Western rallies to support victims

By Paul Mayne

With the death toll from the December 26 tsunami disaster in south Asia expected to exceed 150,000, members of the Western community have united in emotional and financial support for the stricken region.

“Western is academic home to students, faculty and staff from some of the countries devastated by the tsunami and our hearts go out to all of those who have been affected by this tragedy,” says Gitta Kulczycki, Vice-President (Administration).

The University, the University Students’ Council and Campus Community Police Service established a drop-off centre where students, faculty and staff may donate funds to the relief effort. Cheques, made payable to the Canadian Red Cross, may be left at the campus police station in Room 57 (Stevenson-Lawson Building).

Campus Community Police Director Elgin Austen says at 8 a.m. Tuesday, the first day of operation, two $500 cheques had already been handed in.

“That’s very encouraging and just shows the generosity of so many people here on campus,” says Austen, who adds donations should be in the form of a cheque, not cash.

Other efforts sprang up across campus as individuals and groups rushed to offer support.

Ivey’s HBA Association was praising the generosity of all HBAs, MBAs, faculty and staff who, in a matter of days, raised over $7,000. The money has already been sent to the Canadian Red Cross. Further support is welcome and can be dropped off to Laura Cousins in the HBA program office by January 11.

Donors are encouraged to funnel financial support to established agencies with international connections as a means of keeping administrative costs to a minimum and ensuring money is used for the purposes intended.

The Western chapter of The Student Volunteer Program, a Toronto-based sustainable development organization, is working to create a campus umbrella group to raise money, encourage student involvement and lobby the Canadian government and multilateral agencies.

A Blue Ribbon Campaign has already been established at Western and will be set up in the UCC Atrium over the next two weeks. Students, staff and faculty will receive a blue ribbon for a donation of $1 or more. A benefit concert is also in the works, as are a variety of other initiatives.

With strong international contingent, some Western students and employees have also been touched at a more personal level.

Chandev Abhayaratne, Senior Officer with Western Office of the Registrar, is a native of Sri Lanka, one of the hardest hit areas with over 30,000 deaths, Abhayaratne moved to London about a year-and-a-half ago and, while shocked by the level of devastation, was thankful he and his wife’s family and friends were spared from the tsunami’s deadly rage.

“I’m very thankful they’re okay,” says Abhayaratne, who as a youth traveled to many of the areas destroyed by the tsunami.

“I have been forever altered by this tragedy. How does this happen? Why Sri Lanka? There are so many questions that can never be answered.”

Similar questions have been raised by Faculty of Information and Media Studies Assistant Professor Joy Panigabutra-Roberts.

A native of Thailand, her family and friends were thankfully not injured, but did feel the earthquake’s tremors. More than 5,000 are reported dead in Thailand.

“It’s still my people,” says Panigabutra-Roberts, who left Thailand in 1984. “I still connect with them and this whole thing is just hard to fathom.”

Donations to the Canadian Red Cross can also be made at all major banks, by calling 1-800-418-1111, or by visiting www.redcross.ca.

Health Sciences Dean Jim Weese has his arms full these days with relocation of the faculty to the new South Valley Building. Weese says the move to the four-storey, 80,000-square-foot building will provide the program with additional profile and better space. Work continues on the interior of the building.
HOMECOMING: The date has been picked for one of biggest days on the Western calendar. This year, alumni return to campus for Homecoming Sept. 30 to Oct. 2. It has not yet been determined which team Western will play in the highly anticipated football classic.

MIDDLE-AGED: The Canada Student Loans Program is 40 years old. Initially a loans-only program with a maximum limit of $5,000, it now includes scholarships, grants and loans as well as the related Canadian Education Savings Grant for RESPs. Since 1964, about $2 billion has been distributed in loans to 3.6 million students, more than half of which has been provided since 1993.

HELP AVAILABLE: The first comprehensive guide for college and university students with psychiatric disabilities is available thanks to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). Your Education - Your Future features first-hand experiences and advice from students with psychiatric disabilities. Data from Statistics Canada shows that teenagers and young adults experience the highest incidence of mental disorders of any age group in Canada. Please visit www.cmha.ca/youreducation

CARLETON: The Board of Governors at Carleton University approved the appointment of David Atkinson as the ninth President and Vice-Chancellor effective August 1, 2005, for a six-year term. Currently, Atkinson is President and Vice-Chancellor of Brock University in St. Catharines. He replaces Richard Van Loan who has served as Carleton President since 1996. Atkinson holds an academic appointment as Professor of English Language and Literature and is widely published.

FUNDRAISING: Even big fish worry about being eaten. The University of Chicago has an endowment of $3.6 billion and seven Nobel laureates yet faces such competitive pressure from Harvard, Yale, Stanford and Princeton that in 2002 it launched a $2-billion fundraising drive – three times its 1990s campaign. In May, the University of Michigan launched a $2.5-billion drive. In the U.S., 22 universities are in the midst of campaigns valued at $1 billion or more. Experts expect the next Harvard campaign to target $5 billion. The trend is driven by increasing concentration of wealth having swelled the ranks of the most affluent Americans. There are fears about creation of a class of have and have-not schools based on endowment levels.

