

Sackville River Research by Geography Professor and Students Benefits Community



Dr. Cathy Conrad, Geography with students Derek Schware, Environmental Studies (E) and Killy Sabalish, Geography (G). Photo: iStock photography.

The quantity of sediment in a river indicates the health of the river system. Just ask Dr. Cathy Conrad, a Geography professor at Saint Mary's University who has been monitoring the sediment levels of Sackville River for the past three years.

An increase in sediment levels has serious repercussions on the ecology of a river system. The excess sediment destroys fish habitats and kills adult fish as they find it hard to breathe and difficult to find food. The sediment enables harmful contaminants to be carried downstream easily. From an aesthetic point of view, large amounts of sediment give the Sackville River an unattractive, muddy-colored appearance. Rapid immigration to the Bedford-Sackville area of Halifax has led to an increase in sedimentation of the Sackville River.

Dr. Conrad's research gives her students the opportunity to get involved in hands-on learning that has a direct impact on the surrounding community. "I think it is really important for students to see that the knowledge that they gain in the class-

room can be directly applied to concerns that members of our community have."

On a positive note Dr. Conrad is noticing a gradual decrease in sediment as a result of education and public awareness efforts. The SRA (Sackville River Association) volunteers have spoken at schools and conferences. Public awareness has also been promoted with small gestures, like painting images of fish at catch basins in residential areas, or having the council erect signs naming the river where it was crossed by a road. Sedimentation has also decreased as a result of the installation of digger logs by the SRA. These digger logs are large logs that are installed in freshwater rivers to restore and create fish habitat. They help to clean and oxygenate water as well as producing deep pools and spawning beds.

Welcome from the Dean of Arts



Photo: Sandra Fild

This past year has been a time of celebration at Saint Mary's as the University marked its 200th anniversary. I was delighted to be able to join the Faculty of Arts at this milestone in its history. Since taking up my duties in

May, 2002, I have enjoyed working with the vibrant and growing community of faculty, staff, students and graduates. In keeping with the spirit of celebration, this issue of *Smarts* features stories about some recent accomplishments in the Faculty of Arts.

It is widely recognized in the Faculty of Arts that learning takes place both inside and outside the classroom. Several profiles of students pursuing BA degrees open windows on the dynamic learning environment available at Saint Mary's. These students tell of rich learning experiences made possible by professors who link course work with their research projects or with community outreach initiatives. The reports include student involvement in such real-life projects as environmental monitoring of the Sackville River, an archaeological dig in Africa, a model UN conference, and a video production on philosophic issues. We are proud of our wide-ranging opportunities for experiential learning that involve stu-

dents in both the university and the community.

Opportunities for close student-faculty interaction are a hallmark of the learning environment at Saint Mary's generally, and specifically in the Faculty of Arts. As you read the various student profiles, you cannot help but notice how the personal atmosphere is mentioned again and again. In fact, many of the students credit this feature of their BA experience for their academic and professional success. We are proud of our personalized learning environment and are pleased to showcase the benefits it can bring to students.

A particular honour for the Faculty was the naming of Dr. Peter Twohig to the Canada Research Chair in Atlantic Canada Studies. This program has a long tradition of outstanding scholarship, and this appointment will enhance its strength in the years to come.

As the *Smarts* profiles will show you, the Faculty of Arts is committed to continuing its 200-year tradition of excellence. I encourage you to discover more about our activities, and to become part of the Arts experience.

Dr. Esther E. Enns
Dean of Arts

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The SRA is a group of dedicated community volunteers who contribute time and energy for the betterment of the community. Dr. Conrad tries to instill that same sense of volunteerism in her students by first having them work with the SRA volunteers on the River projects and secondly by having the students volunteer in ways related to their education and earning bonus marks in the process. "It is mutually beneficial; the community groups get more help and the students get a great learning experience that they can also receive credit for," she says. "By working with volunteer groups, students also get access to potential employers. Previous students have ended up with jobs with the



Dr. Cathy Conrad, Geography, with honours student Jenelle Semper. Photo: iStock photography.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment Canada, Nova Scotia Power and various research internships."

