

INDIGENOUS INITIATIVES

Supporting Aboriginal achievement for students, staff and faculty has been a priority on campus for years. But through new programming, partnerships and policies, the University of Saskatchewan has made significant progress over the course of 2016. We take an in-depth look at developments across campus.

READ THE FULL STORY ON PAGE 8.



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On Campus News is published 12 times per year by University of Saskatchewan Marketing and Communications. It is distributed to all U of S faculty, staff, graduate students and members of governing bodies, as well as to others in the university community, related organizations, some Saskatchewan government officials and news media.

Subscriptions are available for \$22 per year. Story and photo ideas are welcome. Advertising rates are available online or on request.

On Campus News aims to provide a forum for the sharing of timely news, information and opinions about events and issues of interest to the U of S community.

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ISSN: 1195-7654

PUBLICATIONS MAIL
AGREEMENT NO. 40065156

Return undeliverable addresses to:
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U of S retirees ready for the future

LESLEY PORTER

For those about to retire, leaving their place of work for good can be a disconnecting experience. Fortunately, groups such as the University of Saskatchewan Retirees Association (USRA) are there to make the transition a little easier.

Formed in 1989, USRA's goals were initially pension reform—switching from defined to indexed—according to president Judith Henderson. Twenty-seven years later, the group now aims to promote the interests and welfare of the university's retirees—both faculty and staff—while helping them maintain their ties to the institution.

“We still can have an advocacy role, but I think a lot of us want to stay in touch with the university,” said Henderson, herself a retired English professor who also previously served as assistant dean of student affairs and associate dean of humanities and fine arts in the College of Arts and Science.

Maintaining that engagement after retirement can be tricky. For example, the U of S Alumni Association has a wide membership base, but many staff and faculty are not U of S alumni, she explained.



Judith Henderson, president of the U of S Retirees Association. LESLEY PORTER

There are also those who retire outside of the city or province, but who are still members of USRA. “For those of us here, we have a lot of activities that keep us in touch with each other and we work hard to find ways to support the university,” she said.

USRA is open to retired faculty members, members of the Admin-

istrative and Supervisory Personnel Association (ASPA) union and exempt staff from the U of S and its federated and affiliated colleges. Contract research scientists from on-campus centres (such as the National Research Council) are also eligible to enrol in USRA.

Locally, aside from discounts at campus retail outlets, USRA offers a

monthly luncheon series available to members. While some of the topics are pertinent to the demographic base, others focus on societal and political issues (such as the needs of Syrian refugees or the expectations of a new federal government). Other events are “things that are rather fun,” said Henderson, noting an upcoming luncheon on craft beer.

Regardless of the topic, explained Henderson, the point of the monthly gathering is to “help seniors stay active, both getting out to meet with friends and former colleagues but also stay involved.”

USRA also has an awards program, which recognizes retirees who remain active in their profession and their community.

“Some members remain quite active with grants and labs,” she said. Others excel outside of the office, because “not every person who retires wants to continue professional work. Some of them are very active in serving society through the university and their community. We like to recognize those things.” ■



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

A lot happens at the U of S during the weeks when *On Campus News* isn't published. Here are a few of the top stories from news.usask.ca:

Dadachova new Fedoruk chair

College of Pharmacy and Nutrition professor Ekaterina (Kate) Dadachova is the new Fedoruk Centre for Nuclear Innovation Chair in Radiopharmacy at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S). Dadachova was recently a professor of Radiology, Microbiology and Immunology in the Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University. She received her PhD from Moscow State University in 1992.

Wyant supports new ice facility

Vaughn Wyant and the Wyant Group of companies joined the campaign to fund a new twin-pad ice facility on campus by donating \$500,000 to the University of Saskatchewan's Home Ice campaign on Dec. 1. The university is seeking public support to fund the remaining \$7 million required to construct the new Merlis Belsher Place that will replace the aging Rutherford Rink and be home to Huskie athletics and community minor hockey.

Poelzer presents at UN conference

Professor Greg Poelzer of the University of Saskatchewan School of Environment and Sustainability presented key findings on renewable energy at the United Nations Marrakech Climate Change Conference on Nov. 17 in Marrakech, Morocco. Poelzer, the founding director of the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development, is one of 17 scholars involved in the initiative.

Caribou research proves promising

A U of S research team has found that the woodland caribou population in the Boreal Shield region of Saskatchewan has been slightly increasing over the past two years and currently exists at a high density for the species in Canada. The team, led by U of S biologists Philip McLoughlin and Jill Johnstone, has studied the caribou populations for the past five years. Their final report is due in 2018.

FOR MORE UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWS, VISIT: news.usask.ca @usask

Grahams' gift a game-changer for U of S

\$4-million donation from long-time supporters goes to new Huskie Athletics facility

JESSICA ELFAR

Ron and Jane Graham know a good opportunity when they see one.

When they heard that the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) was proceeding on a new ice facility to replace the aging Rutherford Rink, they decided to get involved to fix a long-standing issue that they said also put the Huskie basketball teams at a disadvantage.

The basketball teams practice in the Physical Activity Complex (PAC), but are unable to use the facilities every December and April when the space is transformed into an exam room for finals. Ron said that reduction in practice time has a real impact on the athletes, who train 12 months a year.

"It's a year-round commitment," he said, noting that the exam scheduling also leads to other hurdles. "It's difficult for the university to attract tournaments, because the demands on the PAC are significant."

With many other Canadian universities offering more practice facilities for their athletes, the Grahams have now committed \$4 million to the U of S to transform the new ice facility—Merlis Belsher Place—into a multi-sport complex.

Their major gift will allow for the addition of two practice gymnasiums, dressing rooms and team rooms for Huskie basketball. Additionally, the new courts will be NBA length, "a full 94 feet—longer than collegiate courts in the city," he said.

The new space also gives the university flexibility to consider an athletic injury research area for athletes down the road, which is on the Grahams' wish list for the basketball teams.

Huskie men's basketball coach Barry Rawlyk said the Grahams have been instrumental to the teams, and that their commitment to the new facility will lead to improved player development.

"This is a true game changer," he



The Grahams have donated close to \$20-million to the U of S, the largest cumulative gift from alumni in university history.

noted. "Access to a facility such as this will greatly enhance the student-athlete experience for every member of our team and will further enhance our ability to attract top-level talent to the University of Saskatchewan."

The university announced the donation to the new facility as part of a special recognition event for the Grahams on December 8, with university students and staff, Huskie athletes and Saskatoon community members in attendance.

The event also celebrated a major milestone—the Grahams have

now donated close to \$20 million in their lifetime to support the university and its students, which is the largest cumulative gift from alumni in university history. In recognition of that remarkable support, the university announced that the main court in the PAC will be named Ron and Jane Graham Centre Court.

"We are privileged to have the support of Ron and Jane Graham, who are shining examples of what it means to be passionate University of Saskatchewan alumni," said U of S President Peter Stoicheff. "Their

generosity is evident across campus, having contributed to numerous athletic initiatives, academic programs, and student scholarships. Simply put, they are outstanding supporters who have made a positive impact on our campus for our entire community."