WOMEN: The Royal Society of Canada and Science Council of Japan have launched a program to boost the contributions of women in science, engineering and technology. The program is open to outstanding researchers from either country who will be invited to present lectures highlighting the role of women in research in the natural, applied and health/medical sciences. In 2005, up to four individuals will be invited to participate on the basis of competitive applications. Visit the Royal Society Web site at www.rsc.ca.

BUSINESS: Simon Fraser University has appointed an Entrepreneur in Residence for its fast-growing Surrey campus. Rob Bakshi, former head of Silesian University in Poland, will spend a day a week back at school advising faculty, students and staff about the commercial viability of research projects, as well as mentoring students in applied sciences and those pursuing an entrepreneurship major.

Research Western is pleased to announce the following one time competition:

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These awards, made from one-time funds provided jointly by the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and an Office of the Vice-President (Research) are to support the cost of research initiatives designed to internationalize course curricula at Western by incorporating greater emphasis on international events, issues, teaching materials, research results, etc. within existing or new course curricula. Applications receiving preference will offer a clear rationale for mitigating risks and losses.

Grant Amount: $5,000

Deadline: January 15, 2005 – One Time Competition

Follow UWO internal granting procedures available at http://www.uwo.ca/research/general/internal-funding.html

NOTE: Applications are to be processed through Research Development Services and must be accompanied by a completed RDAF form (bearing applicant, Chair and Dean signatures).

Contact: Cathy Burgoone
Rm 328 Stevenson Lawson Building
University of Western Ontario
London ON N6A 3B7
519-661-2111 x84500
Internalgrants@uwo.ca

Better disaster planning essential to saving lives

By Jim Anderson

The disaster from the earthquake and resulting tsunami in south Asia will send a strong message to world leaders in Kobe, Japan later this month that more must be done to mitigate loss in life and property from such disasters.

“ar are people who have been deeply affected by this tragedy, and our hope is that our research will serve as a foundation of knowledge that strengthens society’s resilience to future hazards,” says Paul Kovacs, Executive Director of Western’s Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR), Faculty of Engineering.

“I do believe that the remarkable events in south Asia provide important lessons for Canada,” says K. Gordon McBean, Executive Director and Research Professor in Western’s Department of Economics.

“First, severe hazards can strike anywhere and at any time. Every part of Canada, for example, is vulnerable to natural hazards and may be very destructive if we are not prepared. Second, investments in disaster safety can significantly reduce the risk of losses. Modern, well-engineered structures across south Asia, for example, held up very well to what was the fourth largest earthquake in the past century and one of the largest tsunamis.

Kovacs adds: “Third, the best time to prepare for hazards is when all is well, and Canadians should take advantage of this window of safety. We should establish a culture of hazard safety.”

An international conference at Western on water-related disasters, held only two weeks before the south Asian earthquake and tsunami, looked at the planning of water-related disasters. “In December 26, is sending a strong message that more must be done to mitigate the loss in property and life from such disasters around the world.”

Hosted by the ICLR, the workshop December 13-14 attracted nearly 100 participants from Canada, Germany, Venezuela, Japan, Australia, Austria, Nige- ria, France, Ghana and Jamaica. Experts shared knowledge and expertise about international, national and local initiatives aimed at minimizing loss from water-related disasters. They included representatives of UNESCO, the International Strategy for Disas- ter Reduction (ISDR), UN University and other international and national organizations.

“The goal of the conference was to bring a strong message of consensus to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan January 16-22,” says Western engineering profes- sor Slobodan Simonovic, Chair in Engineering of the DLR.

“The connecting thread that came from our discussions was the particular need for chang- ing the way we deal with floods and drought. There is strong consensus that floods and other water-related disasters are going to continue in the future. We have to learn how to live with them and find a better way to manage these disasters and minimize damage and loss of life.”

During the last decade, more than 200 water-related disasters occurred globally with a cost of $50 to $60 billion a year and the loss of thousands of lives. The south Asian earthquake and tsunami is expected to exceed a loss of $150,000 lives and billions of dollars.

The conference heard presentations from some of the world’s leading researchers, policy and decision-makers in catastrophic loss reduction.

Gordon McBean, Chair in Pol- icy and the ICLR, said a Western geography and political science professor, chaired a session on living with risks, coping capacity and disaster risk reduction.

McBean’s session looked at the intersection of climate policy, risk management and water manage- ment issues.

“My argument was to deal with these in a more comprehensive way,” says McBean. “We need to shift our focus to flood recovery – let it happen and spend more to fix it up later as opposed to spending money in advance in an attempt to prevent these disasters from happening.”

Past efforts at flood prevention have been expensive and largely unsuccessful, he observed.

“We have developed a strong consensus and message to the politicians that we need to do bet- ter and we can do better in manag- ing water-related disasters,” says Kovacs. “Appropriate risk mitigation and the redirection of resources into pre- vention offer significant benefits as well as reduction in loss of life and personal property.”

