However, I met some fantastic people at FIMS (Faculty of Information and Media Studies) which made me sad to see the program come to an end.”

Mary Beth, who has continued on at Western to pursue her PhD, completed her undergraduate schooling at the University of Guelph. After working a few years as a museum curator, she made the decision to return to school, joining her sister on campus.

“I suppose returning to school after working for several years has made my experience as a grad student a bit different from that of my peers,” Mary Beth said. “I really enjoyed the History MA program. It was an intensive 12 months but, after being away from school for a few years, I was quite happy to immerse myself in my studies.”

“All of the professors I worked with were wonderful and helped me to succeed in my program. Western certainly has an atmosphere all its own. My favourite places to spend time are in some of the school’s older buildings. Lawson Hall is a great home for the History Department, with its own history as a former library.”

When Susan Start snapped that memorable photo of her husband and daughters at her own Convocation, she never thought she’d be returning more than two decades later to witness her daughters getting their master’s degrees.

“I do remember the day well – a perfect autumn day. My parents, David and the girls were all there,” said Susan. “It’s wonderful that my mother, now in her 80s, will be able to attend her granddaughters’ convocation with us on Friday. My dad was a Queen’s man, and a cheerleader (in the early ‘50s), but adored their rivalry with Western and their many trips to this campus. He would have gotten such a kick out of this 300th Convocation.”

Does it seem odd that one of Susan’s favourite memories of her own graduation is a photo she’s not even in?

“I was walking with my parents behind David and the girls – and the view of them talking and laughing, together with the gates of the university behind them, just struck me as the way I wanted to remember that day,” she said. “It may seem odd that my favourite memento of my own convocation is a photo that I am not in, but to me it’s the day through my eyes.”

So do the sisters recall that snapshot captured so many years ago? Virginia does, sort of.

“I vaguely remember my sister asking why I was allowed to be up on my dad’s shoulders and not her, but other than that it’s a bit of a blur,” she said. “It is pretty neat, sort of a family affair with my sister and me up on the stage and my parents watching from the audience, which was the other way around 23 years ago. Not something that happens every day.”

Mary Beth doesn’t recall asking why her sister got the free ride on her dad’s shoulder instead of her, but looks forward to creating a new memory to call her own.

“It seems a bit like a funny coincidence for both my sister and I to be graduating with master’s degrees at the same time, from the same school where our mom received her MA 23 years ago,” she said. “It certainly wasn’t planned. I guess sometimes these coincidences just happen by chance.”

With mom and dad planning to sit proudly in the audience, theview of them talking and laughing, together with the gates of the university behind them, just struck me as the way I wanted to remember that day,” she said. “It may seem odd that my favourite memento of my own convocation is a photo that I am not in, but to me it’s the day through my eyes.”

Western’s landmark 300th Convocation features the installation of Joseph Rotman as the new chancellor as well as honorary degrees being bestowed upon four exceptional Canadians. Current chancellor John Thompson will also be granted chancellor emeritus status during the convocation ceremony at 10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 26.

The ceremonies are scheduled for the following days:

ARTHUR & SONIA LABATT 10 A.M. THURSDAY, OCT. 25 DOCTOR OF LAWS, HONORIS CAUSA (L.L.D.)

Arthur Labatt, co-founder and former president of TrinMark Financial, is a past chancellor of Western. The Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing and the Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building are named in honour of the community-minded philanthropist and his wife Sonia, a tireless volunteer who is recognized as a pioneer in the field of corporate environmental management in her role as a faculty member at the University of Toronto.

JOSEPH ROTMAN 3 P.M. THURSDAY, OCT. 25 INSTALLATION OF NEW CHANCELLOR

Renowned Canadian businessman and philanthropist Joseph Rotman is Chair of Roy-L. Capital Corporation, a private family investment company. Appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1995 and inducted into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame as a Companion in May 2009. Western’s Rotman Institute of Philosophy is named in his honour.

ADRIANNE PIECZONKA 10 A.M. FRIDAY, OCT. 26 DOCTOR OF MUSIC, HONORIS CAUSA (D.MUS.)

Soprano Adrianne Pieczonka is one of the most renowned opera singers of her generation and has sung in the world’s major opera houses from La Scala and Covent Garden to the Metropolitan and Vienna State Operas. The Western alumna won the 2010 Juno Award for Classical Album of the Year.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE BEVERLEY MCLACHLIN 3 P.M. FRIDAY, OCT. 26 DOCTOR OF CIVIL LAW, HONORIS CAUSA (D.C.L.)

The Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin is the 17th and current Chief Justice of Canada. The first woman to hold this position, she also serves as Deputy of the Governor General of Canada and chairs the Canadian Judicial Council, the Advisory Council of the Order of Canada and the Board of Governors of the National Judicial Institute.

