A PERFECT UNION
U of S researchers Dionne Pohler, left, and Barb Phillips teamed up on a project to examine the effectiveness of the print advertising by Canadian unions. They discovered more than they thought they would, particularly about each other’s respective area of expertise. Read the story on Page 2.

Mercury-free research
Dental students come up with novel filling material

Research by three students in the U of S College of Dentistry may lead to a new mercury-free material for filling teeth.

The novel amalgam that fourth-year students Anapaula Campos, Kellyana Quattrini and Jenna Schmitt have been working on since their first year in the college, replaces the mercury found in traditional amalgams with a silver solution and ceramic nanoparticles.

“When we started the research program we had to come up with a topic,” said Campos. “We tossed around a few ideas and decided to look at mercury-free amalgam.”

With the help Dr. Azita Zerehgar, assistant professor of pediatric dentistry, and Assem Hedayat, assistant professor of dental materials, the group set out to see if they could come up with a material that was long lasting and had amalgam’s strength but was mercury free.

“Amalgam is tried, tested and true,” said Campos. “It’s been used for many years, but there is such a negative public perception of mercury-based amalgams even though there are no harmful side effects.”

The group did a literature review and then used Hedayat’s expertise in materials science to come up with potential mercury replacements.

“We helped him figure out what kind of material we needed and he came back to us with a silver solution and ceramic nanoparticles. We then had to figure out what the right mixture and consistency were that would work for a filling.”

With that determined, Campos, Quattrini and Schmitt went to the college’s tooth bank to get teeth on which to test their new material, using the standard dental filling practice.

Once the teeth were filled, they were “thermally cycled” to simulate the oral environment, explained Campos. This means they were repeatedly immersed in hot and cold water.

The tested teeth were then cross-sectioned and examined under an electron microscope. What the images revealed was surprising to the research team.

“The cross section image showed that the (new) material was a closer fit in the filling. There were no gaps showing between the fillings and the teeth compared to traditional amalgam which does show gaps along the margin of the filling,” she said.

With these encouraging results, the group presented their findings at the college’s research competition, which they won. They then presented their project at the national dental college competition in Vancouver.

“We competed against the other nine dental schools in Canada and placed first there as well,” said Campos, adding that first-place prize was a trip to San Antonio, Texas, to attend the American Dental Association’s 2014 conference as international guests.

The new material, Campos explained, still has to go through a number of tests before
Union membership has been on the decline over the past few decades and researchers have examined myriad reasons for this, from structure to public perception. But nobody, until recently, has considered the role visual marketing plays in the decline and in a potential revival.

U of S researchers Dionne Pohler and Barb Phillips decided it was time to see just exactly what unions in Canada were doing with print advertising, particularly ads directed at external audiences rather than internal members.

"With permission, we looked at the ads of two national private-sector unions and one provincial public-sector union over approximately a five-year period," said Pohler, assistant professor in the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. "Many non-business organizations do not do marketing well. We wanted to see whether unions adopted best practices in visual advertising."

The project, she continued, has filled a major void in the research, as there "is very little literature on union marketing communications."

Phillips, a marketing professor in the Edwards School of Business, said they studied 177 different ads to determine if unions followed advertising best practices such as including a call to action, using a catchy headline or engaging images, and being relevant to the intended audience.

"What we found were some good things and some things that could be improved," she explained. "The ads, in general, were good at showing diversity of age and minorities. They were also good at using visuals and the soft-sell appeal of emotion."

But Pohler and Phillips also found the ads were often far too text heavy, often did not have a call to action, and missed the mark on answering the "what-does-this-mean-for-me" question, particularly when it came to providing an understanding of what unions do for the general public. They also found that many union ads too frequently focused on strikes.

"Strike ads are often seen as attack ads, which the public does not like," said Pohler. "Unions should use marketing communications aimed at external audiences to change public attitudes."

Overall, Pohler and Phillips agreed on a couple things: unions are doing a better job on advertising than the researchers thought, and they really enjoyed taking on an interdisciplinary project because it offered them a glimpse into each others’ respective areas of expertise.

