



UOFR REPORT

P2 VARSITY SPORTS

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P3 PRIVACY COURSE

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Play commissioned for graduating class

The Theatre Department's graduating acting class received a rare educational opportunity when the play *Radiant Boy* was commissioned for them.

The department has a long-standing commitment to developing new work through script development and various faculty research projects; however, this is the first time it has commissioned a play.

The creator, Daniel Macdonald, is an award-winning playwright and English teacher at Miller Comprehensive High School. For Wes Pearce, head of the Theatre Department, Macdonald's background was invaluable because it contributed to the play's success in engaging students and reflecting what the department wanted to do pedagogically. It also presented the opportunity to



Theatre Department actors (L to R) Kaitlyn Semple, Kate Herriot, Kyle Markewich and Judy Wensel rehearse a scene from *Radiant Boy*, a new play by local playwright Daniel Macdonald, which runs Wednesday, March 11 through Saturday, March 14.

simply try something new.

"Even the rehearsal process is a bit different because there is no precedent," says Pearce.

"There is no established way. As an actor you have to become much more giving because you are all stumbling

through the dark together. No one has a preconceived notion of how this should be, which is much different than doing

Hamlet or Lear, where the director knows the story you are going to tell and how everyone is going to work together."

Over the last two years, Macdonald was able to craft a piece that challenged each actor's individual abilities. Lead actor Kyle Markewich, for example, plays the character of Geoffrey, who ages from a child to an adult on stage. The other three actors – Kaitlyn Semple, Judy Wensel and Kate Heriot – play the remaining 20 characters in the story.

"It gives them a chance to change characters very quickly and still make it truthful, honest and convincing as an acting exercise, and we haven't done a lot of that," said Pearce. "We've had good character-driven

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INVITATION

Your voice is important as the University of Regina's new strategic plan is prepared. We seek your vision for the future of your University. Please join President Vianne Timmons and members of the facilitation team for open consultations as part of the University of Regina's Strategic Planning initiative.

Open Consultation with the General Community: Wednesday, March 18, 2009 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Main Floor Lecture Hall Research and Innovation Centre (next to Lab Building)

Open Consultation with the University Community: Monday, March 23, 2009 12 Noon to 1:15 p.m.

Administration-Humanities Pit

To find out more, and to complete a Strategic Planning survey, please visit <http://www.uregina.ca/home/strategic/>

 UNIVERSITY OF
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India strives for profitable farming

Last summer Bhabani Panigrahy was one of the first U of R students to benefit from the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Students for Development program, which pairs Canadian university students with partners in developing countries for the purpose of building governance capacity.

Through the program, Panigrahy – an engineering graduate student – returned to his birthplace of Orissa, India to learn more about the plight of its farmers.

"Considering that nearly 70 per cent of India still lives in villages, agricultural growth will continue to be the engine of broad-based economic growth and development as well as natural resource conservation, leave alone food security and poverty alleviation," says Panigrahy.

"It is quite distressing that the farmers feel (they are) at the lowest rung in the social hierarchy. It will be an important task to bring back the glory and self-respect of the farming community. There are no policy tools that can achieve this directly. However, putting the agriculture sector on a better path and resurrecting its importance across the sectors will go a long way in making farming a respectable profession."

During his month-long trip Panigrahy networked with professionals at the Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), the Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET) and the Agriculture Promotion and Investment Corporation of Orissa Ltd. (India).

He also met with representatives from various govern-



Engineering graduate student Bhabani Panigrahy went to Orissa, India last summer as part of the Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) Students for Development program.

ment and non-government agencies, financial institutions, industry and farmers.

"There are numerous studies and proposed models for agricultural development, but I visited farmers and entrepreneurs with value-added agricultural interests to determine their needs and perspectives."

He discovered that the issues surrounding the decline

in Orissa's farming sector are complex. Youth are leaving the farms for technology jobs in the cities and many of the remaining farmers subsist by working very small plots of land with outdated technology.