Schedule of ceremonies
Commentary

George sets a worthy example to honour, follow

ON OCT. 17, the Toronto Alumni Chapter of the Richard Ivey School of Business presented its 21st Ivey Business Leader Award to Rick George, former CEO of Suncor. More than 400 members of the Canadian business community joined us in celebration of his career achievements, his leadership and his legacy – one of Canada’s greatest corporate success stories.

The Ivey Business Leader Award is presented each year to a business leader who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of business in Canada and who reflects Ivey’s mission to develop business leaders who think globally, act strategically and contribute to the societies in which they operate. Mr. George represents all of these qualities, and joins a long list of distinguished Canadian business men and women who have received this award.

Just over 20 years ago, when he was appointed CEO of Suncor, the energy industry was struggling. Mr. George saw in this challenge an opportunity missed by most. Over the next two decades, he grew Suncor from a struggling enterprise valued at $1.2 billion to a thriving global business with a market value of more than $50 billion. It is Canada’s largest energy company and the fifth largest in North America.

Along the way, Mr. George has demonstrated deep commitment to the people of Fort McMurray and the many other communities in which Suncor operates. The Network for Business Sustainability (NBS), led by Ivey professor Tim Banker, director of Ivey’s Building Sustainable Value Research Centre, published an article this summer describing how companies need to report transparently on their sustainability initiatives and be accountable to their customers and community members. Suncor was highlighted as a company whose management systems prioritize sustainability.

The report states: “A corporate commitment to sustainability leads to ethical employee action even when performance isn’t being monitored. For example, Suncor makes the Chief Financial Officer responsible for environmental and social indicators as well as financial indicators, giving equal weight to all.”

Suncor is also a Founding Member of the NBS Leadership Council. Ivey is not the only organization to recognize the positive impact Mr. George has made to Canada through his philanthropic and business endeavors. Among his many accolades, Mr. George was awarded the Outstanding CEO of the Year in 1999 and he was a member of the Calgary Committee to End Homelessness in 2007. He was named Canadian Energy Person of the Year in 2011 by the Energy Council of Canada. In 2007, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada for his leadership in the development of Canada’s natural resources sector, his efforts to provide economic opportunities to Aboriginal communities and his commitment to sustainable development.

Rick George was the 2012 honoree at the Ivey Business Leader Award. The annual award and fundraising event, organized by Ivey’s Toronto Alumni Chapter, raised $416,942 in support of student awards and a faculty fellowship.

The way we were: 1924

J.J. Talman Collection // Western Archives

Graduates walk in the exterior procession from the Physics Building to University College during Western’s convocation in 1924. Today and Friday, Western celebrates its 300th convocation, a tradition that goes back to 1883.
Survey: Western still tops in best student experience

BY JASON WINDERS

IT’S QUITE THE streak for Western, with 11 straight years as tops in Canada when it comes to the most satisfied students, according to The Globe and Mail’s 2013 Canadian University Report released Tuesday.

When it came to most-satisfied students, Western received an A, the only one awarded in the large universities category (more than 22,000 students). McMaster (4) and Carleton (B+) would follow.

“It’s very gratifying to learn that our students continue to express satisfaction with the high-quality education they are receiving at Western,” said Amit Chakma, Western’s president. “In judging their overall experience, they say we deliver better than any other large research-intensive university in the country.”

“Western would maintain or improve its grade in those 11 categories. Most satisfied students (A – in 2012 to A in 2013), student-faculty interaction (B + to A), buildings/facilities (A – to A), information technology (A – to B) and city satisfaction (A – to B) saw gains; course registration (A – to B), reputation with employers, class size, recreation/athletics, libraries and student-faculty interaction (A – to B) saw slippage.”

Western was given two of only four A+ rankings handed out in the entire report, in buildings/facilities and recreation/athletics. The lowest marks given to Western were Bs, in the areas of course registration, research opportunities and co-op internships.

“Western’s strong showing in this annual survey motivates our entire community to continually improve and seek new ways to enhance the student experience inside and outside the classroom,” Chakma said.

These rankings had to be welcome news to Western. So far this year, the institution had slipped in Times Higher Education magazine’s World University Rankings, released earlier this month, and in the QS World University Rankings of the top 200 global university, released in September, although both measure a far more narrow criteria.

In the very small universities category (under 4,000), Western’s affiliated colleges fared well. Huron University College was first or tied for first in six categories – most-satisfied students, reputation with employers, class size, recreation/athletics, libraries and course registration.

SURVEY SAYS

Of the 19 categories presented in The Globe and Mail’s Canadian University Report, Western finished first in the following categories:

Most satisfied student (A)
Quality of teaching and learning (A)
Instructor’s teaching style (B+)
Research opportunities (B+)
Student-faculty interaction (A)
Academic counseling (B+)
Research opportunities (A+)
Buildings and facilities (A+)
Student residences (A)
Recreation and athletics (A+)
Campus atmosphere (A+)
Work-play balance (A+)

President rolls out priorities in uncertain climate

BY PAUL MAYNE

THIS YEAR’S PRESIDENT’S Priorities face a bit of uncertainty, following the recent resignation of Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty earlier this month.

