A survey sent to all U of S students on campuses across the province is designed to gauge how welcome, respected and supported they feel as members of the university community. Tanya Robertson-Frey, a research analyst in the Institutional Planning and Assessment office, put the survey together to collect information about “the overall campus climate and the experiences and perceptions of students.” A link to the survey has been emailed to every student, along with a request to complete it by Dec. 6.

The project stems from a strategic goal identified in the university’s third integrated plan. That goal calls on the U of S to provide a “safe and welcoming environment in attitude, support services and infrastructure,” and to “carry out efforts to encourage and support activities that lead to the development of a more diverse and inclusive community.” Robertson-Frey said the first step in building the survey was to research various definitions of campus climate. The one chosen for the U of S survey describes campus climate as the perceptions and attitudes regarding issues of diversity on campus.

“Research has shown that the campus environment can influence learning outcomes for students,” she said, “and their attitudes about staying in school so it’s important to try to understand their experiences.”

She explained the survey is divided into a number of sections, the first being “questions that ask students whether they see themselves as part of the university community. We want to know if they’ve witnessed or experienced harassment, exclusion or insensitive comments or jokes,” she said. “We want to know if this is a welcoming environment or if they’re running into any difficulties.”

The survey also explores the classroom experience of students and their interactions with faculty and staff through questions like whether there is a staff member the student feels comfortable talking to and whether they have seen stereotyping in class.

“We also have a section about their experiences with a variety of support services on campus,” said Robertson-Frey, including various students centres, the library and Student Central. “We’re looking here to determine how helpful or unhelpful these support services are.”

Students are also asked how the university might enhance or improve the campus climate. There are a number of options for students to choose from, said Robertson-Frey, including cross-cultural dialogue, diversity training for staff and faculty, or similar training for students. “We’re also asking them for any other recommendations they might have.”

The survey also asks students to respond to questions on a scale of one to five “but there’s usually an opportunity to provide additional comments after each section.”

Roberson-Frey admitted it is challenging to do an objective analysis of subjective responses to questions about personal experiences and perceptions “but by getting a good response rate, we believe we would have a representative sample from which to draw objective conclusions. We’re hoping everyone takes part, which would allow us to look at the results of different subgroups of the student population.”

A report will be prepared based on the survey results, likely by spring 2014. It will evaluate the responses and “will highlight both the positive and negative in the campus environment.” That report, she said, will be part of the development of future strategic plans around student experiences at the University of Saskatchewan.
Two U of S projects were recognized in this year’s Design Council of Saskatchewan Premier’s Awards of Excellence competition. The new Graduate House at College Quarter, designed by Stantec Architecture Ltd., received the top award in the architecture category. Stantec was also responsible for the learning commons in the College of Nursing’s Regina campus, left, which received the Award of Merit in the interior design category. Below is a photo of the pre-renovation learning commons.

**AWARD-WINNING DESIGN**

A $2-million investment from Viterra Inc. in the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) at the U of S will help support the institute’s mission to address the increasing global demand for safe, reliable food. Viterra will also provide the GIFS with land adjacent to its rural facilities, and will identify farmer participants for GIFS’ research field trials.

The institute is focused on meeting the demand for reliable food and sustainable crop production through research and innovation.

The five-year funding agreement will make Viterra the lead grain industry partner joining GIFS founding partners PotashCorp, the Province of Saskatchewan, and the U of S.

The funding agreement covers a five-year period.

**Viterra invests in GIFS**

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The principle of mindfulness
New master teacher takes intentional approach to work

WENONA PARTRIDGE

“Being named a master teacher is really honouring and touching. It’s also very humbling,” said Debbie Pushor of the College of Education about becoming the university’s latest master teacher.

The award has been recognizing faculty who excel in their profession and invest in outstanding teaching at the U of S since 1984. Pushor is the 60th recipient, having been presented with the award at fall convocation in late October.

For Pushor, the title is both an honour and a responsibility. “We all could get better at teaching all the time,” she said. “Being recognized brings a humility and a weight at the same time because teaching is such a large responsibility. It is complex work and it is my responsibility to do it well and to continue to become better at it, and to honour the title of master teacher.”

Pushor began teaching in 1980 in the public school system in Alberta. In January, she will begin teaching in the U of S since 1984. Pushor is the 60th recipient, having been presented with the award at fall convocation in late October.