One of the many places Panigrahy visited was a small-scale perfume-making operation in the village of

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Writ Large

Jordan McFarlen
Student athlete
Men's basketball team

As a fourth-year member of the University of Regina men's basketball team and a student in the Faculty of Education, I have been fortunate enough to experience many of the wonders that are involved with participating in Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). The experience has allowed me to see first hand the many positive things that sport can bring to a university campus and local community.

After playing basketball competitively in high school, I was recruited to play for the U of R Cougars. This meant the opportunity to continue playing the sport that I love at a high level while working toward a degree. Growing up I always viewed the U of R athletes as role models and now I have the opportunity to fill that same role for others.

For those who are not familiar with the CIS, it is the athletic association under which all Canadian university athletic teams participate. The CIS is split into four regions: Canada West, Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic. This allows student-athletes from across the country to compete in the best athletic facilities our nation has to offer while studying at the finest academic institutions.

Participation in the CIS is a privilege for student-athletes. They embody the values of the university and realize their role as ambassadors of the school when competing across the country and interacting in the community. Participation also means being respectful and hard working, as well as understanding the importance of balancing education and sport.

Most importantly the CIS is about community. In the community athletes are positive role models to the youth who look up to them. Athletes and coaches often visit local schools to promote physical activity and healthy living. Personally, I find the school visits are very enjoyable. Recently I was able to spend some time with a local elementary school basketball player who has cerebral palsy. After giving him some advice on improving his jump shot, we talked about teamwork and its importance not only in sport but in life. Interactions such as this play a powerful role in the CIS experience.

Participation in the CIS is also about competing in front of family, friends, fellow students, staff, and members of the local community. The sport allows for people to get together and support athletes who are playing for the love of the game and not for monetary gains. Games and competitions become community events where all fans come together in support of their local team, school, and city.

The CIS experience is one that I enjoy immensely. It has allowed me to travel to many different parts of our country and to connect with some extraordinary people. Sport is just one aspect of the university experience but a very enjoyable and exciting aspect for many.

Writ Large is written by campus leaders and is intended to challenge readers to engage with and learn about the various 'parts' that make up the wider University of Regina community and connect us to the world. If you have a topic suggestion for Writ Large, please e-mail UofR.Report@uregina.ca and include your contact information. Please put "U of R Report" in the e-mail subject line.

- from page 1 *India*

Berhampur. The traditional methods the company uses to make its products require it to spend approximately \$200 to produce \$250 worth of perfume.

"This is simply not practical for the industry or its workers," says Panigrahy. "If the industry could afford to implement current cooling technology, a substantial increase in production would result as the labourers could spend more time on other processing steps. As this new technology will be expensive, the industry requires some assistance in the form of loans or development aid."

The Orissa government is helping the agriculture sector by implementing new policies to promote commercial agriculture, the agro-industry and the food processing industry, says Panigrahy. Some of the incentives it is providing include capital investment subsidies and sales tax exemptions. Money is also being spent to develop organic farming.

Panigrahy hopes that Orissa can work with Saskatchewan to transfer technologies, create collaborations and build new industries in India.

- from page 1 *Play*

plays where they've had great story arcs and characters have grown. But, multiple characters in an ensemble is something a lot of playwrights do these days, so it's important to be able to do that as well – to be able to change character mid-stream, mid-sentence and become another character completely."

Actor Judy Wensel has appreciated the challenge of multiple roles.

"We first met these characters nearly a year ago – at our first table read," explained Wensel. "So, we have had the opportunity to witness their development as Dan has written them over the last several months. In a way it's like we've been with these characters their entire lives. There are layers built into our characters, because we have known so many different versions of them through each draft of the play."



Small-scale operations such as this perfume-making company are one of the ways people in the village of Berhampur, India make a living. Top: Separating liquid from kewda flowers. Bottom: Attaching the top of a perfume pot to its base using low-tech methods.

- from page 1 *Play*

Commissioning a new play also provided the advantage of having the playwright work with the actors, offering commentary and the flexibility to change a scene if it wasn't working well.