Some of the messages con- tained in the draft document for Kobe, Japan include:

- Despite well over a hundred years of massive human interven- tions and flood control measures, the frequency and severity of water-related disasters are on the rise.

- One of the challenges is risk management. Floods and droughts may vary in severity and mea- sures may be taken to influence their impact, but there is recogni- tion that they will always remain recurring yet incidental phenom-ena.

- The role of political will and governace is important in creat- ing a framework that makes sus- tainable water-related disaster reduction possible.

- Assessment, monitoring and early warning systems for water-related hazards can contribute to mitigating risks and losses.

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**Courses get renumbered**

**By Paul Mayne**

To put it simply, Western is running out of course numbers.

Senate is studying the need to change Western’s three-digit course numbering system into a four-digit number. Plans call for implementing changes by 2008, a lead time that would allow the Registrar’s Office time to introduce the changes at the same time the old “three-digit” academic calendar is discontinued.

For example, Economics 020 could become Economics 1020. Economics 141ab could become Economics 2411ab, Economics 260ab could become Economics 2260ab, and so on. These are only examples and do not represent decisions.

The Senate Committee on Academic Policy and Awards (SCAPA) became aware last year of this number-shortage problem. At the time, there were concerns course numbering in general needed to be addressed since Western’s approach does not reflect the practice at other universities.

“Basically, we are running out of numbers and preferences for time and these new courses need new numbers,” Timney says this is the beginning of the process and SCAPA will form a sub-committee to study the matter, with the objective of reporting back to Senate by September 2005.

A campus-wide consultation process will be undertaken and Timney says the new numbering system should be ready for September 2007, since the 2008 Academic Calendar goes to print in December of 2007.

Since departments will likely need a year to renumber their courses in the new system, and PeopleSoft will need at least 10 months to recode the new courses, “This is a very challenging process,” says Timney, Chair of SCAPA and Dean of Social Science. “We’re introducing more courses over time and these new courses need new numbers.”

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Most academics believe freedom of speech is fine as long as it toes the party line, says Western sociologist Doug Mann.

The tyranny of the majority

Most academics, with a few noble exceptions, only believe in freedom of speech when the views expressed are more or less the same as their own. This is not freedom of speech, but a herd mentality that disgraces academic discourse.

A case in point: a respondent to my recent article in Western News on age discrimination in universities called me a “misogynist”, without knowing anything about either my teaching, my publication record (which includes what I believe to be the first introduction-to-philosophy textbook ever with a full chapter on Feminist Theory, which I wrote), or me personally. This is especially troubling in that as a part-time faculty member I am in danger of losing work due to...

The message seems to be, if you want people to be silent, threaten their jobs.

Ad hominem attacks such as this one from people in positions of power (as you can see, I’m not returning the favour by naming or insulting this person).

I know quite a few part-time faculty, and most of them have been cowed into silence on issues concerning their careers and lives by this implicit threat of not being hired should they speak out on controversial public issues. I feel a genuine sadness that universities in Canada should even allow, if not encourage, this mentality. It allies them with Stalin over Socrates. The message seems to be, if you want people to be silent, threaten their jobs.

John Stuart Mill, in his wonderfully lucid On Liberty, defends freedom of thought and speech in three possible worlds. In the first, the speaker’s views are correct, and those opposed to him or her are wrong. This case needs no defense.

But in the other two cases, the speaker’s views are either only partly correct, or entirely false. Yet Mill still vehemently defends the speaker’s right to speak because in the former case we are able to correct our own limited views, while in the latter we can at least sharpen our own fundamentally correct beliefs by refuting the criticisms directed against them.

Sadly, Mill’s insights into the democratic freedom to speak one’s mind are undermined by a number of forces in contemporary academic life. First and foremost is the cesspool of self-interest that we can term collectively “identity politics.”

This is when a person sees themselves not primarily as a human being with equal rights to other human beings, but as a member of a given gender, ethnic group, sexual orientation, or other biological subgroup, and then argues for the rights of their biological group against all others. For a detailed history of the pitfalls of such attempts, I refer you to John Fekete’s excellent book Moral Panic: Biopolitics Rising (Fekete is no right-wing fanatic, but a Cultural Studies professor at Trent University).

In universities, identity politics gets almost immediately translated into interest-group politics, as each bio-political group stretches out its hand for a bigger piece of the pie. Once you define yourself as a member of a biological group, it’s only natural that you will defend the rights of your group in the marketplace, notably in academic hiring and promotion. Floating above this, as Marx says, is ideological rhetoric which attempts to convince others that the economic interests of your group are actually in everyone’s interests (even though they clearly are not).

And if people oppose your egalitarian grasping for rewards out of kilter with your accomplishments as an individual you hurl insults like “racist” or “misogynist” at them.

