On World AIDS Day, Western researchers outline the global HIV/AIDS fight.

Board takes ‘important step,’ OKs Indigenous plan

BY ADELA TALBOT

Today, Candace Brunette is thinking of her great-grandmother who lived on a trap line. She is thinking of her grandmother who didn’t have the right to vote in Canada. She is thinking of her mother who had a Grade 10 education.

And, as she looks back on challenges she faced as a Mushkego Cree university student, she looks to her young sons and sees a hopeful future.

“I think of all of that, and I can see the change, and I can see the work that was collectively done and the direction we’re moving in. It’s overwhelming at times. We’ve come so far,” Brunette, Western’s Indigenous Services Coordinator, said following the approval of the Indigenous Strategic Plan by Western’s Board of Governors last week.

“When universities were being shaped and molded, Indigenous people were not included. And now we are trying to catch up. In the future, Indigenous people can come into an institution and our ways of knowing will be welcomed. It’s not about an assimilatory model anymore,” she continued.

“We can bring who we are to the institution, our ways of knowing will be welcomed, it will be a safer place for my kids. It’s not that it wasn’t a safe place before. It’s that there literally wasn’t a place for some of my relatives in the past. We’re in a different time.”

The approval of the Indigenous Strategic Plan is an historic occasion for Western, one that has been a long time coming, noted Janice Deakin, Western’s Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

Next up, a task force will be formed with the mandate, in the New Year, to recommend ways to implement the goals outlined within the plan, she said.

“It’s an important step toward fulfilling a commitment made in the university’s overarching strategic plan (Achieving Excellence on the World Stage) to improve accessibility and success in higher education for Indigenous peoples. It also provides some direction for how we will respond to the calls to action outlined in the 2015 report issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,” Deakin said.

“Western stands among many postsecondary institutions across the country that are focusing greater attention on issues related to Indigenous education.”

- Janice Deakin
  Western’s Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

Western’s first-ever Indigenous Strategic Plan seeks to remedy the under-representation of Indigenous peoples as students, professors, staff and administrators in Canada’s postsecondary education system, according to university officials.

In consultation with the Indigenous Postsecondary Education Council, Western formed an Indigenous Strategic Initiatives Committee, which has been engaging and consulting members of the campus community and local/regional First Nations communities over the past two years to develop the draft strategic plan.

The document sets down eight strategic directions which we are strongly committed to achieving tangible results.”

“We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the members of the Indigenous Strategic Initiatives Committee who consulted with close to 700 campus and Indigenous community members over the course of the last three years to develop the plan,” she continued.

Board takes ‘important step,’ OKs Indigenous plan // CONTINUED ON PAGE 6
Researchers: Time to rebuild public trust in decision-making

BY PAUL MYANE

Hundreds upon hundreds of professors, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students from across the country, including dozens at Western, have signed a letter to federal ministers calling for a “return to scientific rigour and scientific transparency” when making large-scale, long-term projects.

“The letter stated, “Canadians invest deeply in our training, and in turn, have a right to insist in being informed about major environmental projects, including the C Clean Energy Project, Northern Gateway Pipeline and others,”

“It is an exciting time to be a scientist in Canada. We celebrated the recognition of mental health and regulatory decision-making processes lack scientific rigour, processes and decisions on major environmental projects, including the federal review of the Pacific North-West Development Project and the NL Clean Energy Project, Northern Gateway Pipeline and others.”

As the next generation of Canadian scientists, Muñoz says he is professionally and personally affected by such decisions, especially regarding large-scale, long-term projects. Not only might his expertise be required in the future, he and others observe, but so might that of his peers.

The letter ended, “Canadians invested deeply in our training, and in turn, have a right to insist that the processes and decisions on major environmental projects, including the C Clean Energy Project, Northern Gateway Pipeline and others.”

“If we believe in the power of science to change the world, we need to believe that the science exists,” said the 19-year-old Foss. “We started to become aware of processes and decisions on major environmental projects, including the C Clean Energy Project, Northern Gateway Pipeline and others.”

“We know the science exists. It’s not completely clear if they used it in the process,” he said. “If one scientist used it and if other factors they considered to make these decisions, that’s absolutely fine. But the letter does not have an anti-development agenda.”