Each September, Western president Amit Chakma outlines his priorities for the coming year, with the aim of strengthening the university’s mission as a research-intensive institution.

“It’s always a challenge, but once I got through it, I feel it’s a good exercise,” Chakma told Senate Friday. “It forces you to think about the priorities you make.”

He added, “the instability we see at Queen’s Park” would continue to be an obstacle in forming a solid relationship. Over the last three months, Chakma said he has spent more time on Queen’s Park-related matters than he did over the previous three years.

Another ramification from the unsetlement in Toronto, according to Chakma, is the fiscal situation of Western and other postsecondary institutions.

“The short answer is we don’t know, but that’s not really a good way of thinking. We recognize we don’t know, but we must anticipate these future challenges and difficulties make sure we can get through those the best we can,” he said.

Senate and Board of Governors have approved the following priorities:

- Shaping Western’s future through the next Strategic Planning process;
- Monitor and contribute to Ontario’s postsecondary education policy discussions, while anticipating and managing the impact of policy shifts that may emerge;
- Review and manage resource allocation and utilization in light of the changing fiscal and education policy environment, while pursuing income diversification strategies;
- Continue to build, strengthen and expand academic programs, research and scholarship in Western’s signature areas;
- Continue raising the quality of Western’s entering class at the undergraduate level;
- Promote research intensity and scholarship through continued graduate program expansion, with special focus on course-based masters programs;
- Continue strengthening Western’s internationalization efforts;
- Continue pursuing Western’s fundraising campaign objectives;
- Complete major capital projects, including the new Richard Ivey School of Business and the new residence complex, and align capital priorities with strategic academic goals;
- Strengthen Western’s leadership role in championing research and internationalization agendas with the federal government; and
- Enhance Western’s visibility through media, communication and event activities.

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In memoriam: Brenda MacEachern

Remembering the day we honoured ‘my everyday hero’

Editor’s note: Sonia Halpern, Department of Visual Arts professor, who teaches in the Department of Women’s Studies and Feminist Research, nominated Brenda MacEachern for the Western Award of Excellence in 2006. She would win the award the following year. At the ceremony, Halpern delivered the following speech about MacEachern’s many accomplishments at Western.

Brenda has been the curator in the Richard and Beryl Ivey Visual Resources Library in the Department of Visual Arts since 1970. She acquires, catalogues and manages 150,000 slides in the library’s collection (in addition to a host of other visual art resource materials and equipment) – a collection of images which covers the history of Western art from pre-historic time to the present. She also manages staff and work-study students, and interacts with faculty, students and the public, whom she graciously assists every day.

It is not at all an exaggeration to declare that Brenda, virtually single-handedly, has made the Ivey Library what it is today: one of the best university visual resource libraries in Canada.

Indeed, she is on the cutting-edge of implementing at Western the latest technological advances in her field. And, all the while, in her 36 years of service, she has captured the spirit of Western staff. She is a dedicated, enthusiastic, warm and dignified employee, who, simply put, loves her job – and conveys this in countless ways.

I came to know Brenda when I was an undergraduate Art History student at Western from 1984-88. That’s when she became my ‘everyday hero.’ I remember having so much respect for how she helped the students acquire slides for seminar presentations and essays, always inquiring about their topics so she could offer suggestions of images which could enhance their assignments.

She created those magic moments for students when one recommendation from her enabled them to understand the direction of their research.

In 1991, I became re-acquainted with Brenda when I returned to Western as a faculty member. Having had weekly contact with her for the past 15 years, I still rely on her for her expertise, as do other faculty, and members of the public. When one is looking for that perfect image that will prove a thesis in an article or a point in a lecture, she suggests it, discusses it and finds it.

Brenda is constantly adding to the database system to enable students, faculty and the public, greater access to an increased number of images. Just within the last year, for example, she has added almost 9,000 image records to the database, and acquired and catalogued 700 new slides and 3,500 digital images. She also created new authority files for 300 artists, almost 200 sites, and nearly 300 subjects.

When the Visual Arts department opened in 1967, and began acquiring slides, they were kept in Talbot College (reportedly in shoe boxes). Brenda became the library’s first and only official full-time curator, a facility that came to be housed in a crude portable. In the early 1990s, when the John Labatt building was conceived, it was Brenda who designed the layout of the new Richard and Beryl Ivey Visual Resources Library (opened in 1994). It has since been ranked by the Visual Resources Association (VRA) as one of the ten most beautiful visual resource facilities in North America – the only Canadian facility on the list.