"Being apart of this workshop process is the best thing that has come out of fourth year so far," said Markewich. "It is very different from the normal rehearsal process because the writer is in the room, and especially with Dan, you are able to discuss and talk about the reasoning behind the writing. Sometimes in that process Dan and the rest of us will begin to see things that will not work out, and so he will go away and change them. I am glad to have been a part of it, as it is something to the left of what I will encounter in a typical rehearsal situation, and being involved in anything different and new is wonderful in my final year."

Macdonald's flexibility in writing the play added to students' learning experience.

"I think everyone feels quite valued and impressed that Daniel is willing to take those ideas and see how they work and where they go," said Pearce. "That takes a certain openness because you are not really working alone. Playwrights tend to work alone a lot, and showing work is hard when it's not finished and you know it's not where it should be. So, to be able to take that feedback and make something with it is a really great opportunity for students – not only to see that their ideas sometimes get incorporated but also that openness as an artist is really important."

Radiant Boy opens on Wednesday, March 11 and plays until Saturday, March 14. All performances start at 7:30 p.m. in the University Theatre in the Riddell Centre.

Director of Communications:
Manager of Internal Communications:

Paul Corns

Therese Stecyk

Communications Officer:

Shanan Sorochynski

U of R Photography

Department

Bhabani Panigrahy

Natalie Tomczak

Distribution: Promoting responsible management of the world's forests



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Comics worthy of academic attention

Visual Arts professor Gail Chin and French professor Sylvain Rheault have organized the city's first academic conference about comics to show how these works have evolved far past the peanut butter-covered books most adults remember loving as children.

The shift in the perception of comics started in the 1980s with work such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, a comic that told the story of the author's parents surviving the Holocaust. It received an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and a Pulitzer Prize in 1982.

"That was a revelation – that comics had the same worth as a literary book," said Rheault, who teaches a course about comics in the French Department. "Literature can tell you a lot about the culture of the people and even more so with comics because it's not only the content that is connected but also the visual aspect of art."

Chin agrees and sees comics as an integral part of

the visual culture of Asia. She felt that not including them in her Asian art history course would mean neglecting a prominent part of its history.

"In Japan, the comic was never just a child's art in the way it was in North America and Europe," explained Chin. "The word 'manga' dates back to the 19th century. An artist named Hoausai coined the term. It means comical pictures. Comics in Asia weren't originally for children. Hoausai's comical drawings were meant for adults."

"Any foreigner who goes to Japan knows that on all the subways what the salarymen and the middle-aged housewives are reading are generally comics. Even if it's a housewife kind of magazine, with recipes and things like that, there is usually a comic section."

One thing Chin likes about comics is the diversity of the subject matter. While there are comics about superheroes, there are many more about social problems, the political underground and



(L to R) Comic conference organizers Sylvain Rheault and Gail Chin peek out from behind some of their favourite comic books.

people's everyday lives. One of her favourites is a Japanese series called OL or Office Lady.

"They are done with women in mind," explains Chin. "For example, a lot of them are romances versus violence. And I'm interested in them because they tell you so much about Japanese women. So that's what I try to collect whenever I go to Japan. I try to get them from the train kiosk."

The inspiration to hold an academic conference about comics came from *Harry Potter and the Meeting of the Queen City Muggles*, a one-day conference held last May.

"We owe a big debt to [English professors] Susan Johnston and Marcel DeCoste because they organized it and they were really pioneers in what they do," said Rheault. "They wanted to bring together the general public with the academics and that is the formula

we are copying. Without their exploration, the conference we are doing now would not be."

The Conference on Comics will be held May 2 and is sponsored by the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Fine Arts, in association with the Humanities Research Institute and the Centre for Continuing Education.

For more information, contact Gail Chin by telephone at (306) 585-5515 or email at gail.chin@uregina.ca

Employees encouraged to take online privacy course

University employees are encouraged to take a free online course offered by Saskatchewan Justice to familiarize themselves with the Province's privacy legislation.

