BY BOB KLANAC

Are Western students illiterate?
Probably not, but according to Roger Graves, Director of The University of Western Ontario’s Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication Program, the question is not as provocative as it might seem.

“The TD Bank Financial Group’s Literacy Matters report of a few years ago says that between 11 to 14 per cent of Canadian-born university graduates aged 26-55 have inadequate prose literacy,” says Graves.

“It also says that 22 per cent of university graduates do not achieve adequate scores in prose literacy.”

As the head of the newly re-imagined writing program within Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Graves sees literacy issues as affecting a university student’s education in crucial ways.

“At Harvard, first-year students write 20 essays,” he says. “In Western’s Faculty of Arts and Humanities they write seven or eight. In other faculties, it’s one or two.

“Students can spend their entire academic careers not writing anything.”

Graves says although most students emerge from high school with essay writing skills, many lose touch with those skills due to a lack of long-form writing work.

The reduction of essay writing as an academic component is one of volume, according to Graves. “There are 100 or 200 students in a class,” he says. “That aside, the TAs don’t have expertise in writing.

Graves also sees that from a faculty point of view, it’s hard to teach writing and frankly counterproductive for an untenured person to put much effort into it.

“That’s why you don’t see as much of that as in the ’80s when you had smaller class sizes,” he says. “There’s less funding.”

Literacy is, Graves says, “one of those silent things that erode away.”

“It’s a quality rather than a quantity thing. It’s hard to point to unless you compare how much writing they do now as opposed to 20 years ago. It’s harder to pin down.”

For solutions, Graves looks back 125 years to an 1870 decision by Harvard University to emphasize freshmen composition in light of declining literacy at the time.

“The issue of freshmen composition essentially began in the 1870s in the U.S. because everybody copies Harvard.”

Change is starting to come because of more funding for the issue and, Graves adds, the new Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication Program is part of the solution.

“There’s no question that the issue is on the radar of the administration,” he says. “They are putting more resources into it and we certainly feel that we’re getting support at that level.”

Graves points to the Writing In The Sciences course and a business communication offering as examples of the kind of writing fare that will increase the writing skills of Western students.

He’s also developing courses in travel writing, humour writing, creative non-fiction and screenwriting.

“This is going to improve student learning in their disciplinary areas,” he says. “If students write about the stuff they’re learning, they learn it better, retain it longer and understand it more deeply.”

Remember when?

It was just another day at school for two-year-old Charlotte Usprich, but for mom and dad, it was a trip down memory lane. Charlotte attends the relocated Dr. Mary J. Wright University Laboratory School at Westminster College, while parents David and Deborah were part of the original school that spent 34 years at the Social Science Building. The family was on hand for some special play time Oct. 18 as an open house was held at the new location that included school namesake Mary Wright, President Paul Davenport and many parents and children.
Emotional highs during Fall Convocation

BY BOB KLANAC

As the small-framed woman at the podium started her convocation speech in a quiet voice Friday morning, one could have hardly predicted that her words would bring a full audience of graduates, parents and friends to their feet just 10 minutes later. The day before, grads took part in a cheer-off spontaneously summoned up by a noted organ transplant visionary.

The 290th Convocation of the University of Western Ontario was wonderfully unpredictable like that. Over the two-day event Oct. 18-19, 1,850 graduates walked across the Alumni Hall stage and just as many were inspired, moved and challenged by presentations of the honorary degree recipients.

On Thursday afternoon, Calvin Stiller, a pioneer in organ transplantation and advocacy for donation, told graduates of the joy of serving the “others” in the world. “The more you give, the more you will receive,” Stiller said. Asking permission of Acting-Chancellor President Paul Davenport, Stiller finished his speech by engaging graduates in a spell-and-cheer of the word ‘other’.

Friday morning, Alanis Obomsawin, whose films made her a passionate advocate for justice for Aboriginal peoples, held graduates spell-bound as she talked of her Quebec childhood of “hardship, racism and exclusion”. Obomsawin recalled her father’s influence and in a voice flush with quiet emotion described herself as “a daughter of a guide in the bush.” “Papa, the love I gave was stronger than the hate I received,” she said. “Papa, I won.” The audience of students, parents and guests gave Obomsawin a standing ovation.

At the final convocation session Friday afternoon former Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso spoke of the evolution of democracy due to the rise of new technology. “The voices of people are increasingly being heard through media and new information technology,” told the audience of grads. “Blogs, emails and cell-phones are personal and participatory tools creating new forms of community.”

At the podium on Oct. 19, President Paul Davenport congratulates Aboriginal filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin with an honorary degree.

Western President Paul Davenport congratulates Aboriginal filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin after receiving an honorary degree Oct. 19.

Renowned for pioneering work in organ transplantation, Calvin Stiller was awarded an honorary degree from Western Oct. 18.

Jeff Rayner, a King’s University College graduate (Sociology/Criminology), found himself stuck up a tree following Convocation. Actually, he wasn’t stuck, but seeking a retreat from afternoon rain showers.