The Grahams have been proud Huskie supporters for decades because athletics played a positive role in their university experiences. When they studied at the U of S—Ron obtained his bachelor of engineering and Jane attained

her bachelor of education, both in 1962—Ron was a quarterback for the Huskie football team while Jane was actively involved in intramurals, playing every sport offered.

In 2010, this passion for supporting athletics led to a new visitors' facility for Huskie football.

"We had done a walkthrough of the old facility, and you could see the sky through the holes in the ceiling," said Ron, who described the need to get involved with the re-design of the clubhouse.

The Grahams donated nearly \$3 million towards the two-storey expansion of the modern Graham Huskie Clubhouse at Griffiths Stadium, providing Huskie Athletics with a much-needed training room, film room and meeting space that helps give the team an advantage.

The Grahams have also made a major impact on the university's basketball teams. After their trip to watch the women's team compete at the national championship in 2015, Ron noted opposing teams had more fulsome coaching complements. After that competition, he and Jane decided to fund assistant coaches for the two Huskie basketball teams for five years.

The competition was a memorable one for Ron and Jane, and showed the Huskies just how dedicated the couple is to the teams. The Grahams flew from their home in La Quinta, Calif., and then in-between the competition's two host cities—Toronto and Quebec City—throughout the competition weekend, so that they could see both the Huskie men's and women's teams compete.

"We had hotels in both cities because we didn't know who would advance (to the medal round). At the end of it we were more tired than the players!" said Ron with a laugh.

SEE GRAHAMS, PAGE 14

NASA gets down to Earth with U of S snow course

Professor John Pomeroy discusses university's connection with space agency

HENRYTYE GLAZEBROOK

For most, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is synonymous with images of tense launch countdowns, shuttles, control rooms and astronauts shooting skyward into the stars.

What some people might not realize is that some of NASA's most important work is taking place on our own planet, right here in Canada

through a partnership with the University of Saskatchewan (U of S).

"NASA has what they call a mission to planet Earth, and it's to study Earth's system science—the ocean, the landmass, glaciers, snowpacks, the water, the atmosphere and all these things that can be studied from satellites," said John Pomeroy, Canada Research Chair

in Water Resources and Climate Change, professor of geography and director of the Centre for Hydrology at the U of S.

Pomeroy is one of the minds at the head of a snowpack course being offered this January in a partnership between the U of S and NASA. The course is designed to train scientists who are unfamiliar with snow in collecting measurements—everything from density to temperature to the size of individual crystals—of the white powder that often blankets much of Canada.

"This is the sort of thing that we teach our students here at the U of S on a regular basis," Pomeroy said. "Groups like Environment Canada and the provincial government conduct these snow surveys as part of their normal operations, but in the United States it's not normal because so much of the country doesn't experience snow."

The course has already received an enthusiastic response, with more than 360 candidates vying for the limited 35 spaces available.

NASA has run a similar course for the past four years, but this is the first time that it will move north of the United States-Canada border. Pomeroy said he and the U of S were approached due to the wealth of experience, tools and research sites available to the university and its affiliates.

"It's because of the excellent snowpack we have and the reliable winters, but also the good logistics," he said. "One of our hydrological observatory sites is the Fortress Mountain Snow Laboratory in the Kananaskis Valley, and it's a superb landscape in measuring the snow. We have the site covered with instruments, so it's a good place for us to bring them out to train and it's somewhere we can assure their safety."

Pomeroy said the ultimate goal



John Pomeroy, Canada Research Chair in Water Resources and Climate Change, professor of geography, and director of the Centre for Hydrology.

of this kind of program is to improve the number of researchers who are adept at snow measurements on a ground level and hopefully one day apply those skills to similar assessments via orbital satellites.

"One of the most difficult things to measure—and people have been trying since the 1960s—is the snowpack. There's still not a reliable way to measure how much snow there is, from a satellite," Pomeroy said.

"There are all kinds of things, from road clearing to city snow removal budgets to provincial flood and drought forecasts and even glacier health, that could be aided if we could measure snow accurately from space," he said.

With global indicators of climate change becoming more and more prevalent in the lives of everyday people, Pomeroy emphasizes how measuring snow, tracking

its changes and working toward preventing its further loss is more important now than it ever has been.

"With global warming, one of the first impacts we're seeing around the world is the loss of seasonal snow cover," he said. "In Saskatchewan, we used to get a third of our precipitation as snowfall and now it's down to one-fifth. We've been sitting here in November with dry, warm conditions, and it's been dropping around the world, with many areas experiencing bigger drops than we have in the warmer regions."

"California's drought was not lack of rain. It was lack of snow, and it's brought that state's farm economy to its knees in the last few years," said Pomeroy. "In the U.S. southwest they've had a drought for the last 16 years. At some point you have to call that a change in climate, not just a drought." ■

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Shadick's research is out of this world

JAMES SHEWAGA

It is one of the most fascinating and compelling questions of our time, debated by scientists and theologians alike: Are we alone in the universe?

Researchers at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) are part of the monumental search for answers.

"I believe that life could exist (elsewhere in the universe), but I am not absolutely convinced that life has to exist," said U of S astronomy lecturer Stan Shadick. "Just because it is possible, does not necessarily mean that it does exist, in my opinion. I would like to see the evidence."

Shadick and his astronomy students in the Department of Physics are part of an international effort to try to find that evidence. And one of the first steps to finding life elsewhere is to find a planet in another solar system—known as exoplanets—suitable to support life. The first published discovery of a confirmed exoplanet was made by a Canadian team of astronomers in 1988. Since then, a total of 3,537 have been documented by astronomers around the world, including at the U of S.

"We have only been able to study exoplanets in the last 10 or 15 years, so it is still a fairly hot topic and a fairly active topic in astronomy today," said Shadick, who was listed as a co-author of a paper published in July by the Royal Astronomical Society after he helped confirm a Russian research team's discovery of a new exoplanet. "What I find most valuable for us is this is research that we can do with our telescopes here at the University of Saskatchewan."

The U of S physics department employs five telescopes ranging in diameter from 10 to 14 inches, with a 24-inch telescope—the largest in the province—to be installed next spring after being donated by the Tarasoff family. Through their observations, Shadick and his students have monitored 386 transits of exoplanets as they pass directly in front of other stars. The



University of Saskatchewan lecturer Stan Shadick of the physics department with one of the five telescopes used by his astronomy students.

JAMES SHEWAGA

U of S research team is currently the leading contributor to the international Exoplanet Transit Database.

However, finding exoplanets is just the first step in the search for extraterrestrial life. Shadick said most experts theorize that exoplanets need to be relatively Earth-like in size and must orbit a star similar to our sun and at the correct distance—known as the habitable zone—to provide the correct temperature to allow liquid water to exist on the surface, one of the prerequisites for life on our planet. In addition, researchers believe exoplanets must have a moon of the right mass and proximity to create the tidal forces necessary for life to evolve.

"I think it's a standard theory in biology that life began in tidal pools, so if that is indeed the mechanism for starting life, then to have life on other planets it would need a

moon to create tides," said Shadick. "What I can say is the Earth is very special in many regards. We have

“What I find most valuable for us is this is research that we can do with our telescopes here at the University of Saskatchewan.

Stan Shadick

the right mass of planet, with the right chemistry, with the right kind of star, at the right distance and the right size of moon. So there are lots of special things about our planet that allows for life to exist.”

