Survey season turns spotlight on universities

By Heather Travis

The equivalent of the television sweeps is at hand for universities.

Fall university survey and rankings season is about to unleash with a bewildering array of performance evaluations and academic comparisons, seemingly pitting universities against local and international competitors.

Ratings are a big business for many media outlets, although not without controversy. Universities sometimes bristle at the results, and in particular at inevitable ranking of schools, often arguing the numbers collected do not reflect the breadth of what they do. Many say universities are so individual in the service they provide that such comparisons have little merit.

Still, the media interest mirrors a public appetite for ratings and rankings, whether it is television programs, quality of life in North American cities or universities.

Marty England of The University of Western Ontario’s Institutional Planning and Budgeting says the university receives dozens of requests for data from media agencies each year.

With all of the information about the university in the public domain, England says “these outlets can do this without your consent.

“It’s not a decision of whether to participate or not,” he adds.

Universities find themselves getting evaluated on everything from academics, research funding and sustainability, to funding and endowments, faculty performance and overall student experiences, among other categories.

They all measure different aspects of the service provided by universities, and as a result all come up with different results.

Some surveys even zero in on specific faculties, with business and law often finding themselves on the sharp end of the survey pencil.

Although Western is included in a variety of rankings, England says there are three main surveys the university keeps an eye on – Maclean’s annual ranking of overall academic excellence at Canadian universities, the Globe and Mail’s University Report Card and the Times Higher Education-QS World University Rankings.

For Western, some ratings hold more weight than others.

Continued on page 9

Experimental health clinics help at-risk neighbourhoods

By Paul Mayne

More of the health care needs of two of London’s more high-risk communities are now being met, thanks to a new Western project that brings a wide range of health services under one roof.

The Interprofessional Care Learning Labs Project integrates health and social services through the work of students and faculty from The University of Western Ontario.

The learning labs have been implemented in the Allan Rush Gardens (6 Barberry Court) and Southdale (1057 Southdale Rd. E) housing units. Common struggles in these areas include limited education, alcohol and drug dependency, post-traumatic stress and depression.

The project brings together health promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation to foster individual, family and community wellness.

“Many of the residents that have been involved in shaping the program are very empowered to be involved in planning and implementing the initial programs for the projects,” says Project Coordinator Robyn McArthur.

“Fewer visits to hospital emergency rooms and increasing the continuity of care provided by a nurse practitioner are just some of the benefits of this project.”

Created through the Office of Interprofessional Health Education and Research at Western, the project seeks to engage community members, health care students and practitioners in a common goal.

Collaboration is a key to potential success.

Continued on page 7
Will Suzuki dig Project GROW?

By Paul Mayne

How many people can actually say environmental activist David Suzuki digs their garden? Well, EnviroWestern hopes to be one of them.

Through its Project GROW (Growing Roots Over Western) group, a 1,000-square foot organic garden just south of TD Waterhouse Stadium is now in the running for top spot in the Community Voluminous Vegetables category, part of the David Suzuki Digs My Garden contest launched this year.

Canadians were asked to submit gardening projects and vie for bragging rights, and Project GROW is now in the final three.

Graduate student Tanya Berkers heads up the project and says the completely organic garden began three years ago as part of an effort to make Western a greener and more sustainable place.

“The university provided us a plot of land that we use to grow food without use of chemical fertilizers or pesticides and it has been a huge success,” says Berkers.

The garden has produced everything from tomatoes, broccoli, leeks and beans to raspberries, eggplant, corn and peppers – which are then shared among the 25 to 30 members who tend to the garden a couple times a week during growing season.

“Project GROW has not only provided food, friends and a great reason to be outdoors, but has also been a useful educational tool,” says Berkers. “Most of our new members have never gardened before and are amazed at how easily food can be grown.”

She adds some professors have even brought their classes to the garden to learn more about the project.

“Organic gardening is important to us, as is the sense of community it brings to our large campus,” says Berkers. “We’re very happy with our garden and are sure David Suzuki will dig it too.”

You can help Project GROW reap the rewards of their hard work by voting for Western’s student-led initiative at www.davidsuzuki.org. Winners will be announced next week.

EnviroWestern’s Project GROW (Growing Roots Over Western) has made the finals of the David Suzuki Digs My Garden Contest thanks to the work of the close to 30 students, including Xueyang Yu, Daria Koscinski, and Justine Lindner.

Submitted Photo

Send it Yourself with the New Self-serve Kiosk

Introducing a fast, easy and convenient way to send your letters and parcels... but only for a limited time! The NEW self-serve kiosks are available to use until December 31, 2008, as Canada Post plots this new technology. Simply bring your ready-to-send envelopes or parcels to the kiosk and follow the simple instructions.

Available at University of Western Ontario – 96 University Community Center (UCC) – 1151 Richmond St, London ON until December 31, 2008.

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On-campus concert hall ‘essential’ for Music

By Heather Travis

News that a $40-million performing arts facility is among potential projects identified by the Board of Governors pending available funding is music to Bob Wood’s ears.