FILE PHOTO

Brenda MacEachern, above, created those magic moments for students when one recommendation from her enabled them to understand the direction of their research.
**Solution to boys’ literacy woes not in teachers’ gender**

**BY ADELA TALBOT**

**ANNE WATSON KNOWS** it’s not her gender, but rather what she brings to the classroom, that makes her an effective high school English teacher.

She’ll tell you, such a conclusion is logical. But that hasn’t been the case when considering the achievement of male students in high school English classes.

“There’s this simplification that if we bring more men into teaching – particularly into an English classroom – it will make English more engaging for boys, that men will be able to bring in masculine resources and boys’ achievement will improve,” said Watson, whose recent PhD thesis in Western’s Faculty of Education examined the influence of male teachers on boys’ literacy achievement. “It’s such a simplistic approach. There are multiple ways to be a male English teacher and multiple factors that contribute to student achievement.

“And (in my research), a lot of the factors were not gender specific. You can’t simplify achievement to gender.”

Watson, who teaches at London South Collegiate Institute, said the underlying problem in this assumption stems from the approach given to results of Ontario’s standardized Grade 10 literacy tests, in which male students are defined as an underachieving group.

“In a 2009 (report), girls consistently outperformed boys in literacy tests – 88 per cent of girls were successful versus 81 per cent of boys. That’s not a big gap. If we looked at something like socioeconomics, the gap would be larger,” she said.

What’s most startling, Watson added, is the fact boys were grouped together with other ‘underachieving’ groups such as students from low-income, immigrant and Aboriginal families as well as special needs students.

“To target boys as a risk group and suggest boy-friendly resources (like graphic novels, books about masculine subjects) and strategies in the classroom and more men in the classroom, to me, is so simplistic,” she said. “Looking at ministry policy and media, and seeing this discourse about the capacity of male teachers to improve male literacy, I was wondering if it’s based on research or gender assumption.

“There’s not much research out there suggesting the connection.”

Watson interviewed male teachers and male students, knowing there was a possibility gender assumptions and expectations – such as English being a more feminine subject or boys’ lack of enthusiasm for reading – could cloud the results.

“What I found was that teachers drew on these assumptions more than the boys had. My thesis (‘Men to the Rescue’ - The Influence of Male English Teachers on Boys’ Literacy Achievement) highlights the complexities of these simplistic notions and says multiple factors contribute to boys’ literacy achievement and to pedagogical approaches of male English teachers,” Watson explained.

“In her study, four out of six boys from a low socioeconomic community didn’t pass their English class, even though their teachers were male. Some boys noted they thought girls were better at English because they connected with their feelings more, while other boys noted they had female friends who wished they could write as well as them.

What Watson found was students said it was connections, shared interests and teaching skills that influenced their success and enjoyment of the subject matter in English class.

“At the end of the day, I didn’t have a dominant gender perspective at all, it was too complex. (Achievement is school based and context based – everything depended on individual experiences),” she said. “But the reality is that those (gender assumption-based) initiatives and those discourses do exist. By privileging a single pedagogical framing and not exploring others, initiatives risk being ill-informed and misdirected.”

Watson said the key to moving forward is looking at the issue of narrowing the achievement gap between students – whatever group they fall in – from a number of perspectives.

“We need multiple lenses and multiple perspectives. Tests report scores along gender lines – but there should be multiple ways to look at those test scores. Recently, finally, they’re starting to say it’s the students in the applied stream of English that are underachieving,” she said.

“We also need to look at the models for teaching English; there isn’t a single model. Some teach the classics and approach it as teaching ‘Truth’ while others teach (English) as skills training to write to get a job.”

Given emerging technologies, the definition of literacy is evolving, Watson added, noting gender regimes, social pressures and expectations also play a role in setting expectations for boys’ achievement in English classes.

“We need more critical frameworks,” she said. “We can’t just bring in a male body and think that might work.”

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Writer-in-residence program marks four decades of connections

BY ADELA TALBOT

AS WESTERN’S WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE program, hosted by the Department of English, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, it’s important to keep its role and necessity in mind, said Marjorie Jones, professor and vice-chair in the English department.

“The writer-in-residence is a sort of lightning rod for creativity on campus, for making connections with the community. They bring people together and don’t just serve the university. They hold office hours for students and members of the public,” Jones said.

The longest-standing program in the country, Western’s has, over the years, welcomed some of the best-known names in Canadian literature, among them Margaret Atwood, Marlene Swartz, Alice Munro, Daphne Marlatt, Austin Clarke, Alice Munro, and Marilynne Robinson.

“The writer-in-residence is significant. Jones continued, because the individual, each in their own way, brings the community together, lending creative life in the city, all while breaking multi-faceted barriers.

“It’s amazing how different they can be, and how they can contribute in very exciting ways unique to their personality,” Jones said.