Rain, rain, go away, come back after my graduation. For Julie Ponesse (PhD in Philosophy) it was a matter of waiting out the rain before she and her family were to continue with their day on campus following Convocation.
Help for Sophie followed health crisis

BY PAUL MAYNE

“We've learned how lucky we are to be living in London, but also with organizations like the United Way, and specifically CNIB.”

Rebecca Neyers

“Sophie's at the point now where she is definitely seeing things and tracking us as we walk past,” says Neyers, noting Sophie has some vision but it’s unsure what she's actually seeing. “We put it in terms of a camera that is definitely working, but we're not sure how she's processing the film.”

Through the work of CNIB, in particular Early Intervention Specialist Stacey Adams and her use of special toys equipped with lights and mirrors and made with metallic and primary colours, Sophie continues to progress well.

“We've learned how lucky we are to be living in London,” says Neyers, referring to the number of specialists she and Sophie have visited. “But also with organizations like the United Way, and specifically CNIB.”

While 18 months ago Neyers was told Sophie would likely never cry, smile or display other common expressions, with the help of countless individuals - including a United Way-funded agency – progress beyond those expectations is apparent.

This year Western's own United Way campaign is pursuing its largest fundraising goal ever – $500,000 – to assist in United Way of London & Middlesex's march towards $7.2 million. As of today, the city-wide campaign sits at $1.7 million or 25 per cent of its goal.

To learn more about campus campaign activities and upcoming events, visit http://unitedway.uwo.ca.

Are classroom clickers clicking with faculty?

BY BOB KLANAC

Two years since their classroom debut, clickers took centre stage during a recent review of their use by The University of Western Ontario’s Department of Physics and Astronomy.

With more than 7,000 clickers in use across the campus, the ‘many-to-one’ teaching communication tool has become entrenched in classrooms.

Jeffrey Hutter, a faculty member with Physics and Astronomy, says clickers are useful in setting the pace of his lectures.

“The lecture can be adjusted based on the clicker results,” he says. “It also provides strategic breaks for the lecturer.”

Rather than being passive receivers of a lecture, Hutter says the technology allows students to be involved, with the anonymity of their participation a classroom plus.

“Students are more willing to answer anonymously,” he says. Use of the clickers is also encouraged by a participation grade which can be as much as 10 per cent of the course mark.

“They get credit for using clickers,” Hutter says. “It's not based on their accuracy in answering the questions, just on their participation rate.”

Although it would be intriguing to gauge the relationship between clicker performance and exam performance, Hutter says that conclusions are hard to determine.

“It's easy to tell who’s coming to class,” he says. “But there's no predictive value. You can't tell how they'd do on an exam.”

Fellow faculty member Aaron Sigut says the use of clickers in his classroom brings value through the increase in attendance and the teaching benefits and increased participation.

“Even though they get a participation mark, the students take the questions seriously,” he says. Sigut likes clickers in that they break up lectures and provide good pacing as well as a gauge of how and what the students are learning.

“I can see common misconceptions based on the clicker results,” he says. “I can see immediately what the students know.”

Sigut is clear-eyed about the technology, noting that there are also reasons he dislikes the technology, based on what it is and what it is not.

“It tends to ‘multiple-choice-ify’ classroom interactions,” he says. “It's easy to teach to the technology and not to the students.”

The cost of the clickers is also a concern for Sigut, who notes that if the technology changes, the upgrade in equipment costs can be a burden.

“If the technology remains fixed, then I recommend using it,” he says. “They are however a poor substitute for direct interaction but perhaps clickers are inevitable.”

For his part, Hutter says he loves clickers for one personal reason.

“I'm not a good enough lecturer to just talk for 50 minutes.”
Survey validates ‘best student experience’

BY PAUL DAVENPORT

L ast week, Western faculty, staff, students and alumni had good reason to celebrate the results of the Globe and Mail’s sixth annual University Report Card. Just as we have in each of the previous five years that the Globe has asked students to rate their experience at universities across the country, Western has once again earned the highest grades among Canada’s large research-intensive universities.

This year’s survey, conducted by The Strategic Counsel and Educational Policy Institute, reflects the opinions of more than 43,000 students at 53 universities — the largest sample group yet. Current students were asked to rate their schools on 78 measures, ranging from the quality of teaching and attractiveness of campus, to the quality of our facilities, residences, food and other support services. Of these 78 measures, Western ranked first overall in 33 categories, tied for first in five categories, and ranked first in 33 measures, ranging from the quality of teaching and attractiveness of campus, to the quality of our facilities, residences, food and other support services. Western also earned a total of five A-pluses, 20 straight As, and 19 A-minuses. For a complete list, visit the Resource Centre on the Globe’s Education page at www.theglobeandmail.com/education.