Like the majority of exoplanet discoveries, U of S researchers don't directly view exoplanets, but measure small changes in a star's light as a planet passes directly in front of—or

transits—the star it orbits.

Discovering an exomoon is a much more complicated process, involving calculating the small variations in the speed that a planet orbits a star resulting from the gravitational effect of a moon that causes a planet to speed up or slow down.

"If you were to look at the earth-moon system from space, you would see the earth actually wobbles every month because of the gravity of the moon," said Shadick. "So the work we are doing here could be used for the eventual discovery of an exomoon. There really is no confirmed verifiable discovery of an exomoon to date, so that would be exciting."

However, that discovery would

still be light years away, so to speak, from actually proving that life exists elsewhere in the universe. Theories such as the famous Drake equation and a more recent recalculation by researchers at the University of Washington estimate that the number of extraterrestrial civilizations in the Milky Way galaxy alone could be in the thousands. But making contact, given the vast expanse of space, is another question altogether.

"Our Milky Way galaxy has hundreds of billions of stars in it and there are billions of other galaxies, but they are extremely remote," said Shadick. "Even within our own galaxy, the closest planetary system with life, if life does exist elsewhere, is probably fifty or a hundred light years away. And we are not seeing tourists from other solar systems, so they must be very, very, very far away, if they even exist at all." ■

Survey set to gauge employee satisfaction

✍️ ZAHEED BARDAI

Employee engagement surveys are common in many workplaces because they can drive positive changes in organizations.

With a workforce as diverse as the University of Saskatchewan's, it is even more important to keep a finger on the pulse of faculty and staff engagement.

There are approximately 6,000 permanent and term faculty and staff who make up the workforce at the U of S. Jeff Hepp, Human Resources senior consultant for metrics and performance, is leading the university's new employee engagement survey project, scheduled to begin in early 2017.

"Engagement encompasses how faculty and staff feel about the university in key areas of leadership, personal performance, organizational structures, safety, total rewards and work-life balance," Hepp said.

The last time U of S faculty and staff took part in an employee engagement survey was in early



Jeff Hepp will lead the next employee engagement survey.

✍️ ZAHEED BARDAI

2015. This year, the engagement survey is being administered by the Korn Ferry Hay Group (KFHG).

"In previous employee engagement surveys, we heard from faculty and staff that they wanted a more confidential and secure outlet to voice their opinions; one that was independent from Human

Resources and the university," said Hepp. "There was also a need to incorporate best practices from industry and other universities. KFHG addresses all of these areas, having worked with over 4,000 organizations in engagement surveys."

The university and Human Resources use the anonymous

feedback received through surveys like this to develop programs and make improvements to the workplace for faculty and staff. For example, in previous surveys conducted since 2012, a declining number of U of S faculty and staff stated that they believed an Indigenous person had an equal opportunity for employment at the university.

Since that time, the university has established institutional priorities for indigenization and Human Resources launched an Indigenous self-identification campaign in 2016 in which 205 faculty and staff have declared their ancestry so far. A

spring gathering/conference is also in the planning stages to celebrate these faculty and staff members. In addition, the university has partnered with Indigenous institutions to host the Aboriginal Career Start program, which provides administrative skills development and on-the-job training for students transitioning into their careers.

The Employee Engagement survey will launch in January 2017 and will run for approximately two weeks. ■

Zaheed Bardai is a communications specialist with Human Resources.

Season's greetings

With the holiday season approaching, I want to take a moment to celebrate a few of the highlights that have made this a special year at the University of Saskatchewan.

We have taken important steps toward reconciliation and to being the best place we can be for Aboriginal people and their communities, including the opening of the much-celebrated Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre.

We broke ground on the Collaborative Science Research Building, we announced the Home Ice campaign to help us realize a long-awaited new ice facility, and our Huskie women's basketball team brought home its first Canadian championship.

We received unprecedented federal funding for our signature areas of water and food security, and in the process became the only university in the country to be awarded two Canada First Research Excellence Fund grants.

Our graduating class of 2016 saw more than 4,300 students receive their degrees, joining 150,000 U of S alumni making a difference in our province, across the country and around the world. More Aboriginal students graduated from our university this past year than ever before.

We have much to be proud of and so much more to look forward to in 2017.

I wish you all a happy holiday season and all the best in the new year.



President Peter Stoicheff

Examining Hollywood's portrayal of Islam

U of S religious studies course takes a critical look at the film industry

LESLEY PORTER



Fachrizal Halim, instructor in linguistics and religious studies. LESLEY PORTER

A unique course in the College of Arts in Science is taking a critical look at the cinematic depiction of Muslims.

Islam in Hollywood, a second-year class in the Department of Linguistics and Religious Studies, examines and analyzes the images of Islam as manufactured and portrayed in the Hollywood film industry over the last half-century.

“What we are doing in class is basically just watching movies,” said Fachrizal Halim, the course instructor and a faculty member in the department, “but at the same time, learning this political history and building this interdisciplinary perspective.”

The main goal of the class, he continued, is to expose students to a wide base of representation of Muslims in media, in the context of American political history as well as Muslim history in the modern world. That political, historical and

social context is important to know, as it is directly tied to its portrayal in the movies, Halim said.

“Given many images about Islam and Muslims were produced from the perspective of dominance, coercion and subjugation, Hollywood has not advanced our knowledge about the subject,” he said, adding that the inconsistent portrayal of Muslims has “limited our ability to establish knowledge about Islam and Muslim societies.”

To cover all the bases, the class covers three pertinent themes and time periods, starting with the 1962 epic *Lawrence of Arabia*.

“These are the classical images: that Arabs are barbaric, Arabs are irrational, Arabs oppress women,” he said. “They are very classic images of Orientalism.”

The next period, starting from the post-1979 Iranian revolution all the way up to the Gulf Wars, focuses on national security concerns. Films

such as *Rambo III* (1988), *True Lies* (1994) and *The Siege* (1998) inaccurately or unfairly portray Muslims in a dangerous light by linking their religious practices to terrorism. Another focus is the growing use and impact of technology to perpetuate warfare.

Finally, the time shifts to post-9/11 and the American-led global war on terrorism. From here, the representation of Islam became much more balanced and nuanced, as seen in the 2005 film *Syriana*.

“*Syriana* portrays much more

complex images of Islam,” Halim said. “It doesn’t use the same model as seen in *Rambo*.”

Additionally, the post-9/11 era has created another approach to the portrayal of Islam in the movies: the notion of good Muslims versus bad Muslims.

“The bad ones are the terrorists—those who do actual damage. Those who are good are those who are loyal, who are obedient citizens,” explained Halim.

However, this can be problematic—as with most dichotomies—

as there is little to no grey area in between, he said.

“How do you define good and bad?”

Currently in its second year, Halim created the class to bridge gaps pertaining to the portrayal of Islam and Muslim societies in media products while providing an interdisciplinary perspective. Without such an understanding, he said, viewers are left with “an inadequate analysis that produces an ill-informed conception and a self-perpetuating cycle of misunderstanding and resentment towards the multiple realities of Muslims.”

As the majority of the class is spent watching movies, he encourages students to bring popcorn and other snacks to help set the scene.

