Join the chorus

Western joins international support of Central European University

BY ADELA TALBOT

Western has joined a growing chorus of voices speaking out in support of Central European University (CEU), an American institution operating in Budapest, Hungary, currently under threat by a Hungarian law that could shut the institution down.

“It is a very unusual occurrence in the world, that a government would pass legislation, especially in eastern Europe, to close a university without much consultation, and so quickly – and according to some people, without getting a good legal opinion about it within the context of eastern Europe,” said Julie McMullin, Vice-Provost (International), who chairs Western’s Scholars at Risk Committee.

On April 10, Hungarian President Janos Ader signed into law amendments to Hungary’s National Higher Education Legislation restricting academic freedom for CEU, a private graduate institution founded by Hungarian-American billionaire George Soros and currently presided over by former Canadian Liberal Party leader Michael Ignatieff. The institution has been granting American- and Hungarian-accredited masters and doctoral degrees for more than 20 years.

Veteran political observers across the globe see the law as a manifestation of a long-running Orban feud with Soros. The controversial law requires universities in Hungary to have a campus in their home countries. CEU is accredited in Hungary and New York; it does not have a U.S. campus. The law forbids CEU from issuing American degrees, requiring it to open a campus in the United States – under the control of the Hungarian government, giving it the power to deny work permits to faculty members from outside the European Union, and use the visa system to restrict the university’s ability to choose its students.

Thousands of voices worldwide – including politicians, academics, institutions, public figures and Nobel laureates – have since spoken out in support of CEU, sending letters to Ader and voicing their concerns through protests and a social media campaign.

Western extended its support earlier this week. On Wednesday, European Union (EU) Commission Vice-President Frans Timmermans launched an investigation into the law. Those findings are expected to be complete by the end of April, when EU leaders hold a summit in Brussels. The probe will explore if the new law conflicts with EU rules and if it could apply to other European universities.

Western has been a member of Scholars at Risk, an international network of higher education institutions and individuals working to protect scholars and promote academic freedom, for about a decade. Recently, it has concentrated its efforts into a committee, meeting to discuss matters relating to academic freedom worldwide.

“From time to time, the network tries to mobilize its members to act in solidarity with things they see as being particularly problematic around the world. Although it is usually in support of scholars who have been jailed or threatened, or fired from their university positions just by virtue of doing their academic work, this is the first time we’ve received word from about an institution that is being closed by a government, asking us to reach out in support of CEU,” McMullin explained.

The letter of support for CEU is one action in the larger context of the Scholars at Risk work we are doing at Western. It’s this notion that our ideas of academic freedom are different in different places around the world and are being challenged in a multitude of ways across the globe. How can we, here, do something to help in that regard?”
Detecting dementia tops 3MT competition

Tamara Tavares, a graduate student in the Emotion Cognitive Lab (ECL) of Western Brain and Mind Institute, took top spot in Western’s sixth annual Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition last week, tackling the complex world of frontotemporal dementia, a hereditary neurodegenerative disorder.

BY PAUL MAYNE

T amara Tavares, a graduate student in the Emotion Cognitive Lab (ECL) of Western Brain and Mind Institute, took top spot in Western’s sixth annual Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition last week, tackling the complex world of frontotemporal dementia (FTD), a highly hereditary neurodegenerative disorder.

“Patients with FTD struggle in inappropriate social situations,” she said. “They may show impulsive, antisocial behavior and lack of empathy towards their loved ones. It’s something they are not aware of and have difficulty understanding other people’s emotions,” said Tavares. “As the symptoms are quite variable, overlap with psychiatric disorders, detecting FTD, especially during the early stages, is quite challenging. Accurate and early diagnosis is critical because these treatments are clinical tools aimed at slowing the disease’s progression. If not diagnosed early, however, it will be challenging to administer the treatments effectively in the early stages of the disease,” she added.

The problem, added Tavares, is that patients are not really good at diagnosing themselves, especially during the early stages of the disease. The average FTD patient goes about two years with symptoms before diagnosis, she said. “This is a highly hereditary disease, and we know that a genetic mutation causes it in some cases,” she added. Tavares is also continuing her research by looking at_frontotemporal dementia (FTD) and presenting itself in patients in their 50s or 60s, at least a decade earlier than most Alzheimer’s patients. Tavares and researchers use the right-triangle ratio to track it and track it.

FTD disease affects personality, rather than memory, and poses risks to patients older than 50 or 60, at least a decade earlier than most Alzheimer’s patients. Tavares and researchers use the right-triangle ratio to track it and track it.