There are a number of scenarios where this kind of training can be useful. Is it alright, for example, for a professor to ask students interested in participating in a project to add their name, U of R student number and phone number to a sign-up sheet that, for the sake of convenience, the professor has posted on his or her office door?

What does a staff member do in a situation where a parent, concerned about how their son or daughter is doing at university, phones the Registrar's Office or the administration, asking for information?

Should a faculty member request a student file to help them prepare a letter of reference for that student who is applying to grad school?

In all three examples – even with the best of inten-

tions – the people involved are bumping up against the provisions of the Province's Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. In each case information that is considered personal under the legislation is being shared publicly, explains Annette Revet, University Secretary and the person designated by the University's Board of Governors to administer the legislation on campus.

"In the example of the concerned parent, an employee could be stepping over the line even by confirming that a student is attending the university," Revet states. "If that seems a bit extreme, it may be, but that's why it is important to understand the law. We are so diverse," she observes. "We have personal information on two-year-olds in day care to elderly clients attending the Schwann Centre. We're not like a K-to-12 school."

Revet is concerned that employees who are not familiar with the limits in the legis-

lation may be overly restrictive or be uneasy about what to do when a situation arises that requires releasing personal information. For this reason she welcomes the news that Saskatchewan Justice has started offering this free online course for employees who need to know more about how to comply with the law or who need a quick refresher.

The course is broken into modules and explains different aspects of the legislation. This gives users the option of stopping at any time and resuming the course again later. Revet estimates that it takes about 90 minutes to complete the entire course.

Employees can also provide their feedback on an assessment page, and then print it as a record of having completed the course. As an incentive, every employee who completes the course by March 31 can have their name entered to win a U of R gift basket of prizes.

Because the course is an overview it may not answer



University Secretary Annette Revet serves as a resource for employees with questions about privacy issues and requests for information.

every question people have, Revet adds.

"If responding to a request for information that doesn't feel right, or you're unsure of, trust your instincts and give me a call," Revet advises. "I will allay your fears, and we'll look further into the request. The University has a good relationship with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, so we can go there for more advice."

The online course can be accessed by scrolling to the

bottom of the web page <http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/privacyLAC>. Links to the Local Authority Freedom on Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the University of Regina's information and privacy policy are available through the University Secretariat website at: www.uregina.ca/presoff/secretary/privacy.shtml

If you have any questions about the course or the University's information and protection of privacy policy contact Revet at 585-5545.

Budget challenge softened by prudent decisions

The University is benefiting from prudent decisions made over the last few years, as it prepares a new budget to address significant funding challenges in the coming year.

Conservative budgeting practices in the past shielded the University to some degree from serious short-term consequences due to the collapse of the markets, according to Dave Button, vice-president (administration).

The U of R does not depend on endowments and general investments to fund the operating budget as heavily as some universities, notes Button. As a result, the market collapse will only affect that source of funding to the operating budget by approximately \$125,000.

"We have an aversion to taking 'soft money' to fund ongoing expenses," said Button. "That prudent budget practice of the past has paid dividends during this economic downturn. While some other universities have significant base budget money coming from that source, we don't, so we are protected that way."

The University also braced itself for bad years by only spending five per cent of endowments per year on scholarships and bursaries. In years when those investments yielded returns in excess of five per cent, the money was reinvested to grow the endowment.

The University's investment in energy-saving improvements in both its infrastructure and its operations has also meant estimated savings of \$500,000 to \$750,000 this year, Button noted. As well, a joint project with the Students' Union to purchase a new burner tip for the University's main boiler is expected to result in savings of approximately \$35,000 next year.

Also, in preparing this year's budget, the University took a new approach. Instead of budget managers simply presenting to the central budget committee, they now present to a functional grouping of their peers in each of the areas of academic, administration, research and external relations. The functional groupings rank and prioritize the needs of their units and then report those conclusions to the budget committee.