The Don Wright Faculty of Music dean has been championing a new on-campus concert hall for Western since 2005.

The performing arts facility was among the future projects listed in Category Two of the second phase of the Long-Range Space Plan. Category Two projects are slated for 2010 and beyond and are less advanced from a planning standpoint than Category One projects, such as renovating Physics and Astronomy, and the newer Ivey building.

The so-called ‘wish list’ was submitted to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in an application for a slice of the province’s $60-billion infrastructure program for renewal of public structures.

Wood says it is essential for the faculty to upgrade its performance facilities.

“We are not able to deliver a complete program,” he says. “There are certain things – musical shapes and pieces of music and ensembles – that right now we can’t do on campus or we do with great difficulty.”

Wood compares current conditions to a science program working in labs without the essential equipment.

“Music is a performed art and it is essential that performances take place in spaces that are acceptable acoustically. We are carrying out our programs in acoustically sub-standard spaces,” he says.

The faculty offers larger performances in Alumni Hall, which Wood says has poor acoustic quality.

Two proposals have been made for the new facility: renovate Alumni Hall or build a new facility, potentially between the new Student Recreation Centre and the South Valley Building, on the former grounds of J.W. Little Stadium. Wood has already obtained drawings that explore the renovation of Alumni Hall.

If Western does not improve performance facilities for music students, Wood feels the university will not attract the best students to the extent the faculty aspires. This has become evident on Facebook, where Wood says discussion groups report graduate students voicing a desire to study at Western, but being deterred by the lack of performance space.

Related to this issue is faculty retention and recruitment of guest artists, he adds.

“We go after the finest … and we have many prominent artists, but they require good performance space.”

Many competing music programs at other universities are located in large cities, which allow students and faculty to use concert halls in the area for performances if facilities are not available on campus. However, there is not a suitable space in London, he says.

The city of London and citizen groups have also expressed interest in building a performing arts centre however sticker shock has meant the project has met resistance.

“London really does need a performing arts centre and I would hope that … people don’t see this as an either/or situation,” he says. “We are totally open to conversations with the city in terms of a collaboration with a facility on campus that could be used by folks from the city.”

Wood also envisions an art gallery attached to the concert hall.

Between performances, the facility can be used for faculty conferences and business events, among others, he adds.

Within the last four years, the music graduate population has doubled with the bulk of the students in performance programs. Universities such as McGill, University of Toronto, and the University of British Columbia have set the bar for performance spaces and are making strong investments in their music faculties, he says.

“The word is out and folks want to come here to study,” he says. “This would be a signature moment for Western.”

$20M renovation recreates Lawson, Stevenson halls

By Paul Mayne

The Stevenson-Lawson Building will soon be recognized as individual structures once again – Stevenson Hall and Lawson Hall – mirroring their beginnings as separate buildings.

Renovations to the high-profile building housing the president’s office and, until recently, many key administrative functions, are scheduled to begin in January.

While the two ends of the building will regain their identities, work will not entail separating Stevenson from Lawson.

With an estimated cost of $20 million, work is being done to house programs with expanding graduate enrolment, such as Classical Studies, Philosophy, History, Women’s Studies & Feminist Research, and the Program in Writing & Rhetoric.

“We will not be physically separating the two buildings, but we will be opening up the presently closed-off magnificent entrance to the Lawson Building – it will lead into a common area for the university community,” says Provost and Vice-President (Academic) Fred Longstaffe.

The renovation is expected to continue in a number of stages over about three years.

“We will treat the new facilities in name and in practice as separate buildings, restoring their original names.”

The older and more southerly of the two, originally the Lawson Library, was built in 1934 and its staircase entrance (currently blocked off) may be the only one on campus carved from limestone, as opposed to poured concrete. Stevenson Hall was built in 1955.

The President’s Office, the Office of Faculty Relations, the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, and the Vice-Provost’s offices will be relocated to interim locations during the renovations.

Once completed, these offices will return to the Stevenson portion of the building.

The University Secretariat office will move from the Lawson portion to the Stevenson portion, while Campus Police will remain in the Lawson building.

“When this major renovation is finished, we will have fully modernized space while having preserved the original aspect of two of the university’s most classical buildings – and been able to provide a considerable portion of it to several superb academic departments,” says Longstaffe.

“I hope that it will be a great boost to their staff, students and faculty, once the project is completed and everyone is settled into their new homes.”

The 15th Annual Murray Barr Lecture

The Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology

Dr. Jeffery Kordower

The Jean-Schweppve-Armour Professor of Neurological Sciences

Professor of Neurosurgery

Director, Research Center for Brain Repair

Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois

“A Tale of Two Stories: Why Nigral Neurons Degenerate in Parkinson’s Disease and How to Save Them”

Thursday, October 30, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.