Such high ratings from our students are due largely to the talent, effort, commitment and dedication of faculty and staff across our campus, and I wish to extend my sincere thanks to each of you. There is no better measure of how we are doing in pursuit of our university’s mission to provide Canada’s best student experience than the opinions of our students. And for six consecutive years now, our students have told us we combine a first-rate education with a great campus life better than any other large school in the country. Other indications that we are succeeding in the pursuit of our mission can be found in the results of another survey also released last week — Western’s own Survey of Graduating Students. More than 1,600 graduating students responded to the 16-item questionnaire administered by the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic). As it has for more than a decade now, the survey asked graduating students to rate their satisfaction with the quality of instruction, academic courses and programs, physical facilities and administrative services, and several other aspects of their university experience. More than 80 per cent of this year’s respondents rated their overall satisfaction with the education they received at Western as a 4 or 5 on a five-point scale, just slightly higher than last year’s result. As well, more than 91 per cent of our most recent graduates said they would recommend Western to a friend, which suggests a high degree of satisfaction with their student experience.

In addition to highlighting our strengths, both the Globe survey and our internal survey of students are helpful in pointing out areas for continued improvement. For example, career services and financial and scholarship services are two such areas where students have expressed only moderate satisfaction, and these are areas that our strategic plan has identified for increased attention and investment.

The consistency of the results we continue to see from these surveys reinforces our belief on campus that there is something genuinely special about the campus community at Western — it is truly a unique place to study and learn, all thanks to the contributions of our faculty, staff, students and alumni. As Sean Junor of the Educational Policy Institute told The Globe and Mail: “Western is the one large school that is managing to balance both student engagement and research. That’s tough to do.”

For more stories and reaction, please see the centre spread of this week’s Western News. Online stories can also be found at Western gets top marks in new university survey, CTV.ca news staff, http://communications.uwo.ca/making_headlines/coverage07/1016-1.htm.


The writer is president of The University of Western Ontario.
A new website has been launched to enhance accessibility for persons with disabilities. This website consolidates information from numerous campus departments into a single easy-to-use tool.

Development of the website has been guided by Western's Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee (WODAC), which is devoted to ensuring that the university is proactive about increasing the accessibility of campus. WODAC is comprised of students, staff, and faculty members.

Western has a strong history of enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities. As such, there are a number of services, programs, and committees devoted to accessibility on campus. The new website provides details on these resources, as well as providing links to other important information like Western's policies and accessibility maps. The goal is to make it easier for persons with disabilities to avail themselves of the many services and programs at Western.

Larissa Bartlett, Director of Equity and Human Rights Services and Chair of WODAC, notes that while there were many existing accessibility-related resources on campus, the committee recognized that Western could better meet the information needs of persons with disabilities. The committee decided to create a website to disseminate relevant information to students, staff, and faculty members, as well as to potential visitors to Western.

Health Sciences (Occupational Therapy) Professor Lisa Klinger, chair of the WODAC subcommittee that worked at developing the website, says Western, in seeking to become more welcoming to persons with disabilities, has become one of the first universities in Canada to provide an accessibility website. “We soon realized that the best way to be welcoming is to enable access to all facets of university life and the best way to do that is to empower people with information that’s easy to find and use,” says Klinger. “Much of the information was already available on Western’s website, but it was scattered in many different places and often hard to find.”

“As we worked, we also realized that some information was missing, and so part of our mandate has been to identify informational gaps and try to do something about them. That part of the project will be ongoing. “We hope that the website will contribute to enabling life at Western for anyone who is disabled.”

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for persons with disabilities studying, visiting, and working at Western. With the launch of this new website, the university has taken an important step forward in meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities.

For more information or to view the website, please visit: www.accessibility.uwo.ca

The writer is a member of the Equity & Human Rights Services.
New tools improve earthquake forecasting

By Karen Otto

If someone felt the earth move recently, it probably wasn’t a figment of their imagination. Kristy Tiampo, an assistant professor in the Department of Earth Sciences, says Western’s surrounding area and Canada in general has a continuous rate of low-level seismic activity.

“We have lots of small events,” she says. “We have small earthquakes here.”

A rare few are even large enough to be felt. Last November Sudbury experienced a magnitude 4.0 earthquake while in historic times the St. Lawrence area has experienced up to 6.0 magnitude quakes.

Along the magnitude scale, generally any seismic activity greater than a 3.0-3.5 is noticeable, says Tiampo.

Besides teaching and being awarded the NSERC and Benfield/ICLR Industrial Research Chair in Earthquake Hazard Assessment Tiampo’s also a member of the POLARIS – Portable Observatories for Lithospheric Analysis and Research Investigating Seismicity Consortium – a co-venture between Western, and other universities including Carleton and Queen’s.

The group forms a seismic network for earthquake research in the fields of seismic hazard evaluation and mitigation, early earthquake warning systems and mineral resource exploration.

Researchers hypothesize the reason eastern Canada experiences seismic activity, Tiampo says, is because of post-glacial rebound. During the last ice age, as extraordinarily thick ice sheets covered Canada and, in particular, the Great Lakes region, the earth’s crust sank into the mantle. When the glaciers retreated, the land rose quickly, reactivating existing weaknesses in the crust.

Those weaknesses are causing the area’s seismic activity, which is part of Tiampo’s research.

“And that’s really starting to pay off now,” she says.

Geodetic data, she explains, is a measurement of the position on the earth while seismic data includes the chains of seismic waves caused from seismic activity deep within the earth.

Researchers are starting to see activity patterns, Tiampo says, which has allowed them to learn more about what’s going on under the earth’s surface.

