UWOFA members reviewing deal; PMA awaits Board OK

BY JASON WINDERS

A PAIR OF labour agreements inched closer to completion this week as the University of Western Ontario Faculty Association (UWOFA) began its membership ratification vote, while the Professional and Managerial Association (PMA) awaited final word from Western’s Board of Governors.

On Wednesday, Nov. 12, Western and UWOFA reached a tentative four-year agreement after five days of negotiations with Ministry of Labour-appointed conciliator Greg Long. Details of the agreement won’t be released until it has been ratified by the association’s membership, followed by approval from the Board.

UWOFA members can vote on the deal through Monday. Voting is scheduled from 3:30-6 p.m. today (Nov. 20) outside the McKellar Room in the University Community Centre, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday in the main lobby of Middlesex College, and 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday in the second-floor lobby of the Social Science Centre.

If approved, the Board will consider the deal at a later date.

“I’m so proud of our negotiating team for all their hard work and really thankful to the membership for their support of the team,” said Alison Hearn, UWOFA president. UWOFA represents 1,627 faculty members of whom 1,032 are full-time probationary or tenured, 202 are full-time limited-term, and 393 are part-time faculty. The two parties had been negotiating a new agreement since May to replace the previous four-year contract that expired on June 30.

On Wednesday, Nov. 12, Western and PMA also reached a tentative four-year agreement. More than 63 per cent of membership ratified the deal Tuesday, with a vote of nearly 97 per cent in favour. That agreement now awaits Board approval.

“We’re quite happy with the outcome. The team wouldn’t come forward with something we wouldn’t be happy with the outcome of,” said Chris Thompson, PMA president. “The deal strikes a good balance between honouring the work of our members and acknowledging the difficult fiscal climate we are in.”

The Board will take up the agreement at its meeting today. Details of the agreement won’t be released until it has been ratified.

PMA represents about 1,200 full-time employees engaged in managerial and professional roles. The association’s contract expired Oct. 31.

“The university is pleased to have these tentative deals in place with two valuable organizations on this campus,” said Helen Connell, Communications and Public Affairs associate vice-president.
20 // THURSDAY

MCINTOSH GALLERY EXHIBIT

STAFF AND FACULTY IMMUNIZATION CLINIC
These clinics do not require an appointment. Please bring your health card in order to get the flu shot.
9 a.m.-1 p.m. UCC, Health Services Resource Centre.

FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKSHOP
Income 101: Converting your pension into a retirement income. What happens to your accumulated pension funds? Most relevant to members retiring within the next 10 years. Come and bring your lunch.
12:05-12:55 p.m. UC 142.

PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY COLLOQUIUM
1:30 p.m. P&BA 100.

LEARNING SKILLS SERVICES
Writing Multiple-Choice Tests. Visit sdc.uwo.ca/learning.
2:30 p.m. WSSB 3134.

2014 LEADERS IN INNOVATION DINNER WITH VICTOR GARBER
Award-winning actor, advocate and champion in the fight against Alzheimer's disease. Tickets $250 per person / $2,000 a table of eight.
6 p.m. The Grand Ballroom, Don Wright Centre, Ground Floor, The D.B. Weldon Library.

21 // FRIDAY

WESTERN LIBRARIES GIS DAY
Learn about Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Guest speakers from the Centre for Planetary Science and Exploration and Department of Geography, as well as poster presentations. lib.uwo.ca/gis/gisday.html
9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Map and Data Centre, Ground Floor, The D.B. Weldon Library.

DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC
Dramatic Duos. Sinfonia Toronto's concertmaster Mary-Elizabeth Brown joins Western's cellist Adrian Wright on a journey from the world of Bach's two-part inventions to the dramatic extremes of Kodály's Op. 7 Duos.
12:30 p.m. von Kuster Hall.

ANATOMY AND CELL BIOLOGY SEMINAR
12:30 p.m. M5B 282.

FACULTY MENTOR PROGRAM
Supervising Graduate Students. uwo.ca/graduate.
1:30 p.m. Teaching Support Centre, The D.B. Weldon Library 122.

DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC
French operas L'Heure Espagnole and LeFenfant et les Sortilèges. See Nov 21 for details.
8 p.m. Paul Davenport Theatre.

23 // SUNDAY

DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC
French operas L'Heure Espagnole and LeFenfant et les Sortilèges. See Nov 21 for details.
2 p.m. Paul Davenport Theatre.

MEN’S / WOMEN’S SWIMMING DIVISIONALS
4:30 p.m.

24 // MONDAY

DEPT. OF PHYSIOLOGY AND PHARMACOLOGY
Sigolene Meilhac, Pasteur Institute, Paris, France. The cell orchestra of heart morphogenesis.
4 p.m. DSB 2016.

DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC
Gwen Beamiash and friends celebrate Canadian composers. Robin MacMilan, oboe, Julia MacGregor, cello; and Gwen Beamiash, piano.
6 p.m. von Kuster Hall.

25 // TUESDAY

SENIOR ALUMNI PROGRAM
Dan Riskin, Daily Planet, Discovery Canada. Mother Nature is Trying to Kill You. Living things want to eat us, poison us, use our bodies as their homes, or have us spread their eggs.
9:30 p.m. McKellar Room, UCC.

DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC
French operas L’Heure Espagnole and LeFenfant et les Sortilèges. See Nov 21 for details.
12:30 p.m. von Kuster Hall.

LEARNING SKILLS SERVICES
3:30 p.m. WSSB 3134.

ITALIAN FILM SERIES
Morte a Venezia (Death in Venice). 8 p.m. SEB 2202.

26 // WEDNESDAY

TOASTMASTER’S CAMPUS COMMUNICATORS
Build your confidence in public speaking. 9119.toastmastersclubs.org/. Contact Donna Moore at dmoore@uwo.ca or 8519.
12-1 p.m. UCC 1478.