Auditorium A, 3rd Floor LHSC, University Campus

Coffee and Continental Breakfast Available 8:30-9:00

Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

Religious Life Lecture Series

Theme: “Inclusivity and Diversity”

Thursday, October 16, 2008

Discipleship and the Culture of Life”

Most Reverend Thomas Collins

Archbishop of Toronto

Thursday, October 23, 2008

“Sweet Singer”

A musical play about Charles Wesley, the sweet singe of Methodism

Steven Kimbrough

Elizabeth A. “Bessie” Labatt Hall

For more information contact:

Sister Susan Glaab, CSJ, 519-963-1477

e-mail: sglaab@uwo.ca
The Way We Were: 1977

World-renowned surgeon Charles Drake was well known for avoiding publicity. On Oct. 17, 1977 he could not escape the limelight while participating in a ceremonial plaque unveiling on the 7th floor of University Hospital. The event celebrated the $2.5-million gift from the Richard and Jean Ivey Foundation to establish the hospital’s Neurological Sciences Department. Richard M. Ivey speaking for the family said, “It is all very well to be able to make money available but without people to count on using it wisely that money could be easily wasted. This foundation gift could not have been made without the inspiration and vision of Dr. Charles Drake.” Unveiling the plaque are (l-r) Drake, Richard M. Ivey, Richard G. Ivey and Walter Blackburn.

Letter to the Editor

What's So "Fine" About Job Losses?

Regarding the online article about Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's speech on campus, I feel I can now breathe a sigh of relief—Jim Flaherty says our economy is fine! And to think we were all worried about the thousands of jobs lost, the bank failures, bailouts and plummeting consumer activity. Seriously though, why is Western News providing this guy another opportunity to campaign, because that's exactly what this looks like. It's a puff piece that unquestioningly pads itself with campaign promises directed at students and university administrators. Analysis and insight are conspicuously absent in this article, and I have to wonder why. I mean, Flaherty has, on the public record, made some pretty wacky proposals: proposed making homelessness illegal; proposed tax credits for parents who send their children to private schools; wanted to privatize the Ontario government's biggest cash cow, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario; has told Canadian cities to stop whining and fix their own potholes, etc., etc., etc.

In the federal finance portfolio, Flaherty has overseen a massive increase in government spending and a loss of nearly 200,000 jobs in the manufacturing sector alone. The last time this happened, we called it a recession. So when Jim Flaherty says everything's tickety-boo with the economy, I'm not only disinclined to believe him, I'm nervous. Very, very nervous. I see the layoffs in my community and among friends, people losing their homes, education funds pillaged to put food on the table, marriages breaking down under the stress of suddenly losing one or both - family incomes. This is what's going on in the "real economy". Flaherty's position doesn't seem to reflect any clear understanding of that.

Meg Borthwick
Computer Science

VerbAtim

Newcomers are an at-risk group and need appropriate attention and resources. The City of London’s Welcoming Cultural Diversity in London report recognized the importance of “shift[ing] away from a “deficit-based” way of thinking about newcomers (i.e., what they lack, what they need) and begin[n]g to recognize and celebrate the value added by newcomers.” However, it is equally important for municipalities to recognize that newcomers often lack crucial necessities, including access to affordable housing. Recent immigrants are more likely than others to be homeless or in core housing need. Municipal governments need to respond to this fact by allocating the appropriate resources to helping newcomers establish themselves properly.

Housing for Immigrants in Ontario’s Medium-Sized Cities
Canadian Policy Research Network research report
September 2008
http://www.cprn.org/documents/50555_EN.pdf

Looking Back

From the Western News archives – October 20, 1983

- Maria Rosé, widow of Western Music professor Alfred Rosé, donated her private collection of what was considered to be priceless musical scores and letters written by Gustav Mahler to the Faculty of Music. With this contribution, Maria hoped to promote music as a vital part of the academic world.
- In response to findings showing that degenerative diseases were more due to lifestyle factors than the biological aging process, Dr. David Cunningham developed a long-term study to investigate the effects of physical activity on retired men. Preliminary findings pointed to the possibility of improving these trends through increased physical activity.
- Full-time graduate student enrollment at Western increased by 4.7 per cent from 1982-1983. This was noted as being largely due to greater enrollment in the fields of health science, business administration, social and library sciences, and engineering.
- The mid-season recruiting of Western’s leading scorer Kevin Rydeard provoked the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union to ban the Saskatchewan Roughriders from university football games. In addition, all CFL scouts and officials were prohibited from visiting Western grounds.

- Oscar Wilde’s “The Importance of Being Earnest” was presented by the Department of English from November 3rd to the 12th. Tickets sold for $2.50 for students and $4 for others.

- compiled by Caterina White
Western grad fights for justice in Haiti

A social justice course sparks a personal mission

BY ALEXANDER POKLUDA

In the spring of 2006 I received permission to enroll in the Introduction to Social Justice and Peace Studies course at King’s University College for the fall term. Early in the fall Sharon Gaskell came to speak to our class about the Starthrower Foundation, a charity she founded in 2004 to help students in Haiti.

Gaskell completed her undergraduate and Master's degrees at The University of Western Ontario in Library and Information Science before becoming a youth counsellor for the Catholic church.

Following a trip to Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, as a chaperone on a youth poverty awareness trip, Gaskell decided to personally tackle the problem of global inequality – she retired early and started The Starthrower Foundation.