“They really enjoy this class,” he said, “not because of watching the movies, but they learn something that otherwise is unavailable to them.” ■



Advancing Aboriginal achievement

U of S enhancing opportunities for students, staff and faculty

JAMES SHEWAGA

It has been an institutional priority for years and plenty of work still lies ahead, but the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) has made significant strides in support of Aboriginal achievement over the course of 2016.

From the opening of the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre and the creation of the Aboriginal Career Start program, to new partnerships, projects and appointments, the U of S has introduced a number of initiatives this year to support Indigenous advancement

and engagement for students, staff and faculty.

“I do believe we are headed in the right direction,” said Candace Wasacase-Lafferty, director of Aboriginal Initiatives at the U of S and a member of the Kahkewistahaw First Nation. “The momentum

is great and it’s actually quite difficult to stay on top of everything that is happening on campus. I think the renewal of leadership on campus and I think the message that (U of S) President Peter Stoicheff has been delivering about the high priority of Indigenous engagement is steering us in the right direction. We are really getting behind what we say we are going to do and we are doing it.”

Commitment to Aboriginal achievement topped the list of eight U of S priorities reaffirmed in 2014, with Stoicheff and former Chancellor Blaine Favel taking a leadership role as co-chairs by hosting

a groundbreaking national forum in November of 2015 on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s calls to action. That successful forum—*Building Reconciliation: Universities Answering TRC’s Calls to Action*—began with the U of S and the 23 other post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan signing an agreement to work together to close the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

What has followed has been a wide range of initiatives across campus as the U of S continues to build on its commitment to be “the

best place we can possibly be for the Aboriginal people of this province and this country,” according to Stoicheff. While the university is moving forward, there is a long way to go to meet the needs of an Indigenous student body that continues to grow each year.

“We are graduating more Aboriginal students than ever before, so I think that is a very good measureable sign of success,” said Stoicheff, noting that the Universities of Alberta and Manitoba followed Saskatchewan’s lead in hosting forums and conferences on reconciliation, with U of S officials



Wasacase-Lafferty



Greeyes



Duret

now working with Universities Canada in a leadership capacity to keep that process moving forward. “But we have a long way to go in terms of having a representative number of Indigenous faculty and staff on campus. And I would add to that, we have a very long way to go to have Indigenous members of our community in senior administrative positions.”

With the official grand opening in February, the impressive and progressive Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre builds on the university’s commitment to Aboriginal achievement as a place for cele-

bration at the U of S, which has long supported major cultural events like the annual Graduation Powwow in May and Aboriginal Achievement Week in February each year.

“Obviously the opening of the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre has succeeded in being an attraction and a gathering place and an educating place for all students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal,” said Stoicheff. “And that was a big feature of our moving in the direction that we need to move.”

At the executive level, the Board of Governors—which recently elected Lee Ahenakew of Ahtahka-

koop Cree Nation as board chair—became the latest body on campus to officially adopt an Indigenous land acknowledgement greeting to open all board meetings: *As we gather here today, we acknowledge we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nation and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.*

The addition of new Aboriginal symbols and images in colleges across campus has been another step in honouring and acknowledging shared history while helping Indigenous students, staff and faculty feel

welcome and at home at the U of S. As part of that project, Arts Court—the small turnaround and primary vehicle access point for the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre—was re-christened as Elders Court in February to honour leaders within the local Aboriginal community.

The university’s Indigenous initiatives have attracted national and international attention, from being featured in the November edition of *The Atlantic*, the influential and popular award-winning Washington-based magazine, to the Toronto-based *Globe and Mail’s* coverage of the grand opening of the Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre.

PROGRESSIVE PROGRAMMING

Among the first of the new initiatives in 2016 was the establishment of the Aboriginal Career Start program, with 18 students from other post-secondary institutions earning real-world experience working in four-month placements in a variety of departments at the U of S over the summer. A number of the program participants, like Connie Dodge, have remained on campus in full-time roles.

“Being a Métis woman, I have seen how welcoming the U of S is to all walks of life and being a part of this program is opening doors for a lot of people,” Dodge said. “The doors that have opened for me on campus are endless and the opportunities working here are beyond what I ever expected . . . I cannot express in words how much I appreciate the opportunity I have been given to take part in such an amazing program.”

In winter of 2016, University Council also passed a motion declaring that all degree programs should include Indigenous content. While this has been a slow process, the U of S continues to work towards that goal through new courses now offered in a variety of colleges across campus and more curriculum additions planned for 2017.

“Some of these things will take longer than others, but some we shouldn’t be afraid to act on really quickly and I think we will be seeing that, for example, with individual

colleges adding Indigenous content in all degree-granting programs,” said Stoicheff. “The mandate is there, based on the Council motion, and was there before by the TRC and the calls to action. So we are making progress.”

PROACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The U of S enhanced its commitment to Indigenous language studies available on campus by partnering with the University of Victoria to bring that school’s master’s in Indigenous Language Revitalization Program here in the summer.

For Joan Greeyes—the director of First Nations and Métis relations at the U of S and a member of the Muskeg Lake First Nation—it was an important step in helping protect, preserve and promote Indigenous culture and tradition with a commitment to ensuring the languages and dialects not only survive, but thrive.

“The Master’s in Indigenous Language Revitalization Program will give the University of Saskatchewan a critical mass of First Nation and Métis scholars that we can call upon to become faculty and staff in our institution,” said Greeyes. “This group of students will be in a position to lead the U of S in developing our own Indigenous language revitalization courses and programs at the graduate level.”

In other initiatives this year, the University Library took the lead on partnering with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) in Winnipeg to provide U of S students and faculty access to the NCTR’s vast database of records of Canada’s history with Indigenous peoples.

Meanwhile, the College of Law has partnered with the Government of Nunavut to help Inuit students at Nunavut Arctic College earn law degrees in association with the U of S, which has long been a national leader in supporting Indigenous legal students through the nationally renowned Native Law Centre. In another major development in the college, U of S law professor

SEE POITRAS, PAGE 15

Gift giving tips

FOR CAMPUS SHOPPERS

It seems like everybody is busy this time of year. If you're not writing or marking exams, you're attending holiday parties, adorning your house in tinsel, preparing festive food for holiday visitors or precariously placing elves on shelves. Who has time to shop for presents?

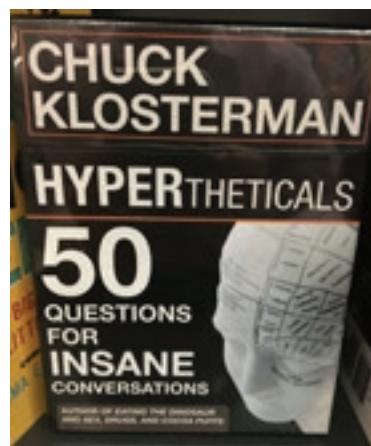
For the third year in a row, members of the University of Saskatchewan marketing and communications team have done the hard work so that you don't have to, scouring all corners of campus for great gifts that are sure to please even the pickiest recipient.

Happy holidays and all the best to you in 2017.

MALARY CLOKE, publications officer
Ugly Christmas sweater? Nah. This one, found at the U of S Main Bookstore, has a cute Huskie on it. You can give one as a gift, then buy another one for yourself to wear to your Christmas party.