THE CHINESE PROGRAM AT HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Lunch and conversation. Anyone wishing to speak Chinese and meet people who study Chinese at Huron is welcome. Bring your own lunch and join the conversation. hwu1@hwu.ca
12:30 p.m. Huron A18.

DON WRIGHT FACULTY OF MUSIC
Electronic Music. 12:30 p.m. von Kuster Hall.

ENGLISH & WRITING STUDIES
Creative Writers Series featuring performances and presentations from poets, novelists and playwrights. Jacob Wren, filmmaker and playwright, gives a reading.
Arts & Humanities Building 2007.

THE DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES
La Tertulia. Anyone wishing to speak Spanish and meet people from different Spanish-speaking countries is welcome. tertulia@uwo.ca.
4:30 p.m. UC 205.

GERMANY FILM SERIES
6:30 p.m. UC 207.

BASKETBALL
McMaster at Western.
Women’s, 6 p.m. Men’s, 8 p.m.

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Student Life

Mustang Band plays way into pop sensation’s video

BY ADELA TALBOT

CONNELL MILLER WAS excited, sure, but it was his sister who was beyond thrilled.

Earlier this fall, when Miller saw an email soliciting for a local marching band to be featured in a music video starring teen pop star Shawn Mendes, he saw an opportunity. So did his 17-year-old sister, Molly.

“She freaked out. She’s a fan,” said Miller, who is the promotions director for the Western Mustang Band.

After he sent along a statement of interest, the band got the gig and some 20 members, clad in purple and white, are prominently featured in Mendes’ new video, Something Big, released last week.

Just as the band seized the opportunity that came with the initial email, so too did Molly.

“My sister actually came with me because she really, really wanted to be in (the video). We gave her a flag and put her in one of those cheerleading get-ups and she is in it, the only one of us who’s not in the band,” added Miller, a fourth-year Engineering student.

But a lot of the band members were equally excited. After all, it was a big opportunity to showcase Western’s 75-year-old marching band tradition.

Mendes, 16, whose popularity skyrocketed in less than a year, has more than 2 million followers on Twitter. His career took off last year after he began posting cover videos on Vine, a social video app. Garnering millions of views in a few months, he was discovered online earlier this year and signed to Island Records. He released his first single, Life of the Party, in June and is the youngest artist to debut in the top 25 with a debut song on the Billboard Hot 100.

“We’re getting a ton of press from this. It’s great. We weren’t totally expecting it, but then we saw how big he was on YouTube and his social media presence. He’s kind of like the ‘Justin Bieber of Vine,’ if I can put it that way, because he’s someone who found fame through these six-second videos,” Miller said.

“I wish I could communicate how good I am with a guitar in six seconds,” he laughed.

The video shoot, in Brampton, last month, was a long day for everyone, stretching from 6 a.m. to nearly midnight. But it was a fun learning experience, and a great opportunity for exposure for the band, which didn’t have to play any music for the video, but learned it regardless to show off its skills and professionalism.

“We didn’t get paid a whole lot, basically enough to cover transportation costs, but we’re OK with that because promotion like this is worth its weight in gold and you can’t buy that,” he said.

The average age of people on the set of Something Big, Miller noted, was 15-16.

“We were probably the oldest people there,” continued Miller, who plays trombone and some drum line for the band.

“We never really comprehended how much work can go into one of those music videos. We’ve done a couple of other music videos but they were always one-take music videos where there was just one shot you had to get. It was a very interesting and very cool experience,” he added.

“It’s very interesting and I think once this song actually hits the radio, I think things will get even bigger from there and the band will get more attention.”

The Western Mustang Band is prominently featured in a new video, Something Big, starring teen pop star Shawn Mendes.
Editor’s Letter

I was on the wrong side of history. During a high-profile public smoking fight years ago, I came out against a proposed ban in my home state by suggesting the measure was an overreach. Why should the state blunt my choice in using a perfectly legal substance, one that made the State of Georgia millions in tax dollars every year? Didn’t this state endorse gambling with its lottery? Why was my vice deemed unacceptable?

The laws against public smoking, I argued, were too limiting of my personal freedom. And I was wrong. What I failed to realize was the public smoking debate wasn’t about me, the smoker; it was about the non-smoker and their right to live and work free of harassment.

I was reminded of those (embarrassing) days last week while reporting on changes to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which will further extinguish smoking in many public places across the province. Starting Jan. 1, it will be illegal to smoke on bar and restaurant patios, playgrounds and public sports fields, as well as sell tobacco on university and college campuses.

These are nice, polite, incremental moves. But they change little. Like on this campus, many of those rules are in place. This just codifies them into law.

But if health officials are truly striving to do everything we can to protect all Ontarians from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, half-measures will not suffice. If Ontario really desires to clear the air, a heavier hand is needed.

And when it comes to universities, that means demanding all campuses go smoke free.

Understand, I am not anti-smoker – far from it. I came of age in smoking newsrooms – an ashtray on each desk, a giant saucer of snuff on the table, a giant saucer of snuff-out butts in the middle of the conference room table. I kicked the habit about a decade ago when I started a family. However, like Leonard Cohen, who returned to smoking in his ninth decade of life, I see an attraction of personal freedom.

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W was my vice deemed unacceptable? Didn’t this same state millions in tax dollars every year? A successful decade-and-a-half run of women’s basketball dominance with an undefeated team won the Ontario Women’s Interscholastic Athletic Association (OWIAA) championship on home turf. The 1980s, however, were marked by instability for generations to come, and get this province on the right side of history before we regret it. It was my vice deemed unacceptable? Didn’t this same state millions in tax dollars every year? A successful decade-and-a-half run of women’s basketball dominance with an undefeated team won the Ontario Women’s Interscholastic Athletic Association (OWIAA) championship on home turf. The 1980s, however, were marked by instability for generations to come, and get this province on the right side of history before we regret it.