"... As institutions of higher education, I feel that we have a great service to provide to members of the community", says Dr. Conrad.

"That's why I incorporate community-based questions and concerns

into my teaching and my research. I can not think of anything more fulfilling than to ask a community group what their biggest questions are, and then set out to try and help answer those questions. On the other side of the coin, members of the community have a wealth of knowledge that faculty and students can equally learn from."



Saint Mary's Leaves Indelible Mark

Having acquired a theoretical knowledge of politics at Saint Mary's, Lara McGuire is now learning the practice of politics on the front lines. Lara, affectionately

known as "Spud" in Ottawa's political circles, recently campaigned in the New Brunswick provincial election and helped prepare the Liberals in PEI for an election. She also helped generate support in the Atlantic Provinces for Sheila Copps when she was vying for the liberal leadership.

After completing the first year of her degree in her native PEI, she decided she needed to get away from home. She visited the universities in Halifax and "fell in love with Saint Mary's," she says. "I was still looking for a small school but wanted the opportunity to meet new people and live in a new province."

The description of the political science courses in Saint Mary's Academic Calendar led to her decision to major in political science. "They all sounded very interesting, so I decided to give it a shot." When international law and politics courses were introduced at Saint Mary's, Lara enrolled in Courts and Constitutions. The professor encouraged students to "go in our own direction with our individual course work. After

completing that course, I knew I wanted to study international law and I have held firm to this desire ever since."

The sense of community Lara found at Saint Mary's contributed to her overall positive experience. "It was both academic and social," she says. While a student, Lara was busy overseeing the SMU DRAFT Team - an alcohol awareness program on campus that promotes the responsible use of alcohol, as well as working for the Students' Association in her final year. She also held part-time jobs as a research assistant and a teaching assistant. "This gave me the opportunity to get to know my professors at a more intimate level than I otherwise would have." She adds that, "given the small size of the department you end up having the same professors for many of your courses and the same students in those classes which affords people the chance to develop close relationships with professors and peers."

Lara recently worked with Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage, in Ottawa, as an assistant to the Atlantic Region, handling issues of regional importance, attending meetings with other assistants from MP offices and the Prime Minister's Office, and serving as a liaison between MLAs and the Minister. She also volunteered as Atlantic Youth Coordinator for Sheila Copps' leadership campaign. Lara is now a student at the University of Ottawa Law School where she is specializing in international law.

Would-Be Astronomer Turns Literature Buff

Many are familiar with the large dome on top of Saint Mary's high-rise residence building. It's a Halifax landmark and difficult to miss when in the neighborhood. For Kendall Shields, it was the Observatory that led to his decision to attend the University. What's so peculiar about this is that Kendall majored in English not Astronomy.

The Bedford native's original intent was to study astrophysics. "I was convinced that astrophysics was the thing for me, and that made Saint Mary's the place. Saint Mary's also offered me a

nice little scholarship, which sealed the deal. But mostly it was the Observatory."

Funny thing was he ended up taking an entirely different path of study. "My decision to major in English is entirely attributable to one man: Ken Snyder, a now-retired professor of English." As a student in his first-year Introduction to Literature



course, "Professor Snyder was this deeply polarizing, but, to me, irresistible figure. He presented the study of literature not as not just an academic discipline, but as a way of being in the world, a way of thinking critically about the past and present."

Kendall was also impressed with the young faculty in the English department. "The English department was full of brilliant young professors ... It was an exciting place to be, surrounded by these fascinating young scholars, who were exceedingly kind and generous with their time. There was no shortage of people to look up to," he says.

Kendall graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Honors English and is now in his third year of a PhD program in English at the University of Toronto. "The Honors English program at Saint Mary's simply could not have better prepared me for PhD work," he says. He was accepted directly into the PhD program rather than having to complete a Master's program first. "I think this direct admission is attributable to, and a testament to, the quality of the English program at Saint Mary's." After completing his PhD, Kendall hopes to teach.