Tavares took part in the regional 3MT competition, held in March, where she placed second. The overall winner was Elizabeth Finger. “What’s exciting is that you get a potential breakthrough for FTD patients and their families. Western was one of the first Canadian universities to recognize and develop an early intervention for FTD patients,” Tavares said.

RESEARCH ON THE CLOCK

Westeron’s Three Minute Thesis (3MT) is a research communication competition where graduate students have three minutes, or less, to present their research and to impress a panel of academic judges and peers. Western was one of the first Canadian universities to host a 3MT competition in 2012. The winners for this year’s competition included:

First Place: Tamara Tavares, PhD candidate, Neuroscience, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry; Topic: what is the diagnosis?

Second Place: Dr. Shana Dett, MD candidate, Surgery, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry; Topic: Characterization to Innovation’

Third Place: Gregory Balassa, PhD candidate, Chemistry, Faculty of Science; Topic: Identification of Novel Biomarkers for Molecular Neurodegeneration

Check out Tamara Tavares’ winning Three Minute Thesis presentation at westernnews.ca.

*WINNER*

TOMALIN COSTANZO // SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

Detecting dementia tops 3MT competition

Tamara Tavares, a graduate student in the Emotion Cognitive Lab of Western Brain and Mind Institute, took top spot in Western’s sixth annual Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competition last week, tackling the complex world of frontotemporal dementia, a hereditary neurodegenerative disorder.
New research opens a window on eye health

BY KEVIN HOPPER

Researchers at the University of Western Ontario have made an important breakthrough in understanding the causes and progression of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of blindness in the Western world.

In a paper published in the scientific journal *Investigative Ophthalmology* and *Visual Science*, a team of researchers led by Kathleen Hill, a professor in the Department of Biology at Western, presented new findings on the mechanisms that underlie AMD.

The research was based on a study in which mice were used as a model system to investigate the pathological changes that occur in the retina, the light-sensitive layer at the back of the eye, in AMD.

The team used a combination of imaging techniques to study the changes in the retinal cells and the underlying tissue over time. They found that the cells of the retina, which are responsible for capturing light and converting it into electrical signals that are sent to the brain, become dysfunctional and eventually die in AMD.

"Our research is an important first step in understanding neurodegenerative diseases and developing a treatment strategy," Hill said.

"The imaging equipment is so sophisticated that we can see the changes in the retinal cells as they occur," said Hill. "We can see the cells becoming damaged, the blood vessels in the retina becoming blocked, and the surrounding tissue becoming more disorganized."
You're too busy to do your taxes. So we will. For free.

If you’re enrolled in a full-time medical or dental program, we’ll prepare your personal income tax return for free (and your spouse’s).

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Conditions apply. See end of this article.
Aviators Bob and Steve Dengler, BFA'93, are set to be the first father/son team to circumnavigate the globe in a helicopter. The pair, along with seasoned pilot Bob MacDuff and VIP guests, will take off from Ottawa July 1 in honour of Canada 150. They will make more than 100 stops in 14 countries during their month-long journey.

BY KRISTA HABERMEHL

It’s Canada’s 150th birthday year and the Denglers, who are passionate to share the country, are taking part in the celebration.

The Denglers registered C150 Global Odyssey as a Canadian not-for-profit and are currently raising funds for True Patriot Love Foundation, the former provides community-based programming and support for Canadian veterans and military families.

Anneke Davidson

“It’s the 150th anniversary of Canada, is such a privilege." said Steve. “Canada is an amazing place and it’s huge. We’re going to be flying over a lot of it. Not big cities – but people just don’t get a chance to see very much. I’m so excited for the trip." The trip also offers many other exhilarating dimensions.

We’ve also found a Russian-speaking ambassador, we’re going to promote Canada's national identity, while helping people to feel like they can really come along for the trip in the cockpit. We also want people to feel like they can really come along for the trip because, unlike other International Diplomatic Odyssey countries that speak English, in Russia, the language they speak on the radio is Russian. For Steve, while the opportunity to share the Canadian heritage, we’re going to promote Canada’s language and culture as well.

The battle was certainly a defining moment in our national history and has particular resonance for me.”

For Steve, while the opportunity to share their adventure, we’re going to promote Canada’s language and culture as well. While trip planning slowed to address my father’s health, the trip of over a month. As we fly around the world, while going to be the second ambassador," said Steve. "Canada is an amazing place and it’s huge. We’re going to be flying over a lot of it. Not big cities – but people just don’t get a chance to see very much. I’m so excited for the trip."