Provincial governments, and especially those outside The D.B. Weldon Library and Support Services Building – remain untouched and unresolved. Admittedly, this is a lot of pressure to put on Ontario universities. Already fighting wars on countless fronts, universities don’t want to unnecessarily open up another.

But if we are willing to take the stand, people will support it. Earlier this year, CVS pharmacies stopped selling cigarettes, as the sale of tobacco products is inconsistent with our purpose – helping people on their path to better health. The company was willing to give up $2 billion of $125 billion in annual sales, all in order to do “the right thing.”

According to the Americans for Nonsmokers Rights, a leading anti-smoking lobbying organization, nearly 1,500 U.S. universities have gone smoke-free. Major Canadian universities have yet to buy into smoke-free campus policies. The exception, Dalhousie, instituted a smoke-free campus in 2003, the first major university in Canada to implement such a ban. In one survey, more than 80 per cent of Dalhousie community members supported the policy.

Despite these examples, however, the provincial government needs to know most universities will not act alone. In the States, many schools have been forced into their changes – provided by new state laws that demanded campuses go smoke free.

Should Ontario summon similar courage? Probably so. If we see universities as cultural leaders, pushing toward an enlightened view of the world and the workplace, then it is a no-brainer move. Smoking has become a civil rights issue for millions in the workplace. This step would clear the air on the issues for generations to come, and get this province on the right side of history before we regret it.

Western News applies a commentary label to any article written in an author’s voice expressing an opinion.

Opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of or receive endorsement from Western News or Western University.

COMMENTARY POLICY

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• Western News accepts letters to the editor. Limit is 250 words maximum, and accepted only from members of the Western community – faculty, staff, students and alumni. Writers may only submit once a semester.

• As an academic institution, Western News encourages lively debate, but reserves the right to edit, ask for rewrite or reject any submission, and will outright reject those based on personal attacks or covering subjects too removed from the university community.

• Western News will offer rebuttal space on any topic, and may actively pursue a counterpoint to arguments. The editor feels he would benefit from a dissenting opinion published simultaneously.

• All submissions become property of Western News for print and online use in perpetuity.
Health Summit opens eyes to scope of problems, but also to potential solutions

BY RAKSHA SULE

LAST MONTH, I attended the pre-World Health Summit preparation workshop and the World Health Summit in Berlin, Germany. It was a truly humbling experience to be surrounded by a thousand renowned leaders from academia, politics, industry, the private sector and civil society from across the world to address global health issues.

At the World Health Summit (WHS), held at the beautiful and historical university campus of the Charité, enabled the 40 student delegates to explore our important role as future health leaders. As part of this preparation, I had the privilege of being chosen as one of 10 students to attend a special workshop to critique Germany and France in relation to their global health strategies.

To contribute effectively to the planning, it was a steep learning curve to quickly understand the workings of the European Union and the history of its political relationship to the European state countries. Despite the difficulty, it was well-worth the time as I learned about the influence of politics on the interdisciplinary sectoral decisions related to health, and how to structure international cooperation to achieve sustainable improvement in health.

During the World Health Summit, held at the Federal Foreign Office, many pressing issues were brought forward during the main symposiums. As expected, the Ebola crisis was highlighted as the first symposium of the summit. It was emphasized that neglecting to build health systems in the poorest of countries has had catastrophic effects. The need for a unified international response was recognized, not only from medical health professionals, but also from all stakeholders that affect financial, technical and logistical support. Additionally, with the United Nations’ post-2015 Development Goals on the horizon, universal health coverage was a key factor amongst all discussions. To develop a model that would establish access to essential medicine and technologies is a challenge, but as stressed by the speakers, this can be combatted by strengthening health systems in both developed and developing countries.

By far, the two most engaging workshops were those directed at discussing global health and social accountability in medical curricula. Although not a medical student, I was able to stay involved in the discussions of these workshops due to my past experiences.

For example, as I am currently in the process of writing a manuscript to compare the presence of social accountability within medical education in Cuba vs. North America, I was able to highlight the transformative social accountability mandate at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM). The Canadian medical schools, in fact, were well-presented in these workshops:

• Dr. Roger Strasser, NOSM dean, was quoted by Dr. Jose Otavio Costa Auler, World Health Summit president, when speaking about the power students have to change curriculums;
• The CanMEDS Framework was used as an example of a comprehensive and effective competency-based educational model; and
• Vincent Durnez, director of the Bureau Facultaire de l’Expertise Patient Partenaire at the University of Montreal, was a plenary speaker who discussed an innovative perspective on patient-centered care.

I am sure I smiled far too many times whenever a Canadian institution or leader was mentioned, but I was proud of our voice in global health and social accountability in the medical education system.

While a phenomenal learning experience, I lived with one piece of criticism. Truthfully I, like many other students, were disappointed the international stage had not previously taken measures to strengthen health systems to prevent the many issues that continue to prevail, such as the Ebola crisis.

Why is ‘health equity’ and ‘health as a human right’ are only now being seriously voiced?

The fear persists in the enormous challenges ahead for the next generation of global leaders – for us, for students. Patent laws for access to medicines are becoming more stringent, climate change is impacting the spread of human infectious diseases – inequalities continue to rise and new health threats continue to emerge.

However, this understanding strengthened my belief of moral clarity – the idea of a moral obligation to assist those in need when in possession of the tools to do so. I am convinced, after working with passionate and socially proactive students, we, as young leaders, can hone these tools (whether through medicine, global health, politics, economics or through an interdisciplinary facet) to develop a skillset to engage and collaborate with diverse stakeholders to provide sustainable health support to communities.