Within the past 10 years Tiampo and her colleagues have noticed a time-dependent aspect of earthquake-quake, meaning discovering how they evolve over time. This helps with discovering not only where they may occur but when they may occur.

And while researchers can to some extent do that now, it will only improve over time, she says.

“I think that it is likely we will be able to deduce areas of the world where we should concentrate our research because we will be better able to quantify where they will and when they will happen,” she says in looking 10 years into the future.

While Tiampo says she won’t predict where or when the next big one will hit – in the 1970s some earthquake researchers attempted quake prediction but found it difficult due to data limitations and the existing level of knowledge – she will forecast.

Tiampo prefers the term forecasting as it refers to probability while predicting implies certainty.

And researchers are forecasting trouble for the west coast.

“There is some potential for a very large earthquake in Cascadia (which includes parts of the west coast),” she says.

But the current probability of the “high-eighth magnitude” quake occurring in the next 10 to 20 years is very low, she adds.

With all the research currently underway, she says, and the discovery of a time-dependent nature of seismic activity, the prospects are looking up for unlocking the mysteries of earthquakes and seismic activity.

“It’s now more promising than ever,” she says.
EVENING OF ITALIAN BALLADS

The Department Of Modern Languages & Literatures and The Istituto Italiano Di Cultura in Toronto present L’Italia e il mare (Italy and the Sea), an evening of Italian ancient & modern ballads, performed by Troubadour Giordano Dall’Armellina: narrator, singer and guitarist; Maurizio Dehò, violin, and Titti Brivio, singer; tonight (Oct. 25), 7:30 p.m., Conrad Hall, University College, Room 224. Admission is free.

CHORAL CELEBRATION

All five choirs in the Don Wright Faculty of Music perform on Oct. 27, 8 p.m. at First-St. Andrew's United Church. Choirs range in size from 16 to 92 voices; three are mixed voices and two are all female ensembles. Tickets are $15 for adults, $10 for students and seniors. In advance from Orchestra London at 519-679-8778 or cash at the door.

TOBACCO–CANCER LINK EXPLORED

“Cancer mortality trends attributed, and not attributed, to tobacco,” will be discussed by an internationally-renowned scientist in a free public lecture today (Oct. 25) from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Aud. “A” at University Hospital. Richard Peto is a professor of Medical Statistics and Epidemiology at Oxford University and co-director of the Clinical Trial Service Unit. He leads large-scale world-wide studies responsible for changing the knowledge about and treatment for diseases including heart attack and breast cancer. Now he is tracking “the worldwide epidemic of death from tobacco”.

CHIEF JUSTICE LECTURES


RECOGNIZE BEST STAFF

Recognize staff individuals and teams for exemplary service by making a nomination for the 2008 Western Award of Excellence. This award represents the highest form of recognition for staff at Western who, through exceptional contributions, help to create Canada’s best student experience. Any active full/part-time staff or work team are eligible to be nominated and anyone can make a nomination. The deadline is Nov. 22. Forms are available at www.uwo.ca/pvp/recognition/nomination.htm.

Hamlet (solo)

By William Shakespeare
Hope and Hell Theatre Co. (Toronto)
In association with Richard Jordan Productions Ltd. (UK)
With Raoul Bhaneja
Directed by Robert Ross Parker

October 30 to November 3
McManus Studio Theatre

An exciting and unique retelling of one of Shakespeare’s most beloved classics, this solo version of Hamlet, coming directly from The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, combines the ancient art of storytelling and the modern ‘one man show’. Winner of the Montreal English Critics Circle Award for ‘Best Visiting Production’.

“Shakespeare dead all these centuries, lives again!”
– The Halifax Chronicle Herald

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Call 519-672-8800 for tickets or buy online at grandtheatre.com

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ALONE AT THE TOP

T he following list features categories in which Western was ranked tops in the country among large universities according to a survey by The Globe and Mail newspaper. The list includes the grade assigned by the Globe based on student responses.

Attractiveness of your campus A+
Sense of personal safety/security A+
Availability of off-campus housing A+
Overall university atmosphere A+
Diversity of extracurricular activities (e.g., clubs) A

Satisfaction with university experience overall A
Overall quality of education received A
School spirit A
Overall quality of on-campus buildings and facilities A
Computer accessibility on campus A
Overall quality/availability of technology on campus A
Overall library quality A
On-campus network for Internet/email A
Amount of green space on campus A
Access to course/teaching materials online A
Availability of faculty to students outside of classroom hours A
Classrooms/lecture halls A

Faculty of Social Science

Amanda Anderson
Third-year Psychology Student, Student Athlete (Basketball)

Braden Gravelle
Fourth-year Kinesiology Student Faculty of Health Sciences

Hesham El Naggar
Associate Dean Research and External Relations Faculty of Engineering

Laura Macfarlane
Second-year Law Student, Volunteer Community Legal Services Faculty of Law

Francis Chan
Associate Dean Admission and Student Affairs Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

Mark Perry
Associate Professor Faculty of Law and Faculty of Science (Computer Science)

Jim Weese
Dean Faculty of Health Sciences

Anisha Kapoor
Fourth-year Student Richard Ivey School of Business

Michael Bishara
Second-year Student Class President Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

Lyndsey Matchett
Fourth-year Student Faculty of Arts and Humanities (Visual Arts)

What Weste

BY DAVID DAUPHINE

I n the minds of Canadian university students, The University of Western Ontario stands out sharply — on the plus side — among the big research-intensive schools.