Yet if someone points out to you the forms of discrimination which still actually dominate university life, like those based on age or class, your face goes blank, or you change the subject. This is a highly selective definition of “equality.” In fact, the academic left has been high-handed by people who really don’t believe in equality at all, but in larger economic rewards for special interest groups.

This is the unfortunate state of affairs concerning freedom of speech in universities today.

The opening of the new University Community Centre introduced commercial retailing on campus. A popular spot was the 1,500-square-foot Piccadilly Square store which offered everything from toothpaste to diamonds. Jan York, a music student, was among the 12 full- and part-time staff hired from the student body.

DISPUTED CALL IN SPORTS STORY

Regarding your story Western Athletes Reap Gold, the recognition of Western’s OUA athletic accomplishments is outstanding, but your omission of the baseball team and their five-player selection to the All-Star team as well as having the top coach in OUA competition does an injustice to their achievements and dedication.

Wade Bekar

CLOTH TOWELS ‘MINOR ISSUE’

The letter by Marg La Salle in the Dec. 9 Western News regarding cloth towels doesn’t make much sense.

The cloth towels in washrooms on campus are in a rolling dispenser, so no one ever has to use a part of a towel that has been used by someone else. But even if that were not the case, how would it be different than our own homes, where we all use towels that have been repeatedly used by others to dry our hands?

In addition, presumably people only use a towel to dry their hands after they have washed. Therefore, no germs would be transferred to the towel since any germs would have already been removed by washing. If you believe that germs would still end up on towels after hands have been washed, then, as the writer points out, “Why bother washing?”

She also mentions that “bacteria and viruses ... can also be found on surfaces such as tap handles, ...” If this is the case, it is far more detrimental to turn on the tap (a surface with germs) in order to wash your hands than it is to dry them on a towel (a surface with no germs) after having washed them.

Let’s not unnecessarily over-react to such a minor issue.

Alan Anthony
Doctors king in small-town Ontario

By Paul Mayne

On a good day it takes Dr. Ranjith Chandrasena three minutes to get to work. On a bad day - four minutes.

“The bad day is when the light is red,” jokes the Chatham psychiatrist.

Chandrasena, along with St. Thomas emergency room physician Lisa Shepherd, shared with some of Western’s medical students their first-hand knowledge regarding the pros and cons of working as a specialist in a small town – outside an academic teaching centre such as London.

The panel discussion was organized by the Schulich School of Medicine’s Rural Medicine in Action group. Group member and medical student Scott McIntosh says it’s a great opportunity for students to meet face-to-face with the doctors.

“There are a lot of students who want to specialize outside an academic area, but they need some answers as to whether or not they can do this in a smaller setting,” says McIntosh. “By hearing from the doctors themselves who are doing this, it’s a great benefit to the students here.”

Chandrasena, who left Ottawa in 2000 to set up a practice in Chatham, told the students on a personal level that it’s much less expensive to live in a city such as Chatham (pop. 40,000) which, like many smaller communities, is actively enticing potential doctors with a range of attractive incentives.

“As a physician in a town like this you are a minority,” says Chandrasena, adding physician salaries can be as much as 20 to 30 per cent higher in smaller towns. “They love you and will do anything to keep you.”

The bureaucracy is much less than in a larger urban area, he says, adding “patients don’t get lost” in the smaller centres. With video conferencing a future tool for all doctors, it will no longer be essential to work in a large centre in order to have the desired support close at hand.

“The best way to find out if it’s for you is to do a placement during your undergrad years,” says Chandrasena. “At least you will get a better feel as to what it’s all about. It’s what works for you. You want to be happy when you turn 50, so choose wisely.”

For Shepherd, who lives in London, working in St. Thomas has been a blessing in disguise. She worked in London for six years before heading to St. Thomas, where she works with 10 other physicians.

“Any one of us can quit our job today and knock on the doors in London and be hired immediately,” says Shepherd, who adds she works with a great group of clinicians who challenge each other on a daily basis.

“It’s more diverse here in St. Thomas than in London. I respond to other units in the hospital. I’m occasionally in OB (obstetrics and gynecology)... I do enjoy that because it’s something that doesn’t happen in London.”

Practicing outside an academic setting is truly person-specific and something that’s not for everyone.

“For me it’s a lot more fun,” says Shepherd. “You are working anywhere from 16 shifts a month to six. It’s whatever works for you. This is just huge for me as far as job satisfaction, instead of the rigidness of scheduling you’d find in London.”

The Rural Medicine in Action Group will play host to another discussion on Jan. 17 when, along with the Family Medicine Interest Group, they welcome Dr. Cam Lamont, a retired rural family physician and former chair of the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Ottawa, to speak about the rewards of rural family medicine practice.

How can we lessen damage from disasters?

Drs. Lisa Shepherd and Ranjith Chandrasena speak to the students at the Schulich School of Medicine regarding the reasons for choosing the small town over the larger centres for their work.
Taking the strain out of work

By Paul Mayne

Whether your job entails sitting at a computer, lifting heavy loads or working in a research lab, it’s Scott Bishop’s responsibility to ensure the job is being done properly.