"I knew nothing about marketing and now I have a great starting point after working with Barb," said Pohler of Phillips, the Rawlco Scholar in Advertising.

"And I certainly know more about unions than ever before after doing this project with Dionne," said Phillips of Pohler’s expertise in employment and labour policy.

The good and bad of union ads

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Unions should use marketing communications aimed at external audiences to change public attitudes toward unions.

Dionne Pohler

January 9, 2015

CORRECTION

In the Nov. 21 issue of On Campus News, a photo of Peter Millard should have been credited to Ron Marken, professor emeritus in English. We apologize for this oversight.
Maximizing the spend
Project looks to improve procurement

Understanding how best to achieve efficiency, and ultimately savings, in the vast and complex area of procurement at the University of Saskatchewan first requires a close look at the experience of the people doing the buying.

“Generating a high level of customer satisfaction is absolutely a priority when we’re looking at changes and improvement to our procurement processes,” said Kenneth Tan, director of the new Office of Strategic Initiatives in Financial Services and the man overseeing a project called Maximizing the Value of University Spend (MVUS). “We’re trying to build better procurement procedures and a huge part of MVUS is understanding customer needs.”

The customers he is referring to are the people—hundreds of people—who make purchases on behalf of the U of S. It is a group that spends a significant amount of money; in 2013/14, the university’s total non-salary negotiated spend was worth about $121 million. And, he said, those customers are currently dealing with policies and procedures that may not have been updated for some time, that may be difficult to access and may be cumbersome to use.

Although the MVUS name is relatively new, the project pre-dates Tan’s arrival at the U of S last April, he said. The first effort was to revamp the university’s travel and expense procedures but the project has since been expanded to include additional streams like inventory control, e-procurement, strategic sourcing and even looking at possible consolidation of some of the stores and inventory located all over campus.

“The university is a massive organization that is very, very decentralized,” said Tan, who moved to the U of S from a position of chief financial officer with a government crown corporation in British Columbia. “Yes, we have policies and procedures (for procurement) but how transparent are they? How often are they reviewed?”

Because the answers to Tan’s questions are “not very” and “not often,” the result is a procurement process that is altered or adapted by customers “depending on where you are on campus.” The goal, he continued, “is to streamline procedures and that requires new thinking to try to find the right balance between prudent processes and having the flexibility to meet unique customer needs.”

Tan said one project underway is to adapt an inventory management software model being developed by the Facilities Management Division to other circumstances. “Ultimately, we would like to see everyone on the university’s travel and expense procedures but the project has since been expanded to include additional streams like inventory control, e-procurement, strategic sourcing and even looking at possible consolidation of some of the stores and inventory located all over campus. “The university is a massive organization that is very, very decentralized,” said Tan, who moved to the U of S from a position of chief financial officer with a government crown corporation in British Columbia. “Yes, we have policies and procedures (for procurement) but how transparent are they? How often are they reviewed?”

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National honour for Miller

Jim Miller, professor emeritus of history at the University of Saskatchewan, was one of 13 people named as Officers of the Order of Canada Dec. 26 by the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada.

The honour follows the April announcement naming Miller the recipient of the 2014 Killam Prize in the Humanities, only the second Saskatchewan person to receive the prestigious national award.

The citation accompanying the Order of Canada recognizes Miller’s “ever-honored and definitive scholarship on the history of relations between Canada’s Aboriginal peoples and its settlers.”

Peter Stoccheff, dean of the U of S College of Arts and Science, noted the significance of the Order of Canada for Miller is that it “takes into account “the tangent of his whole career and really assesses the meaningful impact of his work on Canadians. Miller taught at the U of S from 1980 until his retirement in the spring of 2014. His 1996 book Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools marked the publication of Canada’s first comprehensive history of residential schools and in 2011, he was awarded the Canada Research Chair in Native-Newcomer Relations. ”

Dairy men

This issue we present an image of the staff of the Dairy Lab taken during the 1929-1930 academic year, the Crop Science and Engineering Buildings can be seen in the background. The Department of Dairyising was established in 1944 in response to the needs of the farming community. Among the department’s early work was the creation of a butter grading system and research into the problems associated with yeasts and molds on butter. The Food Quality Control Laboratory was established in 1930 to analyze milk samples for the Department of Health and the City of Saskatoon. Its role included the large-scale chemical and microbiological analyses of dairy and other food samples for a variety of public sector and industrial clients. 