My partner Laura and I recently travelled to Haiti for 10 days with the foundation to experience the country and meet the local people. We were shocked to discover just how difficult their lives really are.

From my perspective, Haitians don't need charity or saving. They need, and deserve, justice. The poverty and inequity experienced in a majority of countries is a form of modern colonialism perpetuated by the Western minority. Since Gaskell came to speak to my class at King's, I have realized her foundation understands the current world order more than most and that I could learn a lot from them.

Gaskell has been living and working in Haiti for the last 10 years. Through the foundation, she enables some of the world's most poor and underprivileged people to attend school. Usually these are young adults orphaned at an early age, but Starthrower recognizes everybody's story is unique.

Charities operating in countries such as Haiti often sponsor children to attend primary school then leave them to fend for themselves when they turn 18. Starthrower sponsors the most-in-need at any age and starting at an early age, but Starthrower recognizes everybody's story is unique.

WESERN NEWS
OCTOBER 16, 2008

Sharon Gaskell, founder of the Starthrower Foundation, cradles a sick child during a recent visit to Haiti.

and he sleeps in the front room on the floor. Outside their front door is a pool of sewage. When it rains, sewage floods his room and often makes him sick. Laura and I brought two hammocks with frames from Canada on behalf of Starthrower to get him off the floor at night.

One of our next home visits took some unexpected turns. The fact that nine people sleep on a floor barely large enough to seat four of us was not what captured our attention.

A 17-month-old baby girl was sitting on a chair by herself, obviously weak, malnourished and ill. Her head was bobbing like she was about to fall asleep. Moments later she passed out and did not regain consciousness while we were there. The little girl's mother was in the market trying to earn money to take her daughter to the clinic. We knew this poor girl may pass away before her mother got home and she didn't receive medical attention.

The student said he was about to go visit his mother in Sen Rafayel but Gaskell explained to him he was the oldest in the house and was, therefore, responsible for looking after the youngest, he was oblige as they say in Creole.

We took the student and little girl to the new hospital in Cap-Haitien. Gaskell paid for the girl to be admitted and gave the student extra cash to pay the doctor once they were seen. Once we got there, the hospital was very busy and they had run out of numbered cards so the student would have to defend his place in line without one. Sharon said he would probably be waiting all afternoon and maybe into the evening. All we could do was hope she received proper medical attention before it was too late.

Gaskell had planned to return to Canada Thanksgiving weekend for a few weeks, but is currently in a Cap-Haitien hospital for emergency surgery likely related to an E. coli infection.

The writer is a fourth year student completing an Honours Specialization in Computer Science and a Major in Physics.
BRIAN FAGAN

Looking at Ancient Climate Change

Thursday, 23 October
Lecture 3:30 – 5:00 pm
Middlessex College 110
Reception to follow
Middlessex College 019
Hosted by Ecosystem Health Initiative
and the McConnell Family Foundation

Brian Fagan is emeritus professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He has been a leading writer on archaeology for more than three decades, and in recent years has written five best-selling books on historical climate change, including The Little Ice Age, The Long Summer, and his latest, The Great Warming: Climate Change and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations.

The University of Western Ontario Visiting University Scholar – Public Lecture and Reception

OCTOBER 16, 2008 WESTERN NEWS

Wet Lab

Talking about Torture

On Oct. 8, Assistant RCMP Commissioner Mike McDonnell spoke at the Faculty of Law. In response to a question about the torture of Abdullah Almalki in Syria, he replied that the RCMP “was not aware” that this Canadian citizen would be tortured at the time when they sent the information that was used by his torturers.

However, an internal Foreign Affairs memo dated Oct. 10, 2002, confirms that the RCMP did in fact know about the strong likelihood of torture resulting from the questions they sent to the Syrian police to interrogate Almalki. “The RCMP are aware of this, but have nonetheless decided to send their request,” (Arar Commission report, pg. 208-209, http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/pco-bcp/commissions/maher_arar/07-09-13/www.ararcommission.ca/eng/AR_English.pdf).

Why is the Canadian government involved in torture? And why is there not a full public inquiry into why and how this happened? Almalki and others like him deserve answers about what was done to them, and why. Unlike in the Maher Arar case, the government and RCMP have refused to hold a full public inquiry into these shameful episodes -- the torture victims and their lawyers are not even allowed to participate in the current Iacobucci commission cover-up.

McDonnell spoke passionately at Western about his respect for leaders who have the courage of their convictions and who speak the truth to authority. Londoners who have the courage to hear some uncomfortable truths about what our government has done and what is being covered up can hear direct, first-hand accounts from torture victims Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad El Maati and Muayyed Nureddin, who will speak on Oct. 18 beginning at 7 p.m. at the London Islamic School (gymnasium at rear). All are welcome.

David Heap
Department of French Studies

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

It is a little cold for swimming, but Earth Sciences PhD candidate Ranjeet Nagare made a splash with his third-year Watershed Hydrology students Oct 9. Nagare conducted his lab on the bank of Medway Creek where students measured the velocity of the water and the depth of the stream.