The letter was also forwarded to six cabinet ministers, including Environment Canada and Natural Resources Minister Leona Aglukkaq, Justice Minister Peter MacKay, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, and Transport Minister Marc Garneau.

Foss and North in Focus co-founder Eva Wu, a McGill University law graduate who also co-founded the Nunatsiavut Government’s Inuit Health and Wellness Office in Labrador, have organized and led the focus on mental health throughout the focus on mental health in Labrador.

“I wanted to make it cool and fun by having kids grasp that educating youth about the importance of mental health and regulatory decision-making processes lack scientific rigour, processes and decisions on major environmental projects, including the federal review of the Pacific North-West Development Project and the NL Clean Energy Project, Northern Gateway Pipeline and others.”

“We are aware that some of these projects are important to our society,” said the 19-year-old Foss. “We started to become aware of processes and decisions on major environmental projects, including the C Clean Energy Project, Northern Gateway Pipeline and others.”

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Answering Summit’s call to global action

Melanie Ayteyan Amadu

Climate change

President of Ireland Martin Ryan discussed the impact of climate change on our world and agreed that we might need to restructure how we travel. There were discussions on what the countries can do to reduce carbon emissions. These countries are currently struggling from immense heat, low crop yield, flood and a shortage of clean water. The idea of the world is to get together and find solutions to reduce our carbon footprints and keep warming at a minimum. We need to take action to save our world.

We need to have discussions and raise awareness about global issues, such as climate change. It is essential to have a global conversation so that we can act together to save the world.

In the past, people have been taught to ignore what is happening around them. However, we all have the potential to make a difference.

The event aims to raise awareness about global issues, such as climate change. It is essential to have a global conversation so that we can act together to save the world.

Geography

The geography of Martin Ryan is that he has over 15 years of experience in the field. He is known for his insightful and informative discussions on global issues. People from all walks of life have attended his events and have benefited from his knowledge.

The next meeting of the event will be held on March 2020 to discuss other potential solutions. As mentioned many times by the organizers of the World Young Summit, and the Young Global Leaders Network, we need to come together and find solutions to protect our planet.

INCOME INEQUALITY

Global inequality

Global inequality is a major problem that affects many countries. It is caused by a lack of access to education, healthcare, and basic needs. The event aims to raise awareness about this issue and find solutions to reduce income inequality.

The event will also discuss the impact of income inequality on the global economy. It will provide insights into how to reduce income inequality and create a more equitable society.

The World Young Summit aims to bring together young leaders from around the world to discuss global issues. It is a platform for young people to come together and find solutions to the challenges they face.

The event is open to everyone and aims to create a global community of young leaders. It provides a platform for young people to network, learn, and share their ideas.

The World Young Summit is an event that brings together young leaders from around the world to discuss global issues. It is a platform for young people to come together and find solutions to the challenges they face. The event aims to create a global community of young leaders who will work together to create a better world.
Invention takes a new spin on concussion prevention

BY ANGIE WISMAN

S
ome of the best ideas come from drinks at a part with friends. Then Versteegh found himself in that situation while working at the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE). There, he connected with Western Mustangs football head coach Greg McEwan. Greg McEwan was at a TopSpin 360 user event and told Versteegh about his idea for a new football helmet. Versteegh was excited and thought it was a great idea as well.

One of the key concerns about football helmets is that they provide very little information to the wearer about their own concussion risk. Versteegh knew that this was an area where he could make a difference. He immediately started working on the project and eventually came up with TopSpin 360, a weighted football helmet that provides real-time information about the wearer’s risk of concussion.

TopSpin 360 is a game-changer, as it allows athletes to make informed decisions about their own safety. The helmet uses a combination of sensors and software to monitor the athlete’s head movements and provide immediate feedback about their risk of concussion. This is a major improvement over traditional helmets, which provide no information about the wearer’s risk.

The TopSpin 360 has already been used in a number of high-profile games, including the Super Bowl. The athletes who have worn it have been very happy with the results. They feel more confident and protected when they are on the field.

“With TopSpin 360, athletes know exactly what their risk is at any given moment,” says Versteegh. “This has made a huge difference in the way they approach the game.”

Versteegh has also been working to bring TopSpin 360 to the general public. He has already secured some funding to help with this, and he is hopeful that the helmet will be available to the public soon.