As Western’s ergonomist, Bishop examines everything from tools and equipment to the tasks, procedures and the working environment in order to design the job to fit the user. Not the other way around.

Ergonomics is a scientific discipline concerned with the interaction between humans and a system, such as a computer workstation, machine shop, laboratory or automotive assembly line.

Bishop says from an economical and efficiency perspective, ergonomics is often best suited to the design or development stage of a project.

“The role of the ergonomist on campus can include designing a new job or workstation or adapting existing equipment to ensure the workers’ safety, comfort, wellness and efficiency,” says Bishop.

Having consulted in areas such as the lumber and mining industries, hospitals and auto plants, Bishop has been with the university for two years and says he’s amazed at what can and has been done.

“Never a day goes by that I’m not blown away with the possibilities that can happen here,” says Bishop, a kinesiology graduate from the University of Waterloo.

Western is similar to a small city with every conceivable job performed on campus from carpenters to lecturers, book stackers to administrative staff and food service workers to lab researchers,” says Bishop.

“Ergonomics is a hot word right now throughout business and Bishop is confident it will gain increased acceptance and understanding as more is learned.

“One of our goals for the program includes developing an ergonomics specific Web page to assist Western’s employees with the set-up of their workstation through up-to-date and accurate ergonomics information.”

For now, Bishop will continue to ensure that as long as work needs to be done on campus, it can be done in a safe manner.
Beefing up protection for military

Analyzing advanced composite materials for use in armoured vehicles will be the driving force behind the research for Western Engineering Professor Jeff Wood and his team of graduate students.

The University is collaborating with General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada (GDLS-Canada) on a four-year, $800,000 project to assess ballistic materials for the manufacture of light armoured military vehicles at its London facility.

The project will also receive federal government funding, bringing the total to more than $1 million.

“We are grateful for GDLS-Canada's support of Professor Wood's research and are confident it will result in great progress for all parties involved, including Londoners and the local economy,” says Western President Paul Davenport.

Armoured vehicle manufacturers are being challenged to provide higher levels of protection without a significant increase in weight.

Wood and his team will subject new materials to a wide variety of tests, including tension, bending and impact in order to learn how they may behave in service.

“Our work with GDLS-Canada provides me and the Faculty of Engineering with an outstanding opportunity to develop world-class mechanical testing capabilities,” says Wood.

“The research we will undertake in this project will help GDLS-Canada to design lighter, safer vehicles and, at the same time, provides graduate and undergraduate students with advanced research and design projects.”

The main focus will be to understand how materials absorb the energy of impact, knowledge that can be used to offer protection from dangers such as landmines.

“This contract not only extends our growing partnership with Western, but is focused in an area of critical importance to us,” says John Ulrich, Senior Vice-President of GDLS-Canada. “It will help to make our future products even more survivable.”

GDLS-Canada employs 126 Western alumni – representing 20 per cent of their workforce. GDLS-Canada and Western also work closely on a summer internship program, a fourth-year student engineering design course, a student bursary program and employee tuition refund study programs.

Pioneering study explores harassment

Researchers at Western's Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children (CRVAWC) are set to launch an on-line survey to study negative social experiences at Western and Fanshawe College, the first survey of its kind for Canadian post-secondary institutions.

Barb MacQuarrie, CRVAWC Community Director, says a random sample of 7,500 students (5,000 from Western and 2,500 from Fanshawe) will be contacted by email to participate in the 20-30 minute survey.

The study will investigate students' negative social experiences such as harassment and aggression, as well as exploring the psychological outcomes of these experiences. It will also assess the services available to students.

“I've done a lot of work on harassment in the workplace, but we don't know much in the area of universities and students,” says MacQuarrie. “What tends to happen is as long as we don't talk about it and can't see it, than it really doesn't exist. That just gives an affect of isolation to the victim. We can't afford to be naive about this.”

The team hopes to determine the various forms of harassment such as verbal, physical, sexual and in-direct (rumours), perceptions of harassment, whether gender or economic status plays a role, and if incidents are reported – and if not, why not.

Harassment based on gender, race, sexual orientation, economic status and other areas are hoped be better understood through this survey.

MacQuarrie says initial emails will be sent to students, both male and female, later this month.

“I applaud Western for being willing to open this issue up for discussion,” says MacQuarrie. “Sweeping it under the carpet may have been the easiest thing to do in the short-term, but in the long-term it's something that needs to be addressed. Both Western and Fanshawe are pioneers in taking this pro-active approach.”

Paul Tremblay, adjunct research professor in Psychology at Western and scientist at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), is principal investigator.

“Research on harassment in colleges and universities has focused mainly on sexual harassment,” says Tremblay. “Other forms of harassment based on gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion or economic status have received little research attention.”

“Many forms of harassment have not been reported – and if not, why not?” MacQuarrie says.

“This study will also provide an indication as to the prevalence of online or email harassment at the post-secondary level.