Research Western is pleased to announce the following competition:

Graduate Thesis Research Award
– Western Internal Grant Competition

Funds for these awards are provided jointly by the Office of the Vice-President (Research & International Relations) and individual faculties. The purpose of the Graduate Thesis Research Award is to help support the costs of research undertaken by graduate students at The University of Western Ontario that are directly related to the successful completion of their thesis/dissertation requirements.

Grant Amount: Set by Faculty – Maximum of $1500
Deadline: Dean’s Office - November 17, 2008
Program Details: http://www.uwo.ca/research/its.html

NOTE: Applications will be adjudicated by individual Faculties and require Supervisor and Chair approval.

Contact: Florence Lourdes
Internal Grants Coordinator
Run 5150 Support Services Building
University of Western Ontario
London ON N6A 3K7
519.661.2111 x84500
internalgrants@uwo.ca

Western 100 Mile Farmers’ Market

Farm fresh, local produce

1 Day Only... Thursday, October 23rd
11 am - 2 pm · UCC Concrete Beach

In conjunction with EnviroWeek at Western
Program seeks government funding

Continued from page 1

team of health professionals and
the client to create shared ideas
and coordinate treatment around
complex health issues,” says
McArthur. “The key components
that enable health providers to
work collaboratively include
knowledge of health practitioner
roles, development of mutual
respect, and coordination of
decision making.”

The project helps students
in health programs at Western
with placements for those who
wish to pursue interprofessional
collaborative practice.

As a clinical practice component
of health programs, the students,
who are supervised by faculty
members, provide nursing,
social work, speech-language
pathology, medicine, physical
therapy, occupational therapy
and nutrition.

“Experience in this
interprofessional setting will
build collaborative skills among
future practitioners and enrich
the community-based experience
for participating students,” says
McArthur.

Government funding for the
project expires March 2009 so
McArthur hopes the benefits will
be sufficient to secure additional
support and an extension.

“The Interprofessional Care
Learning Labs Project is an
innovative project, because it
introduces a unique approach
to care within a community that
is lacking in access to health
resources,” says McArthur.

In a short time, McArthur says,
residents have taken a more
active role in their care and the
activities within the clinics.

“The response to this program
from residents, students and
community members has been
very positive. Their ideas, opinions
and experiences have shaped
our programs in unimaginable
ways.”

For more information about
interprofessional collaborative
practice, or possible placements
within the project, call 519-661-
2111, ext. 87835 or visit www.ipe.
uwoc.ca.

Paul Mayne, Western News

Nurse Practitioner Maureen Mouritzen helps meet the needs of one of London’s high-risk communities through the
University of Western Ontario’s new Interprofessional Care Learning Labs Project.

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Easing pain lifetime mission

Renowned doctor, teacher, mentor and philanthropist Earl Russell, MD ’50, DSc ’06, died at home Oct. 12 at the age of 88. Russell was a respected physician, who dedicated much of his life to alleviating human pain. Russell was a faculty member from 1968 to 1981 in the Department of Anaesthesia. He was Chief of Anaesthesia at Four Counties General Hospital in Newbury and an advisor at Moose Factory General Hospital. He was a member of the staff at Kingston General Hospital, St. Joseph’s Health Care, St. Mary’s Hospital, and the London Health Sciences Centre and, from 1972-1974, president and acting chair of the medical staff at Westminster Hospital in London.

His interest in pain management and career in anaesthesia began as a young doctor serving in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps during the Korean War. Russell remained active in treating patients until his retirement in 2007.

In 1999, a generous gift from Russell to Western established the Earl Russell Chair in Pain Management at Schulich Medicine & Dentistry, currently held by Dr. Dwight Moulin.

Russell and his family have continued to support this chair to facilitate important research in pain management. Russell received an honorary degree from Western in 2006. Listen to his convocation address at: http://atwestern.typepad.com/convocation_addresses/2006/06/june_12_pm_earl.html

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Marjorie (Midge), four daughters, nine grandchildren, two step-grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be today (Oct. 16) from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. at the Westview Funeral Chapel, 709 Wonderland Rd. N., London. A memorial service will be conducted at Byron United Covenant Church, 420 Boler Rd., London on Oct. 17 at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family has asked mourners to consider donations to the Earl Russell Chair in Pain Management at Western or the Byron United Memorial Fund.
Improvement a long-term exercise

Continued from page 1

“We pay attention to the results of the [Globe and Mail’s] student satisfaction survey,” he says, adding it provides insight into the perception of the university rather than an arbitrary evaluation of information.

“Fortunately we have received very good results from our students and their rating of the student experience here at Western,” he says.

But even those at the top of the ratings scales have something to worry about.

“I think we take great pride in the fact that we are ahead of the competition right now. If we started to slip, I’m sure that would be a matter of concern to us,” he says of the Globe and Mail survey, adding the positive responses in the Globe and Mail Report Card confirms Western’s mission statement as “providing the best student experience.”

Due to “survey fatigue,” England says Ontario universities created a format called the Common University Data Ontario (CUDO) which categorizes information on the schools in a consistent manner.