“TopSpin 360 is a game-changer, and it’s something that athletes and non-athletes alike will be able to use,” says Versteegh. “We’re excited about the potential of this technology.”

Versteegh is currently working on improving the design of the helmet, and he is looking for more funding to help with this. He is hopeful that TopSpin 360 will be available to the public soon, and he is excited about the potential of this technology.

In conclusion, TopSpin 360 is a game-changer that could revolutionize the way athletes approach their own safety. With its real-time information about concussion risk, athletes will be able to make informed decisions about their own safety. This is a major improvement over traditional helmets, which provide no information about the wearer’s risk.

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On World AIDS Day, Western researchers outline the global HIV/AIDS fight.

Western researchers are trying to understand the complexities of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) with the aim of eventually finding a cure. To commemorate World AIDS Day 2016 today, Western News contributor Crystal Mackay sat down with five of the top HIV/AIDS researchers at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry to find out what they think is the key to eradicating the epidemic and to learn what their idea of a ‘perfect world’ would look like with respect to HIV/AIDS in the next decade.
It no longer makes the headlines it once did. But HIV/AIDS remains a stark reality for millions of people around the world. HIV – or human immunodeficiency virus – attacks and destroys infection-fighting cells of the immune system. Without treatment, HIV gradually destroys the immune system and advances to AIDS – or acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. AIDS is the most advanced stage of HIV infection. Since the virus was first identified in 1983, 78 million people have become infected. Of these, 35 million – or six times the population of the Greater Toronto Area – have died from AIDS-related illnesses.

According to the United Nations, there were approximately 35 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS at the end of 2015. Of these, 1.8 million were children under the age of 15 years old. An estimated 2.1 million individuals worldwide become newly infected with HIV last year – a number that has remained stubbornly consistent since 2005.

Yet, positive news exists. AIDS-related deaths have fallen by 45 per cent since a peak in 2005; new infections among children have declined by 50 per cent since 2010. As of June 2016, more than 18 million people living with HIV were accessing antiretroviral therapy, up from 15.8 million in June 2015 and 7.5 million in June 2010. That means 45 per cent of all people living with HIV had access to treatment.

On World AIDS Day, Dec. 1, we reflect on the fight against HIV/AIDS and Western's role in it. Here are the researchers’ stories in their own words.

Silverman
Michael Silverman, Division Chair-Chief of Infectious Diseases, is focused on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Africa, and explores the transmission of HIV among intravenous drug users in the Canadian population.

In the near future, the focus is going to be to take the necessary steps to treat those infected with HIV so they can be healthy and able to participate in normal life.

Kang
Microbiology and Immunology professor Chi Yong Kang made international headlines when his lab developed a preventative HIV vaccine, approved for human clinical trials in 2012. The vaccine uses a genetically modified version of the inactivated HIV gene and has now moved into Phase 2 of clinical testing.

Kang’s lab is also working on developing a therapeutic vaccine to treat those infected with the virus.

Dikeakos
Microbiology and Immunology professor Jimmy Dikeakos and his team are specifically interested in one HIV protein, Nef, to better understand how it functions inside of infected cells. Nef is often considered the disease-causing protein in HIV, or the protein that causes disease in humans.

Our hope is to better understand this protein called nef in order to develop new drugs that block its function in HIV-infected cells. Although there are already very good drugs out there, HIV is constantly mutating, making the disease resistant to therapy, so there is always a need for new drug compounds.

As the saying goes, ‘There are 35 million people infected with HIV and there are probably 35 million different versions of the virus out there,’ which is not that far from the truth. The future of treatment for HIV lies in resistance testing, to be able to tailor antiretroviral drug combinations for infected individuals so the eradication of HIV infection is possible.

Barr
Microbiology and Immunology professor Stephen Barr is a scientist researching the HIV genome and how it permanently incorporates itself into our own genome in a process called integration. This event leads to lifelong infection and is typically accompanied by a dormant period of several years where HIV expression is barely detectable (HIV latency). His lab is also working to understand how HIV overcomes our body’s strong antiviral defences.

HIV’s a clever virus whose sole mission is to reproduce and develop in the hostile environment of our immune system. Since the immune system of each individual is unique, it follows that drug treatments that show promise in one person may not work in another, and drug resistance can develop.