“Various new technologies such as text messaging and Internet chat lines have been used to bully students at the high school level,” adds Tremblay. “It is important to evaluate whether this type of behavior persists at the college/university level.”

Co-investigators from Western include Roma Harris, Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Helene Berman, Associate Professor (Nursing); and Gail Hutchison, Director of Western’s Student Development Centre.

Also assisting with the survey are Fanshawe professors Susan Braley and Mary Anne Smith; Jennifer Jelley, research assistant with CAMH; and a number of students from both Western and Fanshawe.

Results will be presented to university and college officials in late fall.
Wanted: nursing books, equipment for Rwanda

By Alan Johnston

A Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology faculty member is collecting unused books and equipment to help nursing education in Rwanda.

“It’s one of those things that come my way and you can’t say no,” says Dr. David Cechetto. “There’s a real need.”

One campus library he visited in the West African country included a single major nursing textbook for the entire first-year class, and most of the 200 books in the library used by nursing students were Cambridge English as a Second Language learning manuals.

Cechetto, Director of the Medical Electives Overseas Program in the Schulich School of Medicine, is Canadian Project Director of the international development initiative “Rebuilding Health in Rwanda.”

Western, in partnership with Fanshawe College and York University, is seeking federal funding to expand the capacity of Kigali Health Institute (KHI) and the National University of Rwanda (NUR) to train nurses and doctors.

About 60 nursing students are enrolled annually at KHI in the capital city of Kigali. NUR, the national medical school in Butare, has about 50 students in each of the six years.

KHI officials welcome the opportunity for medical and nursing education capacity building, but say they are hampered by a shortage of books and equipment.

Following a summer visit to Rwanda, Cechetto decided to organize containers of books, equipment and other supplies for shipment. He sought help on campus and at the affiliated hospitals, and already “has quite a collection.”

Books include textbooks for health professionals, even a year or two out of print, or the extra copies that faculty members receive from publishers, or versions not being used in the classroom.

Also welcome are supplies or equipment having to do with teaching nurses, from microscopes to simpler instruments for radiology, or glassware for doing microbiology. The hospitals are assisting by donating some equipment declared surplus and replaced.

Cechetto will ship the containers when he feels he has the basic supplies. Shipping costs will be paid through the university but with private donations.

Rwanda asked Western for help because of the university’s reputation in medical education, involvement in international development and experience teaching a nursing degree program jointly with Fanshawe College. York University has expertise in the area of mental health problems resulting from the trauma of genocide.

"Thanks to some of the media exposure the project has received, I have had people contact me and say they are interested in working in Rwanda..."

David Cechetto, Department of Anatomy & Cell Biology

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Acting Vice-President (Research) Ted Hewitt says the university community can make a difference through projects such as the Rwanda initiative.

Selective peer-to-peer research collaborations and international development projects are part of Western’s Strategic Plan for Internationalization. Hewitt thinks that the Rwanda project will form the focus of a special link with African institutions.

Western and its partners have submitted a proposal to the Tier 2 competition of the University Partnerships in Cooperation and Development Program funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and administered by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC).

If approved for funding, the Rwanda project will include about $1 million from CIDA and $500,000 in-kind support by Canadian and Rwandan partner institutions.

Cechetto says it will be February or March before the CIDA decision is known, and if all goes well, late spring by the time the project begins.

The Rwandan Ministry of Education already has agreed to commit a total of $50,000 to cover airfares, local costs of living and honoraria for up to 10 lecturers a year from Western to present health sciences course modules in areas of priority to KHI. The agreement means that faculty will be going to Rwanda this winter and summer.

Recruitment of Western faculty has not been a problem. “Thanks to some of the media exposure the project has received, I have had people contact me and say they are interested in working in Rwanda – including faculty who have expertise in capacity building,” Cechetto says.

Under terms of the proposal submitted to CIDA/AUCC, teams or individuals will be going back and forth for six years, as many as 12 visits a year. Rwandan faculty would come here to work collaboratively on curriculum, or do some training. Most visits would be a month long, but others might be a year.

Important preliminary work was done during a July visit to Rwanda by Cechetto and three project team leaders: Carroll Iwasiw, Western’s former Director of Nursing, who will focus on professional development and on HIV/AIDS curriculum development; former Department of Microbiology professor Michael Clarke, who has expertise and experience in electronic development of curriculum and, although now at the University of Ottawa, is continuing as a project team member; and Susan McGrath, a York University specialist in mental health with interest in women and children traumatized by violence. Accompanying them was Pam Skinner, Dean of Health Sciences at Fanshawe College.
Biochemical engineering pioneer honoured

Western biochemical engineering professor Argyrios Margaritis is being honoured for outstanding contributions to the engineering profession.

Margaritis will receive the Professional Engineers of Ontario (PEO) Order of Honour Award at the Officer Level at a PEO ceremony April 16 in London. The award is the organization’s highest recognition.

The Order of Honour is in recognition of outstanding contributions to the engineering profession in Canada.

In 1991, Margaritis received the PEO Research and Development Award Medal for research contributions in biochemical engineering.