She noted playwright and author Drew Hayden Taylor helped the university establish connections with local Native communities while the current writer-in-residence, Ivan Coyote, is making strides in reaching out to and forging a bond with many groups, including local high school students, teachers, alumni and members of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community.

In uniting the community, Jones said the position breaks the town-gown divide by way of the arts. It’s a role that nourishes and fosters connections and creativity, one that will always be necessary.

“It’s a unique position. It’s not a teaching position. It’s a mentoring position and it’s a community building position and a creativity building position. We don’t have anything like that. It’s an experience that enriches everything else and I don’t think there’s anything to replace it.”

What’s unfortunate, she said, is that writer-in-residence programs are increasingly endangered because of funding cuts. The University of Windsor recently put out calls for donations, indicating its program is in trouble and may be cancelled for 2012-13.

Western’s program – one of 24 in Canada – isn’t facing any imminent dangers of extinction, she continued, noting the James A. and Marjorie Spenceley Fund contributes $10,000 annually. That funding is usually matched by the Canada Council for the Arts.

“It’s money that’s not stretching as far as it used to. I’m hoping we’ll be able to top up stable funding in a way that will give us more to operate with,” Jones added.

Limited funds, however, make it difficult to attract writers of stature, and provide them the space and resources for their work and creativity.

“What we’ve been told is that in order to make it worth their while, we have to be able to offer them some money and it’s just not stretching that far. We’ve done some additional fundraising this year and were experiencing this year how amazing it is to have someone on site, in town.”

Jones said there are many stories students and members of the community can share because of their interactions with Western’s writer-in-residence.

“As someone who’s been at Western since her undergraduate days, she’s eager to share her own memories of Austin Clarke, dubbed “Canada’s first multicultural writer.”

“His idea of contribution was to start a writers’ group and put out a publication. We met every week, had amazing dinner parties. He would tell stories and make us think of what it means to be a storyteller. It was the highlight of my university career, no question about it,” she said.

“To have access to someone of his stature, to have the opportunity to meet with him privately and to have the mentoring – it was amazing.”

In fact, the program’s reach is looking to expand.

The English department, together with the University Students’ Council, is in the process of working out a student writer-in-residence position to run concurrently with the main program. The student would be chosen by the two bodies and be a mentor for others, fostering creativity on campus.

Jones noted there would be an honorarium as well and that, as it far as it used to.

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Jones noted there would be an honorarium as well and that, as it stands, the plan is to have a student writer-in-residence for the winter term.
Western Engineering Distinguished Lecture Series

Dr. Gilles Patry, President and CEO, CFI
Thursday, Nov. 1 - 12:30 p.m. - Spencer Engineering Building, Rm. 3109

Please join us as we welcome the President and CEO of Canada Foundation for Innovation. Dr. Patry will present “Driving Innovation in Canada.”

Artist presents an Endless book of works

BY ADELA TALBOT

IN LIFE AND art, you never know what you’re going to get. And that excites Jamie Q.

This is the approach the London artist took in creating a new art book, The Possibilities Are Endless, published by Western’s McIntosh Gallery Curatorial Study Centre and launching this Friday at the Forest City Gallery.

“In making the images, nothing was planned in advance. I would just sit down and start something, and the image just kind of emerged as I went on,” Jamie Q said of the prints contained in the book, composed of colourful shapes, lines and patterns, each abstract and fluid, standing as a map of the creative journey. “The end (of each image) was a surprise because I didn’t know what was going to happen. In terms of image-making, you can come up with something different each time you start – and if everyone were to do that, everyone would have endless, unpredictable images.

“I like the surprises. I like seeing what happens in the end. When you don’t have an idea in the beginning of what it will look like, that’s the most exciting part – to see what happens. And I like to think of that as expanding beyond the book. It’s not just about art. It’s about everything we can do with our lives in the world.”

What you may be tempted to do, knowing the artist’s approach, and what may prove difficult, is isolating the print’s starting point.

“There’s something about trying to figure out the logic of it. There’s a certain kind of logic to the decisions I make when making something, and I wonder if people try and figure out what it is,” Jamie Q explained. The artist added the starting line is usually the perimeter of the print, the use of one colour, followed by others until the image is completed with black outlines.

“Some of the (images) toward the end of the book I’m really happy with. You kind of feel like you’re working through something, and the ones toward the end, the ones that are more recent, feel closer to whatever you’re working toward. I’m always most excited about the most recent work I did,” added the local artist. Jamie Q competed an MFA at Western in 2010 and has been self-publishing work and printing ‘zines for nearly a decade. For those who see the book, the artist hopes its images inspire – that they do something for each individual.

“I think there’s something else people can like, besides what it looks like. Maybe it makes them feel a certain way or it inspires them, or something else, rather than just thinking it looks nice.”

Recent comments on some of the prints have included people saying the art makes them happy, that it encourages their eyes to move and to keep looking.