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ATLANTIC CANADA STUDIES DR. PETER TWOHIG



Research Chair for Atlantic Canada Studies at Saint Mary's

In 2003, the federal government announced a Canada Research Chair in Atlantic Canada Studies for Saint Mary's University. Dr. Peter L. Twohig assumed this new role.

Dr. Twohig is recognized as a brilliant young scholar with impressive research credentials at an early stage in his career. He has developed a broad-based expertise regarding the history of health care in Atlantic Canada. His approach has been to focus on the delivery of health care by understanding how professions in this field are formed and how various health professionals interact. His research has been critical to the debate on health care reform and restructuring.

His research program at Saint Mary's will extend his existing work, producing two new books on health care workers in Atlantic Canada and a history of public health in Nova Scotia. A third project will address the evolution of evi-

dence-based medicine in the context of family practice. Taken together, the three streams of his research will have implications for our understanding of health services and the emergence of the welfare state in Canada.

Students who work with Dr. Twohig will have the unique opportunity of being trained by a distinguished scholar pursuing ground-breaking research in the history of healthcare in Atlantic Canada. They will experience the thrill of asking questions never asked before, learn the skills of research and analysis, and gain insight into medical issues that affect the lives of everyday people.

The Canada Research Chair Program, funded by the Government of Canada, is the most ambitious initiative of its kind in the world. It allows Canadian universities to attract and retain outstanding researchers at the peak of their careers, as well as those whose careers are ready to take off.

ASIAN STUDIES ANGELA HOPPER**Learning About Asia from Different Angles**

Professor Jim Morrison of Saint Mary's Asian Studies program believes the best way to learn about Asia is by using a multi-disciplinary approach.

That is by having professors from various disciplines, geography, political science, history to name a few, who also have a special interest in Asian Studies to teach students about Asia from their own unique perspective.

Commerce student Angela Hopper agrees. Currently completing a double major in Marketing and Global Business Management, Angela became interested in the Asian Studies approach after two years of Chinese language classes. "I enjoyed these classes so much that I continued on taking other classes with the Asian Studies program as free electives," she says.

Dr. Morrison says the multidisciplinary approach is modeled after other similar programs at the University like the Atlantic Canada Studies program. By choosing a specific theme like immigration or women for instance and then looking at the theme through different academic disciplines, students are able to work with the various experts on campus. "This prepares the student for the reality of a part of the world that we can examine from a variety of perspectives," he says. "So



if a student is planning on a diplomatic career, a business career, or to teach English in Asia, they will be well equipped to have a deeper appreciation for the culture, language and politics of this part of the world."

Angela first learned about the program from a fellow Commerce student who was also taking a course in the Asian Studies program. "I was particularly interested in this field of study because the vast majority of the world is of Asian descent, and also because I find Asian values and culture extremely fascinating."

She says when she began in the program, she felt intimidated because she had never traveled to Asia and knew little about this part of the world. "However, the wonderful thing about the Asian Studies program is that you don't have to have a vast amount of Asian experience to be welcome in the program by the faculty and students," she says.

"By the end of my last Asian course, I was among the top in my class. This was achieved primarily because of the support I received from the students and professors in the program. I must add that Dr. Morrison is truly the heart of the program. He is a very wise and approachable man ... after almost 40 SMU courses; he is my favorite professor by far!"

ANTHROPOLOGY ANDREA RICHARDSON**Unearthing the Unknown**

Imagine having the opportunity to join an international team of archaeologists on a dig in Africa. That's what happened to Andrea Richardson, a graduate of Saint Mary's anthropology department.

Andrea recently joined an international team of researchers in Northern Cameroon. The team included a conservator, illustrator, anthropologists, archaeologists and local people from the area. Andrea took part in the excavation of two archaeological sites in the Mandara Mountains. The main purpose of the excavations was to clear rubble so they could better understand the architecture of the sites which included stone platforms, staircases, passages and terraces. They also collected and studied pottery, as well as iron and copper artifacts.