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CHRW, Israeli campus radio partner to bridge cultural divides

BY PAUL MANE

It’s a bit like overhearing a typical university student conversation: You’ll hear staccato comments, people are talking in rapid-fire speech, and you wonder what they’re saying. The difference is, in Israel, the students are speaking Hebrew, so essentially, the conversation you hear is being conducted in a language you don’t understand.

“I’m naturally a talkative kind of person, so I knew it would transition well for me,” said Israeli-born Wallach, who co-founded CHRW’s Radio Gesher, a show that plays on the airwaves.

Located in the northwestern Negev desert, Sapir College is a public college in Israel, with an enrolment of about 2,000 students. While visiting Israel last summer, Boni had an idea. Western and Sapir College have a joint marketing degree program that ties both producing radio shows and sharing it with one another.

Said Sapir students at the show’s launch last spring, “We wanted to do something to bridge the cultures, so we invited students from Sapir to come here, and we’ve simply talked about the things in Israel which is portrayed in the media. And we’re like, ‘Well, we see different things. We don’t really care about (Western) thinking of starting something different here. We’re open to make friends with each other, we want to get involved as much as we can. We’re open to new things in our minds, so if we want to help you about what you can or can’t say, OK, Boni,” Wallach said. “We’re here to show to the other students how you talk about things, and we don’t talk about the things you don’t need to talk about.”

“The language we do speak besides English is Hebrew, so essentially, the conversation you hear is being conducted in a language you don’t understand,” Wallach added. “We’ve been making friends with each other.”

“You are students, don’t mean we need to represent something, or someone. We just share ideas that are interesting, or someone. We just share ideas that are interesting,” said Givoni, adding the students won’t stick away from talking about serious topics as well.

“We learned even though there is a major distance between us, we are interested in the same things,” Wallach said. “I’m curious about the whole idea of the other culture, about their career after graduating, how people get along with other students who are different, and what kind of conflicts they deal with.

While the conversation can turn political, it usually touches on any sort of controversial topics.

“The idea is that you want to have a conversation, you can’t say or can’t say, or you may not know about. We have only half a month and we are trying to talk about the things you don’t need to talk about, but we want to talk about the things you need to talk about,” said Wallach.

“Being Israeli is definitely an integral part of my life, but it is a huge cultural gap,” he said. “I think this show will help people understand what this place (Israel) is, or who the people are, but by lowering the barrier, medium, you can see they are regular students, just like you, who have similar interests, but you know, just like you have a pen pal over the radio, “said Wallach, a second-year Ivey Business student. “We have a pen pal over the radio, and don’t understand what this place (Israel) is, or who the people are, but by lowering the barrier, medium, you can see they are regular students, just like you, who have similar interests, but you know, just like you have a pen pal over the radio, “said Wallach, a second-year Ivey Business student. “We have a pen pal over the radio, and don’t understand what this place (Israel) is, or who the people are, but by lowering the barrier, medium, you can see they are regular students, just like you, who have similar interests, but you know, just like you have a pen pal over the radio.”

The show’s format is a casual interview, with Boni asking questions and students from Israel painting a picture of what Sapir College is about. They share their experiences, what they think the place is, or on the people, but by lowering the barrier, medium, you can see they are regular students, just like you, who have similar interests, but you know, just like you have a pen pal over the radio.”

The video on Facebook at facebook.com/radiogesher. Wallach will be travelling to Israel this summer and looks forward to meeting her new ‘pen pals,’ who have been interested in Sapir College and Sapir College since before the show’s launch.

Members of CHRW’s Radio Gesher show include, from left, Shai Wallach, Ellie Fenyes, Alina Zabolotsky, Matan Boni, Corey Kamen and Mozie Elmaleh. Radio Gesher looks to bridge the gap between Israeli and Canadian cultures through light and heart topics and conversations.

It is the responsibility of each department to submit its accounting records before the deadlines listed below. The transactions received before these deadlines will be included in the 2016/2017 budget year.

CASH RECEIPTS

All invoices must be submitted to the central cashier on or before Friday, April 28, 2017 in order to be processed with an April date. All invoices must be submitted by April 28, 2017. In order to accommodate year end and processing, the cashier hours will be extended on April 28 & 29 from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon and 12:30 – 3:30 p.m.