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Dairy men

From the Archives

When it works well for users and embeds all processes in a single system, it will be a dream. Kenneth Tan

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Research experience invaluable

From Page 1

becoming a viable commercial option.

“Obviously there is more testing to do. We need to test strength, bio-compatibility, corrosion and wear. It’s a long process and we have applied for a research grant to keep the research going, but it has been a great experience.”

The group agreed that being exposed to the research side in a practice-based college was invaluable.

“Going into dentistry, none of us considered research; you only think about the practical component. But now we know how important research is to dentistry. It is a dynamic field and to advance it and change to patient needs requires research. I would definitely do some research in my career. It is very rewarding.”

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Nature Saskatchewan has awarded Josef Schmutz, recently retired from the School of Environment and Sustainability, its Cliff Shaw Award for his article entitled “A hunter-naturalist’s observations of sharp-tailed grouse trends in Saskatchewan” published in the organization’s journal *The Blue Jay*. Schmutz’s article applauds forward-looking ranchers who are using community pasture as a grass bank for drought proofing the family ranch with benefits for sharp-tailed grouse, Saskatchewan’s provincial bird.

Karim Tharani has been appointed as head of Library Systems and Information Technology in the University Library. Tharani most recently served as an IT librarian at the U of S.

Jeff McDonnell with the Global Institute for Water Security has been elected president of the American Geophysical Union’s Hydrology Section, which includes about 7,000 of the union’s more than 60,000 members.

Karsten Liber, director of the Toxicology Centre, has begun his term as vice-president of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) North America, and in November will assume the role of president. SETAC is the world’s largest professional society in the field of environmental toxicology. In addition to his role with SETAC North America, Liber has a seat on SETAC’s World Council.

The Ecumenical Chaplaincy Board has announced the appointment of Rev. David Kim-Cragg as ecumenical chaplain at U of S. He will begin his term July 1. Since 2009, Kim-Cragg has been minister at Grovenor Park United Church in Saskatoon. The Saskatchewan Pork Industry late last year awarded Phil Thacker of the Dept. of Animal and Poultry Science its Lifetime Achievement Award. The award recognizes individuals and organizations that contribute significantly to the sustainability of the pork industry in the province.

The Canadian Society for Chemical Engineering has presented Ajay Dalai, professor of chemical and biological engineering, with the 2014 Barnett Award in Design and Industrial Practice for innovative design or production activities accomplished in Canada. A group in the College of Medicine, including Dean’s Project program student Caitlin Hunter, won a research poster award at the annual meeting of the North American Menopause Society in Washington, DC. Other contributors to the research were Heidi Vanden Brink and Kali Turner. Faculty authors from the U of S include Angela Baerwald and Donna Chizen. The poster title was Age-Related Changes in Ovarian Antral Follicular Dynamics: Associations with Endometrial Hyperplasia.

The Saskatchewan Pork Industry and the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development co-sponsored the poster award at the annual meeting of the American Institute of Animal Science in Kansas City last year. Other contributors to the research were Colin France, Thaddeus Kozlowski, and Kevin Fyffe. The poster title was “A Hunter-Naturalist’s Observations of Sharp-Tailed Grouse Trends in Saskatchewan.”

