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2 December 2004

"Culture, the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit...":
Matthew Arnold (1822-88)

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1. WHAT IS the HRI and WHAT DOES IT DO?

The HRI is an institute with a university-wide mandate that supports research and scholarship in the humanities at the U of R.

The HRI holds two funding competitions every year in some or all of the following programs: Teaching Fellowships, Research Awards, Student Travel Awards, Assistance Awards for Visiting Speakers, Travel Awards for

Board Members, Subvention Awards for Publication, Visiting Research Fellowships. The HRI typically awards a total of approximately \$30,000 per academic year. All HRI awards are the outcome of competitions judged by the HRI Adjudication Committee (see 3 below). The HRI awards an annual \$500 Student Essay Prize for the best paper supported by an HRI Student Travel Award.

The HRI supports the humanities on campus through co-sponsorship arrangements, web hosting, and publicity management.

The HRI offers accessible platforms and forums to humanities scholars and researchers from the U of R and elsewhere to share their ideas. In the past two years the HRI has (1) sponsored or co-sponsored talks by such notable visiting speakers as **Michael Ignatieff, Ann Saddlemyer, Ross King, Roméo Dallaire, Stephen Lewis, Nelofer Pazira, Frederick Crews**, and **Gwynne Dyer**; (2) hosted almost a dozen talks in the Profiling Scholarship Series by U of R scholars about their new work in the humanities; (3) held three of its own conferences and has co-sponsored or is co-sponsoring six others.

The HRI builds bridges between the University and its surrounding community. In the past year, the HRI has welcomed over a thousand visitors from the community to its widely-publicized, free, and accessible events. The monthly e-mail HRI Newsletter reaches hundreds of subscribers on campus and off, including many local arts and cultural agencies.

For more information about the HRI, check our website at <http://www.uregina.ca/hri/>

2. REPORT on HRI MINI-CONFERENCE: "Evaluating Research Performance in the Humanities" (24 November 2004)

The idea of a mini-conference is to cover at least a day's worth of issues in as short a time as possible, in the understanding that people's schedules during the semester frequently do not allow them to allot generous amounts of participation time even to conferences on subjects of wide general interest. At this mini-conference presenters were restricted to ten minutes each, the question period after each talk was five minutes long, breaks were minimal, and refreshments were liberally available during the proceedings. For those unable to attend some or all of the event, all proceedings were videotaped. (Please see below about how to get a copy of the video of this conference.)

The main theme of the conference, "Evaluating Research Performance in the Humanities," emerged from the debate among humanities scholars about what criteria might be most fairly applied to evaluate the products of their research, and in particular whether it is possible to quantify these products. **Philip Charrier** (History) gave a balanced overview of what academic life is like under the British Research Assessment Exercise, in which departments at different UK universities are regularly and officially ranked in relation to each other based on their research output. **Michael Trussler** (English) spoke about the special problems that creative writers in academe have in being evaluated by the peer review process, given that artistic success is typically measured by different criteria than academic success. **Peter Leavitt** (Biology), representing the sciences, gave an overview of the sophisticated kinds of metrics that might be applied to evaluate his own biological research, raising interesting questions about which of these metrics could be applied to humanities research. **Thomas Hadjistavropoulos** (Psychology), representing the social sciences, surprised many of the humanists in the audience by explaining why a book published in his discipline was frequently viewed as a lesser achievement than a peer-reviewed article in a journal.

After the break, **Robin Fisher** (Dean of Arts), spoke of some of the challenges facing those involved in the evaluation process in a faculty as diverse as Arts, and noted that peer review, like democracy, might not be a flawless system, but is probably a better one than the alternatives. **Lynn Wells** (English), generated some lively debate when she remarked that humanities scholars often have no good use for certain grant programs offered by federal funding agencies. **Darlene Juschka** (Women's Studies), revealed how in the Program that she heads, interdisciplinarity is not a research option but a necessity. **Carolina Ferrer** (International Languages), in describing her own interests in the intersection of chaos theory and apocalyptic fiction, raised the interesting question, "Who might be best qualified to evaluate interdisciplinary work that transcends faculty boundaries?" To conclude, a panel comprising **Kathleen Irwin** (Theatre), **Rachelle Viader Knowles** (Visual Arts), and **Daryl Hepting** (Computer Science), showed how even the question of authorship itself could be problematized by their transdisciplinary Bus Project.