SEAN CONROY, alumni communications specialist
If someone on your holiday shopping list is always questioning scruples, sensibilities and long-held norms, I highly recommend *HYPERtheticals: 50 questions for insane conversation*, devised by author Chuck Klosterman. For example: Would you save a friend from a bear attack in exchange for a lifetime of rain? Give the gift of insane conversations for the low price of \$17.99 at the Main Bookstore.



TERI PARKHURST, marketing specialist

Nothing says "I love you" like a gift that literally helps keep your friend/sister/brother alive! Make sure they're staying hydrated with a great-looking bottle that keeps things cold or hot for 24 hours. They are available in a rainbow of colours and patterns in two different sizes at the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Place Riel (\$34.99 or \$39.99).



LESLEY PORTER, communications co-ordinator

The music snob in your life will love these Beats by Dre headphones, found at the Campus Computer Store for \$199.99. They come in a bunch of funky colours and, according to the box, are tuned with emotion. I don't know what that means, but it sounds life-changing.



JAMES SHEWAGA, news editor

No better way to show your Huskie pride than to wrap up in one of these during the frosty winter months. Available at the Main Bookstore for \$19.95, you might as well pick up a pair at that price! Great logo, nice colours and super soft material make this item a must-have under the tree in the Shewaga household this year.



LORI VERISHAGEN, publications officer

Need a gift idea for that hard-to-buy-for kid on your list? This is it! It's warm, super cozy and simply adorable—any kid would look cute as a button in it. Found at the Main Bookstore.



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Brothers' bond bolsters Huskie hopes

✍️ JAMES SHEWAGA

For the first time in their lives, brothers Tyler and Derek Epp are teammates, proving to be a proverbial dynamic duo for the University of Saskatchewan Huskies men's volleyball team.

"We were always a little too far apart in years to play together in school, so this is very cool," said Tyler Epp, a 23-year-old fifth-year member of the Huskies who is five years older than his brother Derek, an 18-year-old rookie on the team. "It's been awesome, it's been a blast on the court and off the court. Just to have him around has been a ton of fun and very special."

The Epp brothers were never in high school together at the same time, but the five years of eligibility in university athletics has finally allowed them to team up. A member of Canada's junior men's volleyball team, Derek was one of the most hotly recruited players in the country last year, a 6-foot-6 setter with multiple scholarship offers. But the opportunity to suit up with his brother—a 6-foot-7 middle blocker—at home in Saskatoon in front of family and friends made the decision an easy one.

"It was a very big part of the decision," said Derek, who has quickly assumed the starting setter role with the Huskies, being coached this season by Joel Dyck while long-time coach Brian Gavlas is on sabbatical. "To stay around family and to get the chance to play with my older brother—because I never had a chance to play with him in any previous sports—that was definitely a big draw. It's super special to be able to play with Tyler, but also to be part of the Huskie family."

Interestingly, the Epp brothers are one of 11 sibling combinations on Huskie Athletic teams this season, including: Leaden and Mackenzie Chartier (track and field); Donovan (football) and Emmarae (track and field) and Fabian Dale (men's soccer); Caleb and Thomas Eidsvik (football); Derek and Tyler Epp (men's volleyball); Brianna and Christy Fehr (women's basketball); Austin and Colin Ferronato (football);



Derek (#14) and Tyler (#17) Epp team up for a block in recent Huskies action.

(women's basketball); Austin and Colin Ferronato (football); Alex and Jesse Forsberg (men's hockey); Davis (men's basketball) and Emily Humbert (women's volleyball); Amy and Naomi Manske (track and field); Eric and Malcolm Thakurdeen (football); and Kaitlin and Morgan Willoughby (women's hockey).

Like most brothers, the Epp boys, including middle brother Jeremy, butted heads at times growing up, driving their parents Christine and Mark—currently working on his PhD in the U of S College of Kinesiology—a little stir crazy on long trips in the van on family vacations, or while going head-to-head playing sports at home. But that sibling rivalry has morphed into a bond of brothers and a kinship connection that can give them an edge on the court.

"Growing up we had a few intense games of one-on-one in the driveway playing basketball or taking shots at each other playing hockey and we went at it a little bit, but now that we are on the same side it's great," said Tyler, with a chuckle.

"We communicate really well and there is definitely something there. We kind of know what the other guy is thinking and we have no problem hashing it out if something is not working. So the bond is there and it will just continue to get stronger."

The brothers—both kinesiology students who hope to move on to play professional volleyball one day—have also become each other's biggest supporters, with Tyler serving as one of the team captains and helping ease Derek's transition to university athletics and academics.

Like many younger brothers,



Derek Epp



Tyler Epp

Derek grew up watching and wanting to be like Tyler, who competed in the 2013 Canada Summer Games in Quebec and in the 2015 Canadian university men's volleyball championship right here in Saskatoon.

"He was one of my biggest role models growing up, always looking up to him, always trying to beat him in physical competitions and not always being successful," said Derek, with a grin. "I would say the way I train and the way I play and try to handle myself on and off the court, all come from watching Tyler. And being able to talk through things now on the drive home from the gym after practice, or just having someone to talk to basically 24/7, it's great."

For his part, Tyler has taken great pride in watching Derek develop into one of the country's premier players in the under-20 ranks and is relishing this rare opportunity to be teammates for the first time.

"I have told him that in a lot of ways, even though he is younger than me, I look up to him too, with the way he works and the effort that

he puts in and the focus that he has," said Tyler. "He may say he got it from me, but in a lot of ways, I look up to him in those areas and obviously the success that he has had is super exciting and it's been awesome to watch him develop."

With a wealth of talent on this year's team, the Huskies may also develop into a contender in the powerhouse Canada West conference, easily the most competitive league in the country. Capping this memorable season with a trip to nationals would be the perfect ending for the Epps.

"There are no weekends off in this conference and you have to be playing your best every weekend if you want to win," said Tyler. "It's still early, but I think athletically we have a shot to be in the mix again this year."

"We are just trying to put all the pieces together and see how far we can take it," added Derek. "But it would be very special to end up at nationals, especially this season, being able to play with Tyler. It would be great." ■

ALL IN THE FAMILY: Sibling connections on Huskie Athletic teams in 2016-17:

Leaden and Mackenzie Chartier (track and field)
Donovan (football) and Emmarae (track and field) and Fabian Dale (men's soccer)
Caleb and Thomas Eidsvik (football)
Derek and Tyler Epp (men's volleyball)
Brianna and Christy Fehr (women's basketball)
Austin and Colin Ferronato (football)

Alex and Jesse Forsberg (men's hockey)
Davis (men's basketball) and Emily Humbert (women's volleyball)
Amy and Naomi Manske (track and field)
Eric and Malcolm Thakurdeen (football)
Kaitlin and Morgan Willoughby (women's hockey)



New Inuit art collection fires the imagination

JESSICA ELFAR

A new art collection at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) has a cold and snowy history.

Norman Zepp (BA '76) and his wife Judith Varga (BA '76) have travelled the northern-most part of Canada to research art created by Inuit people and have cultivated a nationally-recognized collection over the course of nearly 50 years.