When The Globe and Mail newspaper set out to survey students about their experience, it compiled a broad range of questions in order to rank almost every facet of their lives on campus.

In that survey, published last week in magazine format and on the web, Western was tops in the country, or tied for first place, in 57 of the 78 areas the Globe and Mail chose to measure.

The sheer volume and diversity of top rankings makes it difficult to pinpoint why Western does so well — although the message “Canada’s best student experience” indicates the level of commitment.

Some top-ranked categories are more or less specific to an area, such as A grades for students for feedback rather than creating rankings based on statistics, such as volumes of books and class sizes.

And some cut right across everything on campus — Western was ranked Number 1 in overall university atmosphere and sense of community.

While Western News reported last week on results outlined in the Globe’s magazine, this represents a portion of all the stories.

We are taking care to light all areas that stands out, according to Here, Western

By David Dauphine

Right from the get-go when I came in, I found Western a very welcoming place. It’s a great atmosphere and everyone helps when you need something. They’ve got great programs for athletes. Western is an awesome school.

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rn does best

Overall quality of food services B-
Availability of needs-based scholarships/bursaries B-
On-campus employment opportunities B-
Affordability of off-campus housing B+
Career counselling services B

As a student at Western, it is easy to find the best services and opportunities. As mentioned in the Y REPORT CARD, the university is well-known for its leading-edge research and high-quality teaching. The campus bookstore offers a wide range of options, and the availability of up-to-date computer equipment is excellent.

In some categories, Western was tied for first place with other large universities.

Reputation for conducting leading-edge research A
Reputation for graduate studies A
Reputation for undergraduate studies A
Availability of journals/articles/periodicals A
Online library resources A
Faculty members’ knowledge of subjects A+
Tolerance for diverse opinions and ideas A-
Reputation for high quality teaching A-
Service provided by library staff A-
On-campus wireless network (e.g., Wi-Fi) A-
Total number of library holdings A-
Number of courses to choose from A-
Availabilty of up-to-date computer equipment on campus A-

Campus bookstore A-
Usefulness of feedback from faculty B+
Overall quality of career preparation B+
Quality of academic advising B
Academic support and counselling B
Services for international students B
Quality of the food available on campus C+
Availability of merit-based scholarships C+
Assistance with locating part-time jobs to fund education C+
Number of healthy meal options available on campus C
Availability of organic foods on-campus C

Chuck Mathies
Acting Director of Sports and Recreation Services
Faculty of Health Sciences

Lisa Fadden
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education

Elgin Austen
Director
Campus Community Police Services

The peer mentoring program is one of the big things that happens in the faculty of music. The older students mentor the new students around. It’s a really friendly welcoming environment that the students themselves foster and I think they’ve been given the autonomy to do this. Even though we have one of the largest music programs in Canada, it feels like a small faculty. Everybody knows each other and they make each other feel special.

Marc Capancioni
Graduate Student (Journalism)
Faculty of Information & Media Studies

Tied at the Top

In some categories, Western was tied for first place with other large universities.

Reputation for conducting leading-edge research A

Service provided by library staff A-
On-campus wireless network (e.g., Wi-Fi) A-
Total number of library holdings A-
Number of courses to choose from A-
Availability of up-to-date computer equipment on campus A-

Marc Capancioni
Graduate Student (Journalism)
Faculty of Information & Media Studies

It’s one of the most beautiful campuses around. When you wake up in the morning, you’re tired and you may want to go back to bed but this campus is so beautiful with the Thames River going through it. Plus this building (North Campus) itself is stunning. It’s a brand new building. And the pros are fantastic!

Kate Pagyk
Fourth-year Student (Music Education, Percussion)
Don Wright Faculty of Music

I think it has to do with attitude and involvement. It’s about really caring about the student body, not necessarily caring about the numbers, but caring more about how their students do and what they’re getting out of their experience.

Rachael Wood
Graduate Student
Don Wright Faculty of Music

There’s no doubt in my mind that it’s the quality of the instruction at this institution across the board, and obviously I’m speaking from a music perspective, but in the non-music classes I’m taking too. We have world-renowned scholars (and in this faculty, performance scholars) who are available to the students and you can’t just find that anywhere else.

Lauren Riggin
Second-year Student (Medical Sciences)
Faculty of Science

We have so many opportunities here at Western. We have great buildings, great cafes, great residences and great teachers, who are really enthusiastic. That really means a lot to me because I know a lot of my friends who go to other schools, their teachers don’t really care. Here, my teachers know me and definitely do care.