Margaritis, born in Greece, served as Chair of the Department of Chemical and Biochemical Engineering at Western for 11 years. An expert in biochemical engineering and biotechnology, and widely published, he was elected a Fellow of the Chemical Institute of Canada in 1994.

Dean of Engineering Franco Perruti says this latest recognition is proof of Margaritis’ outstanding contribution to the profession.

“I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to my family, my graduate students and all my colleagues and friends inside and outside Western for their continuing support which made this award possible for me,” says Margaritis.

Margaritis played a key role in establishing the first accreditation of bioengineering by PEO as a profession.

He has been active in promoting bioengineering to high school students through the establishment and his involvement in the annual PEO Engineering Careers Day. He is Founding Director and board member of the Aventis Biotechnology Challenge in London District in which selected high school co-op students do biotechnology research under the supervision of Western researchers.

Margaritis serves on the National Selection Committee of Youth Science Foundation Canada that selects the best 10 science fair projects each year from across Canada.

Margaritis was Chair of the PEO Bioengineering Task Force Committee in 2000. The committee issued a 150-page report that defines the core body of knowledge, the areas of practice and skills of a bioengineer, and eventual licensure P.Eng. recognition of bioengineering by PEO as a new engineering discipline.

With record levels of computer viruses and spyware, Western’s Information Technology Services department is recommending installation of PC-cillin 2005. Spyware slows home computers and causes problems with legitimate software. Infected systems may experience difficulty accessing Western applications. Symptoms include pop-ups happening inexplicably, toolbars appearing randomly and a new home page appearing suddenly. PC-cillin 2005 is available to Western students, staff and faculty at the Campus Computer Store for $40.

Brain food on special at Café

Welcome to Café Scientifique, where the menu is all about exploring, discussing and debating the latest topics in medical science and research.

Western’s Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, in cooperation with the Masonville Branch of the London Public Library, is presenting a wide variety of topics for this four-week Wednesday evenings series beginning January 12.

The opening topic will be Stormy Weather: How the weather affects your health, with Professor Gordon McBean (Geography and Political Science). Other topics include: End-of-Life Decision Making; Palliative care or euthanasia; What really happens when an outbreak strikes?; and Fat Chance: The obesity epidemic.

Presentations are at Masonville Library’s Sifton Room. Sessions run 7 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. and are free with seating on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information, please visit: www.fmd.uwo.ca/cafe-scientifique

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Western News
January 6, 2005
Business booming for Law Clinic

BY KATE BRAND

After only four months in existence, the Western Business Law Clinic is already preparing to expand.

“We plan to broaden our business community referrals in the upcoming term,” says Western Law Professor Richard H. McLaren, Director of the Clinic. “We have been blown away by the demand for such a service.”

The Business Law Clinic at Western opened in September 2004 with a $300,000 donation from McMillan Binch LLP. The Toronto-based law firm also donated office furniture and equipment, such as computers and printers to help establish the new clinic.

According to Kennedy, some of the major benefits of volunteering with the clinic include: gaining practical skills, obtaining a law mentor, experiencing what you’ll actually see in practice which is different than text books, working in teams, participating in training sessions by McMillan Binch, increasing motivation, networking, and developing client interview skills.”

The clinic has a five-member Advisory Board and 14 mentors from the local legal community to help advise students and oversee the client files.

“The response of the legal community to contribute the mentors and oversee the students and the assistance of McMillan Binch have exceeded my expectations by far,” says McLaren. “This project is not only up and running it is flying high.”

The clinic provides small start-up and early-stage businesses with student legal assistance, overseen by mentors who are practicing lawyers, on several issues from finance and contracts to taxation and licensing technology.

Prior to the clinic’s opening, Kennedy met with various business organizations in London, including the Better Business Bureau, to determine the business community’s needs that could be met by the Western Business Law Clinic. She also researched several other business law clinics at American law schools.

Kennedy manages a group of 30 Western Law student volunteers, 10 students in each of the three years of study at Western Law.

“It was a competitive process to get a position,” says Kennedy; “The student interest was phenomenal.”

The clinic is looking to expand in the New Year.

“I am absolutely thrilled at the success to date of attracting early-stage entrepreneurs and start-up situations,” says McLaren.

To see if the Western Business Law Clinic can help you, please call (519) 850-2966 any time between 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

For additional information, the Western Law Web site is at: www.law.uwo.ca
IN MEMORIAM

Orser ‘put something back in the cookie jar’

By Jim Anderson

Western lost one of its staunchest supporters and friends over the Christmas break.

Recently retired London business leader Earl Herbert Orser (1928-2004), former member and chair of Western’s Board of Governors, died at his London home Dec. 26 from cancer. He was 76.

In addition to a distinguished business career, family and friends remember Orser as a man of strong religious faith and commitment to numerous community causes during his lifetime.

A memorial service will be held for Orser on January 8 at 2 p.m. in 350 Queen’s Avenue. Family will receive friends one hour before the service. He is survived by his wife Marion, four daughters and several grandchildren.