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Alanna Howell hopes to help the university deal more sustainably and cheaply with a bothersome byproduct of dairy research—cattle manure. "As a biological engineering student, I’m quite interested in waste utilization; that is, to use wastes in a way that can actually be beneficial," she said. The opportunity to find a way to better handle manure from the dairy barn is one of many offered under the auspices of the Sustainability Living Lab initiative, which attempts to find solutions for real-world challenges on campus. "We’ve been doing this on an ad hoc basis for years, but last year we decided we’re really going to formalize and expand it," said Margret Asmuss, sustainability co-ordinator for the U of S Office of Sustainability. Howell’s work is set up to emulate an actual biological engineering project, with clients and deliverables, research on best practices, a proposed design and recommendations. Currently, manure produced at the Rayner Dairy Facility is scraped into a pit, stirred into a slurry, pumped into a tank for storage, then hauled away to be spread on fields. Howell said it costs the university about $65,000 a year for the service.

We've been doing this on an ad hoc basis for years, but last year we decided we’re really going to formalize and expand it," said Margret Asmuss, sustainability co-ordinator for the U of S Office of Sustainability.

Howell is looking at a system that processes manure through a roller mill to separate the liquids from the solids. The solids can be composted and used to enrich soil. The dried compost could also be used for bedding.
Molecule discovery boosts knowledge about nerve repair

MAICHAEL ROBIN

A research team led by Valerite Verge at the University of Saskatchewan has discovered a molecule that can be used in the repair shop of the body’s nervous system to bring new treatments for debilitating nerve injuries.

Like other cells, neurons have a main body and axons—long, branching filaments that carry nerve impulses from the brain to the extremities and back. Verge said a series of experiments by Ying show Luman is not only an order taker, but also a messenger, shuttling back to the neuron information critical for re-growing the damaged axon.

“This is a brand-new concept, that all the way out in the axon there are molecules that can sense the stress of a nerve injury and send that signal back to the cell body to further regulate axon repair,” she said. “This is another major piece of the puzzle (in understanding how nerves heal)”

The research is published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Verge and her colleagues will now be looking to find out more about which Luman-regulated proteins are the active players in repairing injured nerves.

“We’re now also in the lab looking at strategies and ways that might rev this (repair process) up,” Verge said. “Can we then develop new therapeutics that target those, or find ways to boost this Luman response to make this repair even more effective?”

Another project in the Verge lab approached nerve repair from a different angle: repairing the insulating sheath surrounding axons using direct electrical stimulation.

Like electrical wires, nerves have a form of insulation called myelin that protects them and allows more efficient signal conduction, she said. In diseases such as multiple sclerosis, myelin is destroyed, causing everything from physical disability to trouble thinking or chronic pain.

Verge said research has already shown that direct electrical stimulation helps nerves re-grow after an injury, but could it help re-insulate nerves whose myelin has been damaged by disease?

In work conducted by her PhD student Nikki McLean and colleagues from Alberta and Ontario recently published in the journal PLOS ONE, Verge said it was discovered that direct electrical stimulation boosts knowledge about nerve repair

Sustainability challenge creates learning opportunity

From Page 4

allowing part of the manure to be recycled for the dairy barn.

“It might actually be better than straw which, coming from outside, might introduce microbes (into the barn) from a totally different ecosystem,” she said.

While dealing with manure solids is fairly straightforward, liquids are more challenging.

“What isn’t known is how much it will cost to treat the remaining effluent to the point where it can either be flushed into the sanitary sewer or recycled as grey water, to be used at the facility in some way,” Howell said.

To this end, Howell is looking at systems used in dairy facilities across Canada and the United States for developing a short list of possible solutions for the U of S.

From those alternatives, I’ll be choosing one that I’ll do detailed design on, and then present to the Department of Animal Science. “

Aasmuss explained this is a typical culmination of a Sustainability Living Lab project—a solution that can be implemented by the university. The student projects can also provide valuable foundational information for university planners.

“A number of years ago, we had a group of mechanical engineering students look at (cooling and refrigeration) in Marquis Hall,” she said. “When Marquis Hall came to do its renovations, they asked for that study because it provided a lot of the groundwork.”

Sustainability Living Lab projects cover a broad spectrum, she said. Planning students are slated to tackle the challenge of making the campus more bicycle and pedestrian friendly, and how to make university lands more effective wildlife corridors. A pharmacy and nutrition student is working with Culinary Services to help offer more locally sourced foods in Marquis Hall, and a School of Environment and Sustainability student is examining ways to assess the sustainability of the university’s various farm operations.