For Pushor, teaching is joyful, and is about relationships and friendships. “Teaching is a way of being in the world – it’s affective work, community work and relational work. It’s about my students’ relationship to the content, to me, and to the broader context.”

One of the principles Pushor advocates is mindfulness, which she described as being “intentional in the things we are doing and making conscious decisions.” For Pushor, teaching is joyful, and is about relationships and friendships. “Teaching is a way of being in the world – it’s affective work, community work and relational work. It’s about my students’ relationship to the content, to me, and to the broader context.”

Pushor puts her principles into practice while teaching by asking her students to consider the things they are going to do to promote not only their own learning but also the learning of others. For example, she explains that attendance is required “because each student matters to other students and their presence is needed to build relationships with and promote the learning of others.”

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Betatron history

PATRICK HAYES, U OF S ARCHIVES
U of S Archives, A-2273.

The cut line for this StarPhoenix photo from ca. 1949 reads, “Arranging patient in front of 25 million-volt betatron in preparation for treatment are nurse Anne Churdy and Dr. Thomas A. Watson, Director of the Saskatoon Cancer Clinic. The 67-year-old victim of cancer received a short treatment for several days.” Everything had to line up before the university could install Canada’s first betatron (a type of particle accelerator) in 1948. With support of the Board of Governors, President J. S. Thomson, the provincial government and two years of intensive lobbying from physics professors Harold Johns, E.L. Harrington, Newman Haslam, and Leon Katz, the machine was purchased and installed in a purpose-built structure at the back of the Physics Building. The betatron gave the Department of Physics a first-class facility for radiation treatment and nuclear research. The betatron led to the linear accelerator and eventually to the Canadian Light Source.

ON CAMPUS NEWS - November 22, 2013

Trimming back on the monthly phone bill

The buying power of an organization the size of the University of Saskatchewan can yield significant savings on many fronts, including how much the organization pays for cell phone and wireless service.

Valerie Hoeflicher, a procurement and contracts specialist in Purchasing Services, said although the U of S is one of SaskTel Mobil-ity’s largest customers, its previous corporate contract was not giving the university the best deals available. With talk, text and data plans costing various amounts depending on plan features for the almost 1,000 employee cell phones and wireless devices, the university’s monthly bill was about $47,000.

In an effort to streamline the process and find savings, Hoeflicher said she looked at all U of S users with data plans and found about 125 who consistently went over the data limit each month, “and lots more were encroaching on their cap. There were also users exceeding the limit on their text plans. By switching everybody to unlimited airtime, text and data plans, the savings speak for themselves, plus it would be so much easier if we could have just two plans - talk and text, and the same but with data.”

In her discussions about the situation with SaskTel, Hoeflicher was asked if the university qualified for government rates, “and when they sent them to me, I said we have to have that.”

The result of the negotiations is that the university now offers its employees just two plan choices, said Hoeflicher, talk and text or an unlimited data plan. “Even by switching all data users to the unlimited plan, that alone creates a savings of about $7,000 per month.”

The new contract will also result in savings on what has been a typical monthly bill of $5,000-$10,000 for airtime overage, she said, and for a number of specific services. These include long distance rates that, in the new contract, are reduced to $0.08 per minute from $0.10, and U.S. roaming charges that drop to $0.15 per minute compared to the previous rate of $0.95.

Information about the cell phone and wireless device plans can be found on the Financial Services Division website.
John Hansen joined the U of S in July 2012 as an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology specializing in justice, crime and society within the context of Indigenous knowledge and non-Western models of justice. “It involves working with the criminal justice system, but it’s really a community justice process where members of the community come together and they deal with victims and offenders with traditional teachings in a way that emphasizes healing, repairing harm and restoring balance,” he explained.

Hansen is a member of the Opaskwayk Cree Nation of northern Manitoba, son of a Danish father and Cree mother. He grew up in Thompson, and spent summers at his grandmother’s house on the reserve. He completed a general undergraduate degree at Brandon University before pursuing a bachelor’s degree in education with the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (now the First Nations University of Canada). He completed his master’s degree at the U of S and his doctorate at the University of Regina. After working as an instructor for eight years, he was promoted to associate professor with the University College of the North at the Pas before accepting his current position at the U of S.