Hearing from both students and distinguished experts attending the World Health Summit was inspiring, empowering and motivating. I am excited, now more than ever, to continue pursuing my dream as a ‘physician-global health advocate’ while fighting in solidarity with others for health equity across the globe.

Raksha Sule is a student in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Since 2009, the World Health Summit has brought together more than 1,200 global opinion leaders from academia, politics, civil society and the private sector to take responsibility in all health-related challenges.
English and Writing Studies professor Kim Solga, along with an interdisciplinary team of colleagues, has revived the theatre on campus. One of her students, Caitlin Austin, is pictured at right during Toronto’s Nuit Blanche last month, and with Stratford’s statue of William Shakespeare, outside of the Festival Theatre.
Academics

Theatre revival takes students beyond the stage

BY ADELA TALBOT

THEATRE THRIVED ON campus when poet and playwright James Reaney taught at Western from 1960 until 1992. It was the "heyday of performance" in what was then known as the Department of English.

The theatre workshop of the time – a major player in the department's history – was shut down in a round of budget cuts in the 1990s. "It was one of those things you trim," said Kim Solga, who teaches in the Department of English and Writing Studies today.

But a revival is coming.

Over the years, English professors still taught drama, and performances, including Summer Shakespeare, continued to be produced, even though theatre had no formal home. That is, until now. With an interdisciplinary team from the Faculty of Arts & Humanities, Solga formed the Theatre Studies program – now in its first year.

"We didn't want to become something we're not. We can't have a conservatory program – we don't have the resources for that – but we do have a whole whack of people here (in the department) and in Arts & Humanities, who are into performance in a variety of incarnations," Solga said of the program's recent formation.

Going forward, Theatre Studies will allow students in the English and Writing Studies to pursue either a major or a minor module, tapping their studies off with a capstone course called Destination Theatre. This course will take students to a major theatre city for a short residency to learn about the culture of theatre and what it means to be a working artist.

When she came to Western in 2005, Solga joined Joanna Devereux, M.J. Kidnie and Allan Pero, among other faculty members in the department, who had a background in theatre and performance. For years, things chugged along as she and her colleagues taught drama and included performance components in their classes.

Across the faculty, colleagues had expertise not only in traditional English drama, but in other European traditions, as well as queer performance, performance for social justice, First Nations theatre, dramaturgy and directing. This multi-faceted approach to theatre was what emerged as a would-be strength of a standalone Theatre Studies program.

"We've initiated this program with the goal of being multidisciplinary. That multidisciplinary perspective will give us the opportunity to give students not just Canadian traditions, not just British traditions, but other language traditions in North America, around the world, European directors, sexuality and performance, race and performance, and so on," Solga explained. "I'm thrilled. This gives us a place to live, to share and make knowledge together and to give the students those options."

While Western doesn't have the resources to form its own drama school, this kind of diverse program offering sets the program apart from similar programs in the country.

"We're working to make this a really eclectic experience of what theatre and performance means in the world today and, I hope, that's where we will make our mark," Solga said.

"We tried to look at interesting, innovative courses elsewhere, looked at best practices and we created a program rooted in scholarship, reading and thinking about what it means to watch theatre as a critical audience member, what it means to understand a play as a piece of dramaturgy for the stage. It also includes hands-on courses at Stratford."

Current students, the first for the program, are taking core courses this term, and have taken trips to the Stratford Shakespeare Festival to see stage and studio productions, as well as to Toronto's Nuit Blanche arts festival.

Solga said graduates can go on to do a variety of things, including employment in the arts, education and even legal work.

"Friends have come out of a theatre program and stepped very naturally into the legal profession because of the way that profession demands you balance critical work with the performance of the case in court," Solga noted.

"For better or for worse, we're living in a creative economy and students are learning what performance means in a culture, learning how performance is valued in this economy. This positions you to exploit it, and that is really what's necessary for a creative worker in this economy. I'm quite confident students coming out of this program will do well."
BY ADELA TALBOT

LAST WEEK, STUDENTS in Health Sciences professor Jennifer Irwin's Health Promotions class went on an unusual field trip – one they asked for, planned and executed on their own.

With a goal of spreading compassion across campus, the class – comprised of 350 second-year students in the School of Health Studies – spent Wednesday afternoon engaging in and encouraging random acts of kindness in the community.

One group of students handed out thank-you cards to bus drivers who stopped on campus. Another gave granola bars and water bottles to students heading to class. Some bought hot chocolates and handed them out to people waiting in the cold for a bus, while some handed out sticky notes with compliments to those who walked by. Students also talked to people about kindness, encouraging discussion about compassion.

And that's just a small sampling of the ‘RAKs’ – the random acts of kindness – the class decided to spread across campus as part of a larger project called Kindtagious, a follow-up to last year's project, the Butterfly Effect: A Legacy Through Kindness.

Each act was followed with a card, handed out by students, which read:

You have been RAK'ed! Keep this random act of kindness going. Do something kind for someone else and pass this card along.

"At first, you feel kind of awkward, because it's not something you do. We were handing out compliment sticky notes, and once you start doing it, it feels comfortable and it's like an adrenaline rush," Emily Brunka said. "It makes you feel so good after. I'm sitting here smiling for no reason. People asked if they could pass it along to someone else, and you just know it's going around and it's going to make someone's day. When you feel good, you want to do good things for yourself and other people."

Another student almost cried after handing a thank-you note to a Hospitality Services staff member and receiving unexpectedly overwhelming gratitude in return.

"The best part is, you don't know how far one act of kindness can go or the impact it can make," Sarah Pol said.

Lukas Polidon and Alex Marshall, who handed out water bottles and granola bars, said students' reactions of surprise and gratitude made their day – especially after speaking with one young woman who they caught leaving class in obvious distress.