Using the CUDO guidelines, universities provide information based on a commonly agreed upon definition of each category, he adds, which avoids ambiguous questions being interpreted differently by each school.

Each university makes their CUDO information public, which allows any media organization to access the data. This also eliminates favouritism, he says.

Although universities are bombarded with rankings, this can provide a gauge of student satisfaction and how different schools compare, says England. However, Western does not directly change its plans or procedures based on the survey results.

“I wouldn’t say we would act on anything simply because it was observed in the Globe and Mail survey, but to the extent that the results confirm what we believe to be the case, then we’ll begin to act on it,” he says.

For example, Western has received low ratings in the past for the quality of the career placement services and student recreation facilities.

Recognizing these areas required work, Western has recently invested millions of dollars in new facilities for both, and is working to improve their services.

The university also publishes its own performance evaluations annually, which compares Western with other research-intensive universities.

“We are aware of the areas where we need to improve and we are aware of the areas where we seem to be doing well,” he says.

ELECTION RESULTS

Lori Gribben will continue to represent administrative staff on the Board of Governors following recent online elections. Elected to Senate were Catherine Wilkins (administrative staff) and Hesham El Naggar (School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Elections for undergraduate representation on the Board of Governors were held yesterday and today.

JD NEARS APPROVAL

Senate is recommending that, beginning September 2009, Law degrees – since 1957 known as Bachelor of Laws (LLB) -- be called Juris Doctor (JD). The JD is typically regarded as a professional degree, requiring an undergraduate degree as well as a law degree. Students feel JD would facilitate international employment. Law alumni would have the option to change their degree to a J.D. (with a fee to replace their diploma) or retain their LLB.

CAMPUS BRIEFS

EL ECTION R E SULTS

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Badami: Writing is a journey of hard work

By Heather Travis

Author Anita Rau Badami draws inspiration from the world around her and this year, The University of Western Ontario will become the artist's playground.

Badami is the James A. & Marjorie Spenceley Writer-in-Residence for 2008-2009 in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

She comes to Western with an impressive resume, having been awarded the Regional Commonwealth Writers Prize and Italy's Premio Berto for her bestselling second novel, The Hero's Walk, which was also named a Washington Post Best Book of 2001.

The novel was long-listed for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Prize and the Orange Prize for Fiction, and shortlisted for the Kiriyama Prize. As well, she is the recipient of the Marian Engel Award for a woman writer in mid-career.

“I see the residency as an opportunity to have a one-on-one dialogue with aspiring authors about the art and craft of writing, as well as to share my perspectives and experience as a long-time creator of fictional worlds,” she says.

Badami was born in India and grew up with a love for writing, underscored by the fact that she sold her first short story at 18 years old. She earned a bachelor’s degree in English Literature at the University of Madras, and completed a Master’s degree and a graduate thesis became her first novel, Tamarind Mem, which was published worldwide.

As for this artist's favourite place to write, Badami worked as a copywriter for advertising agencies in Bombay, Bangalore and Madras and freelanced for major Indian newspapers and published stories in children's magazines.

But after she moved to Canada and completed a Master's degree in English Literature at the University of Calgary in 1996, Badami had a breakthrough. A year after graduation, her graduate thesis became her first novel, Tamarind Mem, which was published worldwide.

“If you think writing is what you want to do for the rest of your life, be prepared to invest a lot of passion and hard work into it,” she says. “And don’t give up. The end of a project is always worth all the slogging, I think.”

As for this artist's favourite place to write, Badami prefers a small office in her home, which is overflowing with books and papers. The tiny, square room overlooking her garden, has become the backdrop for the colourful and exotic settings she evokes in her writing.

“The world around me, and that includes all of the above and then some” serves as inspiration for her works.

Badami will be holding office hours in the faculty, offering advice and criticism to students and aspiring writers.

“It always gives me a thrill to work with new writers, to spot, and, in a small way, to encourage talent. I look forward to interacting with the writing and reading community in London.”

She is available for appointments Mondays through Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, on the following dates:

- Nov. 3-6, 2008
- Dec. 1-4, 2008
- Jan. 5-8, 2009

Contact Vivian Lavers in the Office of the Writer-in-Residence for an appointment.

Distinguished lecturer

Richard Kane had the opportunity to speak last week about his research in the area of algebraic topology at Conron Hall. Kane has previously been honored with the Canadian Mathematical Society Distinguished Service Award and David Borwein Distinguished Career Award for his contribution to mathematics. The Western award acknowledges sustained excellence in scholarship over a substantial career at Western.

### Distinguished University Professorship award winner

- Richard Kane
- Research in algebraic topology
- Honored with various awards
- Awarde for sustained excellence in scholarship at Western

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### JOHN RALSTON SAUL
- Author of "A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada"
- Western University Professorship award winner
- Reading, book sale & signing
- Wednesday, October 22 at 7:30 PM
- Faculty of Education Auditorium, 1137 Western Road
- Tickets: Special Offer $30 includes signed book and free admission
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- Tickets on sale at The Book Store at Western, 519-661-3520 x 84573; Books Plus 519-661-4091.