“I knew I was interested in Indigenous issues back in the late 80s as an undergraduate student when I could study injustices in the world,” he said. “I think this is a much-needed field and at the U of S, it’s more than just lip service. They’re actually scholarship – Indigenous studies and Indigenous issues. I think this is a much-needed field and at the U of S, it’s more than just lip service. They’re actually putting it into practice.”

NEW TO US highlights the work of new faculty members at the University of Saskatchewan. If you are new to campus, or know someone who is, please email ocn@usask.ca.

John Hansen

Approach to students questioned

President Busch-Vishniac is welcoming feedback from friends of the U of S to her Vision 2025 draft document on the institution’s future.

As a U of S alumnus (BEd’64, MA’73), I’m troubled and perplexed as to why the University is over-accommodating aboriginal students. A university is meant to comprise a universe of cultures and creeds, not any one in particular.

The construction of the Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Student Centre in particular is misguided and unwise—its unaffordability notwithstanding. Hiving off any one student grouping is no way to prepare them for functioning in society at large. Far better that all undergrads enter the rough and tumble of the common fray than be accorded such special treatment.

 Especially depressing is the GO-RB Student Centre, you have missed a key message about this project: it is for all members of the campus community and as such, deserves a prominent location at this university.

I continue to believe that the University of Saskatchewan has a moral imperative to meet the educational needs of all of the residents of the province, certainly including First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners. We will remain committed to reaching out to Aboriginal learners, their families and communities in order to accomplish our mission. We hope to make the U of S the university of choice for many First Nations, Métis and Inuit students—in part by creating an environment that recognizes and values a wide variety of cultural practices and that enhances the visibility of our Aboriginal heritage in our physical and virtual spaces. We also aim to make First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners better understood by non-Aboriginal learners and staff on our campuses. This, in my view, is far from “over-accommodating” anyone; it is simply the University of Saskatchewan fulfilling its mission and reaching its stated goals.

Regarding your comments about the Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Student Centre, you have missed a key message about this project: it is for all members of the campus community and as such, deserves a prominent location at this university. ■ Ilene Busch-Vishniac

Mr. Eyre, I thank you for your comments on Vision 2025: From Spirit to Action. The draft vision intentionally raises some issues that might be viewed by some as controversial, and I appreciate that we are receiving comments regarding these issues that will help shape the final version of Vision 2025.

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President, University of Saskatchewan

RESPONSE

U of S fulfilling its mission: president

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President, University of Saskatchewan
Behind the mask

**Technique teaches non-verbal communications**

LANA HAIGHT

People are often encouraged to “take off their mask,” but not in a third-year drama class at the University of Saskatchewan in which students learn to wear masks.

“It’s a wonderful way to teach the playing of character,” explained Prof. Dwayne Brenna, who has taken this method of teaching character development to other parts of the world.

“Mask acting travels well because it’s a physical medium. Once you put the mask on, you adjust your body to it and it doesn’t really rely on spoken word. I don’t speak Spanish and I don’t speak Hindi. You would think I might have trouble in Boruca (Costa Rica) or Hyderabad (India) communicating, but, in fact, these masks do the communicating for you.”

At the U of S, 12 students are enrolled in Drama 318 that start with studying and wearing a neutral mask, one that is plain, no wrinkles. It has a bit of a lip that causes you to pucker up a little. It has drooping eyelids that might suggest a sleepy character. The character often seems to be more youthful than some of the other masks. On the particular actress who last wore it, this mask became very young, very flirtatious. She was very interested in boys. No two people wear a mask in the same way, he said. And while Brenna hasn’t noticed significant differences in how Canadians interpret the masks compared with people from India or Costa Rica, the characters themselves were very much a reflection of culture.

“I’ve never seen anyone in Canada wear this one and take on the character of a swami,” indicating a particular mask with large, round cheeks. “But in Hyderabad, the actor who put it on created a character that had a spiritual quality, but he was also very flatulent. He was always having gas and waving it away from himself,” said Brenna laughing as he recalled his trip last winter to the University of Hyderabad in India, where he led a two-week workshop on mask and the actor.

Brenna sees benefits to students from other disciplines learning to use masks as a way of improving non-verbal communication, including body language. When someone is wearing a mask, posture is much more noticeable because the focus moves from the face to the rest of the body.

Where his masks will take him next Brenna is not sure, but the suitcase is packed and ready to go whether the destination is around the world or to a neighbouring college at the U of S.