“We want to formally link students with sustainability challenges we have on our campus so they can use those as learning opportunities,” Aasmuss said.
Dr. Douglas Freeman has accepted a second five-year term as dean of the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM). The Board of Governors approved the reappointment based on the recommendation of the interim president and a review committee that noted Freeman’s strong record for building relationships and his leadership in moving forward the college’s teaching and research agenda.

Freeman joined the U of S March 1, 2010 from North Dakota State University where he headed up two departments—Veterinary Diagnostic Services and Veterinary and Microbiological Sciences. He also served as director of that institution’s Great Plains Institute of Food Safety for two years, and led multi-disciplinary research programs in disease surveillance, public health and food safety. Freeman completed his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, clinical residency and Master of Science degree in theriogenology at the University of Minnesota, and received a PhD in reproductive physiology from the University of Idaho.

Research shows promise for future treatments

From Page 5

electrical stimulation of the nerve not only helped it rebuild its myelin, but the stimulation also revved up the associated immune system response.

“The results in the paper are really stunning in that a single one-hour bout of electrical nerve stimulation helped both the repair of the myelin, as well as helped the axon protect itself against destruction,” Verge said. She cautions that the results are promising but there is still much work to be done. The experiments used a rat model and surgical intervention, which is impractical in humans, especially if the damaged nerves are in the brain or spinal cord.

“The one thing I don’t want to do is create false hope, but I can say there are a number of different strategies that we’re testing,” she said. “If we can electrically activate the neurons and their damaged axons, make them more active, will they remyelinate (re-insulate) better? And the answer appears to be yes.” Verge explained one strategy might be to stimulate more nerve activity naturally through exercise. Physical rehabilitation programs designed to deliver just the right amount of stimulation could be part of the solution.

“This holds tremendous promise, because we already know from past studies that (electrical stimulation) helps injured neurons to regenerate,” she said. “Now we know it can also help axons … to remyelinate. So the big challenge is on: can we do this with less-invasive approaches or approaches that will stimulate larger areas?”
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Conferences

2015 Leadership Conference
The Edwards School of Business presents the 2015 Leadership Conference: Sustainable Leadership – From Civic to Crucial at TCU Place. The conference will showcase Saskatchewan leaders' knowledge and expertise, as well as provide fresh perspectives and practices on sustainable leadership. More information can be found at leadershipconference.usask.ca.

Health Conference
The Pediatrics, Obstetrics, and Gynecology (POG) Women’s and Children’s Health Conference takes place Feb. 5-6 at the Saskatoon Inn. The event will provide recent development and issues in women’s and children’s health, management of complicated cases and a multidisciplinary approach to improving care. For more information, visit usask.ca/mc.

2015 Winter Refresher
St. Andre’s College presents its annual Winter Refresher March 7-9 themed “The Holy Spirit and the Environmental Crisis.” The guest speaker is Mark Wallace, professor of religion and interpretation theory co-director of Saskatchewan College, Saultthunder, Pennsylvania. More information is available at standrews.ca or call 306-966-8970.

Seminars/Lectures

Veterinary Microbiology Seminar Series
Fridays at 12:30pm, Room 2105 WCVM
• Jan. 9, 1:45-2:45 pm, Room 2105, Brian McLean

Advanced Photography II, Jan. 21-April 22
• 2D Design I, Jan. 22-April 23
• Sculpture I, Jan. 22-April 23
• 3D Design I, Jan. 22-April 23
• Photoshop I, Jan. 20-April 21

Library Researcher Series
• Jan. 22, 10-11 am, Murray Library, Room 102
• Jan. 29, Beware of Predatory Publishers! Library, Room 102

Library Collaborative Learning Lab, Health Sciences Library, Room 1430
• Jan. 14, 2:30 pm in Arts 100, Alan Guenther and Naqaa Abbas will lead People Demand the Downfall of the Regime
• Jan. 26, Research Data Management, 1-2 pm, Murray Library, Room 102

Seminars/Lectures

Educative Executive Management
For information call 306-966-8686, email exoowrds@usask.ca or visit edwards.usask.ca or visit edwards.usask.ca.