"What I love most about my field is the exploration of the unknown. Every time that an archaeologist starts a new project, he or she learns something new about the period and place of study, and about the people there in the past," she says.

Originally from Oyster Pond on Nova Scotia's eastern shore, her decision to attend Saint Mary's was an easy one. The Anthropology department offered all the courses she was interested in, including archaeology, physical anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and social and cultural anthropology. "I knew I wanted to study one of



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these topics, and that I wanted experience in all of them." As well, there was the added bonus that Saint Mary's location allowed her to save money by living at home.

She gives the Anthropology program high marks. "The professors have a good understanding of the topics they teach, and their enthusiasm for their subject shows. The program covers a broad range of topics, given that the department

is quite small," says Andrea. "The small department is a benefit as well. The small class sizes in the upper level, allow you to ask questions and to get to know the other students as well as the professors."

Andrea is now completing a Master of Arts at the University of Calgary and would someday like to complete a PhD so she can teach anthropology or archaeology in the future.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE

Drama Professor Receives University's Highest Honors for Teaching

Dr. Janet Hill, professor of English, is this year's winner of the Reverend William A. Stewart, SJ, Medal for Excellence in Teaching. The award recognizes faculty members who have made an extraordinary contribution to the education of Saint Mary's students through teaching in the University's tradition of quality undergraduate education.

"I really am deeply honoured personally. I spend a great deal of time thinking about how learning takes place and how best to facilitate it," says Dr. Hill. "It's nice to feel that it's mattered." Dr. Hill began teaching at Saint Mary's in 1998 as an assistant professor of English. As to why she loves teaching, she says: "There are many reasons and they change constantly. ... I like working in something that demands that I keep learning and responding to new situations. Because I'm interacting with students, I'm always discovering new ways to look at my subject and at how communication takes place. Everything is dynamic and under constant review. I often discard approaches that were successful in the past and then no longer work for me or the students."



In the summer of 2001, together with her colleague, Dr. Goran Stanivukovic, Dr. Hill developed a special topics course called "Shakespeare in Stratford-upon-Avon." This course includes a trip to England where students experience Shakespeare performed by professional actors in Shakespeare

country. "I'm really excited by my subject (drama) and can't think of anything better than having a job which requires me to talk about it with other people. Talking about drama to them extends my own thinking; listening to students does so too, frequently challenging me to re-think," says Dr. Hill.

"Another challenge that I enjoy and believe to be vital is trying to establish a class as a learning community - a genuine one, not faked. The students do a great deal of talking to one another, and I try to move around as much as possible to speak individually to students. I believe that learning has to be genuinely collaborative, transactional. Striking a balance between encouraging students to speak out of their individual experience and stimulating them to expand beyond their own immediate experience is difficult, but also challenging. Both need to happen. When I can tell that it has, it's eminently satisfying."

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UN MODEL CONFERENCE

Political Science Students Participate in UN Model Conference in New York

In April 2003, while most students were busy studying for their exams, a delegation of Saint Mary's students traveled to New York City to participate in a five day National Model United Nations (NMUN) conference. The annual conference is one of the largest of its kind, bringing together some 3,000 students from universities and colleges around the world. Students experienced first hand the challenges and rewards of running the UN system accompanied by their academic advisor, Dr. Marc Doucet of Saint Mary's Political Science department. The Saint Mary's delegation, the only delegation from Nova Scotia in attendance, proudly represented the Republic of Paraguay on several UN committees. Working late into the evening, SMU delegates debated issues, drafted working papers, formulated resolutions, endured interminable voting procedures, and even squeezed in some sightseeing between committee sessions!