“If it’s something that people could sit with, and keep coming back to and keep getting something out of it … I hope people find it interesting, compelling and inspiring.”

Jamie Q recently completed a public art project commissioned by the City of London – a mural under the bridge by the London Children’s Museum. For the artist, the mural is, in a sense, the last installment of The Possibilities Are Endless.

BY YOU OR

Following the launch at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 2, the book will be available on the artist’s website jamieq.net, as well as the Forest City Gallery, 258 Richmond St., for $15. Silk-screened prints based on images from the book will also be available at the launch.
Donation targets newcomer mental health

Beth Mitchell, director of London Health Sciences Centre's Mental Health Care Program and faculty member in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (Paediatrics/Psychiatry), said the creation of the RBC Centre for At-Risk Children and Families will begin to make a difference in the transition for new Canadians in London.

BY PAUL MAYNE

WHEN IT COMES to settling in a new country, topics arising usually include housing, employment and schooling, among others. Last on that list, likely, is gaining access to mental health services.

Partnering with Western, London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) looks to meet those mental health needs with a new initiative to help children and their families who have experienced fear, violence and trauma in a forced migration from their former country, and who now need to cope with the added stress of settling into a new community.

Beth Mitchell, director of LHSC’s Mental Health Care Program and a Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry faculty member (Paediatrics/Psychiatry), said a $1.3 million donation from the Royal Bank of Canada will create the RBC Centre for At-Risk Children and Families and begin to make a marked difference in the transition for new Canadians in London.

“In looking at the rising number of newcomers to London, some of the issues we see in our referrals are children and families who have been through pretty horrendous situations in their home country or in their route to get to Canada,” Mitchell said.

“We provide services, we want to determine how we can do it better, how we start to connect all the services that are here and pilot some new opportunities.”

According to the 2006 census, London is home to people from more than 140 distinct ethno-cultural backgrounds and approximately 22 per cent of Londoners are new Canadians.

Studies show these groups face additional barriers in seeking and accessing mental health care.

Mitchell said the initial phase of the initiative will address the barriers between newcomers and the mental health services offered.

“You think broadly about mental health in Canada, there remains a stigma attached to mental health issues and mental illness. People are reluctant to get help, and we know that,” she said. “With this population, it is sometimes greater. In some cultures, when you have a mental illness, it could mean you’re locked up for life; in some cultures it could mean you’re locked up for it that creates that barrier.”

“But the number one concern about health services when they come to Canada is mental health support. What’s out there? How do they get it? The challenge, of course, is always in language, but it’s also being culturally sensitive to what it means to seek mental health services in this population.”

“There are no plans to market this idea as a business model, but rather go directly to the people who are in need of service.

“There are some fragment services (in London) and there are people who do try to help, but it’s partially that it’s not as coordinated and may not be as accessible as it needs to be,” she said. “What we want to do is build on what’s already there, talk to people in various communities and perhaps have focus groups to seek needs and what would be easier for them.”

Mitchell also wants to educate and build capacity across the system, perhaps helping teachers or nurses better recognize symptoms, and not brush it off simply because of a language barrier, for example.

“We’re an academic hospital affiliated with Schulich, with a number of students from nursing and applied health doing their training here,” Mitchell said. “We think that’s another way to have a much greater impact on the project as they (students) are coming in learning how to assess and recognize and learning more effective, cutting-edge treatment options and taking that to wherever they may end up going. There will also be an evaluation component where there will be an opportunity for faculty and students to do research as part of this.”

Mitchell hopes this latest push to better understand mental health issues will pull back the curtain of discussion on what continues to be a taboo subject for many.

“We’ve a long way away from it just being as comfortable as saying ‘my dad was just diagnosed with cancer.’ It tends to be that kind of thing we’re embarrassed to talk about,” Mitchell said. “Every time something like this happens, I think we start to chip away at that stigma. It’s starting to change.”

PAUL MAYNE // WESTERN NEWS
By Adela Talbot

All things considered, hip-hop music, as a genre, is still relatively new – both in popular culture and in academics. And while the genre has, over the past three decades, cemented itself in our cultural landscape, it hasn’t generated much serious, equally deserved discussion among those who’ve spent years researching and writing countless words on the nuances and successes of other genres, primarily rock ‘n’ roll.

Enter Christopher White’s MA thesis in Popular Music and Culture.

In ‘Rap is easy, career is the hard part’: Analyzing success, longevity and failure within the framework of the hip-hop career, White examines the evolution of the genre, drawing parallels between hip-hop, pop and rock to show how established patterns act as guides to successful careers for all musicians.

“Hip-hop was seen by many as a fad during the earliest years of the genre, and now, 30-plus years later, we can clearly see that it has established itself (as one of) the most popular forms of music,” White said.

