



Faculty explores the art of change

Victor Hugo's advice to "Change your leaves; keep intact your roots" might well describe the goals of the plan laid for the future of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Regina.

Last year, recognizing that the University and the society it serves are changing, the faculty completed an action plan designed to guide it through the next five years. Its overall aim is to ensure the liberal arts remain a leader within the University and in the many communities that surround it.

"The Faculty of Arts is reaching out to a more diverse student population; particularly mature, Indigenous and international students," says arts dean Robin Fisher. Trends indicate that the number of students graduating from high school will drop significantly over the next five years, while the number and proportion of First Nations students will increase. "Our partnership with the First Nations University of Canada will be crucial here, and we're developing some joint programs with them," Fisher says.

At the same time, the U of R is making a concerted effort to attract students from other

countries, and is reaching out in new ways to support students on and off-campus. For example, the faculty is implementing initiatives to support high school graduates in the transition to University, and when they arrive on campus. This includes orientation sessions at the beginning of the school year and courses such as English 100, UNIV 100 and UNIV 110, which are designed to help students upgrade their writing skills and flourish in the University environment. "It's important to support students at this stage, because it is wasteful to have students come to the University and not succeed," Fisher says.

One aspect of this supportive approach is a pilot project which enables qualifying students at Winston Knoll Collegiate to get a taste of the course workload while studying an introductory course in psychology for credit, in their home classroom. The U of R is also collaborating with Saskatchewan Institution of Applied Science and Technology (SIAT) and the regional colleges to deliver an increasing number of face-to-face, televised and online courses to first-year and mature students across southern

Saskatchewan.

The action plan also addresses the importance of the liberal arts (the faculty encompasses 19 departments ranging from anthropology to women's studies) in doing research that benefits society. Two faculty members are involved in projects that recently received grants of \$2.5 million and \$1 million, demonstrating that arts faculties continue to attract large grants at a time when federal granting agencies have shifted their focus to the sciences and the innovation agenda.

Finally, there's the need to take the results of the research out into the community. This includes traditional channels such as guest lectures and conferences, as well as lunch hour presentations by faculty members at Roca Jack's coffee house in downtown Regina. The Faculty has also developed a "Who Can I Call?" guide listing faculty members and their areas of expertise for anyone looking for an answer to difficult questions.

More information about the Faculty of Arts and the Experts Guide is available at: <http://www.uregina.ca/arts/>.



Arts dean Robin Fisher: "Reaching out to a more diverse student population."

Hi-tech microscope unlocks the secrets of rocks

"Each type of rock and mineral has a different signature, a different chemical makeup," explains Dr. Ian Coulson, an assistant professor of geology at the U of R.

And magnified 100,000 times, those differences between one rock and another can become startlingly apparent.

Differentiating rocks is just one of many uses to which the geology department's latest acquisition can be put. The JSM-6360 scanning electron microscope is not the kind of microscope you're not likely to find under your Christmas tree. Housed in an air-conditioned and air-filtered "clean room," it sits on a modest desk in the geology research complex in the basement of College West. Along with its companion hardware — the attached cathodoluminescence system that collects and displays luminescent images — it can display images of objects magnified anywhere from five to 300,000 times the original size.

An instrument like that is a powerful tool for unlocking geological secrets, says Coulson, but it's hardly a single-purpose piece of hardware. It can provide forensic investigators with evidence about shell casings, hair or clothing; yield images of medical or bio-

logical samples for pharmaceutical researchers; show engineers the structure of porous rocks where oil and natural gas are often found; or even plumb the secrets of the soil being excavated from the bottom of Wascana Lake.

"We also have some biology students looking at the growth of fungi under the microscope," says Coulson, "but you have to be careful. You're bombarding the samples with electrons, and some organic samples could be damaged."

Not that geological subjects are any less intriguing than Wascana mud. Coulson hasn't had a chance to examine any of the diamonds found in explorations near Prince Albert, but he describes diamonds as "some of the best luminescent materials in the world. Put a diamond under the microscope and you can tell where it came from by its luminescent characteristics."

Other resource-based industries have expressed interest in using the microscope to study possible mineral-bearing formations in Saskatchewan, and Coulson also anticipates hiring a researcher who would use the scope to develop ways of cleaning up contaminated mine sites in northern Saskatchewan.

The microscope and its attachments cost a bit

more than \$500,000, which was paid for from the Faculty of Science research fund, the Canada Fund for Innovation and a grant from the provincial government. Users are charged an hourly rate on a cost-recovery basis.

Surprisingly, perhaps, it's relatively easy to learn how to operate the microscope. "I teach a second-year course in mineralogy," Coulson says, "and after two or three hours of training on using the microscope, the students are ready to move onto more detailed work. Students will do a lot of the work on the research projects we have lined up."

As for Coulson himself, his research interests include mineralogy and vulcanology, the study of volcanoes. While volcanoes are in short supply in Saskatchewan, Coulson has samples he collected during a field trip last summer to Mount Etna, a volcano in Italy, and he's curious to see what they can tell him about the most recent eruptions that took place in early 2003.

You can view the JEOL JSM-6360 and other equipment used by the Department of Geology at: <http://www.uregina.ca/geology/facilities.htm>

CAMPUS LIFE CALENDAR

Wed., Jan. 14 — 12 p.m.
Saskatchewan Instructional Development & Research Unit seminar
"Education and Industry"
Speaker: Conrad Pura
Rm. 215, Education Bldg.
Info: 585-4309

Wed., Jan. 14 — 4 p.m.
Sociology seminar
"Analog Theory, Analog Astronomy & Analog Sociology: Metatheory for the Natural and Social Sciences"
Speaker: Robert Biezanski
Rm. 420, Classroom Bldg.
Info: 585-4443

Fri., Jan. 16 — 4 p.m.
History colloquium
"Writing Saskatchewan Women"
Speaker: Ann LeGer-Anderson
Rm. 349, Administration-Humanities Bldg.
Info: 585-4209

Fri., Jan. 16 — 4 p.m.
Visual Arts lecture
"Home and Other Fictions"
Speaker: Rachelle Viader Knowles
Rm. 050, Riddell Centre
Info: 585-5557

Wed., Jan. 21 — 12 p.m.
Saskatchewan Instructional Development & Research Unit seminar
"The New International Office"
Speaker: Alain Boutet
Rm. 215, Education Bldg.
Info: 585-4309

Wed., Jan. 21 — 10:30 a.m.
Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy lecture
"Aboriginal Peoples and Saskatchewan Industry"
Speaker: Jamie McIntyre
Gallery Bldg., College Avenue Campus
Info/Register: 585-5775

Thurs., Jan. 29 — 1:15 p.m.
Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy lecture
"Education Opportunity-Privacy Legislation Compliance in Saskatchewan"
Speaker: R. Gary Dickson Q.C.
Gallery Bldg., College Avenue Campus
Info/Register/Tickets: 585-5869

Sat., Jan. 31 — 8 p.m.
Faculty of Arts Subscription Series
Department of Music faculty members performing various pieces
University Theatre, Riddell Centre
Tickets: \$8 Adults/\$6 Students & Seniors
Info: 585-5583

For a complete Calendar of Events at the University of Regina visit our Web site at www.uregina.ca



University of Regina students Tracey Donas (left) and Deidie Mack celebrate the start of the Winter/2004 semester with savings on used books, at the used book sale on campus earlier this week.

U of R Photo by A/V Services

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