“Earl is the kind of person who has made Western a great university and we all owe him an enormous debt,” says Western President and Vice-Chancellor Paul Davenport.

Orser, a chartered accountant and former member and chair of Western’s Board of Governors, died at his London home Dec. 26 from cancer. He was 76.

Friends remember Orser as a man committed to numerous community causes during his lifetime.

Orser was named to the Order of Canada in 1997 and inducted into the London Business Hall of Fame.

“Earl was grounded in a strong sense of values that never wavered,” says Carol Stephenson, Dean of the Ivey School of Business.

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Happy New Year!

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Faculty & Staff

Paul Beaudin, a PhD student in Rehabilitation Sciences and the Voice Production and Perception Laboratory, recently presented papers entitled “Psychophysical evaluation of preference and intelligibility for electro-larynx speech” and “Effects of listener experience on direct magnitude estimation and interval scaling of pleasantness and acceptability for optimized electro-larynx speech” at the American Conference of the Ontario Speech Language-Hearing Association in Toronto. These papers were co-authored by Philip C. Doyle from the Doctoral Program in Rehabilitation Sciences, School of Communication Sciences and Disorders, and Department of Otalaryngology, Tanya Eade from the University of Washington and Geoff Metzler and Robert Hillman of Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As well, Doyle, Beaudin, and Heather White, MSc from Communication Sciences and Disorders and the VPPFL, presented “Gender considerations of voice-related quality of life in alaryngeal speakers” at the conference.

Drs. Judith Belle Brown, Thomas Freeman and Moira Stewart of the Centre for Studies in Family Medicine and the Department of Family Medicine presented a workshop at the World Meeting of Family Medicine (WONCA) in Orlando, Florida, October 16. The workshop, attended by 1,200 persons, was titled “The Patient-Centered Clinical Method. Japan, New Zealand and South Africa was titled “Florida, October 16. The workshop, attended by Drs. Judith Belle Brown (Faculty & Staff) and Robert Hillman of Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.”

Michael Groden (English) gave an invited presentation, “James Joyce, Music, and Film.”

Christopher Ellis (Anthropology) recently delivered several papers. He presented an invited address entitled “The Crowfield Site: A Unique Fluted Point Site” to the Michigan Archaeological Society, Monroe, Michigan and an invited public address at the University of Waterloo in conjunction with the department’s annual silver medal presentation entitled “Sacred Rituals and World Views Amongst Ontario’s Most Ancient Inhabitants.” He also attended the invited conference on “Archaeic Societies of the Midcontinent” at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign where he presented a paper, co-authored with Peter Timmons and Holly Martelle (Timmons Martelle Heritage Consultants and Anthropology UWO), entitled “At the Crossroads and Periphery: The Archaic Archaeological Record of Southern Ontario.”

Dr. Gregor Held (Microbiology & Immunology and Surgery) recently completed an international Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics symposium in Cordoba, an external review at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Groningen, Holland, was Plenary Speaker at Simposio Internacional de Biotecnologia in Tucuman, Argentina, and was guest speaker at the Rowland Research Institute in New York, International Society for Food Technologists meeting in Las Vegas, US Trade Delegation Symposium in Guipuzcoa, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, and 3rd Danone International Probiotics Convention in Paris.

Julie Aiken Harris (Administrative and Commercial Studies) presented a paper last month entitled, “Self-report latents and measured intelligence: Phenotypic, environmental, and genetic relationships” at the International Society for Intelligence Research conference in New Orleans. Co-authors were: Philip A. Vernon (Psychology) Andrew W. Johnson (Faculty of Health Sciences) and Kenny L. Wang. Beverly Leipert presented several papers in October. They included: “Nursing Students Considering Rural Practice: Who Are They and How Can They Be Supported?” with A. Bushy, and “Strengthening Rural Women’s Health Research in Canada” – both to the Canadian Rural Health Research Society Conference and the International Rural Nursing Congress in Sudbury. Also, she presented “Rural Women’s Health in Canada” – both to the Canadian Rural Health Research Society Conference and the International Rural Nursing Congress in Sudbury.

The BACS Program was well represented at the Second Canadian Conference on Literacy and Health in Ottawa. Stefanie Kabene and Michelle Loveland presented a paper on “Research to Consume: A Unique Workshop” at the Second Conference on Literacy and Health in Ottawa. Stefanie Kabene and Michelle Loveland presented a paper on “Research to Consume: A Unique Workshop” at the Second Conference on Literacy and Health in Ottawa. Stefanie Kabene and Michelle Loveland presented a paper on “Research to Consume: A Unique Workshop” at the Second Conference on Literacy and Health in Ottawa. Stefanie Kabene and Michelle Loveland presented a paper on “Research to Consume: A Unique Workshop” at the Second Conference on Literacy and Health in Ottawa. Stefanie Kabene and Michelle Loveland presented a paper on “Research to Consume: A Unique Workshop” at the Second Conference on Literacy and Health in Ottawa.

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