"She was reluctant, at first, to take the snacks, but we convinced her that a cold drink and a snack would help her out. Before she walked away, she smiled and said, 'It's a terrible day, not a terrible He,'" Polidon said.

When asked how they thought their RAKs contributed to the promotion of health, students felt a connection to those with whom they interacted. They fostered a sense of community, compassion and made both the giver of kindness, and the receiver, feel better.

While students could easily have taken the chance to skip the RAK portion of the class last week, showing up for the second half once students reconvened, nearly 350 showed up, Irwin said.

"You want to do good. You want to foster kindness. You more than want to do it, you are doing it. You're putting your money where your mouth is. I see that you really care. I see your compassion for others is boundless," she said to the class afterwards.

The class was quick to bounce back, as students stopped for hours who listened in a space where Kindtagious was a possibility.

"As she provided the opportunity for our class to perform random acts of kindness, she played a role in every act of kindness that our class performed that day. (This resulted in over 300 ran- dom acts of kindness.) She created some magic in our class, and that magic is something I hope never, whether it be a person giving a kindness, or a person receiving a kindness, will ever forget," said Joshua Walsh.

The kindness doesn't stop at the classroom door. Students are encouraging the university community to keep Kindtagious alive.

RAK cards, created by Deb Coward from Student Support Services and Angie Mandich, associate vice provost for student experience (acting), are available to pick up and pass out (along with an act of kindness) at the Health Sciences Office, HSB 200; Student Success Centre, UCC 110; and Student Development Centre, WSS 4100.

The Legacy of Kindness
Class looks to make campus kindness contagious

ILLUSTRATION BY FRANK NEUFELD

SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

Students in Jennifer Irwin's Health Promotions class spread across campus last week as part of a project called Kindtagious, doing random acts of kindness, which included handing thank-you notes to bus drivers and snacks to students on their way to class.
Young alumnus employs creativity in job campaign

BY PAUL MAYNE

AFTER GRADUATING FROM Western this past April, Justin Bansal found it difficult to find a job. It’s now November, and the search continues. “I didn’t know how bad the situation was until I graduated. I don’t think anyone can really understand all the things we have to deal with – unless you’ve been there,” said Bansal, who earned a degree in Business Administration. “Family and friends are constantly asking you what you’re up to and your answer hasn’t changed the last 50 times they’ve asked, ‘I’m still looking for a job.’”

“Unemployment can really confuse us students. After graduating from university, we think becoming employed shouldn’t be too difficult. It’s a whole other story when you get out there on your own.”

But a tough market has not squelched the creativity and perseverance of this young alumnus. When his applications weren’t working, Bansal knew he had to do things differently. He had been told that resumes are a ‘work of art,’ and remembered reading many articles highlighting some really creative resumes that looked like Facebook profiles or Twitter profiles.

Thus, Bansal’s ‘Google resume’ was born. Bansal’s resume resembles a Google search you would do on a computer, in this case, when you search ‘Creative + Team + Player + Detail + Oriented + Talented + Born-Marketer,’ it asks ‘Did you mean: Justin Bansal?’

“No matter how difficult it gets, I’m not ready to give up on my job search,” he said. “That’s why I research tactics to stand out among the rest and believe taking actions like these really demonstrates my determination and creativity.”

Earlier this month, he released his resume as a part of a campaign to get hired by Loblaw Companies Limited. “I believe that working at Loblaws will be more than just a job,” he said, citing the company that was selected recently as one of Canada’s top employers for the sixth year in a row. “I can actually have a career there, and gain a strong foundation in the retail business.”

He purchased ads through Twitter to target specific online users for their support. With a set budget, he was able to target users based on their interests, accounts they followed and location. In just a few days, he acquired almost 7,000 impressions and 400 engagements.

“My wish was it would go viral on Twitter, but no one can really control that,” Bansal said. “I’m still waiting for a response from the company, hoping they see how determined I am and how much I really want to work for them.”

Sarah Dawson, Western alumni career coach, applauded Bansal’s energy.

“Creativity can yield results. Recent grads should go beyond the job postings to find work,” Dawson said. “Go and talk to people. That human interaction is key. New grads should always ask employers for short, informational meetings – hopefully before graduation.

“It’s about having more information than ‘the masses’ as well as increasing your name recognition with the employer later on. The reality is most people are gaining employment with an internal reference. An informational meeting can get you one of those.”

In order to nab those meetings, Dawson recommended leveraging the Western alumni network as well as the LinkedIn alumni search tool.

While there have been times along the way where Bansal had lost his confidence, this latest endeavour has him once again self-assured that his perseverance will be rewarded.

“I’m fighting for myself, as well as other recent graduates who deserve to be acknowledged and given a chance in the real world,” he said. “We’re not asking for a high salary; all we want is an entry-level position where we can apply our education and receive mentorship so that we can advance in our careers.

“Those actions I have been taking demonstrate things my resume can’t. They prove things about my character and attitude and really show I am determined. I hope Loblaws offers me a job, but if that doesn’t work out, I hope this campaign is still motivational for other recent graduates out there, as I can understand their situation.”

- Justin Bansal
Research

Study confirms dangers of fetal alcohol exposure

BY PAUL MAYNE

IT REPRESENTS THE biggest single cause of developmental disabilities among newborns in Canada and the United States – exceeding $14 billion in health-care costs annually. And while the prevention of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) remains a high priority, Western researchers are convinced an alcohol culture will make it tougher to get the message out – no matter how much proof scientists provide.

“The scientists have bought into it; our problem now is convincing the public,” Biology professor Shiva Singh said.

“It’s the tip of the iceberg when you look at FASD – there are a lot of problems underneath. The more you look the more you’re going to find.”