See Character, Page 9

LANA HAIGHT is a Saskatoon freelance writer.

Whispering out loud

COLEEN MACPHERSON

Iliea Busch-Vishniac has joined a small group of Canadian university presidents who are sharing their thoughts, ideas and comments with the public 140 characters at a time.

Using the account @UsaskPresOffice, Busch-Vishniac has taken to Twitter as a way to “whisper out loud” about both her official work as president and her personal life outside the office. On the professional side, she may tweet after a particularly interesting meeting, comment on an issue or call attention to the work of others. On the personal front, the account gives the president the opportunity to reveal herself more fully.

“As president of the university, I gave up my privacy,” she said. “I’m not complaining; it’s part of the job. I would never tweet anything personal that would embarrass the institution but I think people don’t get to see enough of me interacting with people, or dogs, or living in the residence. It’s a way of showing a more personal side of me.”

Although her account specifies it is from the office of the president, Busch-Vishniac

See Character, Page 9

Busch-Vishniac

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**ON CAMPUS NEWS**

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**November 22, 2013**

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Sensing the Earth
Mollard ensures students explore local geology

A recent donation from U of S alumnus Jack Mollard will give engineering students opportunities to learn more about interpreting the geological landscapes of Saskatchewan.

The Dr. Jack Mollard Sensing the Earth Tour, established this past September with a $100,000 gift, will give about 130 second-year civil, geological and environmental engineering students a chance to explore about a half dozen geologically significant locations between Saskatoon and North Battleford, said Jim Kells, head of the Department of Civil and Geological Engineering.

“The number one goal is to get the students out of the building and into the field,” explained Kells, who worked with his colleague Grant Ferguson and the Mollard family to figure out how the gift could be best used in the college. “Students get to see features of the physical landscape that are important to our profession, like river valleys, glacial features and unstable slopes, and have them explained to them.”

Human interaction with the natural environment like road construction or pipeline development is critical to civil, geological and environmental engineers, Kells continued, comparing the field trip to medical students getting time in the operating room.

“The visual experience of the site, what we can infer by seeing the environment, how one can understand the engineering significance expressed in the features of the physical terrain, is an important tool,” Kells said. “This one-day field trip will help students interpret the landscape. We’re an earth-based discipline and we need to be able to determine and predict how the land will behave if we build (on it).”

Sensing how the Earth might behave, said Kells, is how Mollard made a name for himself.

“Remote sensing of the landscape through aerial photography is what Dr. Mollard is well-known for. He brought this technology to Saskatchewan and Canada and is a pioneer in the area. Through his work, he has had such a profound effect on remotely sensing the terrain for engineering purposes.”

Mollard graduated from the U of S in 1945 and completed his master’s and PhD at Purdue University and Cornell University respectively, before returning to Saskatchewan where he set up J.D. Mollard and Associates in 1956.

Among Mollard’s more than 5,000 consulting projects is work he did on the Gardiner Dam project in the late 1940s and early 1950s. More recently, but much further from home, Mollard is doing work on terrain analysis of Mars. “He’s looking at imagery of Martian landscapes, in particular water features,” Kells explained.

“He’ll be 90 this January, and still goes to the office every day. He is so passionate about the profession and loves what he does so much that he admits that he may not have worked a day in his life,” Kells said with a laugh.

Mollard’s passion for the work is obvious to those who meet him too. “As part of the inaugural field trip, Dr. Mollard not only joined the students on the tour but also made a presentation to the participating students the day before. The students were enthralled listening to his story and Dr. Mollard enjoyed the opportunity to share his knowledge and passion.”

Jack Mollard travelled along with engineering students this past fall to view geologically significant sites around Saskatchewan.
Carnivorous plants among unique herbarium collection

MICHAEL ROBIN

Hugo Cota-Sanchez fills a small jar from a sink in his office and sets it on his desk, then retrieves the wizened remains of a plant from another jar. With its fronds tightly curled like a fist and with a few small dry roots, it seems death has long since claimed it. “It (the water) is highly acidic and plants need more nutrients than what is available there, so very few can survive,” he said. “They are very specialized. We see many adaptations like very tough leaves.”

I would say 80 per cent of our specimens are from Saskatchewan and our collection here has nearly 182,000 specimens

Hugo Cota-Sanchez

Carnivorous plants’ adaptations make up for the nutrient-poor environment by luring and trapping insects. The bugs’ proteins, once digested, make a good source of nitrogen and phosphorus. There are three types of these plants native to Saskatchewan: sundews, bladderworts and pitcher plants. Each has evolved a different strategy to catch their meals, he explained.