Their collection—which has been donated to the University Library—includes more than 200 sculptures, dozens of prints and drawings, five wall hangings, a vast set of photographs and original interviews with the Inuit artists, predominantly from the Keewatin region of Nunavut.

“It’s rewarding to present the artwork on campus,” said Zepp. “The U of S has always treated Inuit art collections seriously and I am impressed with how it’s been displayed. I appreciate that the university can put most of its art collection in front of its community.”

Zepp, an independent art



Norman Zepp and his wife Judith Varga have donated a major Inuit art collection to the U of S.

LESLEY PORTER

curator, started collecting Inuit art when he first attended the U of S as an art history student in 1969. He developed his expertise in the area when he established the Inuit art department at the Art Gallery of Ontario and helped found the Museum of Inuit Art in Toronto in 1985.

Zepp has spent his lifetime studying and working with the Inuit people and their creations,

including research trips to Nunavut, where he, and at times Varga, stayed with the Inuit artists in their homes in order to understand the origin of their artwork. For instance, some of the most iconic pieces in the collection are the detailed carvings of caribou. Zepp said the Inuit people of the Keewatin region relied heavily on the animal—for food, clothing, shelter and tools—and the reverence for the animal is reflected

in their art.

“This would be a remarkable collection even if the art weren’t included,” noted Tim Hutchinson, university archivist. “The interviews and archival material provide unique insight into the lives of Canada’s northern artists—indeed it is likely the only in-depth documentation available about many of the artists. This is an invaluable addition to our research collections

focusing on the North.”

Not only has Zepp brought his lifetime of work to the university, he has also shared his expertise by curating other notable Inuit art donations. In 2015, he helped the University Art Collection showcase Inuit art sculptures donated to the Edwards School of Business by alumnus Sam Schwartz. He also curated the Henry and Cheryl Kloppenburg Collection of Inuit Sculpture, which was donated to the College of Agriculture and Biore-sources in 2011.

“I look forward to a time when we will be able to have much of the art on permanent display, as an inspiration for students and other visitors to University Archives and Special Collections,” said Charlene Sorensen, the library’s interim dean.

The Norman Zepp-Judith Varga Collection exhibit is in the Link area of Murray Library until the end of January 2017, and will be available for students and researchers to use in their work through University Archives and Special Collections. ■

Jessica Elfar is a development communications specialist.



Bonham-Smith

Peta Bonham-Smith's term as interim dean, College of Arts and Science, extended for a period of up to one year, starting July 1, 2016.

Beth Horsburgh appointed interim dean, College of Nursing, for a period of up to one year, beginning March 1, 2016.

Keith Willoughby appointed interim dean, Edwards School of Business, for a period of up to one year, beginning July 1, 2016.

Adam Baxter-Jones' term as interim dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research, extended for a period of up to one year, beginning July 1, 2016.

Robert Tyler appointed acting dean, College of Agriculture and Biore-sources, for a six-month term starting Sept. 1, 2016.

Dr. George Mutwiri's term as interim executive director, School of Public Health, extended for a period of up to one year, starting July 1, 2016.

John Rigby's term as interim associate provost, institutional planning and assessment, extended to June 30, 2017.

Lois Berry's term as interim assistant vice-provost, health, extended to Aug. 31, 2017.

Doug Surtees' term as associate dean



Baxter-Jones

academic, College of Law, extended to June 30, 2017.

Dr. Chris Clark appointed associate dean academic, Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM), for a five-year term effective Sept. 1, 2016.

Dr. Tom Smith-Windsor's term as associate dean rural and northern programs, College of Medicine, extended for a period of up to one year, beginning Oct. 1, 2016.

Janet McCabe appointed interim assistant dean Prince Albert and North, College of Nursing, for the period of July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

Chelsea Willness appointed associate dean research and academic, Edwards School of Business, for a five-year term, effective Aug. 1, 2016.

Dr. Gill White reappointed to the position of associate dean Regina campus, College of Medicine, for a five-year term effective Sept. 1, 2016.

Dr. Jane Alcorn appointed associate dean research and graduate affairs, College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, for a five-year term effective July 1, 2016.

Angela Bedard-Haughn appointed acting associate dean research and graduate studies, College of Agriculture and Biore-sources, for a six-month term starting Sept. 1, 2016.



Willoughby



Rigby

Dr. Ken Sutherland re-appointed associate dean academic in the College of Dentistry for a five-year term, effective July 1, 2016.

Lorin Elias appointed associate dean students, College of Arts and Science, for a five-year term effective July 1, 2016.

David Burgess appointed to the position of associate dean research, graduate support and international initiatives, College of Education, for a five-year term effective July 1, 2016.

Dr. Anurag Saxena re-appointed associate dean postgraduate medical education, College of Medicine, for a five-year term effective July 1, 2016.

Dr. Andries Muller appointed to the position of interim associate dean continuing medical education, College of Medicine, for a period of up to one year, beginning July 1, 2016.

Martha Smith-Norris appointed to the position of acting associate dean, College of Graduate Studies and Research, for the period July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017.

Dr. Elizabeth Snead appointed interim associate dean research, WCVM, to June 30, 2017.

Dr. Petros Papagerakis appointed to the position of associate dean research, College of Dentistry, for a five-year



Bedard-Haughn

term effective July 1, 2016.

Cindy Shmon appointed as head of small animal clinical sciences, WCVM, for a three-year term effective July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2019.

Paul Newton appointed department head of educational administration for a five-year term effective July 1, 2016.

Dr. Kathy Lawrence appointed acting head of family medicine for a six-month term effective July 1, 2016.

Robert Johanson appointed department head of electrical and computer engineering for a five-year term effective July 1, 2016.

Ramji Khandelwal appointed acting head of biochemistry for a term of up to one year.

Brent Nelson appointed acting head of English for a one-year term effective July 1, 2016.

Jo-Anne Dillon re-appointed as head of microbiology and immunology effective July 1, 2016 for up to five years.

Bill Roesler appointed head of biochemistry effective July 1, 2017 for up to three years.

Geoff Cunfer appointed department head of history for a three-year term effective July 1, 2016.



Willness



Muller



Dillon

Dr. Haissam Haddad appointed to the position of unified head of the Department of Medicine, effective April 1, 2016 for a five-year term.

Dirk de Boer appointed as head of geography and planning for a three-year term, as well as acting head of Indigenous studies for a one-year term, both effective July 1, 2016.

Gordon Sarty appointed as head of psychology for a five-year term effective July 1, 2016.

Len Findlay, Department of English, was appointed a senior fellow at the Centre for Free Expression at Ryerson University. Earlier this year he was elected a director of the Harry Crowe Foundation for Academic Freedom.

Dr. Jay Kalra, professor of pathology and laboratory medicine in the College of Medicine, was recipient of the 2016 Canadian Society of Clinical Chemist award for Outstanding Contribution to Clinical Chemistry.

Safa Kasap (engineering), **Ron Cummings** (law) and **Ernie Walker** (arts and science) awarded the title Distinguished Professor, effective July 1, 2016.

Helen Baulch (SENS) awarded a five-year Centennial Enhancement Chair in Aquatic Ecosystem Biogeo-chemistry effective May 1, 2016.

Just joining University Library team as dean in the new year

Melissa L. Just will take over as the new dean of the University Library on Feb. 1, 2017.