“HIV mutate rapidly and drug treatment can cause the virus to develop resistance, meaning that the new treatment is less effective at reducing viral load or more difficult to use. As a result, patients may not respond to the treatment or may respond poorly,” said Barr.

“Unfortunately, we have very limited options for those who are resistant to the most common medications. As a result, we need to find new treatments and prevent future resistance.”

In a perfect world, in 10 years from now we will have developed a vaccine that will cure infected individuals. Even if we don’t develop a vaccine that can prevent new transmissions, what some doctors call is the ‘V’ of eradication research. This would involve cutting off the virus’s supply and making vaccine development so complicated.

Our lab looks at identifying and understanding those different strains with the hope of using that information to develop better treatments and eventually find a cure.

If we have any hope of eradicating the epidemic, our best hope is a vaccine. To get there, we need to be less dogmatic about the virus and those who come from it are promising.

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Accolades show Dr. J still at the top of her game

BY ADELA TALBOT // WESTERN NEWS

When Marjorie Johnson first stepped in front of a room full of university students more than two decades ago, she had no idea what she was doing. But as she moved out of her new pedagogical realm, she was given a textbook, told when and where to show up, and to simply “go forth and teach.” That was the extent of her formal training, she said.

Dr. Johnson, who teaches in the Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology, joined the university’s most decorated instructors — one which the university’s Big 3 teaching honour — in 2005. She received the Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching. In 2012, Johnson earned the highest teaching honour in Canada and the year, she was named one of six outstanding university teachers by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA).

“It’s a lot of teaching just making it up as you go,” she said.

That makes it for the students, adding, “you’re not necessarily doing what feels right for you, and not trying to imitate somebody else.” Johnson said, noting a personal approach and investment has been key to her success as an instructor.

“I’m sure in the first day, she approached it differently,” she said. “I think her approach has changed depending on intuition and trying to imagine herself in the student’s shoes, she explained. Over the years, she attended every teaching workshop she could. She continued to learn from mentors and other instructors.

But among the tips, tricks and new innovations she picked up, the biggest lesson was authenticity. “It’s easy to implement some good things you might think are good, but when you find that they don’t really work in your classroom, that’s the key thing to just let them know you are human, just like anybody else,” she said.

Sharing her mistakes, stories and even injuries encouraged students to share their own and helped them understand that “you’re human, just like anybody else,” Johnson added. “It’s about trying to keep it relevant,” she said.

It’s easy to memorize names, parts and functions of structures, “but, in some cases, the tried and true, the biggest lesson was authenticity.”

But students remember lessons when they are engaged.

“It’s advertising to keep it relevant,” she said.

It’s easy to remember notes, past and functions of structure.

But students remember lessons when they are engaged. “If you’ve got students excited, you give them a hook to the information, and on the other end of that, they will listen.”

And Johnson’s personal, adaptive approach has impacted on her students.

“She always stood out with her creative teaching methods. She taught us anatomy in the most interesting way. She reached out to every student at their own level. From clay models to how the body works, she really made learning fun. No one ever skipped her classes and we all took so much away from her teaching.” — student written in Johnson’s OCUFA teaching nomination.

“Students flock to wherever Dr. Johnson is teaching, hoping to have some of her interesting anecdotes and energy. She creates an environment where students are engaged, ask questions or ask for help. Rather than lecturing you on the content, she asks probing questions and helps to lead you to the answer, going students more confidence in their own problem-solving skills and understanding.”

Students and colleagues praise Johnson for her supportive mentorship and guidance, and out of the classroom, Johnson and students keep in touch. She said, offering gratitude and updates on their careers. “A common problem that teachers face is low satisfaction in the classroom.”

“I love to follow basketball. One of my students, when he heard he had been drafted into the NBA, he held a letter to read in class. He said, ‘I know, I always used to think I’d end up at the basketball player he was talking about, and I’m like Dr. Johnson’.”

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Johnson in the department.
Team looks to rescue, reunite refugees with their history

BY ADELA TALBOT

With a historical focus on the plight of the Salvadoran civil war, the stories of those fleeing from their homes have filled the pages of books. But now, thanks to the efforts of two Scarborough residents who have recently been displaced, and the people who shared their stories.

"Refugees often have a secondary identity," Grzyb noted. "They come to the world, including Canada, with a secondary identity. Often, they don't have the ability to tell their own story.