Copies of the (two) videotapes of the conference proceedings cost \$2.00 + tax if you provide your own blank videocassettes, or \$8.00 + tax if you don't. Please note that the recording is in black and white (don't ask!) To order, please e-mail Jennifer.arends@uregina.ca or call 585-4226 before 17 December 2004.

3. HRI ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE 2005

The HRI Adjudication Committee for 2005 will consist of:

(Chair) **Sheila Petty**, Dean of Fine Arts, Professor of Media Production and Studies, and U of R President's Scholar 2002-04

Carol Schick, Associate Professor of Education and Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Social Justice and Aboriginal Education

Jeanne Shami, Professor of English and U of R President's Scholar 2003-05

The HRI congratulates **Carol Schick** on her recent appointment to her new Canada Research Chair. The HRI thanks outgoing chair **Ellen Chapco** for her exceptional service to the HRI Adjudication Committee over the past two years.

4. HRI PROFILING SCHOLARSHIP SERIES: David T. Barnard (11 January 2005)

David T. Barnard (President, University of Regina) will be talking about the behind-the-scenes process that led to the publication of his novel ***With Skilful Hand: The Story of King David***, recently short-listed for the Saskatchewan Book of the Year Award.

4:00 - 5:30 pm
11 January 2005
Location TBA

Watch this space for further information.

5. CULTURE and HERITAGE RESEARCH CLUSTER: Exploring New Possibilities for Collaborative Research (1 February 2005)

Background:

In October 2000, the U of R released a document identifying five areas of strategic emphasis: Culture and Heritage, Energy and Environment, Informatics, Population Health and Social Justice. These "research clusters" were intended to facilitate the development of creative new research and academic programs and partnerships, both inside and outside the University. The clusters were areas in which the U of R had current strength, significant opportunity for further development and the potential for far-reaching impact. The areas did not represent all research

activity at the University, or even all the areas of development, but they were a convenient way to organize some of the activities being pursued rigorously by U of R scholars.

Notice:

The HRI, with the assistance of the Office of the Vice-President (Research and International), will be convening a meeting of the Culture and Heritage Research Cluster to explore new possibilities for collaborative research. People from on and off campus who have benefited from collaborative research or who are offering ideas for fruitful collaboration will be presenting very short informal talks. People whose research falls under the broad rubric of "Culture and Heritage," people who are interested in exploring the possibilities for collaboration, and new faculty in humanities disciplines, may find this meeting valuable.

4:00 - 5:30 pm
 Tuesday 1 February
 Location TBA

Watch this space for further information

6. BOOK RECEIVED: Judith Silverthorne's *INGRAINED LEGACY*

Judith Silverthorne's *Ingrained Legacy: Saskatchewan Pioneer Woodworkers, 1870-1930* is a comprehensive collection featuring biographical sketches of over 80 early Saskatchewan pioneer woodworkers. Several full chapters highlight some of the exceptional woodworkers, who were scattered all over the province from remote backwoods to bustling communities along the rail lines. While some operated successful commercial businesses in towns and on their farms, others honed their skills in obscure seclusion, working by hand with materials available to them in their particular locations. Besides giving a synoptic look at their lives and a reflection of their diverse ethnic backgrounds, talents and abilities, this resource book provides over 200 visuals of them and their extraordinary work. There are also alphabetized appendices listing additional woodworkers, locations, and types of artifacts.

Full bibliographic details are as follows:

Judith Silverthorne. *Ingrained Legacy: Saskatchewan Pioneer Woodworkers, 1870-1930*, Spiral Communications Inc., 2004. 6"x 9", soft cover. 166 pages + 221 photos & illustrations ISBN 0-9732879-0-X. \$21.95 CN/\$19.95 US paperback.

7. HRI CONTACT INFORMATION

The HRI e-mail Newsletter appears once a month from September to April, and more occasionally during the rest of the year. Recent issues are archived on the HRI website.

The HRI Newsletter reaches more than 500 subscribers at the University of Regina, its affiliated institutions, and in the surrounding community. Please forward a copy to friends and colleagues with an interest in the humanities.

To subscribe (free of charge) or unsubscribe to this newsletter, please go to the HRI website at <http://www.uregina.ca/hri/informationform.html>

For further details about upcoming HRI events or to submit material to future newsletters, please contact:

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