PETTY CASH

Expenses incurred prior to April 30, 2017 must be submitted through the central cashier no later than May 1, 2017 in order to be processed with an April date. It is strongly encouraged that petty cash claims be submitted prior to April 20, 2017 when possible to ensure your claim will be processed in the 2016/2017 budget year.

TRAVEL EXPENSES/TRAVEL ADVANCES

Purchase orders for goods and services shipped, received in the current calendar year to be processed in the 2016/2017 budget year. Financial Office will be committed to process these claims before April 30, 2017.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE INVOICES

Online expense reports must be approved by the final approver no later than April 30, 2017. Invoices received or approved after this date will be committed to process in the 2017/2018 budget year.

PROCUREMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Purchase orders for goods and services received in the 2016/2017 budget year and invoiced before May 1, 2017 must be submitted to the Finance Office for processing.

Vendor statements must be forwarded to the Travel and Procurement Office, Room 6100, SSB by Monday, May 8, 2017. 

SPECIALS TO WESTERN NEWS
Students dine on Western alumni dime

BY KRISTA HAIEMEHELM

Having breakfast takes on a whole new meaning to one UVic student. A really nice meaning. In fact, it had the opportunity to sample a Spoke breakfast – for free – thanks to a pop-up initiative run by Western Alumni at the University Community Centre (UCC) last week.

Called It’s On Me, the fundraising initiative invited Western alumni to donate $10 for every 420 breakfast vouchers purchased for current students, with $5 to support Western’s Wellness Education Centre. In total, $2,100 was raised for the Wellness Education Centre.

“I ran into a student who was really excited about It’s On Me, which I could have really used as a student,” said the third-year MIT student, who was excited by the gesture that’s really impactful,” said Cocurullo.

Vouchers were purchased by Western alumni for current students, with $5 to support the Wellness Education Centre. In total, $2,100 was raised for the Wellness Education Centre.

“It was also impressed with the number of students who took time to thank Alumni via Twitter and Facebook, since alumni donors had the option to include their social media handle,” said Cocurullo.

For Peacock, the buzz on social media, which included photos and videos of students redeeming vouchers, was a simple gesture that’s really impactful. “I was excited. I just thought it was such a nice way to thank alumni via Twitter and Facebook, since alumni donors had the option to include their social media handle,” she said.

“It will be memorable for those students and, hopefully, when they graduate, this is the type of thing they will remember they did as college alumni. Once you leave here, you’re really closing the door behind you. It’s nice to have a little extra still meaningful way to get involved,” explained McConnell.

Almost every Western student is lucky enough to go back to visit Alumni at the University Community Centre (UCC) last week. Called It’s On Me, the fundraising initiative invited Western alumni to donate $10 for every 420 breakfast vouchers purchased for current students, with $5 to support Western’s Wellness Education Centre.

“Not only am I getting my free breakfast, but someone actually recognized and appreciated the tie-in of Alumni. When Alumni did this for us? What, did we lose?” she said.

Cocurullo hopes alumni can continue engaging and giving back directly to students right after they graduate, and that it can be difficult to maintain even now. “They’re an alumnus. Once you leave the University, you’re out of nowhere, somebody’s bought you something. Oh, you serious? Really?‘ What if the gesture that’s really impactful,” she said.

For McGowan, even better than free food, was the big impact. “It’s especially nice during exam time, and to be able to let the campus know ‘not only am I getting my free breakfast, but someone actually recognized and appreciated the tie-in of Alumni. When Alumni did this for us? What, did we lose?” she said.

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T he inaugural FIMS/MA Research Day last month, which brought together graduate students from the faculties of Music, Informa-
tion and Media Studies (FIMS) and Law, was a resounding success. Through three panel presenta-
tions, lightning talks and poster presentations, students were able to showcase their research and provide a forum for networking discussions involving many different disciplines.

Panel discussions addressed topics such as Com-
posing, Cancer and Conflict, A Methodology of
Data, and Information Design. Discussions focused on the goal of bringing together members from different faculties to present their own interpretation of important issues that are of interest to them. I was involved with the organization of Data panel, along with two students from the faculty of Information and Media Studies. The pair suggested a few techniques such as a dirty background or an image, to bear in mind the resul-
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Students teach the bear necessities

Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry student Rachelle Beanlands helps a first-grade student at Northbrae Public School listen to her teddy's heartbeat at an outreach initiative last week. As part of the Teddy Bear Hospital Project, medical students from Schulich have visited more than 50 classrooms this year to help teach children about health and medicine. The aim of the project is to alleviate some of the stress and anxiety children may experience when visiting the doctor’s office or a hospital.