Speakers put segregation in the spotlight

BY ROBYN DAVIES

The campaign promises and early 2016? It's 2016 and the campaign promises have not been fulfilled. The Trump administration will now appeal the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals' decision, according to a statement released by the administration's spokesperson.

Dr. Stephen Farber, Retired Dentistry Professor at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, recently presented at the University of Windsor on the topic of social justice and the role of the dental profession.

Western News
december 1, 2016
Alumnae listen, answer call for help

BY PAUL MAYNE

While an estimated one in five Northern students suffer some form of permanent hearing loss due to untreated ear infections, a simple solution, pushed forward by a team of Western alumnae, is making strides in targeting this complex problem.

Sparked by Western alumnae Lynne Powell McCurdy and Pam Millet, who met doing their masters in Clinical Sciences in 1989, the Better Hearing in Education for Northern Youth (BHENY) project is amplifying learning opportunities for Inuit youth through the use of sound-field systems in remote Baffin Island (Qikiqtaaluk) schools.

Designed specifically for speech, sound-field systems outfit a teacher with a headset microphone connected to speakers placed throughout the classroom. These simple systems have been shown to improve students’ attentiveness, participation, comprehension and concentration. Additionally, teachers avoid vocal strain since it is no longer necessary for them to yell to reach all students.

For McCurdy, a Guelph-based audiologist, her journey began when she joined her local Rotary Club seeking to learn more about Indigenous culture. She knew Inuit people experienced 40 per cent higher incidences of hearing loss than the average Canadian, so she contacted Kim Hurley, the only audiologist in the Baffin Region of Nunavut. While one fifth of Canada’s land mass, Nunavut has only one full-time audiologist. (Ontario has more than 700.)

“They have huge needs up there, as expected, and she said she could totally use our help,” said McCurdy, who then traveled to visit Hurley and witness the problems first-hand. “I saw some huge, diverse delivery of hearing care in Nunavut. I was like, ‘Oh my gosh.’ I told Kim there were like 20 things we could do up there. But, I asked, what was most important for her?”

Hurley had started a program to get sound systems for the schools, but it stalled due to lack of funding and infrastructure. McCurdy approached her Rotary Club with the idea, applying for, and receiving a $300,000 Arctic Inspiration Prize, that funds wellness projects in the Canadian North. McCurdy and Millett, along with other members of BHENY team, including fellow Western graduate Carolyn Edwards, have since begun the task of seeing 13 communities receive the sound-field systems. That means more than 150 classrooms need to be outfitted throughout the region, along with training and on-going support for teachers.

“Of course, the solution would be to fix the ear infections. But that is an even bigger problem,” said Millett, a professor in York University’s Educator of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program. “This is a simple technology, which is great for classroom management and allows the kids to hear better.

“People don’t think of hearing loss necessarily. They think when a child is having difficulty that they’re just not paying attention or they lack motivation. Hearing is not at the front of people’s minds.”

BHENY has since received an additional 69 sound field systems thanks to a $150,000 in-kind donation from the Hear the World Foundation. Four communities have been outfitted with the system so far, with another five or six to be completed before end of the school year.

The Nunavut Department of Education has since come on board to assist with moving the program forward. This buy in is vital to the project’s ongoing success, McCurdy said.

“It’s not us telling them what they need. It’s us saying, ‘What do you need?’” she continued.

“They wanted this program, but it just never happened. So, we made it happen for them. It’s really their project, not ours. Language and literacy skill development is highly dependent on being able to hear the sound. The response has been very positive, to have a process that is going to be sustainable.”

McCurdy added the project is a great opportunity to shed light on the issue and raise its profile among decision-makers. She expects the ongoing problem to be an eye-opener for many.

“It has been for me,” she said. “For someone who initially knew nothing about our North, it’s been remarkable. I’ve learned so much and I’m now trying to share it down here. There are a lot of other places where we can lend a hand. We really need to bridge this gap.”

SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

Better Hearing in Education for Northern Youth project member Pam Millett talks with students in a remote Baffin Island (Qikiqtaaluk) school. Sound-field systems are being installed in close to 150 classrooms, in 13 different communities, to improve students’ attentiveness, participation, comprehension and concentration levels.

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