Sundews grow slender leaves covered with hair-like tentacles, each tipped with a droplet of sticky, sweet liquid loaded with enzymes to digest insects once they have been lured and trapped.

Bladderworts, as their name suggests, feature bladders that literally suck in aquatic insect prey in much the same way that a turkey baster sucks in fluid when its bulb is squeezed and released. Pitcher plants’ name also suggests their trapping strategy: a liquid-filled pitcher whose inner surface features inward-pointing hairs that ensure that once prey climbs in, it can’t climb out.

Like most northern plants, Saskatchewan’s carnivorous flora are small, limited by available sunlight and growing season, and have restricted geographic distribution. For example, the largest tropical pitcher plants are big enough to hold more than a litre of liquid and catch not only insects but small animals like shrews. Pitchers growing in Saskatchewan bogs are about as long as a man’s finger.

There are specimens of all three types of carnivorous plants at the W.P. Fraser Herbarium, carefully collected from locations chiefly in central and northern Saskatchewan.

Each specimen is pressed, dried and mounted on paper with information like where it was gathered, what plants were growing around it, in what landforms it was found, and the collector’s number. Cota-Sanchez said every botanist is issued a unique number for collecting; some can gather 40,000 to 50,000 specimens in a career. The herbarium is home to several lifetimes of work.

“Our collection specializes in the flora of Saskatchewan,” Cota-Sanchez said. “I would say 80 per cent of our specimens are from Saskatchewan and our collection here has nearly 182,000 specimens.”

Those specimens are stored in rank after rank of two-metre-high steel cabinets. More than a botanical library, Cota-Sanchez explained the value of the collection: It represents Saskatchewan’s past and present plant diversity and is source material. Researchers are constantly finding new ways to use it. For example, they have extracted DNA from herbarium specimens gathered in the 1940s, demonstrating that genetic information is also included in the collection.
They won’t be walking around the Bowl like the pack of beagles did over the last few years, but a group of cats are joining a nutrition study similar to the one that made the dogs famous at the University of Saskatchewan.

The beagles that the campus community was so fond of seeing were part of a nutrition study in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM) that is growing to include 10 cats named after our favourite hot drinks: the girls are named after teas, like Chai and Earl Grey, and the boys are named after coffees, like Americano and Latte.

“What we found with the beagles was so promising that we expanded the study to cats,” said Lynn Weber, associate professor in the Department of Veterinary Biomedical Sciences. “But this time we are testing more pulse crops instead of just peas.”

The three-year study—funded by Sask. Pulse Growers, Alliance Grain Trades and Horizon Pet Foods—will be testing lentils and fava beans against corn, which is typically used in pet food, Weber said.

“Most manufacturers (of pet food) use more starch instead of protein because it’s cheaper, but corn starch has a high glycemic index. Lots of starch might be a reason cats are prone to diabetes and obesity.”

It is Weber’s hope that replacing the high-glycemic starch with pulse starch, protein and fibre will provide a better diet for both dogs and cats. “We will focus on cardio, blood pressure and metabolism. We saw benefits in the dogs, and we expect to see even more benefit in the cats because they are carnivores and require more protein in their diets.”

The cats recently arrived and are getting used to their new home in WCVM. “They are getting more social, getting along better with each other and they are getting used to us—they weren’t used to getting so much attention from people,” said Weber.

This spring, more beagles will be arriving on campus to join the study, but it doesn’t end with cats and dogs. “We’re also going to include aquaculture fish like tilapia and rainbow trout,” said Weber.

“It’s a big project and we’re just getting started, but we’re excited,” she said, adding that the project also includes researchers Murray Drew and Tom Scott from the College of Agriculture and Bioresources and Matt Loewen in WCVM. Kyla Zatti, research associate in both colleges, and grad student Jennifer Briens are also part of the project.

“The cats, like the dogs before them, will be placed in family homes at the end of the study.”

### Around the Bowl

**Bram Noble**
professor in the Dept. of Geography and Planning and the School of Environment and Sustainability, has been appointed Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) leader in the Office of the Vice-President Research. Noble will provide mentorship on developing grants proposals to researchers in the social sciences, humanities and fine arts.