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder is a continuum of various permanent birth defects caused by the mother’s consumption of alcohol during pregnancy. The umbrella term was developed to include fetal alcohol syndrome as well as other conditions.

Hard as it is to believe, no scientific consensus exists on whether there is a safe limit for alcohol consumption during pregnancy.

Recent findings, led by Biology PhD student Ben Laufer, however, have proven exposure of human embryonic stem cells to low alcohol can alter gene expression, leading to the abnormal development of prefrontal cortex in the newborn.

These findings build on – and confirm – his previous work on mice models, which also showed continuous exposure of low-to-moderate doses of alcohol during pregnancy impacted behavioural and cognitive outcomes for the newborn.

In addition to issues at birth, the lingering effects continue later in life, Laufer said. Fetal alcohol-exposed schoolchildren show a small, but potentially important, detrimental effect on educational outcomes.

“We’ve come across a strong replication and expansion of the pattern that we’ve seen in the mouse models,” said Laufer, who works under Singh’s supervision.

These latest results deserve serious consideration as the Royal College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists continue to state, “There is considerable doubt as to whether infrequent and low level of alcohol consumption during pregnancy convey any long-term harm.”

“The rational question is, ‘Does no evidence of harm from low levels of alcohol consumption mean 100 per cent exclusion of the possibility of any harm to the fetus?’ To the best of our understanding, the answer is ‘no,’” Laufer continued. “The business-as-usual model is not helpful. It continues to result in births with alcohol effects. Any harm caused by prenatal alcohol is currently not reversible and will affect the child for life.

“Any adult has the right to drink if they so wish. But also, every child has the right to be born healthy.”

Through a simple saliva test, Laufer saw identical signatures in humans as in mice.

“The brain’s whole epigenome really seems to be deregulated. A lot of that seems to be an indicator of a past developmental event being altered, as opposed to a current one,” he said. “That was our ‘eureka moment.’ We see it in the child’s spit, so we were wondering, ‘Why is this exact same signature occurring in the (mouse) brain?’

When Singh began studying FASD, it was the most common disorder in the population of those with mental defects – at times up to 30 per cent of children. With no clear causation for any other diseases, it all went back to maternal drinking.

“Looking at gene expression, we found it doesn’t matter if we treated them (mice) in the first, second or third trimester. The effect was still there. Their brain gene expression was altered,” he said. “This kind of observation has never been made – that you do something way back and it maintains.”

While questions always remain for scientists, the continuing problem is convincing the general public of the dangers of prenatal drinking.

“The idea is to make use of what’s under the iceberg to enable you to predict whether or not someone is actually going to show it,” he said. “It is amenable to treatment, not necessary with a drug, but with proper education.”

Research led by Biology PhD student Ben Laufer, right, under the supervision of Biology professor Shiva Singh, left, has confirmed earlier findings that exposure to even low levels of alcohol during pregnancy impacts gene expression and molecular alterations in the brains of newborns.
**Academics**

Idea to revolutionize yogurt distribution seeking funding

**BY ADELA TALBOT**

MICROBIOLOGY AND IMMUNOLOGY professor Gregor Reid wants to revolutionize the way Western Heads East delivers its life-saving yogurt to the people who need it most.

Since 2004, Western Heads East has been a grassroots Western-based program focusing on health and nutrition in East Africa. The program began in Tanzania and later expanded to Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Malawi. More than 60 student interns representing all faculties have travelled to Africa over the past decade to work with ‘yogurt mamas,’ industry, institutions and government partners to run the program based on the probiotic research of Reid and Sharareh Hekmat of Brescia University College.

At the heart of the program is the empowerment of women, yogurt mamas, to establish community kitchens that make a sustainable difference in African communities economically and physically.

Reid’s new project would bring together his team in Uganda, with what others are doing in Kenya and Tanzania, to expand the reach – and healing power – of the program.

The idea was sparked by a colleague in Uganda. “When Western set up the kitchens, I went a few times, and on one occasion, I took Remco Kort, a researcher from the Netherlands. He was very impressed and went away and created a foundation called Yoba For Life. They’ve set up a similar thing (to what we’ve proposed) in Uganda,” Reid continued.

Like Western Heads East, Yoba For Life aims to help people in resource-poor countries by local production of a probiotic yogurt, called Yoba.

Unlike Western Heads East, however, the organization has a central location where they train locals in the production of probiotic yogurt. These individuals then fan out to set up their own production plants elsewhere in the country.

While anyone could make yogurt, Reid said, probiotic yogurt needs a particular organism strain to add to the mix. In Tanzania, this strain is available only at the National Institute for Medical Research. The perishable product limits the amount that can be transported, by the mamas, and later limiting how much they can make.

“Every week, they grow it up, and then the mamas come collect it from them and add it to the milk. The process is time consuming and has too many extra steps,” Reid said.

To answer a similar problem, Yoba For Life created a ‘sachet’ – a small, disposable pouch filled with the necessary organism, only dried. The probiotic organism is grown in bulk, dried and powdered. Once done, it’s ready for distribution.

“All you do is you empty that into milk and they grow,” Reid said. “That’s what these sachets can do.”

Because mamas don’t have to travel to a central location, dried probiotics in sachets could reach rural areas much easier. It would bring the health benefits of probiotic yogurts to more people, empowering more women to open up kitchens, and enhancing the sustainability of the whole initiative, by removing its dependency on labs, which create the yogurt strain. Yoba For Life estimates its sachets could help an additional 20,000 people.

Reid’s project, once funded, could reach 100,000 more.

“Right now, we have 10 kitchens and they are limited by being able to get the probiotic from the institute. With the sachets, anyone could open a kitchen and, if they make 100 litres of yogurt, they’re going to make significant profit. That’s the difference,” Reid said.

A recent proposal based on revamping was rejected by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. But Reid remains hopeful.