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A month of elections and meltdowns

The economic turmoil has focused attention on the need for expert commentary from universities and business schools. Steve Foerster, Professor of Finance, Richard Ivey School of Business, has been in high demand to put the economic disorder into context. BusinessWeek recently quoted him in an article about business schools being authoritative places for business commentary for the public as well as on advising companies and policymakers on how to respond. Foerster and Ivey professors Stephen Sapp and Jeffrey Gandz have also been interviewed on CTV's National News, Newsnet, on many CBC Radio shows and in articles for the Globe and Mail, National Post, London Free Press, Canadian Press and Reuters.

Foerster’s column on volatility in the stock market, “Volatility index can help give investors the all-clear,” was published in the Globe and Mail’s Report on Business.

The downturn has also hurt manufacturers. Chris Piper, Associate Professor of Operations, Richard Ivey School of Business, has been called upon for commentary on layoffs at various manufacturing plants in Canada. He was recently quoted in the New York Times, Canadian Press and A-News London.

Economics Professor Kul Bhatia, likewise, has been in the spotlight of late, dissecting and discussing the difficulties Canadians are experiencing during these challenging times. On two occasions this month, listeners from across Canada could hear Bhatia in every major market as he provided expert analysis for CBC Radio’s syndicated network. He has also been interviewed by London Free Press, A-News, Rogers Television, AM 980 and CBIR.

With elections on the horizon in both Canada and the U.S., commentary on political advertising has been in demand. Shanker Krishnan, a visiting marketing professor at the Richard Ivey School of Business, just completed a study on competitive advertising in political campaigns that is slated for publication in an academic journal. He has been quoted in both the National Post and the Globe and Mail on recent campaign advertisements.

New research by Daniel Ansari, an Assistant Professor and Canada Research Chair in Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience in the Department of Psychology, could change the way educators view mathematical difficulties and ideas to assist children who face these problems. Ansari and his graduate assistant Ian Holloway shared their findings with CBC Radio Syndication, Globe & Mail, Reuters and A-News.

David Spence, Robarts scientist and neurology professor at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, presented research at the World Stroke Congress in Vienna showing a vast majority of patients with narrowed arteries do not need surgery to reduce their risk of having a stroke. He gave interviews to Reuters News, Washington Post, Canadian Press, London Free Press, A-News, and other publications including newspapers in Germany and Switzerland.

Andrew Leask, a professor in the departments of Dentistry and Physiology & Pharmacology at Schulich Medicine & Dentistry, had a paper published on scarring or fibrotic diseases, and how to stop them, which was featured on A-News and Rogers First Local.

Marnin Heisel of the Department of Psychiatry discussed suicide in the London Free Press and on CKCO-TV, during suicide awareness month.

Jack Bend, of the Departments of Physiology & Pharmacology, Pathology and Paediatrics was on CTV National to discuss a new study on Bisphenol A, used in food cans and hard plastic water bottles.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

Vice-provost returns to teaching, research

By Heather Travis

After 13 years as Vice-Provost (Academic Programs & Students) and Registrar, Roma Harris is ready for the next stage of her academic career.

It was a steep learning curve for Harris, who began her career as a lecturer in the Department of Psychology and later became the assistant dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies. She also served as acting dean of the school from 1993-1995. But in spite of many academic accomplishments, Harris was ready to take on a new challenge at the administrative level.

In 1995, just as Western was experiencing extreme funding cuts under then-premier Mike Harris and a new Progressive Conservative provincial government, Harris began her tenure as Vice-Provost. After her appointment, the Registrar’s portfolio was added to her list of responsibilities.

“I learned a lot doing what I did and I have a huge respect for the administrative staff, whose commitment to the university keeps the structure moving along,” she says.

Since she was charting new waters in the position, Harris relied on the experience of her support staff to help guide the evolution of the university’s student and faculty services.

As an extension of the president’s office, Harris also saw her team working to enable President and Vice-Chancellor Paul Davenport in his mandate to turn around the university’s declining quality of undergraduate students. Harris says her staff was integral in creating Western’s current reputation as one of the most academically competitive and sought-after universities.

“It was a big part of my mandate to put the structures in place to make that possible,” she says.

Harris approached the position with two main goals: to recruit people with new skills into the administrative staff and to develop skills among the current staff members; and to build a culture of service.

Her portfolio had many growth spurts during her tenure, including changes to the structures of undergraduate programs and making it possible for faculty to work across disciplines, consolidating student support services, improving the teaching support centre, increasing student financial aid and integrating many web-based services.

Although there is always room for improvement, Harris is satisfied with the work she was able to accomplish.

In spite of a full plate of administrative duties, Harris maintained her academic pursuits.

She continued to publish and secure research funding, as well as supervise graduate students during her tenure as Vice-Provost.

Although her role as Vice-Provost was extended, Harris knew she would return to teaching and researching full-time.

“I feel like I’ve been able to keep my hand in it,” she says.

She is on leave for this year, however she will teach next year in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS).