The University of Saskatchewan (U of S) announced Just's five-year appointment on Nov. 16, as she takes over the role from interim dean Charlene Sorensen.

For Just, the first step will be getting on the same page with her new staff and leading the University

Library master planning project to enhance services at the seven library branches at the U of S: Education and Music; Engineering; Leslie and Irene Dubé Health Sciences; Law; Murray Library; Science; and Veterinary Medicine.

"I am thrilled to take a leadership role at the University of Saskatchewan to continue the process of revitalizing, refurbishing

and reimagining library spaces and services at one of Canada's most prestigious research institutions," said Just. "This is an exciting time for us as we re-envision the extensive information services that we offer to continue to meet the changing needs of our campus community and beyond."

Just brings an extensive track record of success at a number of

notable American universities. She most recently served as associate vice-president for information services, and director of New Brunswick Libraries, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J.

Prior to joining Rutgers University in 2012, Just served as director of the Biomedical Library



Just

SEE PROVOST, PAGE 14



COMING EVENTS

SEMINARS / LECTURES

Department of Psychology's monthly colloquium series

Jan. 19, 3–4 pm, Arts 153, Professor Erika Dyck, Department of History, University of Saskatchewan, will give a talk entitled: "Tune in, Turn on, Step Back: LSD's past and present in psychedelic psychiatry." Members of the university community and the general public are welcome to attend this presentation, which is part of the Department of Psychology's monthly colloquium series. For more information, please contact Peter Grant at 966-6675 or via email: peter.grant@usask.ca.

COURSES / WORKSHOPS

Edwards School of Business Executive Education

For information call 306-966-8686, email execed@edwards.usask.ca or visit edwards.usask.ca/execed

- Oct. 12–March 18, The Masters Certificate in Project Management - Saskatoon
- Oct. 13–March 11, The Masters Certificate in Project Management - Regina
- June 22, 2017, Empowering Women Leaders Program - Saskatoon - NEW
- Dec. 12–14, What the Non-Financial Manager Needs to know about Financial & Managerial Accounting – Saskatoon

English Language Evening Classes

Jan. 3, 2017, Language Centre, Williams Building. Polish up your academic writing, speaking skills or pronunciation with an evening class at the Language Centre. Winter term classes begin in January 2017. Contact the main office for placement and registration information or visit ptels.usask.ca.

THE ARTS

Sisters United: An exhibit on women's suffrage in Saskatchewan

Daily until March 14, 2017, 9 am–8 pm, Diefenbaker Centre. Sisters United commemorates the centennial of women winning the right to vote in 1916. Explore

compelling stories of suffragist leaders who laid the foundation for women's rights in Saskatchewan.

MISCELLANY

Building Strong Relationships with Your Adult Children

Dec. 12, 11 am–12 pm, Admin Building C280. Discover how to improve your relationship with your adult children including learning how to manage personal relationships, financial boundaries and how to navigate their marriage and their children. To register visit bit.ly/2dx9tiU. For more information, contact Wellness Resources at 306-966-4580 or email wellness.resources@usask.ca.

How to Receive Criticism and Make it Work for You

Jan. 16, 2017, 3–4 pm, Arts 101. Receiving criticism is hard but don't let your ego stand in the way of benefitting from that feedback. This workshop will help you to learn to effectively accept criticism and use it in a productive way. To register, visit bit.ly/2fdCtLc. For more information, contact Wellness Resources at 306-966-4580 or email wellness.resources@usask.ca.

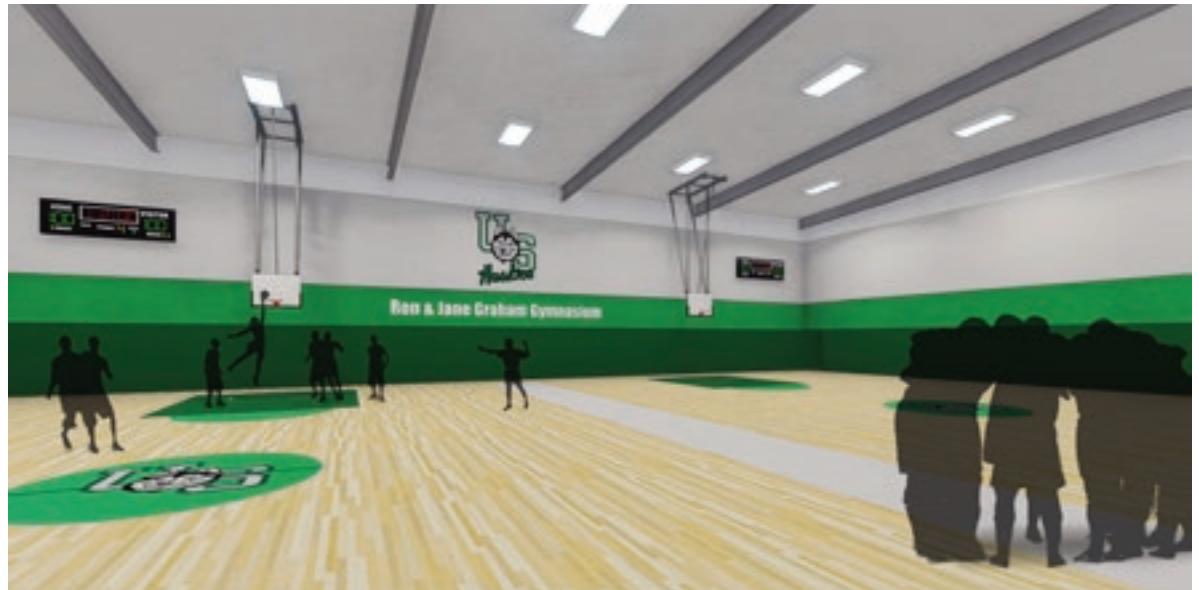
Craving Change Workshop

Jan. 19, 2017, noon–1 pm, room 323, Place Riel Student Centre. Do you want to change your eating habits but don't know where to start? The Craving Change™ workshop focuses on why you eat the way you do and not on what you eat. This five-week workshop meets Thursdays at noon starting Jan. 19. Cost is \$30. Register today as spots fill up quickly. For more information and to register, visit cravingchangeusask.eventbrite.ca.

Sunday Mass at STM Chapel

Sundays until Oct. 22, 2017, 11 am–noon. Join the campus ministry team for the celebration of the Eucharist! Come worship God in a welcoming environment with people from the campus community. For more information visit stmcollege.ca.

Next OCN: Friday, Jan. 13
Deadline: Tuesday, Jan. 3



An architectural drawing of the newly planned Ron & Jane Graham Gymnasium at the U of S.

SUBMITTED

Grahams going the extra mile

FROM PAGE 3

When thinking back to their many donations to the U of S, the contribution the Grahams are most proud of is the establishment of the Ron and Jane Graham Centre for the Study of Communication in the College of Engineering in 2007, which transformed to a school in 2013 after the Grahams donated \$3.27 million to enhance the centre. The Ron and Jane Graham School of Professional Development helps engineering, agriculture and biore-sources, and kinesiology students develop professional communication and entrepreneurial skills so that they are better prepared to enter the job market and to become better citizens after graduation.