“Due to the fad status, early hip-hop artists likely didn’t see many long-term opportunities to turn rapping into a career. However, there are a number of current hip-hop musicians – like Jay-Z and Diddy – who have highly successful and long-term careers, and emerging rappers can look to them as evidence that a hip-hop career can/do exist.”

So, how did hip-hop evolve over the years, and what steps have led to the success of artists like Jay-Z? Because the genre, relatively speaking, differs from rock and pop in areas such as the subject matter of its songs and overall culture, White was expecting the hip-hop career pattern to be different as well.

“Initially, I thought the hip-hop career pattern would be a very unique thing; that it would be much different from a rock and pop career. What I’ve realized is that it’s actually very similar to other genres of music,” White noted.

He found the steps to get a career off the ground, and keep momentum moving, are similar in all respects.

“You have to go through a certain hierarchy of events to get to where you’d have what you’d call a career – starting as an independent musician, working your way up, becoming better through practice, live performances and recording experiences and then, performing live on an increasingly wider scale.”

The other similarity, in all genres, White added, is there’s no single formula for success. Broader trends in the music industry change. There’s no guarantee that once it’s attained, a successful career will last. Just look at Vanilla Ice or MC Hammer.

“Where the hip-hop, pop career or rock career differ is when the musicians start to go into non-musical pursuits, like business or acting. In rock music, there’s this worry about selling out, and in hip-hop music, while it definitely does exist, it is almost as if it’s encouraged to go on to the next big thing,” White explained.

Financial success is a big motivator for success in hip-hop music; (musicians) often flaunt it in their lyrics whereas rock musicians, when they get to a certain level of popularity, you don’t hear them singing about being rich.”

Ultimately, White’s thesis shows the shifts in the economic and cultural landscape associated with the hip-hop genre, providing a better understanding of its growing success and respect in the music industry.

But still, at the end of the day, while he can’t speculate as to why, White said it’s likely rock music, as a genre, will always trump hip-hop.

“I think if there’s a hierarchy of music, I think rock music will always be at the top. Genres like pop and hip-hop that have been around now, for so long, are used to some levels of respect in academics, culture and with the average listener. They do well, but I think these other non-rock genres will never reach the same level of respect.”

As the success and longevity of hip-hop musicians grows, Christopher White’s Popular Music and Culture MA thesis is generating academic discussion about the genre’s evolution and merits over the past four decades.
Campus Digest

Transplanting the Western Experience to Nigeria

Four members of a delegation from the University of Nigeria (UNN) visited Western’s first-year undergraduate labs in physics, chemistry and biology to take more than notes on teaching methods and lab apparatus. Pictured are, standing, from left, Western Physics & Astronomy professor Kanthi Kaluarachchi, senior lecturer Chukwudi Anyanwu of UNN, first-year Chemistry lab supervisor Jan Mathers, Western Physics & Astronomy professor Giovanni Franchini and professor Chukwuemeka Okoye of UNN; seated, from left, professor Pius Ukoha and technologist Philip Ayogu, both of UNN.

After seeing Western’s undergraduate science laboratories, the University of Nigeria (UNN) would like to take them home with them, or at least have the next best thing and build their own.

Four members of that institution – professor Chukwuemeka Okoye, Physical Sciences dean, Department of Physics and Astronomy; professor Pius Ukoha, Physical Sciences associate dean, Department of Pure and Industrial Chemistry; Dr. Chukwudi Anyanwu, senior lecturer, Department of Microbiology; and Philip Ayogu, technologist, Department of Chemistry – visited Western’s first-year undergraduate labs in physics, chemistry and biology to take more than notes on teaching methods and lab apparatus.

The delegation took away presentations, instructional videos and even floor plans to emulate Western’s best student experience more than 9,200 km away.

The idea started more than a year ago when Western Physics & Astronomy professor Kanthi Kaluarachchi arranged the tours within her department. To fill a short gap in the schedule, Kaluarachchi showed the project. Soon, a group including B.N. Okolo, UNN vice-chancellor, visited Western. Physics & Astronomy professor Kanthi Kaluarachchi arranged the tours within her department.

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"At that time I said ‘OK,’” Kaluarachchi said. "He later said, ‘I’m going to hold you to that one.’”

Although UNN is a large university, it is in need of facilities. At times, 10 students may be sharing one apparatus within a lab.

"What they are trying to do is replicate our labs and we had sessions with a couple of companies,” Kaluarachchi said. “They gave presentations to show what is available in the market.”

UNN officials plan to erect buildings to house the new labs for biology, chemistry and physics based on floor plans thanks to Western’s recent renovations those areas. They will also benefit from the expertise of people like Phin Perquin, Physics & Astronomy stores and second-year lab technician, and Vicky Lightfoot, Biology operations manager, who were instrumental in managing the projects in their departments.