**Nancy Turner**
has joined the Gwena Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness in the position of program director to provide strategic leadership in the centre and to lead institutional initiatives to enhance learning and teaching. She has returned to Saskatchewan after a decade working in London, England, most recently as associate dean of learning, teaching and enhancement at the University of the Arts London.

**Terrence J. Downey**, president of St. Thomas More College, has been elected chair of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities in Canada for a two-year term. The organization represents 21 Catholic institutions across the country.

**Allan Ponak**
special lecturer in the College of Law and adjunct professor in the Edwards School of Business, has been nominated president of the National Academy of Arbitrators, the professional organization of neutral labour and employment arbitrators in Canada and the U.S. The academy includes only 60 Canadians among its membership of 650.

**The Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry** presented its Global Partners Capacity-Building Award to **John Giesy** of S U’s professor and Canada Research Chair in Environmental Toxicology, at its annual meeting in November. The award recognizes individuals or groups for their contribution toward building capacity in the environmental sciences within countries with developing economies.

**The Global Institute for Food Security** at the U of S has announced the appointment of **Roger Beachy** as a senior consultant effective Jan. 1 when he completes his current appointment as interim and founding executive director and CEO. On Oct. 31, the University of California Davis also released news of Beachy’s appointment as founding director of that school’s new World Food Centre.

**Dr. George Mutwiri** has been appointed assistant executive director of the School of Public Health for a three-year term that extends to June 30, 2016.

**Kevin Lowey** of Information and Communications Technology is one of 17 people named an inaugural member of the Blackboard MVP program. The program recognizes individuals who have established themselves as experts in Blackboard technologies and overall educational technology. Lowey is the only Canadian to receive the designation.

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**Honouring the Very Best**

An honorary degree is the highest honour the university can bestow. Acceptance of an honorary degree by a candidate brings recognition to both the recipient and the university. The honorary degree committee of the U of S Senate is asking members of the university community to consider nominating honorary degree recipients for convocation ceremonies in 2015 and beyond.

Nominees should be distinguished persons who have made an eminent contribution to scholarship, education, the arts or public service in Canada or internationally. Nominations that are time-sensitive or are related to university or college activities such as reunions, conferences or integrated planning initiatives should be noted.

For the nomination form and guidelines, visit usask.ca/university_secretary. For more information, contact the University of Saskatchewan Student Awards Office, Room 400, 102 Agriculture Building, 1035 Scarth Street, or call 306-966-5001.
Resource development with respect
New CRC calls for early talks with Indigenous communities

MICHAEL ROBIN

From the Idle No More movement to anti-fracking protests in New Brunswick to the ongoing Saskatchewan oilsands industry, Aboriginal peoples are making their voices heard both on the streets and in the courtrooms and according to law professor and the U of S’s newest Canada Research Chair Dwight Newman, it is time for non-Aboriginal society to listen.

“Many Indigenous rights protect things we should all care about,” he said, “things like people being able to maintain their communities and rebuild communities and family structures, or being able to live securely knowing they can benefit from responsible resource development. Things like people being able to reconnect with lands sacred to them, or communities being able to develop in ways that further opportunities for everyone.”

Newman studies Indigenous rights within the context of Canadian and international law, providing insights to guide Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to mutual agreements. His 2009 book, The Duty to Consult: New Relationship with Aboriginal Peoples, reviews how lower courts, businesses, governments and Indigenous organizations apply the concept. To date, his research has helped bolster numerous legal arguments and has been quoted in dozens of judgments, including three Supreme Court of Canada decisions.

“We’re trying to understand how courts, policy makers and all stakeholders can work together to create a framework that enables responsible resource development while respecting Indigenous rights,” he said. The matter of Indigenous rights is complex, with provincial and national jurisdictions overlapping with the interests of numerous First Nations and those of private industry. Newman explained that Indigenous communities are looking for greater respect for and protection of their cultural and spiritual traditions, or greater participation in—or protection from—resource development within their territories.

While each situation demands its own analysis, he said one principle remains the same:

“It will often be helpful to everyone if governments and corporate project proponents engage early on with Aboriginal communities in a manner going above bare-minimum legal requirements so as to find win-win solutions.”

Newman noted that while there has been much progress in law with regard to Indigenous rights, this progress is not always visible in people’s lives. Many misunderstandings on all sides remain. Translating recognition of rights into real results continues to be a challenge.