"That is the most memorable and long-lasting gift we've made," said Ron, who comes from a family that includes three generations of U of S engineering alumni. Ron also noted that this gift in particular brought together the couple's vocational interests.

"It seemed to fit with Jane's education background and my engineering background, so we focused on giving there," he said.

Not only have the Grahams made a positive impact on the U of S community and campus, they've also left a lasting impression on the parents of many Huskie athletes.

"We often hear from parents of students who have benefited while at sporting events—they even express their gratitude to our family

members," Ron said.

When asked what inspires them to give back to their alma mater, the Grahams spoke of supporting areas that are close to their hearts. They hope other alumni do the same, in their own way.

"We look at people to give back to where they are passionate," Ron said. "We hope it's at their university, as it sets the direction of their careers."

Based on the turnout for the donation announcement event, the Grahams' passion for supporting the university, its students and its athletes is appreciated by many across campus. ■

Jessica Elfar is a development communications specialist.

Provost proud to add new library leadership

FROM PAGE 13

at the University of California-San Diego from 2009 to 2012, and as director of Lee Graff Medical and Scientific Library in Duarte, Calif., from 2006–2009. She filled a variety of library leadership roles at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles and

the University of California-San Francisco, from 1995 to 2006, and also served as a library instruction adjunct faculty member at USC from 2007 to 2009.

Just earned a Bachelor of Arts at the University of California-Riverside in 1991, a Master of Library and Information Science at the University of Texas in 1994, and a Doctor

of Education from the University of Southern California in 2007.

"We conducted an extensive international search to find the right person for this leadership role and we are extremely pleased to welcome Melissa Just to our campus," said Michael Atkinson, U of S provost and vice-president academic. ■

ON Publishing Schedule	No.	Issue Date	Deadline Date
	5	January 13, 2017	January 3, 2017
	6	February 10	January 31
	7	March 10	February 28
	8	April 14	April 4
	9	May 12	May 2
	10	June 9	May 30



Presidential painting

As the 11th president of the University of Saskatchewan, Gordon Barnhart's official portrait was unveiled on November 14, 2016. Barnhart, who preceded Peter Stoicheff as U of S president, posed for approximately 25-30 hours over multiple sittings as artist Cyril Leeper worked to get each stroke just right. The portrait is now displayed in the second-floor walkway between the Peter MacKinnon Building and the Administration Building with other presidential portraits. ■

Poitras appointed to prestigious post for inquiry

FROM PAGE 9

Marilyn Poitras was appointed as a commissioner of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

At the spring and fall convocation ceremonies this year, the U of S graduated 492 self-identified Aboriginal students, accounting for 11.3 per cent of the total 4,347 students who earned degrees in 2016. That marked the largest graduating class of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in the history of the university.

In September, a record number 2,244 Aboriginal students registered for classes in the fall term, 11.1 per cent of the total student body of 20,234. While the registration

and graduation numbers show that the university is welcoming more Indigenous students on campus than ever before, one factor in that increase is that more students are actively taking part in the self-identification process.

That ongoing campaign is extremely important, according to Graeme Joseph, the team leader for First Nations, Métis and Inuit student success. He noted that the last Statistics Canada report confirmed that 16 per cent of the provincial population identifies as Aboriginal and is expected to climb to 20 per cent over the next 20 years.

"There is a major demographic shift taking place in this province and that's important for the U of S," said Joseph, who is Gitksan, originally from northwestern British Columbia.

For Joseph, identifying the number of Indigenous students on campus is a critical part of the process of responding to student needs.

"Self-identification is vital to ensure that we are meeting the needs of Aboriginal students, to understand how many Aboriginal students are at the university and equally importantly to understand what their experiences are like and how we can proactively help them," said Joseph. "This is the important next step. The value to students just isn't that they get counted, but that they receive support when they need it."

In addition to supporting students, the university is actively searching to hire a vice-provost of Indigenous engagement and is committed to enhancing opportunities for all Aboriginal staff and

faculty. A big part of that process is changing the approach and mindset across campus, according to Liz Duret, who was hired in fall of 2015 as the inclusion and diversity consultant at the U of S. Duret, who is Métis, regularly leads workshops across campus for employees to openly discuss diversity and stereotypes in an effort to educate and help make the university a more inclusive and welcoming place for everyone.

"We are looking for alternate ways to attract and retain Aboriginal staff and faculty," said Duret.

It is this area that remains one of the biggest concerns on campus. Aboriginal employees make up only 3.3 per cent of the total U of S workforce, well below the current provincial target of 12 per cent.

To help address this issue,

the university is exploring the idea of establishing an Aboriginal Alumni Association in an effort to better tap into the talent pool of Indigenous U of S graduates in the provincial workforce. Duret said the human resources division will also be hosting an Indigenous employee conference in the spring to help build better community connections on campus for faculty and staff.

While plenty of work lies ahead, Duret said the university is slowly making progress in this area.

"Absolutely," she said. "I think our leadership and the president has been very clear about the direction we are taking and that makes a huge difference when everybody is on board. We all benefit from having an inclusive and diverse workforce." ■



There are fascinating statues, artifacts and fun objects located all over the University of Saskatchewan campus. Get to know them a little better with this year's *On Campus News* back page feature: Interviews with inanimate objects. If you know an inanimate object, tell us about it at news@usask.ca.



The skeleton came from a large male polar bear kindly supplied by Dr. Malcolm Ramsay of the Department of Biology. In May 2000, Dr Ramsay was killed in a helicopter crash while working on polar bears near Resolute. Malcolm was a man of many passions but perhaps the greatest of these was the polar bear. As you look at this wonder specimen, think of Malcolm.

Polar bear skeleton

LOCATION: WESTERN COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE, MAIN FLOOR

■ Where do you live?

I'm found in the Arctic region of the world—Northern Canada, Alaska, the Scandinavian Peninsula and Northern Russia. Canada alone is home to more than half of our population—you may have seen some in Churchill, Man., during their autumn migration until the ice freezes over.

■ I hear the Arctic is cold. How do you stay warm?

Adaptation, my friend! I have a thick layer of white fur to keep me warm on the chilliest of nights. Even my feet are covered in it. Beneath that is a thick layer of blubber for further insulation. It also helps keeps me buoyant when I'm in the water hunting for my dinner.

■ And what do you like to eat?

When it comes to the Arctic food chain, I sit at the head of the table and eat all the meat. Seals are my favourite and I can smell them a mile away—just kidding. It's actually up to 30 miles away. One trick I use is to lay motionless near a hole in ice, and when I smell its breath, just reach in and dig in.

■ How big are you?

Pretty big—we are the largest living land carnivore, after all. When standing upright, females can span over two metres and males close to three. My skeleton alone is 88 inches tall!

■ How did you get here?

I was dedicated in honour of Malcolm A. Ramsay, a U of S professor and researcher who died in a helicopter accident on May 21, 2000. He and a colleague, Stuart Innes, were in Nunavut conducting research on the relationship between polar bears and seals. They were returning to their research station after a day of tagging polar bears when the helicopter suddenly crashed.

A renowned evolutionary biologist, Ramsay was known for his research on polar bears, specifically the ecology and physiology of female polar bears. I am very happy to be here at the U of S campus to pay homage to Professor Ramsay and the illuminating research he did with polar bears in his short life.