Preparations to attend the conference began in September 2002 when the idea was first proposed

to students registered in the International Organization course. Students formed the SMU Model UN Society (SMUMUNS) and began organizing various fundraising activities. A smaller delegation of five was sent to the Canadian International Model UN (CANIMUN) conference in Ottawa in March to gain some practical experience and help the larger group prepare for New York. The group received strong financial support from the administration at Saint Mary's. The students also benefited from an external travel grant provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the UN Association in Canada. Without this broad support participation in this unique international event would not have been possible.

The 2002-03 SMUMUNS delegation included: Katherine Baillie, Jarret Boon, Jesse Cooper, Daniel Cosman, Lori Curtis, Marie Frenette, Keely Hollis, Stephanie Hughes, Ozlem Metinoglu, Kristin O'Toole, Claire Robinson, Rayna Sanford, Sarah Sweeney and Matt Wells.

PHILOSOPHY ERIC BOUDREAU/JOE MALONEY

Philosophy on the Big Screen

When Eric Boudreau and Joe Maloney decided on an alternative format to the usual class presentation style, little

did they know the impact that their decision would have on their eventual career paths. What started as a video presentation for a metaphysics class at Saint Mary's has become their start in the movie business.

The pair of philosophy students embarked on their ambitious project for a seminar-style class tackling the subject of "knowledge". Their goal was to make the heavy philosophical subject matter fun. "Our film was philosophy and comedy, so even those who aren't hardcore philosophers would be entertained," says Eric.

The duo wrote the script in March, shot the entire film in four days - a challenging schedule for even the most seasoned producers. "We were running out of time....and wow was that a hectic four days! We edited the movie the night before

the premiere and then had to run to the computer store for help to get it onto a dvd. Showtime was 4 o'clock, and at 2:30 we still weren't done ... Anyway, it did get done in time and we showed 'The Quest for Knowledge' to our class that afternoon."

Eric says that after all the time and money they had invested in the project, he was really hoping people would like it. "But I couldn't have dreamed of how well it went over! We just blew people away, my professor Shelagh, [Crooks] in particular. It went so well that we had to have a second viewing." Dr. Crooks and Dr. Peter March thought that the video would have an audience beyond Saint Mary's. "They thought that our style and humour worked very well. And we loved doing it. It was by far one of the busiest weeks of my life, but it was also one of the most fun weeks I have spent," says Eric.

So Eric and Joe are in the process of producing another film. They say that this will give them a chance to iron out the mistakes they made in their first video and they plan on doing some market research with their second film at universities across the Maritimes.



Photo: Jennie Stevens



Photo: Sander Fiala

ARTS PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE

Bachelor of Arts (Honours)	French
Bachelor of Arts (Major)	Geography
Bachelor of Arts (General)	German
Master of Arts – Atlantic Canada Studies,	Hispanic Studies
Criminology, History,	History
International Development Studies, Philosophy and Women's Studies	International Development Studies
Majors	Irish Studies
Anthropology	Linguistics
Asian Studies	Mathematics
Atlantic Canada Studies	Philosophy
Classics	Political Science
Criminology	Psychology
Economics	Religious Studies
English	Sociology
	Women's Studies

smarts facts

- * Saint Mary's has the largest Arts Faculty in Nova Scotia.
- * At Saint Mary's you can take an Arts degree while minoring in Business or the Sciences.
- * The 20-credit program provides added program diversity.
- * Metro inter-university programs allow you to draw on the best resources local universities have to offer. Programs are available in Film Studies, Linguistics and Women's Studies.
- * Saint Mary's is the only University in Canada where you can complete an undergraduate degree in Irish Studies.
- * Saint Mary's has the only stand-alone Criminology program in Atlantic Canada, which includes the Bachelor, Honours, Graduate Diploma and Master's.
- * The Creative Writing program enables students to have their work published in a University publication.
- * Cultural life on campus includes an Art Gallery, a performing arts series, the Saint Mary's Drama Society, a Writer-in-Residence reading, and a Public Philosophy Lecture Series.
- * Saint Mary's has the only Asian Studies program in Atlantic Canada.
- * Saint Mary's is the first Canadian university to offer a Shakespeare course at Stratford-upon-Avon,

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