“Universities have a big role to play here. Rigorous research, ongoing engagement with communities and a commitment to solid knowledge-sharing all have vital contributions to make, and the University of Saskatchewan’s commitment to excellence in this area is something that can stand out and make a contribution to the province, to the country and to the world.”

Newman

We’re trying to understand how courts, policy makers and all stakeholders can work together to create a framework that enables responsible resource development while respecting Indigenous rights.

Dwight Newman
World Food Day

Calling attention to the waste of food in Canada

On Oct. 16, the U of S marked World Food Day with a display designed to draw attention not only to issues of hunger but also to information on how consumers control food wastage.

World Food Day, established in 1979 by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, is an opportunity for citizens to come together to strengthen national and international efforts against hunger, malnutrition and poverty, said Grant Wood, a professor of plant sciences in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources. It is also a chance to draw attention to achievements in food security and agricultural development.

Working with the university’s Office of Sustainability, Wood co-ordinated a display in the Agriculture Building that highlighted food wastage in Canada. He said Statistics Canada figures show that in 2009, the annual per capita wastage of edible food at the retail and consumer levels was about 172 kg. “It’s a sad paradox that we have food insecurity and food wastage in the same city,” said Wood, who teaches a course in urban food production.

Knowledge of food storage requirements, buying habits, preferences and recipes are other tools that were visually illustrated in the World Food Day display. In one example of the information provided, Wood pointed out that the best before date does not mean the food is unsafe and should be thrown away. “Unfortunately, consumers incorrectly think the food is unsafe and dump tons of food every year,” he said.

Best before dates on shelf-stable foods are often just a manufacturer’s estimate of when the product will no longer be at “peak quality,” he said. “The Canadian Food Inspection Agency website says you can buy and eat foods after the ‘best before’ date has passed, however, when this date has passed, the food may lose some of its freshness and flavour, or its texture may have changed. Understanding what best before means will certainly help consumers make informed decisions about what to keep and what to throw away.”

Herbarium a research resource

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Cota-Sanchez and his colleagues also have their own project, using the herbarium as reference to create a comprehensive catalog of plants in Saskatchewan intended to replace a similar work on Alberta flora that students must now use. It’s a mammoth task, so the team has split the project into four sections of a single book, each published separately. So far, three are done: ferns and fern allies, lilies and orchids, and the genus Carex (sedges). The final one, on grasses, is scheduled for publication in December. The books are available at the U of S Bookstore.

On the walk back to his office, Cota-Sanchez confessed to being a bit of a “plant geek,” which has interesting side benefits. When watching a movie set in Africa, he immediately saw through the film maker’s ruse as he recognized the flora of California. Likewise, in the movie Jurassic Park, a character holds up a plant and declares it to be one of the first land plants.

“It was actually a begonia,” Cota-Sanchez said – a fairly recent species from an evolutionary standpoint. “Botanically speaking, she made a very bad mistake.”

Back at the office, the resurrection plant has already begun to unfurl its frons. Cota-Sanchez plucks it from its jar of water to return it to dormancy, its lesson conveyed: plants, with their infinite variety and tenacity, are miraculous creatures that sustain and make possible life on Earth.

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Room with a View

This year’s back-page feature explores the view of campus from various office windows, and the people who enjoy them. Do you have an interesting view? Let us know at ocn@usask.ca

Room with a View

As you’re walking through the Bowl, don’t succumb to the temptation to check your hair in the tinted windows of the Geology Building because someone just might be watching from the other side.

Primping is just one of the sights Chantal Strachan-Crossman and Michelle Howe enjoy through the windows of the main office of the Department of Geological Sciences. “It’s always entertaining to see people fixing their hair or making faces in the glass,” said Howe, the department’s finance administrator. “People don’t realize we can see them.”

“What don’t we see?” responded Strachan-Crossman, graduate secretary for geological sciences, when asked what’s on view out the window. “We’ve got front-row seats for just about everything that goes on in the Bowl—frisbee, football, the powwow, people skating in the winter and kids lining up to go into the Natural Sciences Museum.”

They agree that the oddest sight they’ve seen recently is what they call the slow-moving people, a group they think might be associated with the drama program who progress across the Bowl at an intentional glacial pace. According to Strachan-Crossman, "It takes them about half an hour just to make it past our windows.”