Colleen Richardson
Assistant Professor
Music Education and Music Performance Studies
Don Wright Faculty of Music

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Carli Whitwell
Graduate Student (Journalism)
Faculty of Information & Media Studies

Western is the most stunning campus ever. I went to Mac and it had a nice campus but I came here and it felt so much like home, warm and nice and approachable. Our faculty has state-of-the-art technology and everything we’re learning is new and what we’re going to be learning in the workplace. And I’d also have to say the pros here in our program are incredible.

The peer mentoring program is one of the big things that happens in the faculty of music. The older students mentor the new students around. It’s a really friendly welcoming environment that the students themselves foster and I think they’ve been given the autonomy to do this. Even though we have one of the largest music programs in Canada, it feels like a small faculty. Everybody knows each other and they make each other feel special.

Mitch Zimmer
Science Writer
Faculty of Science

I think a lot of it has to do with our professors and instructors really being in tune with what to present to students. We are always expanding student space and getting up-to-date equipment. And with the Material Sciences addition, we will have even more student spaces.

Ruth Heard
Manager, Continuing Teacher Education
Faculty of Education

I think we do it by really focusing on students, as well as keeping on the leading edge. In our faculty in particular, we maintain a very vibrant program that is current, the materials are current and the IT support is up to date.

Lisa Fadden
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education

The faculty is really passionate about both research and their role as mentors for students. The professors really look to expand our knowledge of teaching and education and that is their legacy for the future. I have been really impressed with the services the university provides, as a whole, as well.

Elgin Austen
Director
Campus Community Police Services

Western has established a supportive culture of everyone contributing to a safe campus. Our programs are a benefit to everyone and are widely supported by Western’s entire community. A key factor is working together with the community on prevention initiatives while maintaining open communications with students, faculty and staff.

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Chuck Mathies
Acting Director of Sports and Recreation Services
Faculty of Health Sciences

Lisa Fadden
Graduate Student
Faculty of Education

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Mental strategies can lower golf scores

Average golfers can improve their score by adopting certain mental strategies.

Alan Edmunds, a professor in the Faculty of Education, will present a free public lecture today (Thursday) at 1:30 p.m., entitled “A Psychological Strategy for Improved Golf Scores”, at Althouse College, Room 1141. Edmunds conducted a study with Kinesiology professor Craig Hall on how and why average golfers improve golf performance with a mental strategy Edmunds developed called Auto Focus.

“We were convinced golfers’ existing skills could produce consistently better scores if we replaced passive thoughts and/or contaminating thoughts/distractions with an active and purposeful mental technique,” says Edmunds.

A demonstration of the Auto Focus technique will be included.

Former Brazilian leader visiting research chair

Former Brazilian President Fernando Cardoso, who received an honorary degree from The University of Western Ontario this past week, has made the jump back to academic life, which includes a Western connection.

As the 2008 Canada Visiting Research Chair in Brazilian Studies, Cardoso will deliver at least one major address at each of the participating universities, which includes Western, University of Calgary, York University, Université du Québec à Montréal and Saint Mary’s University.

The chair was formed in 2003 to promote the study of Brazil in Canada and strengthen academic relationships between the two countries. For Cardoso, a political science and sociology professor at Universidade de São Paulo before entering politics, it was the right time to return to the academic setting.

“It’s very important to me, with all my life being a university professor,” says Cardoso. “After two terms (as president), I think it was time to go back to university to try and present my intellectual views and perspectives.”

“It was a real coup for us to have President Cardoso here as this fall’s Brazil Chair,” says Ted Hewitt, Western’s Vice-President (Research & International Relations).

Cardoso spoke to members of the partner universities, along with Western students and faculty, prior to Convocation.

“He provided some fascinating insights into the thinking behind many of the initiatives developed by his government between 1995 and 2003,” adds Hewitt.

Cardoso, who is also a professor-at-large at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies, says returning to one’s roots can also be rejuvenating.

“The youth at university tends to give you more energy and strength to continue to tackle challenges,” he says. “They are, and need to be, fighters for a better world.”
Sonja Gustafson has a personal connection to MS.

By Bob Klanaq

A chance conversation between a Western music student and a representative for a non-profit agency has led to one of the fall’s more unique gala events.

Saturday night at the Stardust Lounge will feature noted soprano Sonja Gustafson in a recreated 1940s lounge setting complete with five-piece jazz combo and all the stylistic trappings of the era. All proceeds from the Nov. 3 event will benefit the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada (MS).

“My motivation is that I’ve already experienced how valuable the MS Society is. They’ve done a lot for my mom and I wanted to see if we can raise their profile a bit.”

Gustafson says the fundraiser is a joint effort between her and the MS Society.

“My motivation is that I’ve already experienced how valuable the MS Society is,” she says.

“They’ve done a lot for my mom and I wanted to see if we can raise their profile a bit.”

Gustafson’s experience with the charity through her mother has enlightened her on the fine points of living with the disease.

“It’s so different for everybody who gets it,” she says. “They all have different symptoms and different treatments. There’s still a lot they don’t know about MS.”

“It’s more about managing the symptoms and maintaining the same quality of life and ability to do things.”

Tickets can be purchased at www.mssociety.ca/chapters/londonmiddlesex.