“It’ll be a different life at a different pace and I’m looking forward to it,” she says.

At the end of her term, Harris has happily passed the torch to newly appointed Vice-Provost (Academic Programs & Students) and Registrar, John Doerksen.

“I’m very pleased that it’s John Doerksen taking it on,” she says. “I feel I’ve been able to keep my hand in it.”

Former Vice-Provost (Academic Programs & Students) and Registrar, Roma Harris, is shifting focus and returning to life as a full-time teacher and researcher. A reception in her honour is set for Oct. 21, 4:30-5:30 p.m., in the Great Hall.
READER SURVEY

Western News is published 34 times a year by the Department of Communications and Public Affairs for faculty, administrative staff and students. Our goal is to provide useful news and information about our campus community and issues affecting higher education, as well as offer a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions.

This reader survey is part of ongoing efforts to improve the newspaper. You can help by completing this form and returning it by Nov. 10 to: Western News, Department of Communications and Public Affairs, Suite 360, Westminster Hall, The University of Western Ontario, London, ON N6A 3K7. Include additional comments on a separate sheet of paper.

For an online version of the survey, please go to: http://communications.uwo.ca/news_survey

Your participation is appreciated.

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☐ Undergraduate student
☐ Graduate student
☐ Postdoctoral fellow
☐ Alumnus
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☐ Member of senior administration
☐ Dean/Chair
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☐ less than one year
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How many of the last four issues of Western News have you read?
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| Fairness | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| Accuracy | 1 2 3 4 5 |
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| Headlines | 1 2 3 4 5 |
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☐ Honors & Awards (faculty, staff, student achievements)
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☐ Interviews with administrators
☐ City/Western partnerships
☐ Stories on new University programs
☐ Board of Governors, Senate news
☐ University Students’ Council (USC) news
☐ Society of Graduate Students (SOGS) news
☐ Appointments
☐ Faculty & Staff
☐ Stories on conferences at Western
☐ Physical Plant news
☐ Advance stories (concerts, exhibitions, open houses, etc.)
☐ Environment issues
☐ Sports at Western
☐ News about other universities
☐ Letters to the Editor
☐ Opinion column (Commentary & Viewpoint)
☐ Overheard column (faculty/media)
☐ Photographs
☐ Display advertising
☐ PhD Lectures
☐ Classifieds
☐ Coming Events
☐ Student Services Bulletin
☐ Campus Digest
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Have you responded to a Western News advertisement?
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Have you had a news item, notice or letter to the editor/opinion piece published?
☐ Yes ☐ No

How do you get your copy of Western News?
☐ News Box ☐ Mail ☐ Other

How would you improve Western News? Please consider both online and print version in your comments.
A central Web site displays advertisements for all vacant academic positions. The following positions are among those advertised at www.uwo.ca/pro/faculty/quick/index.htm.

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FULL-TIME ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Faculty of Health Sciences - School of Physical Therapy - Applications or nominations are invited for the position of Director, School of Physical Therapy. The selected candidate will be a physical therapist with strong interpersonal skills who will assume a senior academic rank with tenure. An appointment period up to five years will afford the successful candidate both the time and the flexibility required to make a mark as an academic leader. The effective date of the appointment is July 1, 2009. The deadline for receipt of applications is Jan. 15, 2009.

Richard Ivey School of Business - Global Environment of Business - Seeks candidates for a position as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the area of Global Environment of Business. The ideal candidate will contribute to the group's research focus on the interaction between firms and their external institutional environment, as well as to one of the school's four cross-enterprise centres (www.ivey.ca/centres.htm). The submission deadline is Dec. 31 although applications will be accepted until the position has been filled.

Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry - Dentistry - Applications are invited for two (2) full-time positions for limited term appointment at 50% reduced responsibilities at the rank of Assistant Professor in the Division of Oral Surgery effective Jan. 1, 2009 or as soon as possible thereafter.

Faculty of Information and Media Studies - Manager, Graduate Resource Centre - Seeks an energetic, innovative and service-oriented individual with excellent communication skills to fill the position of Manager, Graduate Resource Centre for a full-time term appointment from December 2008 through December 2009. Rank and salary for this position will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. Applications are to be submitted covering letter, curriculum vitae, and the names and contact information for three references, in electronic format by Oct. 17, 2008. All positions are subject to budgetary approval.

Applicants should have fluent written and oral communication skills in English. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadian Citizens and Permanent Residents will be given priority. The University of Western Ontario is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified women and men, including visible minorities, aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities.

ACADEME

PhD Lectures

Aaron Barth - Philosophy, Reconstructive and Natural Language Approaches to Linguistic Analysis, Oct. 17

Jennie Ward - Psychology - Humor Used During Two Types of Discussions Between Friends, Associations With Coping and Interpersonal Well-Being - Oct. 20, 1 p.m. Room 9420 SSIC

Qi Zhang - Biomedical Engineering - Real-Time Visualization and Manipulation of Volumetric Medical Images - Oct. 22, 9 a.m. Room RR Fisher

Please send submissions to newseditor@uwo.ca

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