Jan. 13-14, Introduction to Trans- formational Leadership
• Jan. 31-Feb. 6, The Effective Executive Leadership Program – ERK Resort, Westlock

Centre for Continuing and Distance Education
For more information, visit www.cce.usask.ca or call 306-966-5599

U of S Language Centre
English as a Second Language Classes, Jan.-March 19-28
• French levels 1 to 7, $210.00 (GST exempt)
• Italian level 1: $220.00 (GST included)
• Portuguese level 1: $220.00 (GST included)
• Spanish levels 1 to 7, $250.00 (GST included)
• German level 1 and 2: $200.00 (GST included)

Textbooks and workbooks are extra (excluding Japanese for the Traveller and Cow level 1).

Workshop Series
• One-Week Intensive French Immersion for those who wish to advance their language Feb. 16-21, 25 hours over 5.5 days, Cost: $550.00 (GST exempt), materials and final lunch provided

Panel Discussion Series on the Environment
Call 306-966-5599 to register

Other Languages
• January 9, 2015

Japanese for the Traveller: $241.50 (textbook and GST included)
• Spanish levels 1 to 7: $220.50 (GST included)
• French level 1 and 2: $210.50 (GST included)
• German level 1 and 2: $200.50 (GST included)
• Italian level 1: $220.50 (GST included)
• Portuguese level 1: $220.50 (GST included)
• Spanish level 1: $232.00 (class materials and GST included)

Workshops/Lectures

Multilingual Conversational Language Classes Jan.-March 29-31
• German level 1 and 2: $200.50 (GST included)

Textbooks and workbooks are extra (excluding Japanese for the Traveller and Cow level 1).

January 9, 2015

Events

Women’s Hockey
Jan. 17 & 17 vs. UBC
Jan. 23 vs 24 and 26, Manitoba
Huskies @ Home

Women’s Basketball
Jan. 9 vs. Regina
Jan. 14 vs. Regina

Basketball
Jan. 19 vs. Regina
Jan. 30 vs. 31 at TWU

U of S Master Teacher Award
Deadline to submit nominations to the GMCTE is February 15, 2015

For further details please visit usask.ca/gmcte/awards/u-s-master-teacher-award

Sylvia Wallacel Sessional Lecturer Award
Deadline to submit nominations to the GMCTE is February 15, 2015

For further details please visit usask.ca/gmcte/awards/sylviawallace

Provost’s College Awards
Deadline to submit nominations to the college is February 15, 2015

For more information, please visit provost.usask.ca/awards provosts-awards

Provost’s Themed Awards
Deadline to submit nominations to the GMCTE is February 15, 2015

Provost’s Award for Excellence in Aboriginal Education
Provost’s Award for Excellence in International Learning
Provost’s Outstanding New Teacher Award
Provost’s Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award (for Faculty)
Provost’s Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award (for Graduate student)

Visit ccde.usask.ca/community-music. For more information, visit usask.ca/gmcte/events or call 306-966-2231.
A curious thing happens when students view Mac Hone’s sketchbooks: they become better artists. Professor Tim Nowlin has been incorporating the Hone sketchbooks into his studio art classes ever since they were donated to the University Library, University Archives and Special Collections over a decade ago. Hone was a master at capturing great detail, particularly in his quick character sketches.

“In my figure drawing classes, I often include a sketchbook assignment to promote the idea of drawing from life as an ongoing regular study practice,” explained Nowlin. “I like showing my students the Mac Hone sketchbooks as they are an intimate record of an ongoing sketching practice by a serious artist. As you can see from the examples, Mac’s small drawings reveal beautifully fluid, gestural lines that capture both the relationship of forms and the vital life energy, movements and personalities of its everyday subjects. My students are always amazed and that inspiration really incites students to pursue their own sketching practice more seriously.”