Sonja Gustafson has a personal connection to MS.
Partnership forged with German university

BY PAUL MAYNE

The German Sports University (GSU), the largest university dedicated to sport science in Europe, has selected The University of Western Ontario as their first foray into Canada for an exchange agreement, due in large part to the strong reputation of the university.

“At Western there are special topics and institutes that fit into our programs at home, for example in the areas of aging, Olympic Studies and sports management,” says GSU President Walter Tokarski, who spent the last five days at Western meeting with a number of faculty and senior administrators.

“But in the broader perspective, we have contacts with several other universities in the world who are connected with Western in certain areas, so we knew about the reputation of this university. For us it was more about the institution as opposed to the country in making this decision.”

For Western, this marks the 29th country with which the university has international student exchange programs. Contact between the two institutions began two years ago, leading to a signing earlier this week that will see student exchanges – five within the next year – and opportunities to collaborate on common research areas within the School of Kinesiology and Faculty of Health Sciences.

Kinesiology professor Darwin Semotiuk, who spent a number of days with Tokarski on campus, anticipates a significant win-win situation as the universities work together on priorities.

“For them to say they want to do business with us is a very strong message of credibility for our university and for the academic programs we offer in the Health Sciences area,” says Semotiuk.

Safety program set to launch

Western’s Campus Community Police Service is putting finishing touches on a program to detect and reduce potentially violent confrontations.

The policy, still in draft form, is called Safe Campus Community. It’s made up of four levels of alerts designed to help notice and react to signs of trouble before they escalate.

“We all benefit from a safe campus and we all need to contribute. Safety is a shared responsibility.”

Elgin Austen
Campus Police Director

For example, actions that create anxiety fall under the ‘low-risk’ category and are classified as an ‘alert’. Preventative and responsive methods are listed in the policy, as well as resources to seek out if help is needed.

Campus Police Director Elgin Austen hopes the program will help people act on their own accord to diffuse a threat or seek help before it becomes a danger.

“The policy isn’t quite finished, but the program is rolling out now,” says Austen.

The Safe Campus Community program becomes a positive supplement to Western’s ‘best student experience’ motto. Austen was to bring the program to the attention of students this week when meeting with University Students’ Council to discuss safety initiatives.

“We all benefit from a safe campus and we all need to contribute,” says Austen. “Safety is a shared responsibility.”
Labour law goes to work

By Bob Klanac

The role of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in the workplace is the subject of a conference being staged by the Faculty of Law.

The Charter and Human Rights At Work: 25 Years Later takes place October 26-27 in Room 38 of the Law Building.

The event is held in tandem with a speech by Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin on Oct. 26 in Conron Hall. Her topic is The Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Canadian Labour Law.

Conference coordinator Michael Lynk, Associate Professor in Law, the charter has had an enormous impact on workplace issues.

“The impact of the human rights ‘duties to accommodate’ is a great example,” he says. “Before the ’90s a person with disabilities had to do all the tasks in a job description. Now there is a substantial responsibility to accommodate employees.”

“It’s had a great impact on integrating persons with disabilities into the workplace.”

The recent abolishment of mandatory retirement will be explored at the conference by way of the issue of age discrimination.

“There are more older workers in workplaces than ever before,” he says.

“They overturned case law that decision,” says Lynk. “They have to ensure in individual relations disputes,” he says. “They’re coming from Nova Scotia to British Columbia to attend, he says. “Speakers are coming from international labour organizations in Geneva and most of the major universities in this country.”

Although registration is required for the conference, the McLachlin talk is free and open to the public.

Law prof. Michael Lynk

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin

“Governments now have to think twice when they intervene in workplace discrimination complaints in the future,” he says. A highlight of the conference will be McLachlin, who is expected to speak on the seminal court decision she co-authored called BC Health Services. Although the court had traditionally not interfered with imposed collective agreements such as the one put in place for BC Health Services employees, it broke precedent by doing so in that case.

“They overturned case law with that decision,” says Lynk.

“Governments now have to think twice when they intervene in workplace discrimination complaints in the future,” he says.
COMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 25
Organizing the Search for Tom Thomson
Artist Jeff Wall examines the impact of the Group of Seven on the Canadian approach to contemporary landscape painting. Runs to October 28. McCain Gallery. Visit mccinngallery.ca

October 26
Modern Languages and Literature - An Evening of Italian Ancient and Modern Ballads performed by Troubadour Giordano D’Armellina: narrator, singer and guitarist and Mauro De Boel: violin plus Titti Brivio singer. Cone Hall, University College, Room 224, 7:30 p.m. The admission is free.

Visual Arts Department Speaker Series - Kelly Mark, Mixed Media Artist, Toronto. VIA, 100, 8 p.m.

October 26
Department of Biochemistry - Dr. Maud L. Menten Memorial Lecture Series. Mike Schaller, UWO School of Medicine, North Carolina. "FAK: Regulation of Cell Motility and Changes Control Activity." MSB 384, 10:30 a.m.

Don Wright Faculty of Music - Su Jeon, piano, Eckhardt-Gramatté winner. von Kuster Hall, 12:30 p.m.