“The sachet is absolutely the way to go. It is a way for these communities to make some money and the growth is spectacular,” Reid said. “I think the Gates Foundation made a mistake and unfortunately this data wasn’t available when we applied. It’s unfortunate because the potential of this is huge.”

Other avenues are opening up. Last week, the Canadian government announced $370 million in funding through the Partnerships for Strengthening Maternal, Newborn and Child Health over the next five years. The funding will go to initiatives of selected Canadian organizations that help reduce maternal and child mortality and improve women’s and children’s health in the targeted regions.
Western’s research finding new life across the globe

SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

A recent mission to China provided a backdrop for Western to sign a handful of deals for commercializing technologies developed in Canada. Western’s delegation created a new company with Sinobioway Group to bring to market results of several joint projects.

“I believe this is the first joint venture in China partially created and owned by a Canadian university,” said Ling Ting, Director of Asian Operations for WORLDDiscoveries Asia.

Another key deal provides seed funding to create a start-up company and a research and development team with Southeast University to validate, manufacture and sell mobile units that generate green energy from biomass.

During the two-week mission, Western also established partnerships with some of China’s top medical schools to advance training related to family medicine and create an imaging training centre.

Pictured, John Capone, Western Vice-President (Research), right, shakes hands with Hongwei Ren, general manager, Western-Sinobioway Co. Ltd., at an event celebrating the new company.

Watching on were, from left, Michael Chan, Ontario Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade; Brad Duguid, Ontario Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure; Kathleen Wynne, Ontario Premier; Shilong Zhu, Deputy Director-General, Beijing Science and Technology Commission; and Guy Saint-Jacques, Canadian Ambassador to China.

– Douglas Keddy

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Western University Awards for Excellence in Teaching

Western’s Awards for Excellence in Teaching have recognized outstanding contributions by faculty to the academic development of students since 1980-81. Previous recipients of these awards are ineligible for re-nomination for the same award. Up to six awards may be made annually in the following three categories:

The Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching was established to recognize continuing members of full-time faculty (appointed either as Limited Term or Tenured) at Western and at its Affiliated University Colleges. Clinical Academics appointed under Conditions of Appointment: Physicians Appointed in Clinical Departments and Clinical Divisions of Basic Science Departments are also eligible for nomination.

The Angela Armitt Award for Excellence in Teaching by Part-Time Faculty was established to recognize Part-Time members of faculty. To be eligible, the nominee must have held an academic appointment to teach at least one full degree-credit course (or equivalent) offered by Western or by an Affiliated University College during the fiscal year (May 1 through April 30) preceding nomination.

The Marilyn Robinson Award for Excellence in Teaching was established to recognize a continuing member of full-time faculty who is appointed either as Limited Term or Probationary at Western or at an Affiliated University College, and who usually has seven years or less of full-time university teaching experience at the time of his or her nomination.

The nominations will be considered by the Senate Subcommittee on Teaching Awards (SUTA). The nomination dossier must be submitted by January 15, 2015 to the Chair of SUTA c/o the University Secretariat (Room 4101, Stevenson Hall). An electronic copy of the dossier must also be submitted by January 15, 2015 as a single PDF file to Erika Hegedues, Associate University Secretary at erikah@uwo.ca.

For more information about Western’s Teaching Awards please refer to the following website:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/senate/sutaregs.pdf

Dossiers of winners from the past three years are also available for viewing via the OWL system by sending a request to Erika Hegedues at erikah@uwo.ca.
PhD Lectures
Daniel Strangos, Mechanical and Materials Engineering, Studies in Small Scale Thermal Convection. 1 p.m. Nov. 24. SEB 2099B.

Victoria Fell, Biochemistry, The Role of new Ku70/WA Domain in the Response to DNA Double Strand Breaks. 1 p.m. Nov. 26. MBS 384.

Jun Zheng, Chemical and Biochemical Engineering, Mechanical Pretreatment of Composts for Bioethanol Production by a Twin-Screw Extruder. 2 p.m. Nov. 20. TEB 434.


Xue (Sarah) Dong, Economics, Essays on Labor Market in Indonesia. Nov. 25. TBA.

Miscellaneous Services
Computer repairs, virus removals, networking issues, all resolved in a timely matter. We sell new Windows 7 computers, and off lease Windows 7 laptops. Trusted for more than 35 years. Hyde Park Computers, 1990 Hyde Park Road 519-641-0248.


A central website displays advertisements for all vacant academic positions. The following positions are among those advertised at uwocampusjobs.uwo.ca/positions.html. Please review, or contact the faculty, school or department directly.

Full-Time Academic Appointments
Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry - Academic, Cardiac Surgeon, Department of Surgery
Seeking a full-time clinical academic cardiac surgeon at the rank of assistant, associate or full professor. Applicants considered at the rank of associate or full professor must demonstrate the ability to publish in the highest-quality academic and subspecialty outlets and be a recognized expert in his or her field of research. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. Review of applications will begin after March 1.

Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry - Chair/Chief, Division of Vascular Surgery, Department of Surgery
Seeking a chair/chief, full-time clinical academic vascular surgeon, at the rank of associate or full professor. Applicants will be accepted until the position is filled. Review of applications will begin after Jan. 1.

Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry - Chair/Chief, Department of Medical Imaging
Applications are encouraged immediately and, in order to ensure consideration, should be received by Jan. 12.

Ivey Business School - Finance
Invites applications from exceptional early or mid-career candidates to fill a probationary (tenure-track) position at the rank of assistant or associate professor in the Finance discipline. If qualifications and experience warrant, the appointment may be made with tenure at the rank of associate professor. Review of applicants will commence on Dec. 10 and applications will be considered until the position is filled.