Kaluarachchi organized this week’s visit with assistance from Fanchini, lab supervisor Shailesh Nene and head technician Peter Frank. Jan Mathers, first-year Chemistry lab supervisor, and Winona Gadapati, first-year Biology lab supervisor, helped organized tours in their departments.

NEWS AND NOTES

Western has been selected as a finalist for the Ontario Business Achievement Award in the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario Corporate Governance Award category by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. The award honours a business that demonstrates excellence in raising the standard as an exemplary corporate citizen and makes a commitment in areas such as corporate governance or environmental stewardship. Western exemplifies these qualities maintaining a sustainable campus.

Western recently published its first online newsletter, The Purple & Green Newsletter, to reflect both the spirit of Western and the environment. The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis, informing members of the Western community about initiatives on campus and in the city.

The newsletter will serve as an umbrella for sustainability, covering news from diverse groups of students, staff and faculty. Everyone is encouraged to submit articles related to sustainability for the next edition by emailing Beverley Ayeni at sustainability@uwo.ca.

Visit sustainability.uwo.ca and click on ‘Purple & Green Newsletter’ to view the first edition.

Kailyn Gadsby, a Brantford native, is one of five recipients of the 2012 InterMune IFF Legacy Scholarship Program, awarded to family members of individuals living with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). She is pursuing a master’s degree in communication disorders (speech pathology) at Western, and works as an intern at the same agency where her mother worked.
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- Alternative Dispute Resolution
- Exciting career options.

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**STUDENT CENTRAL IN-PERSON HOURS**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Wednesday from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. 519-661-2100.

**ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK**

Are you interested in engaging in community service work – locally, or across the globe? The Student Success Centre and Western Residence Life are pleased to offer staff at faculty at Western the opportunity to be involved in Alternative Spring Break 2013. Information about the program and applications can be found at sbb.uwo.ca.

**SDC PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES**

Got stress? Check out a variety of free multi-week psychological skill-development groups and psycho-educational lectures on such topics as: managing anxiety and stress, regulating emotions, and dealing with thesis stress. Space is limited. Registration required. Check out sdc.uwo.ca/psych for more information.

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**WORKSHOPS**

Understanding Canadian Culture and Job Searching, Oct. 30, 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. UCC, room 210. Countries have their own unique ways of behaving and interacting. This session examines Canadian customs as they relate to the work environment. This workshop will be of particular interest to students new to Canada or unfamiliar with job search practices in this country.

**UNDERGRADUATE COURSE REGISTRATION DATES**

Oct. 25-26: Autumn Convocation.
Oct. 26: Last day to add a first-term second quarter (TR) course without academic penalty (Kin).

**Full-time Academic Appointments**

Richard Ivy School of Business - Management Science seeks candidates for a visiting and/or limited term appointment (all ranks) in the area of management science to begin July 2013. Submission deadline is Dec. 31, 2012, although applications will be accepted until the position has been filled. For information on how to apply, please visit our website at ivy.uwo.ca/faculty/Career_Opportunities.htm.

Faculty of Science - Applied Mathematics invites applications for a probationary (tenure-track) faculty position in the area of theoretical physics at the rank of assistant or associate professor. The successful candidate will also be appointed as an associate faculty member of the Perimeter Institute (perimeterinstitute.ca). Consideration of applications will begin on Dec. 10, 2012 and continue until the position is filled.

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Celebrating the Kingsmill legacy on campus

In 1916, Western purchased 150 acres from the Kingsmill family to develop as the new site for the campus. It would be one of three farms that would make up the university’s campus. A dedication ceremony was held last week to place a plaque to mark the location of the original Kingsmill family home, situated in the wooded area near the south west side of Middlesex College. Bricks from the original homestead are still located within the woods.

On hand for the dedication ceremony were Fred Kingsmill, left, great-grandson of Thomas Frazer Kingsmill, and Tim Kingsmill, his great-great-grandson.

Thomas Frazer Kingsmill established his store in London in 1865, chosen because of its growing prominence as a military, industrial and educational centre. The Kingsmills’ three daughters attended Hellmuth Ladies College, and their eldest son, Thomas Frazer Kingsmill, Jr., graduated from Huron College, but left the ministry to work in the store. Another son graduated from medicine from Western’s medical school.
Western’s United Way drive takes flight

Western’s 2012 United Way campaign officially launched last week – literally – as paper airplanes took flight in helping announce the university’s $727,000 fundraising goal. Last year, Western raised a record-breaking $716,632 on behalf of 1,300 faculty, staff, retirees and students who contributed to making it the largest donation ever received by the local United Way, and marking the university as the largest per capita workplace donor across Canada for postsecondary institutions. Pledge forms were distributed across campus this week, with numerous fundraising events and initiatives gearing up over the next couple months. If pledge forms are returned to employee campaign coordinators by Nov. 9 you will qualify for a number of early bird prizes.