Fall Epidemiology and Biostatistics Research Seminar Series - Theresa Studet. Analysis of Observational Studies in the Presence of Treatment Selection Bias: Effects of Invasive Cardiac Management on AMI Survival using Propensity Score & Instrumental Variable Methods." 1:30 p.m.

Men’s Hockey - Waterloo at Western, 7:05 p.m.

Drew Hayden Taylor
Department of English/Canada Council for the Arts
Writer-in-Residence 2007-2008

For many years, the Department of English has been host to a writer-in-residence. This year, the post of the Canada Council for the Arts and the James A. & Marjorie Spenceley Writer-in-Residence will be held by Drew Hayden Taylor.

Writers-in-residence hold regular office hours, discuss problems and aspects of writing (even their own), and are pleased to comment on any creative writing that a student may submit for criticism. Drew Hayden Taylor

To University College room 173.

Please contact Vivian Lavers in the Department of English (Tel: 519 661-3403; email: vilavers@uwo.ca) to arrange an appointment with Mr. Taylor and then submit a hard copy of your writing sample (up to 10 pages, double-spaced), at least one week before your appointment, to University College room 173.

For more information on Mr. Taylor, and the Writer-in-Residence program, please visit the Writer-in-Residence page of the Department of English web site. http://www.uwo.ca/english/site/writers/writers.html

A Panel Discussion on
Ivy Tower Blues: A University System in Crisis

A book by:
Dr. James E. Côté (Department of Sociology)
Dr. Anton L. Allahar (Department of Sociology)

Monday, November 5, 2007, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.
The Great Hall, Somerville House, Room 3326

Everyone is welcome to attend

Panelists:
Dr. Rebecca Coulter
Faculty of Education
Dr. Paul Davenport
President & Vice-Chancellor

Dr. Nick Dyer-Whitford
Faculty of Information and Media Studies
Tom Stevenson
President, University Student Council

Moderated By:
Dr. Jane Toosvel
Department of English

About the book:
Ivy Tower Blues is a frank account of the contemporary university, drawing on the author’s own research and personal experiences, as well as an input from students, colleagues, and administrators. James C. Côté and Anton L. Allahar offer an insider’s account of the university, a popular alternative to that overwhelmingly presented to the general public. Throughout, the authors argue that fewer and fewer students are experiencing their university education in ways expected by their parents and the public. The majority of students are hampered by insufficient preparation at the secondary school level, lack of personal motivation, and disinterest. Concern about popular opinion, there is no administrative or governmental procedure in place to maintain standards of education. Ivy Tower Blues is an in-depth look at the crisis facing Canadian and American universities, the factors that are precipitating the situation, and the long-term impact this crisis will have on the quality of higher education.
**World experience deepens learning**

Want to make a difference in the world while at Western? Look into the Service-Learning Program, a unique form of experiential learning that helps students deepen their comprehension of core material as well as enhancing their understanding of the world. Students in the program to date have worked in projects in Mexico, Dominican Republic, flood-ravaged Louisiana as well as local London projects. To cover transportation costs students organize campus fundraising projects and make personal contributions.

Contact: www.servicelearning.uwo.ca.

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Seniors and students, including Western students, are an important part of the real estate market in London. CharityLINK Real Estate Brokerage is proud to offer a special commission for those looking to buy or sell a property. This incentive is our way of saying thank you for making our community a better place.

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Hunting Club Mews - Prime location near Richmond Row. Good parking, beautiful condition, with 12 bedrooms. Fully leased. Gross income is $10,600. Formerly used as duplex and still intact. Ideal for owner occupied 2 bed room apartment and rent the 8 bedroom unit.

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Old London North - two bedroom bungalow c/a, gas heat, 6 appliances, quiet decor, fenced in yard, $950 plus utilities. First and last. Minimum one-year lease, Victoria and Talbot, easy walk to buses, St. Joe’s, UH, Western, Gibbons Park. Staff/faculty preferable. Available now. Call 519-455-9099 after 7 p.m.

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Distinguished University Professorship
Call for Nominations

The Distinguished University Professorship program is Western’s highest recognition of those who have built a record of excellence in all three of teaching, research and service over a substantial career at Western.

Recipients of the Professorships will receive the honorary title of Distinguished University Professor, an award of $10,000 to support scholarly activities and a citation to be presented at an appropriate occasion. Recipients will also be expected to deliver a public lecture. The number of Professorships is limited. Full details can be found at:

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

Selection from among nominees will be made by a Senate elected committee that will complete its work by April 1, 2008. Nominations should include a letter describing the nominee’s qualifications for the award, a curriculum vitae prepared by the nominee for this purpose, and at least three confidential letters of reference. The letters of reference, at least one of which must address teaching and one at least of which must address research, should be from arm’s length individuals who are recognized authorities in the nominee’s fields of scholarship, and who can speak to the nominee’s achievement in teaching, research or service. Original nominations, plus 6 copies should be sent to:

The Office of the Vice-Provost (Academic Planning, Policy & Faculty)
Room 138, Stevenson-Lawson Building
The University of Western Ontario

The deadline for receipt of nominations is January 31, 2008.