Part-Time Academic Appointments (Anticipated)
Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Master of Library and Information Science
The Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Master of Library and Information Science program expects to have limited-duties (part-time) appointments to teach the following courses during the Summer period May 1 to Aug. 31.

On-campus positions include: Information Literacy: Theory and Practice (LIS 9132), Legal Issues for Information Professionals (LIS 9158), Records Management (LIS 9203), Collection Management (LIS 9131), and Business Information (LIS 9232).

Online positions include: Collection Management (LIS 9131), Information Management (LIS 9514), Academic Libraries (LIS 9630), and Social Software and Libraries (LIS 9768).

The closing date for applications is Dec. 10.

Don Wright Faculty of Music - The Department of Music Performance Studies
The Department of Music Performance Studies expects to have a limited-duties (part-time) appointment to teach the following courses during the summer period May 1 to Aug. 31.

On-campus positions include: Vocal Arts (Music 3967), and Intensive I (Music 2977).

The closing date for applications is Dec. 31.

Unusual Luxury Apartment for Rent

Western News accepts letters to the editor Limit is 250 words maximum, and accepted only from members of the Western community - faculty, staff, students and alumni. Writers may only submit once a semester. As an academic institution, Western News encourages lively debate, but reserves the right to edit, ask for rewrite or reject any submission, and will outright reject those based on personal attacks or covering subjects too removed from the university community.
Getting into the swing of International Week

Recent Medical Sciences graduate Milani Sivapragasam, along with 11 Western colleagues, are joining dozens of the brightest minds from around the globe this week at the Undergraduate Awards Global Summit in Dublin, Ireland. Through The Undergraduate Awards, a worldwide competition, student work in 25 categories was judged against peers from 206 universities, across 27 countries. Winners were selected out of 4,792 submissions.

Sivapragasam’s paper, Exploring Myxoma Virus Oncolytic Virotherapy in Combination with Carboplatin for the treatment of epithelial ovarian cancer, was named the overall winner of the Medical Sciences Category. She completed her research paper working with supervisor Dr. Trevor Shepherd from Western’s Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. Sivapragasam is now enrolled in the MD/PhD program at McGill University.

Eleven other Western students were recognized as ‘highly commended’ (among the top 10 per cent) in their fields including Rachel Bath, dentistry; Daria Deakin, Western provost and vice-president (academic); “These extraordinary results in Western’s first year participating in the competition demonstrate our students excel on a global academic stage, on par with those from highly ranked international institutions like Harvard, Princeton, and Cambridge.”

Only two other Canadian students – one from McGill, one from the University of British Columbia – received the top prize in their categories.

NEWS AND NOTES

For Tammy Defoe, life is all about fitness and wellness. As a certified personal trainer, and Brescia University College student, she looks to share her healthy lifestyle and improve the lives of others with a new self-published calendar.

Defoe said lifestyle-related diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, mild depression and many cancers, among others, have been on the rise over the past 20 years. “Many people want to become healthier, more fit and improve their condition(s) and overall wellness, but, struggle with a lack of knowledge, a lack of motivation or a lack of resources to make this a reality,” she said.

The 12-month fitness-and-wellness calendar will give users enough knowledge and virtual motivation to achieve their goals and maintain them for life, Defoe said.

“Exercise is only one component of becoming healthier and fitter, and most of the information online doesn’t educate the public on the other important components like nutrition, sleep, stress and social support,” she said.

Through the calendar’s tracking system, which includes brief daily self-evaluations, individuals can learn about their life patterns and how they do – or don’t do – affects their health, fitness level, body weight and overall well-being.

The calendars are available at The Book Store at Western.

London will be buzzing about the fate of bees at the Making London Pollinator Friendly event at 7 p.m. Monday in Wolf Hall, London Public Library, Main branch, 251 Dundas St.

What are the issues and what are practical steps we can take as citizens of London to help the plight of pollinators? World-renowned bee expert Laurence Packer of York University will share his insights on wild bees, as well as join an expert panel, moderated by Western Biology professor Brian Branfireun, to discuss conservation and restoration strategies in the city.

This forum is organized by the city’s Advisory Committee on the Environment, London Public Library, Wolf Performance Hall, Central Library and concerned community members.

The Goes Global Cultural Showcase featured performances from 10 different acts last Thursday in the Mustang Lounge at the University Community Centre, all in celebration of Western’s International Week. The English Learning Centre (ELC) Choral Singing Group filled the stage to kick off the event, which also featured information booths, cultural icebreakers and opportunities to learn from Western’s diverse campus. The event was hosted by the International & Exchange Student Centre, University Students’ Council, Ethnocultural Support Service and Western University Staff Working Group on International Engagement.

Campus Digest

Western student ‘first among peers’ at Global Summit

TWO ONE-ACT FRENCH OPERAS

BY MAURICE RAVEL

Nov. 21 at 8 p.m., Nov. 22 at 2 p.m. & 8 p.m., Nov. 23 at 2 p.m.

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Bienvenue à Western University

For more than eight decades, Western and the people of Trois-Pistoles, Quebec, have been engaged in a partnership in language education. The Trois-Pistoles French Immersion School brings a range of degree-credit language courses, from elementary to advanced, and a wide range of social and cultural events to its participants. Recently, Trois-Pistoles Mayor Jean-Pierre Rioux, left, travelled to London to meet up with Western President Amit Chakma to discuss the immersion program and check out the university campus.

Get Ready to Lead

The Schulich Interfaculty Program in Public Health at Western University

Join us at the London information session. Meet with Program representatives, have one-on-one time to discuss your qualifications, and experience the Program’s unique case method learning.

Saturday, November 22, 2014
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Fourth Floor
Western Centre for Public Health and Family Medicine
Western University
1465 Richmond Street, London, Ontario

For more information and to register, visit
www.schulich.uwo.ca/publichealth/mph/registration