"I think people see (the change in process) as a more comprehensive and better way to engage and get the right priorities determined by the right people – by the people most knowledgeable in the area," said Button. "Who better than the academic experts around this University to rate and review academic priorities?"

However, despite prudent budgeting, to remain a competitive institution, the University will still need to



Conservative budgeting practices have helped shield the University's scholarships and bursaries from the recent collapse of the market this year.

ask the provincial government this year for a 10.2 per cent (\$8.01 million) increase to the operating grant. It is also asking for one per cent (\$788,000) over and above this amount for special initiatives related to recruitment and retention, as well as one per cent for advancement initiatives in marketing, communications and fundraising.

The total operating grant request is for \$89.27 million,

an increase of 12.2 per cent

over last year.

"When we add up all the components of running a University layered on top of the current fiscal environment and all of the different assumptions and input measurements

that go into calculating the need, we are only asking for the amount of money required to remain a quality institution and competitive with our peers, without significantly increasing tuition fees,"

Button said.

One of the most significant challenges the University faces is a 15 per cent decline in tuition revenue – \$6 million – over the last four years due to declining enrolment. While it will make every attempt to stabilize the enrolment declines, prudent management requires it to budget for a 1.5 per cent decline for 2009-10.

As part of its overall submission to the government, the University is recommending an

additional increase of 4.8 per cent in the base operating grant to allow for a managed tuition increase, which would be equal to the provincial rate of consumer price inflation plus two percentage points.

According to Button, this keeps the combined tuition and fee costs for University of Regina students among the lowest in the country.

Some key challenges the budget must address are increased salary costs, general inflation, and the devalued Canadian dollar, which has weakened the University's buying power for things such as library acquisitions.

(end note)

Quality facilities for students remain a priority

Deferred maintenance, along with new projects that support learning and teaching, are at the top of the needs list contained in the University's capital funding request to the provincial government.

There is a significant ongoing shortfall in the sustaining capital funding level, according to Dave Button, vice-president (administration).

Nearly 10 years ago the Province commissioned a study by Edward DesRosiers which recommended that universities should spend "at the lowest level of prudence" at least 1.3 per cent of a facility's replacement value on building maintenance. As the cost of maintenance has become inflated over the years, the provincial government's funding commitment has now decreased to approximately

0.86 percent of replacement value, says Button.

To remain prudent, despite not receiving the funding from government, the University has chosen to borrow money to maintain its facilities, resulting in \$9.4 million in capital debt which is paid from its annual sustaining capital grant.

The University is asking the Province to increase its sustaining capital grant to \$16.9 million from the approximately \$7.02 million it currently receives, to bring funding up to the nationally recommended 1.3 per cent (\$1.3 billion) of replacement value.

"Our facilities are in better shape than most other (universities) but we can't get complacent," Button says. "Maintaining good standards are critical to create a quality place to live,

work and study. It's also an important recruitment tool. It's a proven fact that student recruitment and retention are directly related to the quality of the facilities and services and so we must continue to invest in our facilities to keep them at their high level."

The University has also identified \$10 million worth of shovel-ready projects it could proceed with in response to an immediate stimulus package from the government including building system upgrades to College West and the Lab Building.

The University would also like to see movement on two key capital projects that support the learning and teaching mission: a student learning commons (\$70 million) and a professional programs complex (\$52 million).



The University strives to meet a high standard with both the services and facilities it provides in order to attract and retain students.

The Māmawihitowikamik: Assembly Hall and Student Learning Commons would consist of a 140,000-square-foot addition to the south side of the Dr. John Archer Library building. The design would reflect the values and culture of Aboriginal communities as well as consolidate student services on campus. The upper floors would provide more space for library resources, work and collaboration areas for individuals

and groups, and a modern conference centre.

The proposed professional programs complex would be comprised of a four-storey, 120,000-square-foot addition to the Education Building and would provide additional space for programs in the faculties of Business Administration, Education, Fine Arts, Engineering, Social Work and the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGSPP).