

The Social

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Message from Joan Finegan, Acting Dean

The old adage “change is a constant” describes the past year in our Faculty. We welcomed a new University President, and said farewell to Bob Andersen, our Dean of the last five years. During his tenure as Dean, our faculty has flourished. We welcomed many new faculty members into various departments, including Economics, DAN Management, Political Science, and Psychology. His leadership has left our Faculty in a particularly strong position.

As we embrace a more inclusive understanding of Indigenous issues in Canada and around the world, we realized it was time to change the name of the First Nations Studies program. It is now called Indigenous Studies.

We have also had to say goodbye to Brock Millman, a history professor who past away after a short illness. To honour his memory, The Department of History has established a student scholarship in his name.

This issue of the Social highlights some of the many changes and advances in research made in our Faculty. Isaac Luginaah and Elizabeth Finneron-Burns consider how different societies deal with climate change using both new and traditional approaches.

Laura Stephenson is leading a SSHRC Partnership Grant valued at \$2,500,000, to study elections and democracy and how to maintain the health and resilience of Canada's democratic institutions.

Johanna Weststar has delved into the working conditions within the video game industry, while Jennifer Robertson examines the roots of abusive supervisors.

All of this research will better position us to find solutions to the pressing problems facing our society.

In the year ahead, we will continue to see changes as we will welcome a new department chair in Sociology, and a number of new Faculty members.

I'm honoured to take on the role of Acting Dean. In the role, I have the privilege of leading a faculty made up of amazing faculty, staff and students.

I invite you to read more and discover some of the amazing things happening at Western, and in the Faculty of Social Science.



Developing organized labour in the game industry

Johanna Weststar sees the game industry as an example of the challenges facing many workers in a changing economy

Precarious employment, long work hours, digitization of labour, these are some of the challenges facing people working in the video game industry.

Johanna Weststar is an Associate Professor in the DAN Department of Management and Organizational Studies. She has been studying the working conditions in the video game industry for 10 years. While most research in labour relations and management focuses on more traditional industries, such as manufacturing or the public sector, Weststar is interested in video game development as a new and emerging industry.

Weststar sees the game industry as an example of the challenges facing many workers in a changing economy. As the industry matures, workers are taking more concrete steps to organize and demand rights.

In a recent paper, *Building Momentum for Collectivity in the Digital Game Community*, Weststar and Marie-Josée Legault of the Université TÉLUQ outline the approaches game developers have taken to improve their workplace situations.

Initial efforts took the form of protests, such as secret messages added to games, creating Easter Eggs for players to find, which would give credit to the studio workers who completed the game. As consumers found these, they began to like them more and the industry co-opted them.

The next stage of activism took the form of increased discussion about the issues workers faced. This included the development of a professional association and more discussion of quality-of-life issues developers faced.

These approaches were complicated by the attachment many developers have to the industry. As many played games as youth, they often identify themselves as 'gamers' and feel more connected to the industry. "The industry relies on a lot of fresh, passionate and typically young, male workers," said Weststar. This connection along with the way project-based work is

structured and managed, Weststar said, leads workers to 'self-exploit', working long hours to meet deadlines they cannot control.

"They are making fantastical creations, but it's hard work and takes a toll," said Weststar.

The approach to making video games creates its own set of challenges for workers. While publishers put games out, they contract game development studios to build the games. Publishers set the timelines, and the studios have to meet the demands. This means that developers are largely powerless to change the timeline, and demand more from their workers, often creating time-crunch situations. After the projects are complete, the studios must find other work. This means that, for many workers, when the project is done, their job could be gone, creating an environment where employment insecurity is the norm.

In recent years, workers have taken steps toward more organized resistance, raising their voices in two parallel streams: improving working conditions, and addressing sexism and the representation of women.

There has been an increase in talks at major industry conferences to deal with the issues and workers are beginning to organize their own groups, as a possible precursor to forming unions.

Once such group is Game Workers Unite, which has tailored its message specifically to the community, and is in talks with existing unions.

Weststar is interested in following the development of GWU, as a case-study of the efforts to improve working conditions in contemporary workplaces through innovative forms of worker representation.

"Now is a pivotal time to see where it is going," said Weststar. "It will be interesting to see what workers can gain and whether these changes can stick."

Getting to the root of abusive supervision

Abusive supervision can have extreme consequences for both employers and organizations, creating unnecessary stress and increased burnout and turnover, and a decrease in employee and organizational performance. A paper by Jennifer Robertson has investigated whether the roots of abusive supervision may lie in supervisors' perceptions of themselves, others and relationships that are developed during infancy.

Robertson, Associate Professor in the DAN Department of Management & Organizational Studies, and co-authors A.M. Dionisi and J. Barling, have investigated this relationship in a paper entitled, "Linking Attachment Theory to Abusive Supervision". Now that paper, which published in 2018 in the Journal of Managerial Psychology, has received an Emerald Literati Award, recognized as a highly commendable paper of 2019.

Emerald Literati Awards are selected by the Editorial Boards of Emerald's journals, in this case, the Journal of Managerial Psychology, with three papers elected for their outstanding contribution to scholarly work. The winning papers are considered well-written and reflect rigour in terms of argument and analysis.

Attachment Theory, developed in the field of Developmental Psychology, suggests that our early interactions with primary care-givers can impact how we view ourselves and others through life. If, when an infant cries or calls for attention, their care-giver responds consistently, the infant will develop secure attachment, and see themselves and others in a positive way. On the other hand, if the care-giver does not respond, or responds inconsistently, the infant will develop insecure attachment and see themselves and/or others negatively. Importantly, these perceptual views can impact how we approach relationships, including those in the workplace.



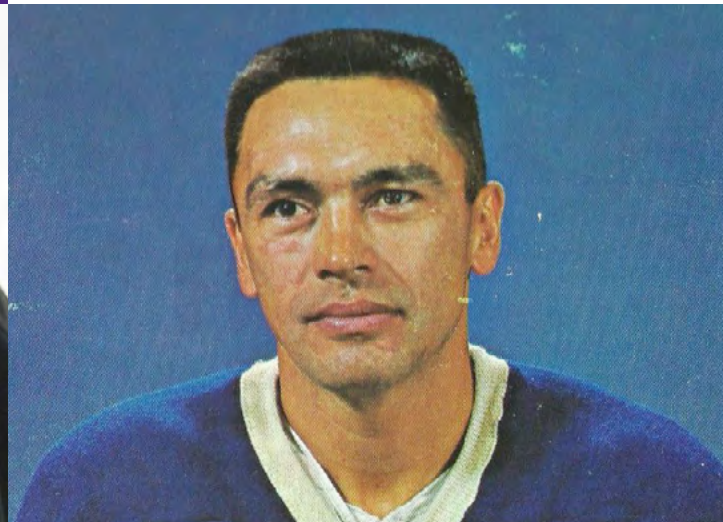
In the study, Robertson and her colleagues predicted that a leader's attachment orientation, conceptualized as ones' comfort with closeness and ability to depend on others, will impact his/her social self-efficacy, which in turn, will lead to abusive supervisory behaviour. To investigate these relationships, the authors used survey results from subordinate-leader dyads.

Subordinates rated their leaders' abusive supervision, while the supervisors completed measures of their levels of social self-efficacy and attachment. The study found that supervisors' who are comfortable with closeness and can depend on others (are securely attached) had higher levels of social self-efficacy, while those who were anxious about closeness and depending on others had low levels of social self-efficacy. In turn, leaders with low social self-efficacy beliefs engaged in higher levels of abusive supervision, such as hostility, anger and ridicule.

While previous research has shown abusive supervision has been the product of social learning, identity threat or poor self-regulation, the research by Robertson and co-authors shows it may also be impacted by our beliefs of the self, others and their ability to cultivate positive social interactions.

"In order to address it, we need to understand how managers think about their relational capabilities," said Robertson. "We know that attachment orientations can change so we can use this information to train managers to have more positive beliefs about their relationships and about social self-efficacy, for example through cognitive behavioural therapy."

In 2016, Robertson's paper, co-authored with Barling, "Greening Organizations Through Leaders' Influence on Employees' Pro-Environmental Behaviors," received an Emerald Citation of Excellence.



Exploring roots on and off the ice

Story by Debora Van Brenk/Photo by Paul Mayne (Western News)

Kalley Armstrong might justifiably boast about her pedigree – whether about her stellar hockey career with one of North America’s top college teams, or as granddaughter of a Hockey Hall of Fame player. But even if hockey is in her DNA, boasting is not.

Instead, the Anthropology graduate student is most pumped about how sharing her on-ice talents with young Indigenous athletes is helping her explore her First Nations roots. Armstrong is the driving force behind a recent hockey school for young players from the Chippewa, Munsee-Delaware and Oneida (CMO) communities west of London.

“We’re providing hockey development. They’re getting exposure to good hockey resources. But it’s also important to emphasize what hockey does outside the rink – being proud of who you are and having a purpose in who you are,” she said. “It’s giving First Nations youth access to these resources and people who really care about them – about being a resource for them on and off the ice.”

A centre and captain for the Harvard Crimson women’s hockey team, Armstrong was an assistant coach last season for the Mustangs women’s hockey team. Last season, she also coached a novice team in the CMO association. Armstrong’s hockley camp was about more than hockey development for kids who might not otherwise have had that opportunity. Indigenous traditions are as fundamental to the event as skating and shooting.

For instance, the week began with a smudging ceremony led by elders Mary Lou Smoke and Dan Smoke, professors in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry’s Interfaculty Program in Public Health.

Off the ice, Armstrong draws inspiration and strength from her grandfather, George Armstrong, the first Indigenous NHL player.

Throughout his 20-year playing career with the Toronto Maple Leafs, he was a five-time All-Star, the Leafs’ longest-serving team captain with 13 years wearing the ‘C’, and a four-time Stanley Cup winner, including the team’s last Cup in 1967.

Having just turned 89, he still brings a keen analytical eye to the rink as part of the Leafs’ scouting staff.

“I’m super proud to be part Indigenous because of him. Over the past few years I’ve been trying to connect with those roots,” Armstrong said. The legacy of racism and colonialism is part of the family’s ongoing story. Because of rules of the Indian Act at the time, George Armstrong’s Algonquin mother lost her Indian status when she married her non-Indigenous husband.

“In my grandfather’s experience, growing up as an Indigenous hockey player in the NHL, that (racism) created a bit of fire in his belly. Hockey was a vehicle for him to deal with it,” Armstrong said.



She sees some of that same passion in her young proteges and also marvels at their growing sense of identity and pride.

“They’re such amazing kids. I’ve always wanted to give back to the Indigenous community because of this and because of my grandfather. I am teaching them about something I know about – hockey – but they are teaching me, too, about what it means to be Indigenous. They are so proud. I feel I am learning way more from them.”

The CMO United Hockey League and parents have offered considerable support to the hockey school, she said. Working with her on and off the ice are Kelly Babstock, a former college standout with Quinnipiac Bobcats, and Sydney Daniels, Armstrong’s former Harvard teammate – both Indigenous players and pros with the National Women’s Hockey League.

When she graduated from Harvard, Armstrong signed on as assistant hockey coach at Western and began working as an administrator in the Western Centre for Public Health and Family Medicine. There, she met Schulich professor Gerald

McKinley, who explores social determinants of Indigenous health in Ontario. Sensing her passion for hockey and love for her grandfather, McKinley urged her to earn her master’s degree.

Part of her thesis entails presenting her grandfather’s oral history. “We sit in his basement and I listen to his stories and the way hockey played into his experience as an Indigenous person.”

Through his words, she understands the challenges and pride of her heritage, and the strength he developed to share with his children and grandchildren.

“Growing up with my grandpa, he was always a role model, a hero to me. He is the best grandpa a kid could ask for,” Armstrong said. “He taught me a lot about how to carry myself as a person and as a hockey player. I’ve tried to model myself after him.”

A Global award for a review of globalization

DAN Management alumna receives global recognition for research into attitudes toward globalization

Georgia McCutcheon, a graduate from the DAN Management Consumer Behaviour program was the Regional Winner in the field of Business for North America, for the Global Undergraduate Awards.

The Global Undergraduate Awards is an academic awards program recognizing undergraduate work. Submissions are evaluated anonymously by a group of international academics, with the top ten per cent of entries from each region in each category named as Highly Commended. The highest performing Highly Commended entrant from each region is named a Regional Winner of their category, while the best Highly Commended Entrant is named the Global Winner. In 2019, there were more than 3,400 submissions.

McCutcheon's paper, prepared as an undergraduate thesis in DAN Management, looked at the backlash against globalization, and what she felt were contradictory reactions to the multifaceted phenomenon.

Backlash, she said, tends to be focused on only certain aspects of globalization. "Most people don't take any offence to Apple computers being manufactured in China, or listening to music produced elsewhere," said McCutcheon, "but they do have issues with topics like immigration."

McCutcheon worked with Mark Cleveland, Associate Professor in DAN Management, to measure consumer attitudes, breaking down globalization into nine different factors. The research examined attitudes toward globalization and individual dispositions that may act as antecedents.



The paper looked at four attitudes toward cultural outgroups: self-identification with global consumer culture, cosmopolitanism, xenocentrism (the preference for the products, styles, or ideas of someone else's culture rather than of one's own) and consumer ethnocentrism. McCutcheon completed regression analysis to determine whether these attitudes were predictive of certain attitudes toward globalization, as well as used exploratory factor analysis to conceptualize the dimensions of globalization and to develop a measurement tool capable of assessing individual attitudes.

"The paper has a political-economic focus, but is highly relevant for business in general, to understand what is motivating certain consumer attitudes," said McCutcheon.

She said DAN Management provided a great opportunity for broad exposure in different business disciplines, as well as a balance between practical and research focused education.

"There was good exposure to both elements, which were important for future education and working in industry," said McCutcheon.

McCutcheon will return to Western to complete a Master's degree in International Business. She plans to continue working with Cleveland on the paper, expanding the group of participants for a better understanding of attitudes towards globalization.



Lifelong Learning an exciting adventure for double degree holder

"The more you learn about one subject, the less valuable your effort becomes until you extend your horizons with other knowledge," said Greg Lee.

Lee graduated with a degree in Economics and Business Administration in June 2019, and during his career as a student at Western, he focused on learning through as many means as possible.

Since he was young, Lee was passionate about learning how people live and interact in a society, and how he could provide value to the system. Lee came to Western in 2011, studying Economics.

Lee explained that he focused on economics to "learn about the study of markets, which beautifully articulated how psychology, math, and logical reasoning come together to explain the subjects."

To build on that knowledge, Lee enrolled in Ivey Business School in 2014, to gain a better understanding of the corporate world.

With knowledge of the theory and practical application of economics and business, Lee enlisted in the Korean military in 2016 for two years.

"If business school showed me a sample of what the real corporate world looks like, enlisting in the military showed me a sample of what the real population looks like," said Lee.

Lee's military service provided him with a unique insight.

"In absence of a strong governance system, such

as the military (an extreme end), those people undoubtedly would be grouped (and be independently and identically distributed; economics blood in me) respectively in the society," said Lee. "But with the system, they were able to work together towards a common goal and I saw how a sample of the humanity came together. That, and perhaps the military disciplines, are the biggest lessons which impacted the way I think and interact."

Even during his military service, Lee did not let his business studies rest. While enlisted, he completed his US Chartered Public Accountant exams. Upon returning to Western in 2018, he completed the Chartered Financial Analyst Level 1.

Greg is deeply interested in providing value in the North American financial industries, and in the long-term, Greg seeks to extend the horizons of understanding the universe through studying non-adjacent fields of subjects.

"I think knowledge compounds. We should be putting sustainable and consistent effort into learning throughout our lifetime, said Lee.

Putting his economics training to work, Lee provided a mathematical explanation of the value of lifelong learning, showing that when you build on previous knowledge with new, complementary knowledge, you gain more in the end.

"I hope everyone can see learning as a life-long journey, an exciting adventure, not a chore," said Lee.

Understanding firm responses

Daniel Chaves researches industrial organization and applied microeconomics



Daniel Chaves is joining the Department of Economics as an Assistant Professor.

Chaves completed his PhD at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and researches industrial organization and applied microeconomics.

Chaves applies microeconomic models to the decisions and behaviour of firms to examine how they interact and compete. Specifically, Chaves studies how firms determine strategic responses to regulations, and how these responses affect market and policy outcomes.

In a recent study, Chaves examined how automakers in Brazil responded to government levies on engine size, with different taxes applied based on a range of engine size brackets.

The levies were introduced to improve fuel efficiency, and to act as a luxury tax. Chaves found the levies were effective as luxury taxes, with the government collecting more money from more expensive vehicles.

The tax policies were, however, ineffective as a method of improving fuel efficiency. Using models based on all possibly available engine sizes, Chaves found that automakers offered the largest possible engine size within each threshold, removing smaller engine options from the market. In turn, consumers did not have as wide a selection for fuel-efficient vehicles.

“Western will be a great place to be. It’s one of the best departments in Canada and it is also a very collegial department”

- Daniel Chaves

Chaves is interested in other work related to the Brazilian auto industry, including how Brazilian car sellers use the availability of safety features in cars as a method to price discriminate consumers, and how the price of cars in Brazil changed in response to the government introducing policies to reduce international competition.

Chaves feels his work will fit in well with the work of the Department of Economics at Western.

“Western will be a great place to be. It’s one of the best departments in Canada and it is also a very collegial department.” said Chaves. “It will be a nice place to learn more and I am looking forward to start working with my colleagues.”

Focusing on the differences

Sergio Ocampo-Diaz research macroeconomic theory and heterogeneous agent macroeconomics



Sergio Ocampo-Diaz is joining the Department of Economics as an Assistant Professor.

Ocampo-Diaz recently completed his PhD at the University of Minnesota. His research focuses on macroeconomic theory and heterogeneous agent macroeconomics.

Heterogeneous agents in economics are used to highlight and test differences between people, which may impact how they respond to changes in the economy.

Ocampo-Diaz develops economic models that highlight or provide understanding into macroeconomic trends. Using these models, he introduces levels of heterogeneity to understand how different policies or changes, such as automation, impact the economy.

In a recent paper, Ocampo-Diaz examined how different occupations are affected when technology changes.

“Automation affects how work is done, but it also affects workers, these effects are different for different types of workers,” said Ocampo-Diaz. “I developed a theoretical framework to study why certain workers do what they do, and how the assignment of tasks to workers is affected by technology.”

Ocampo-Diaz also developed a model to determine the effects of wealth taxation on different economic actors, including those with high levels of wealth,

and those with high income. He compared these outcomes to the effects of taxing capital income.

“Taxing wealth is much better for more productive investors,” said Ocampo-Diaz. “When you are taxing capital income, you are taxing the productive investors more. Taxing wealth means you tax wealth holders, including those with low levels of income.”

His current research applies heterogeneous agent models to measure differences in impact and behaviour of self-employed people in developed and developing countries. While in developed countries, self-employment can be seen as a sign of success, in developing countries, it generally results in subsistence or low-productivity.

While the areas of focus are quite different, the methods employed are the same through all the projects. The heterogeneous agent models provide important insight that can lead to better policy developments, Ocampo-Diaz said.

Ocampo-Diaz said his decision to join Western was easy.

“The faculty is currently researching hot topics in labour economics,” said Ocampo-Diaz.

“My main research is into the effects of new technology and how it’s reshaping work, and Western is making a big splash into how we think about these things. With that, and the collegial atmosphere, it was an easy sell.”

Placing the community at the very centre of research

Two PhD students in the Department of Geography have been invited to be part of a national leadership and mentorship network.

Vanessa Ambtman-Smith and Steven Vanloffeld are both PhD students in the Department of Geography, working with Chantelle Richmond. They are among 20-scholars from across Canada awarded Doctoral Scholarships from the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation.

This is the first time when two scholars from the same institution and working with the same supervisor have been awarded the scholarship.

The Scholarships award students who are “engaged leaders who are conscious of the impact of their research, connected to the realities of the communities in which they work, and open to non-conventional forms of knowledge.”

Ambtman-Smith and Vanloffeld are focused on community-engaged research, connected to Indigenous communities. Ambtman-Smith identifies as Métis-Cree. Vanloffeld is a member of the Chippewas of Saugeen.

“Despite the very different environments Vanessa and Steven are working in, they are both driven by a deep moral imperative that places their community partner’s needs at the very centre of the research,” said Richmond.

Ambtman-Smith is focusing on how Canada’s health care system can work to rebuild trust

amongst the Indigenous population.

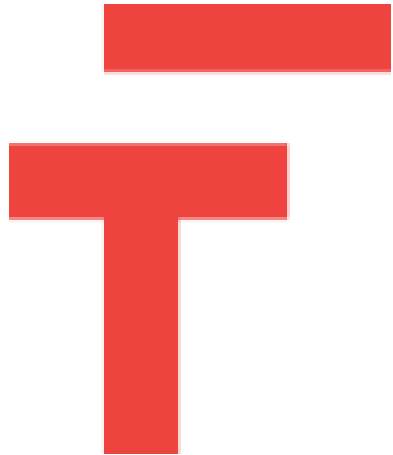
Vanloffeld is documenting the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process unfolding in the Saugeen Ojibway Nation, as the Chippewas of Saugeen and the Chippewas of Nawash consider accepting a proposal for two deep geological repositories to house different levels of nuclear waste, in their traditional territory.

FPIC gives Indigenous peoples the right to give or withhold consent on all matters affecting their territories. The principle was defined under the United Nations’ Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Vanloffeld will be engaging and working with the Chippewas of Saugeen, his home community, as they undertake the process. This includes extensive knowledge translation to ensure community members understand the science of the matter, before they make a decision via a community referendum.

Vanloffeld is documenting the process to prepare lessons for other First Nations, for industry, and for the Government of Canada, for consideration for future FPIC processes.

“The government has signed the UNDRIP, but what does this mean?” asked Vanloffeld. “This is a test-case. The government is taking a wait and see approach to see how the community approaches it.”



Vanloffeld brings personal and professional experience to the research. Before starting his PhD studies, Vanloffeld served on the Saugeen First Nation council.

“Serving on council, I sat on the nuclear file, and saw, from a different perspective, the amount of work that goes into ensuring this is a good process,” said Vanloffeld. “I saw the magnitude that this process will have on current generations, on future generations, and around Canada.”

Through the consent process, Indigenous communities hope to re-establish the pattern of development. Vanloffeld explains that in the past, companies and industries would move into an area, exploit the territory and leave, leaving behind environmentally degradation.

“All development happens within Indigenous territory. Typically we have had impact benefit agreements, but these don’t meet the needs of the community,” said Vanloffeld. “The hope is that lessons learned here will inform and guide negotiations that lead to beneficial agreements between communities and industry.”

“Most Indigenous communities aren’t against development, they just want to benefit from development, but there has been a history of exclusion,” said Vanloffeld. “Finally they have a say in to whether it will go ahead.”

Community engagement and involvement is a defining feature of Vanloffeld’s research.

“I’m doing the research, but ultimately it’s the community’s project. I’m documenting, preserving, and learning from their significant efforts,” said Vanloffeld. “I’m a community member and will participate in the vote, but it’s an honour to document the process for current and future generations to learn from.”

Vanessa Ambtman-Smith is researching the impact of new approaches to health, as health care providers engage and integrate Indigenous approaches to health.

Through Canadian history, Indigenous people were mistreated in hospitals, as they were forcibly segregated from their own communities, or from others in the hospital. Others were unwitting subjects of medical experiments.

Even though the overall health of Indigenous peoples is generally considered to be worse, they in general are less likely to enter a hospital and under-utilize health care. This is true even when accounting for geographic access. Even Indigenous people in urban areas have lower rates of hospitals and health care use.

This has profound impacts on health, including higher infant mortality rates for Indigenous people, regardless of where they are located.

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“It’s no wonder there are Indigenous people across Canada who don’t trust hospitals,” said Ambtman-Smith. Included in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a call to action to support the use of traditional medicine in health care.

In response to the TRC recommendations, some hospitals and health care providers are creating spaces or additional supports to meet the physical, spiritual, emotional and mental needs of Indigenous patients. One example of this, which Ambtman-Smith is focusing on, is a sweat lodge built by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the first in Ontario to exist in a hospital space. Ambtman-Smith will consider the impact of these approaches.

“No one has done an evaluation to see if these spaces are meeting their intended needs, and whether they are true acts of reconciliation,” said Ambtman-Smith. “I hope to learn from the case-study, and understand from an Indigenous perspective what these spaces mean for health and healing.”

Ambtman-Smith’s research builds upon the work of previous Indigenous health researchers, who have shown that rates of access is more closely connected with the harm associated with health care spaces than with geographic access to these spaces.

“Is it possible to privilege Indigenous approach and see changes?” Ambtman-Smith asked. “I’m interested to see if you change the physical space does that change the outcomes.”

For Ambtman-Smith, community engagement is more than a buzz-word; it provides a very different structure and framework for her research.

“Indigenous research takes a lot more time up front, as you work to build relationships and accountability to collaborators, and work on what the research outcomes might be,” said Ambtman-Smith. “The first interactions with partners and communities is to determine how a researcher can support them. This is a real divergence from the standard research approach.”

Ambtman-Smith hopes her involvement in the mentorship program will help restore the rights of Indigenous people in academic, leadership and health care institutions.

The Trudeau Foundation scholarship provides financial support during the research process, but also aims to create mentorship and support networks for emerging researchers. This includes leadership training, connections with the foundation’s Mentors and Fellows, and language training, including support for Indigenous scholars to learn their traditional language.

For Ambtman-Smith, the experience and involvement with a network and community will be most rewarding. “There is a group of diverse recipients and you get to see how your idea and work can grow,” said Ambtman-Smith.

“To get the call saying you’ve been chosen as a scholar is humbling,” said Vanloffeld. “I did the work, but I wouldn’t be here without the support of my supervisor, the faculty, the department and the wider institution.”

Both scholars are completing their PhD under the supervision of Chantelle Richmond, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Health and Environment and Associate Professor, Department of Geography.

“In our group, we do research with communities on the issues that matter most to them, ideally to enable communities with the resources required to be healthy and self-determining,” said Richmond. “To me, what’s most exciting about these awards is the recognition that this model of Indigenous research is relevant not only in our field, but for Canada as a whole.”

“It’s an honour to be able to share this honour with someone else, and with someone else who is working toward the same goal of centring Indigenous identity in the academic world,” said Ambtman-Smith.



High School History Day opens doors to a new understanding of History

The Department of History wants to change the way area high school students think about history. For the past four years, the department has invited students from around the London area to High School History Day, to introduce students to the discipline at the university level.

“It’s not a sales day for Western,” said Rebecca Northcott, Undergraduate Program Advisor for the Department of History. “It is intended to show that history is interesting and to encourage people to continue history in any way.”

The event met with immediate success, with 230 students in attendance in the first year, and has grown since. In total, more than 1,250 students have attended.

“We add new schools every year, we get students coming back multiple times with different classes, and we get nothing but praise from the teachers,” said Jonathan Vance, Undergraduate Chair for the Department.

For the first two years, the event was held in spring. The department moved the event to fall, partially due to request from staff at high schools.

“The staff wanted the event in the fall because students have to start thinking about their next steps and about going to university,” said Northcott.

The day is a chance for high school students to get a sense of what learning is like in university.

Participants can attend seminars and lectures, and have the option to create their own scheduled so they can attend sessions that interest them.

The day also provides learning opportunities for graduate students. Graduate students run mini-tutorials, with a maximum of 20 attendees.

“These are opportunities to lead tutorials in their own research, areas they are active in, as opposed to just the course they are assigned to,” said Northcott.

Feedback after the event is always positive, and Vance believes it is helping to bring new students into the department.

“I do both Summer Academic Orientation and the Faculty Day events in Frosh Week, so I get to meet lots of first-year students,” said Vance. “Every year, I meet more and more students who are taking a History course because they had come to High School History Day – or maybe they’re not taking a History course but they still take the time to come up to me and say they attended HSHD and enjoyed it. So we think this is the formula that really works.”

Along with the response from students, other departments in the university have seen the day as inspiration. Geography has introduced a day for high school students. Staff from Arts & Humanities have also attended to see how they may be able to implement some changes in a preview day.

Honouring a legacy of service

Department of History to honour memory and service of Brock Millman through student scholarship



In December 2018, the Department of History lost a dear friend, colleague, and teacher with the passing of Professor Brock Millman. Millman inspired students and colleagues alike with his expansive knowledge, dedication to teaching, intellectual generosity, and commitment to service. Now alumni and faculty of the department are coming together to honour his memory.

Millman was a scholar with a wide range: he published books on many subjects, including Anglo-Turkish relations and Canada during the First World War. Along with his academic position, Millman was a Colonel in the Canadian Armed Forces, Commanding Officer for the 4 RCR in London, Commanding Officer of the 31 CBG Battle School, and Commander of 31 Canadian Brigade Group.

In 2010, Brock deployed to Afghanistan in nation-building efforts as a Senior Advisor to the Afghan Ministry of Defence. Upon his return, he was committed to supporting veterans returning from active military duty, particularly those struggling with PTSD.

Jacob Damstra first met Millman as a student in Millman's 4th year International Relations course. At the same time, Damstra was a junior officer in the 1st Hussars and Millman was the Brigade Commander. When Damstra returned to Western to complete a law degree and an MA in History, he stayed in touch with Millman.

"He was a good mentor and resource and I know he had that relationship with others as well, regardless of whether they had involvement in the military," said Damstra.

Following Millman's passing, there was "a general consensus that something should be done to honour his legacy," said Francine McKenzie, Chair of the Department of History.

According to McKenzie, because of Millman's 'strong sense of responsibility and commitment to teaching', it is fitting to establish a student award in his name. His students - who were among his biggest fans - also wanted to commemorate their teacher. Jacob Damstra suggested that the award should give preference to students in the armed forces as a way to fuse the two pieces of Millman's professional life.

Damstra said Millman had a great impact on him "as a student, but in particular as a student who was simultaneously trying to complete military reserve training and establish a career based on service, in military and private sector."

To help establish the fund, the group is seeking donations from students, alumni, and members of the university community at large.

For Damstra, the scholarship is was a way to "give back to him, after his passing, in a way that would be respectful of, and proportionate to impact he had on me, to help that impact keep going forward."

Damstra said he hopes the scholarship is able to support other students who are service-minded, but who might not have the benefit of Millman's mentorship and guidance.

The Brock Millman Memorial Student Award will be presented annually to an undergraduate student for outstanding achievement in a History or International Relations program, with preference given to students who have served (or are serving) in the Canadian military.

Janice Forsyth named to College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists

Forsyth's forthcoming book looks at history of the Tom Longboat Awards

Janice Forsyth has been named a member of the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists.

Forsyth is an associate professor of Sociology and Director of the Indigenous Studies program. Her research focuses on the way sports have been used as tools for colonization and how Indigenous people have used those same activities for cultural regeneration and survival.

In May 2020, Forsyth's book *Reclaiming Tom Longboat*, is scheduled to be released by the University of Regina Press.

The book looks at the history of the Tom Longboat Awards, which Forsyth uses as a lens through which to see Indigenous-settler relations in Canada.

"It's complicates our understanding of what Indigenous people are trying to do with sport," said Forsyth. "It's not just about getting healthy and winning medals. It's about reconnecting with the land and rebuilding their nations by reimagining who they are as Indigenous people."

Tom Longboat, a member of the Onondaga Nation from the Six Nations of the Grand River, was the dominant long-distance runner at the turn of the 20th century.

The Tom Longboat Awards were created in 1951 to recognize the achievements of Indigenous athletes. The awards were founded by Jan Eisenhardt, a Danish immigrant to Canada, who worked with the Department of Indian Affairs.

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood (later the Assembly of First Nations) and the Sports Federation of Canada took on responsibility for the awards. Since 1998, the Aboriginal Sports Circle has been responsible for administering the program.



When the award was founded the focus was to use the awards, and athletics, to encourage Indigenous peoples to assimilate into Canadian society, Forsyth said. "As far as I know it is the only sport award that the state has ever created. And it was developed to advance their policies at Indian Affairs."

In the time since its foundation, the custodian organizations have adjusted how they tried to use the awards, Forsyth said. Now, the awards are used to recognize Indigenous athletes, as a form of self-determination.

"National organizations like the Aboriginal Sport Circle are using sport to help create and advance capacity development at the community level, through coaching, physical education and wellness programs. They are doing it from an Indigenous point of view with a focus on self-determination in sport," said Forsyth. "There is no one approach to sport in Indigenous communities because every community is different in terms of their history, their culture, and their aspirations for how they want to live. Sport helps them to achieve their own objectives for the future, so they are doing sport in a way that makes sense to them."

Forsyth was interested in the awards, in part, because she received the regional award for Ontario in 2002, and because she thought it would be "an interesting challenge to tell the story of Indigenous-settler relations through the perspective of a sport award."

Those named to the College represent the emerging generation of scholarly, scientific and artistic leadership in Canada.

"I'm incredibly honoured, because when you take a look at all of the people who are doing incredible things - at our institution and throughout Canada - it's pretty amazing to think that my nomination was selected," said Forsyth. "It's an honour to be standing beside the other members in the 2019 class."

Are happy relationships discovered or built?

Samantha Joel receives grant to investigate the development of relationship dynamics

If romantic comedies hold any truth, real happiness comes when you meet your soul mate, someone you are just meant to be with.

But are happy relationships the result of compatibility, or hard work?

Samantha Joel, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology has received a 5-year SSHRC grant, valued at \$228,442, to investigate “Are happy romantic relationships discovered or built? The role of early investment regulation in shaping relationship quality.”

The project will recruit people in new relationships and track them over two years, with the goal of understanding how relationship dynamics initially develop.

The project continues Joel’s work researching relationships. Previously, Joel looked at established relationships and how people chose to end those relationships if they were not satisfied in them. She found that people in long-term relationships have a hard time getting out of them, even if they are unfulfilling.

“After looking at that and getting a bit discouraged,” said Joel, “I thought, maybe we can help people to choose more compatible partners.”

Her next focus was looking at initial mate choice. She found that people are relatively unselective at the beginning of a relationship, being very open to dating a broad range of partners, especially within their own social group, and in turn, ignoring their own standards and possible ‘deal breakers’.

“Being in good relationships is protective, whereas being in a bad relationship can be detrimental for your health and wellbeing,”

Samantha Joel
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology

“Being in good relationships is protective, whereas being in a bad relationship can be detrimental for your health and wellbeing,” said Joel. “There is a lot of research on how people can improve their existing relationships, but we don’t know how unhappy relationships first develop.”

To address this gap, Joel will focus on the “fledgling state of a relationship, when people are learning more about new partners, and deciding whether the partners are right for them.”

“Destiny beliefs are the idea that some couples are inherently more compatible than others, and that some couples are meant to be together,” said Joel. “We know that people hold those beliefs, but we don’t know how accurate these beliefs are. Is it the case that some couples are just a better fit than others? Or is it the case that, if you put enough time and effort into a relationship, you can make it work with just about anyone?”

The project will recruit couples that are in new relationships to understand how relationship dynamics first unfold, and whether anything can be done in the early stages of a relationship to help build a better relationship, or identify relationships

that look like they will not work down the road.

“Recruitment will be a big challenge,” said Joel. “A big part of why we know so little about the fledgling state of a relationship is the difficulty finding participants who are in such a specific, short-lived phase in their relationships.”

Joel said that we are in a state where people expect more from their romantic relationships and partners than they ever have before.

“In modern Western culture, a romantic partner is not just someone to raise a family with, they are also supposed to be a best friend, and a confidant. For many people their romantic partner is really their closest social tie,” said Joel. “It’s a great if things are going well, but it can be devastating if they aren’t. It’s all the more important to understand why some relationships thrive and some do not.”

“The early dating stages of a relationship are important, but we don’t know much about them,” said Joel. “Let’s find out what they look like, how people choose partners, and whether there’s anything we can do at that stage to help people wind up in relationships that are right for them.”

A traditional response to modern problems



Can a traditional farming practice help farmers mitigate the challenges created by climate change?

Isaac Luginaah, Professor in the Department of Geography, has received a 4-year, \$175,265 SSHRC grant to understand how seed security and social connections may help farmers in Malawi deal with the effects of climate change.

Luginaah is working with co-applicants, Tim Conley, from the Department of Economics, and Jinfei Wang, from the Department of Geography, along with Paul Mkandawire from Carleton University, and collaborators from five different organizations or institutions.

Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world. In 2006, in the face of this economic position and difficult growing conditions, the government of Malawi introduced an agricultural input subsidy program. Through the program, farmers were encouraged to buy fertilizer and hybrid maize, intended for higher yields, and a shorter growth cycle.

The intent was to increase production of maize, thus increasing the amount of food available. This push has created its own set of difficulties, Luginaah points out. The increased reliance on maize has disturbing implications for long-term resilience, as it is less drought-tolerant and provides limited nutritional benefits in terms of micronutrients.

“Farmers are having trouble maintaining crop diversity,” said Luginaah. “With a focus on modified seeds, traditional drought tolerant crops are disappearing.”

Luginaah also points out that mono-cropping, the

practice of growing the same crop year after year, results in more stress on the soil, leading to crop failure and seed insecurity. It also leads to less dietary diversity with a decrease in nutritional options.

The Malawian government declared a State of Emergency over severe droughts in both 2014 and 2016, with another drought in 2018. In March 2019, there was severe flooding as result of Cyclone Idai. The increasing frequency of droughts and extreme weather events means that the results from this project will have broader implications for seed security and climate change resilience in Malawi and the other sub-Saharan African countries. Part of the study will focus on scenario planning, working with farmers to project possible outcomes and effects of climate change.

One solution to these problems could be the traditional social networks that farmers keep, between family, friends and neighbours. Through these networks, farmers share seeds, and can encourage crop diversity.

“Farmer social networks reinforce resiliency,” said Luginaah. “In the context of farmers, we want to know how they rely on their social networks, and how it improves their chance at success. This component of the project is been led by Dr. Tim Conley in the Department of Economics.”

The work, while very important to Malawi, is also important and applicable around the world, as many growing areas face challenges due to climate change.

“There are so many different things that could happen,” said Luginaah. “How do you plan for the future? Who do you rely on for seeds? What seeds do you grow?”

The Lucky Bench

Brian Luckman honoured for more than 50 years of research in Jasper National Park



On Sunday, September 8, Parks Canada dedicated a bench in Jasper National Park to Brian Luckman, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Geography, in recognition of his research within the National Park.

Labelled “The Lucky Bench”, the plaque reads: “Recognizing the work of Dr. Brian Luckman. Since 1968 his research and interpretation of this environment have enriched our understanding of the Canadian Rockies.”

Luckman has carried out research in the Rockies for over 50 years, conducting fieldwork in every field season since 1968, except for 1979. This work has contributed to the understanding of landscapes in the Park through studies of geomorphic processes (rock falls and snow avalanches), hydrology, glacier history, environmental change, tree-ring studies and climate reconstruction. Tree rings have been used to study the history of glacier and treeline fluctuations and to develop reconstructions of temperature and precipitation fluctuations in the Park.

Luckman has published many papers about these topics and has worked with Parks staff to develop interpretive materials and displays for several sites. A major focus of his research has been dating changes of the Athabasca Glacier as well as reconstructing the climatic and environmental changes for the area around the Columbia Icefield over the last 1000 years. He has monitored changes in Angel and Cavell Glaciers at Mount Edith Cavell with repeat photography.

The location of the bench overlooking the two glaciers and small lake at Mount Edith Cavell is an appropriate and much appreciated recognition of his research at this site.



Broadening the vision for what it means to be Indigenous

First Nations Studies Program officially renamed to Indigenous Studies program

The First Nations Studies program has officially been renamed as the Indigenous Studies program.

The change is intended to be reflective of a more inclusive understanding of Indigenous issues in Canada and abroad, and reflects the inclusion of all Indigenous people - Inuit, Métis, First Nation, urban, non-status.

"The program review is the outcome of a change that has been in the making for a long time," said Janice Forsyth, Director of the Indigenous Studies program. "It is a reflection of people's broader interests in Indigenous culture, not just First Nations history and cultures."

Diana Lewis, Assistant Professor in Indigenous Studies, said the former title of First Nations Studies could lead students to believe the courses are only intended to discuss First Nations issues.

"Indigenous includes Métis, Inuit and people living off reserve. Half the population of Indigenous people live in urban centres," said Lewis.

Serena Mendizabal is a 4th year student in Indigenous Studies and Media, Information and Techno-culture. For Mendizabal, Indigenous Studies is "more universal, and more of an all-encapsulating term that can provide a broader perspective."

Tehya Quachegan is a 3rd year student in Indigenous Studies and Psychology, and president of the Indigenous Students Association. She said the change has already occurred in many other universities, and it may make the program more attractive to students.

"When you say First Nations Studies, it makes it seem that you are only studying First Nations," said Quachegan. "If it is called Indigenous Studies, it is open to more peoples."

"Indigenous issues are shockingly similar in any colonial country. Socio-economic issues are the same, and Indigenous peoples are experiencing marginalization and poverty. Issues like colonialism are pretty consistent, no matter where it happened."

- Diana Lewis
Assistant Professor in Indigenous Studies

The program already includes courses on the Indigenous experience in other areas, such as courses on the cultures of the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific.

The name change further connects researchers and students to an international experience.

"This is a way to broaden the vision for what it means to be Indigenous" said Forsyth. "It fits within the broader international perspective the university takes."

Forsyth noted that Indigenous researchers at the university are already working to foster relationships with Indigenous peoples from abroad.

Lewis said the name could provide a broader insight for international understanding of Indigenous issues.

"We get international students who are non-Indigenous and our courses are often the first time they have contact with any sort of Indigenous content," said Lewis. "It makes them think about Indigenous people globally."

"Indigenous issues are shockingly similar in any colonial country," said Lewis. "Socio-economic issues are the same, and Indigenous peoples are experiencing marginalization and poverty. Issues like colonialism are pretty consistent, no matter where it happened."

When considering the change, the students highlighted the importance of being able to identify with the issues being discussed in the program.

"I personally identify as First Nation, and we need to be sure to avoid generalization when using the term Indigenous," said Mendizabal. "It can be detrimental because of the broadness. We can take away the hardship experiences. It's important that Indigenous Peoples be pluralized to show that there are different experiences."

"It is kind of difficult because it is such a broad term. It encompasses a lot of different groups" said Quachegan. "A lot of people choose how they want to identify."

More than just a re-branding, the change will impact courses and research.

Forsyth said the program has already hosted one retreat where attendees were asked to consider what kind of knowledge and skills students need upon graduation. The attendees included staff from Indigenous Services, as well as students and university-community representation.

Lewis believes the broader approach will provide better research perspectives as well.

"Indigenous methods can be applied to Indigenous peoples globally," said Lewis.

"I hope it brings more representation from global perspective and see how all Indigenous people can work together," said Mendizabal, "and maybe gain from the First Nations perspective that was foundation of program and maybe gain on a broader landscape."

Building partnerships to strengthen Canadian democracy



Decreasing voter turnout, increased cynicism and threats from outside sources are beginning to undermine the strength of Canadian democracy. The study of elections and democracy is vital to finding effective ways to reverse these damaging trends and maintain the health and resilience of Canada's democratic institutions.

A new project, funded by a SSHRC Partnership Grant valued at \$2,500,000, takes on this challenge. Laura Stephenson, Professor in the Department of Political Science, and Allison Harell, Professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal, are co-directing a pioneering team of 28 researchers and 23 partners from across Canada in the Consortium on Electoral Democracy/ Consortium de la démocratie électorale (C-Dem) to reimagine elections research in Canada. As one of the largest SSHRC grants received by any faculty member in the Faculty of Social Science, C-Dem is breaking new ground through its innovative application of a cooperative model of consortium-led social science research.

The central pillar of the C-Dem activities will be the continuation and expansion of the long-running Canadian Election Study (CES). Since 1965, generations of researchers have learned how Canadians feel about democracy, react to issues and perceive politicians, and how these attitudes impact their views and vote choice through the CES. The creation of C-Dem ensures this vital survey is maintained, conducting federal election surveys in 2019 and 2023. "It's incredibly important to have good data on views of the Canadian public in order to understand what is going on in society" said Stephenson.

But more than a national survey on federal elections, C-Dem also expands the study of democracy in the provinces and territories as well as during inter-election years. The team will carry out one provincial election study in every province and annual cross-Canada surveys. Additionally, it will expand the study of electoral democracy into Indigenous communities, a valuable topic not previously covered by the CES.

"The yearly studies will be important for studying trends," said Stephenson. "The data is important to help us figure

out what people are thinking and how they are reacting to events around them."

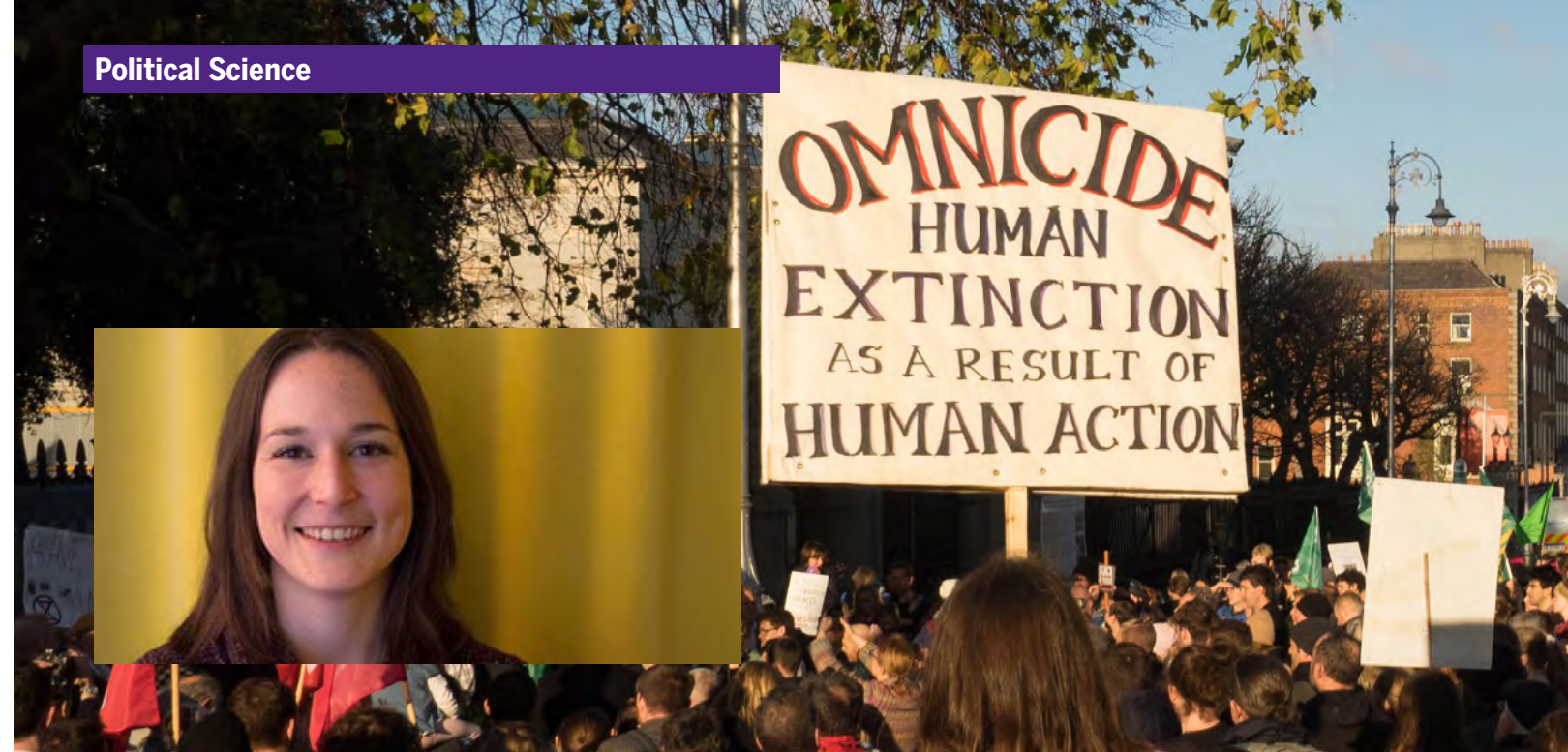
A core feature of the C-Dem consortium is its diverse network of project partners. In addition to its four university partners, C-Dem brings together government entities, including Statistics Canada and the Tlicho Government of the Northwest Territories, electoral management boards in five provinces, and civic organizations such as Apathy is Boring, CIVIX, and the Forum for Young Canadians. Project partners will pool their resources and build upon mutual interests to investigate together the health of Canadian democracy over time.

Stephenson said the diverse partnership is important to ensure the study project produces data and research results that are relevant to as many people as possible.

"Academics can design surveys that best suit research interests, but there are lots of groups studying democracy from different perspective, thinking of things in different ways," said Stephenson. "For example, electoral management bodies think about how people get to the polls and whether the public thinks votes are secure. Incorporating perspectives from our partners will help to make this project most useful."

To maximize the use of C-Dem research, the project data will be made accessible to all. Designed in partnership with the Centre for Computational and Quantitative Social Science, under the leadership of Dave Armstrong (a co-investigator on the grant), a dynamic website will be a cornerstone to C-Dem's outreach strategy.

Using multiple interactive and visualization features, the website will make C-Dem data accessible to organizations and the general public, including teachers and journalists, so they can see for themselves different aspects of attitudes toward democracy in Canada. C-Dem will also support a variety of other outreach activities, such as PoliDoc, a contest for youth to develop short films about democracy, to engage all Canadians in supporting the health and vitality of democracy.



What are our obligations to future generations?

Elizabeth Finneron-Burns is joining the Department of Political Science as an Assistant Professor.

Finneron-Burns has a PhD from Oxford University, and researches obligations to future generations, and how we make decisions related to these concerns.

"It's obvious that many of the policy decisions we make will affect the quality of life future people will enjoy. Take climate change for example. If we fail to mitigate, the people who will live in the future will suffer tremendously," said Finneron-Burns.

"On the other hand, if we take the appropriate steps to stop/slow warming, people in future will probably live very good lives."

Finneron-Burns takes these considerations a step further, and looks at how our responses to concerns may impact how many people, and who, may even exist in the future.

"Taking climate change as an example again, the lifestyle changes we make in order to mitigate (e.g. driving less, travelling less, being vegetarian) will likely affect who we meet as potential partners, when we choose to have children, and how many

children we choose to have," said Finneron-Burns. "Some people who would have existed if we didn't mitigate climate change will never exist if we do mitigate. My research looks at how the fact that our decisions affect not only how good a life future people have but also their very existence and numbers changes what our duties to them are."

While considering the impacts on future generations, Finneron-Burns is also interested in the question of human extinction, which she examined in a journal article, "What's Wrong with Human Extinction?" published in the Canadian Journal of Philosophy. In the article, Finneron-Burns examines the moral and contractual obligations people have to prevent human extinction.

In coming to Western, Finneron-Burns returns to Ontario, where she completed her undergraduate degree, and where she served for several years as a policy advisor for the government of Ontario.

"I'm very excited! I'm looking forward to working with some of Canada's best students and political scientists," said Finneron-Burns, on coming to Western. "Though as a Queen's grad, I will probably struggle with my loyalties at football games!"



Understanding the impact of youth stress

Hayden receives SSHRC funding to investigate sex and gender differences in the evolution of stress exposure and stress sensitivity

Stressful life events are a robust predictor of negative mental health outcomes, particularly depression. Elizabeth Hayden, professor in the Department of Psychology, wants to know why some youth develop greater vulnerability to stressors than others.

Hayden, along with co-applicants Elizabeth Hampson, professor in the Department of Psychology, and Kate Harkness, of Queen's University, have received a \$317,595, 5-year SSHRC grant to fund a study "A developmental approach to understanding sex and gender differences in the evolution of stress exposure and stress sensitivity."

"Humans can experience remarkably stressful events, but most of us are ok. We don't develop mental health problems," said Hayden. "How can we figure out who is going to be the most vulnerable or sensitive to negative life events?"

Tracing youth development from childhood to adolescence will lead to new knowledge concerning how stress sensitivity develops. Hayden said that there are many factors that impact how people respond to life events, including biological processes, children's emotional characteristics, and how kids think about or interpret stressors.

Not only do many factors contribute to vulnerability to stress, the extent to which one is vulnerable changes over time based on one's environment. "We know that early stress exposure has its own impact on children's sensitivity to stress over time," said Hayden. "It's not the case that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. In fact, experiencing early stressors tend to make us even more vulnerable to future stress, later down the line."

In previous research, Hayden assessed responses to stress and stress exposure in over 400 families of pre-schoolers.

In that study, Hayden collected multiple waves of data on children's emotional characteristics and hormonal responses to stress, as well as exhaustively characterizing children's early environments.

The new SSHRC funded project will follow these children across adolescence. In doing so, Hayden will be able to see how children's early stress responses and environments predict adolescent stress responses and stress exposures.

"Although life stress sometimes comes at us 'out of the blue,' it unfortunately isn't unusual for us to play some role in eliciting stressful situations. Our own actions may lead us into stressful situations," said Hayden. "Are there any early childhood tendencies of kids that predict whether, as adolescents, they will tend to find themselves in stressful situations more frequently than their peers?"

As a key part of the project, Hayden will examine gender differences in stress responses.

"Girls, starting in adolescence, become depressed at a much higher rate than boys," said Hayden. "Depression starts to happen most often for adolescents or young adults, which may be related to developmental changes in stress reactivity that emerge around this same time."

Hayden said women and girls are more vulnerable to interpersonal types of stress, but the reasons for this are unclear.

"There are socialization processes that may make girls value solid social connections more so than boys," said Hayden. "However, there are biological differences that make girls more vulnerable as well. Probably both play a role, but our study will hopefully allow us to be more precise in terms of the key factors that contribute to girls' greater risk."

Hayden hopes that the research can contribute to identifying clues toward understanding who is most impacted by stress, and why.

"Ultimately, it would be nice if we could develop preventative measures," said Hayden. "For example, if we could show that girls are more vulnerable to interpersonal stress primarily due to the beliefs they hold about social ties, we could focus on changing those attitudes."

Hayden said that project is as much about adaptive development as maladaptive development.

"This project won't simply be about looking at negative health outcomes," said Hayden. "Our data will also give us the opportunity to understand how and why some kids turn out just fine, even if they life stress in their early environments."

Reducing the stigma of Borderline Personality Disorder

Erin Kaufman researches the mechanisms underlying BPD, and self-injurious behaviour.



Erin Kaufman has joined the Department of Psychology as an Assistant Professor.

Kaufman researches the mechanisms underlying borderline personal disorder (BPD), and self-injurious behaviour. While the two conditions are not synonymous, Kaufman said they share common factors, and those who develop self-injurious behaviour are at increased risk for developing BDP.

Borderline personality disorder is a severe mental health condition. Affected individuals tend to experience their emotions more intensely and have a high frequency of intense emotion. They often have difficulties maintaining interpersonal relationships, and may struggle with impulsivity and anger.

Kaufman researches how people come to develop features of BPD, and the mechanisms that lead to the condition. Kaufman said that there is a strong heritable component, but it typically develops through biology and environment transactions from an early age.

Much of Kaufman's work is interdisciplinary in nature, as she examines the physical responses to psychological stress.

For people with psychopathology, cardiovascular responding is often distinct from healthy individuals, and many are less physiologically prepared to cope with stress.

Learning to respond this way occurs over thousands of events and social situations in a person's life, said Kaufman.

She is focused on trying to interrupt the intergenerational transmission of these conditions, and through this develop a better understanding of treatment targets.

"I've never seen people suffer so acutely, and people who are so openly blamed for their experiences. Borderline Personality Disorder is extremely stigmatized," said Kaufman. "These are people who are suffering profoundly, and this suffering ripples out to family and society."

"These are people who tend to show up in hospitals often, for health and mental health care," said Kaufman. "If you could reduce the stigma, it could help reduce the costs associated with care."

Kaufman said she is thrilled to be coming to Western.

"Western is an extremely strong institution, and the department has a clinical science focus."

"A clinical science model, by giving greater focus on research, teaches you to be a consumer of [the research] literature," said Kaufman. "Clinical science programs are more integrative, and more research focused. Western is one of the relatively few departments that identifies that way."

Recognizing a year of incubating new ideas with NEST

In September 2018, the Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST) launched as a dynamic opportunity to incubate new ideas in social science research and policy.

In the year since, NEST has hosted a very successful speaker series, issued calls for doctoral and postdoctoral fellows, developed a new Master's program, and laid the groundwork for exciting cross-disciplinary research.

"Our Faculty has quickly established itself as a national leader in empirical social science. NEST enhances this strength by bringing together people from all of our departments to create synergies that may have otherwise been missed," said Bob Andersen, Dean of the Faculty of Social Science.

"We've laid great groundwork this year and are well positioned to scale things up and develop an exciting array of interdisciplinary policy-relevant research and training," said Victoria Esses, Director of NEST.

Included in the upcoming research projects is the Canadian Communities Policy Observatory. The observatory will act as a platform for providing information on communities, mapping and matching characteristics of communities to inform and measure the results of policies.

The new NEST Master's in Research for Policy and Evaluation is a one-year Professional Master's program. It will emphasize quantitative and qualitative research skills that can be used to develop, evaluate, and enhance policies and programs in a variety of settings, including in government, not-for-profit, and private sectors, preparing graduates for a broad variety of employment opportunities in which strong

research skills are desirable.

"NEST drives many important initiatives, such the Social Science Interdisciplinary Research Grant program, a new post-doctoral and doctoral fellowship program, and a new signature research that reflects our expertise in equality, prosperity and governance," said Andersen. "In short, NEST plays a very important role in creating a unified research identity for the Faculty of Social Science."

"We want cross-disciplinary conversations to emerge," said Esses.

The network's governing council, made up of academics and community members, was also formed this year. The council will provide strategic advice on research directions, dissemination strategies, educational opportunities, and fundraising.

The doctoral and postdoctoral fellowships, announced in September 2019, are intended to provide graduate student and post-doctoral an opportunity to work on policy relevant issues and policy design, while also bringing in their own ideas and new perspectives on the issues.

All the projects aim to further NEST's mandate of creating evidence-based research that will inform social and economic policy in Canada and North America. Esses said the work of NEST will always be relevant, and is keenly applicable to issues being discussed during the current federal election campaign.

"All the issues the NEST centres focus on – urban policy, immigration, ethnic relations, human capital and productivity, social inequality, transitional justice – will be discussed leading up to the election, and they will continue to be important," said Esses.



Health of multiracial children is more than just black and white

What does it mean to be multiracial in the United States, and what impact does the rise in multiracial individuals have on racial inequalities in health?

Over the past five decades, North American countries have seen the unprecedented rise in numbers of interracial unions and mixed-race individuals. Kate Choi, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, has investigated how this demographic change will affect racial inequality, in a new paper, “The health of biracial children in two-parent families in the United States”, published in *Demographic Research*.

Using data from the National Health Interview Survey, Choi was able to identify the reported race of children based on maternal and paternal race and identify multiracial children of mixed Black-White heritage. In fact, she was able to take it one step further, and distinguish children born to white fathers and black mothers from those born to black fathers and white mothers. In most previous studies, children of Black-White heritage have generally been treated as a single group although there is evidence that White male-Black female couples are more advantaged than Black male-White female couples. By breaking them down into subcategories, Choi was able to document health disparities depending on the gender of the Black parent.

Choi concluded that the health outcomes were closely connected with the parental race, and ranged on a continuum. Children in household with two white parents tended to have the best health outcomes, and those in single-race black household had the worst health rates.

Households with white fathers and black mothers had rates closer to single-race white households while those with black fathers and white mothers were closer to single-race black households.

Choi speculates that these varied health outcomes could have many causes. Educational differences of partners who select into the distinct unions may contribute to



health inequalities across these groups.

It is a well-established fact that children born to educationally disadvantaged parents tend to have poorer health relative to those born to parents with higher levels of schooling. Black fathers complete fewer years of schooling relative to White fathers. Because people cohabit or marry a spouse with similar levels of education, the partners of Black fathers also have lower levels of schooling relative to the partners of White fathers.

The strength of family connections also plays a role. White families are less supportive of interracial unions.

As a result, whites in interracial unions experience more stress than blacks in interracial unions. White women are more affected by these familial reactions than white men. This means that there are higher levels of stress in white female-black male unions, which can lead to worse health outcomes for children born in these unions.

“Race relations within the family goes on to the affect the next generation,” said Choi.

Finally, limited access to services within the health care system can lead to worse outcomes for children with black parents. Choi found that while single-race white families self-report better health rates, they actually have higher rates of developmental diagnosis, particular for conditions such as ADHD and autism. Choi states that these families are more likely to go to the doctor to get a diagnosis.

All three of these point to the prevailing discrimination within society. While many health surveys assign multiracial people into single-race categories, Choi said these assignments miss nuances created by differences in parental race. Delving deeper into the health data has provided insight into whether racial inequality will increase or decrease with more multi-racial families.

Project adds Indigenous voice into textbook

Photo and story by Paul Mayne (Western News)

A sociology textbook used by universities across Canada received an Indigenous-focused update in hopes of exposing young scholars to the ongoing issues facing many communities – all thanks to a new Western summer research program.

“We wanted to accurately present Indigenous traditions, culture, teachings and ways of knowing, as well as their history of suffering and cultural discriminations they continue to face today,” explained Kristen Longdo, BA'19 (Criminology/Sociology), who worked on the project through Western’s Learning with Head & Heart program.

Real Life Sociology: A Canadian Approach, co-authored by Western Sociology professor Anabel Quan-Haase, is a textbook that targets first- and second-year university students. The book introduces the core concepts and issues in Canadian sociology, incorporating history alongside contemporary topics like cyberbullying, precarious employment, privacy, and transgender rights.

The book, however, benefited from an expanded scope, incorporating Indigenous issue.

“Ideally, implementing such content will make future students not only aware of what their fellow brothers and sisters have endured, but how they continue to suffer,” Longdo said. “We cannot change the past, but we can shape the future. Young scholars are the future and have the strength in their voices to influence change in society.”

The Learning with Head & Heart program aims to open space for Indigenous students to use Indigenous Knowledge systems and language within undergraduate summer research projects across a variety of disciplines.

Lead by Research Western and Western Student Experience, in partnership with Indigenous Services, the summer program pairs Indigenous undergraduates and faculty supervisors/mentors to conduct research that bridges academic and Indigenous ways of knowing. Students receive \$7,650, covering 14 weeks of full-time employment.



Connecting during Quan-Haase’s Technology and Society course earlier this year, the professor soon approached Longdo about assisting with a summer research project.

Longdo added to numerous chapters of the book, touching on areas including Indigenous ways of knowing, storytelling, crime/incarceration, economic equality, socialization and specific incidents including Dudley George and the Ipperwash protests, residential schools and the recently released report on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

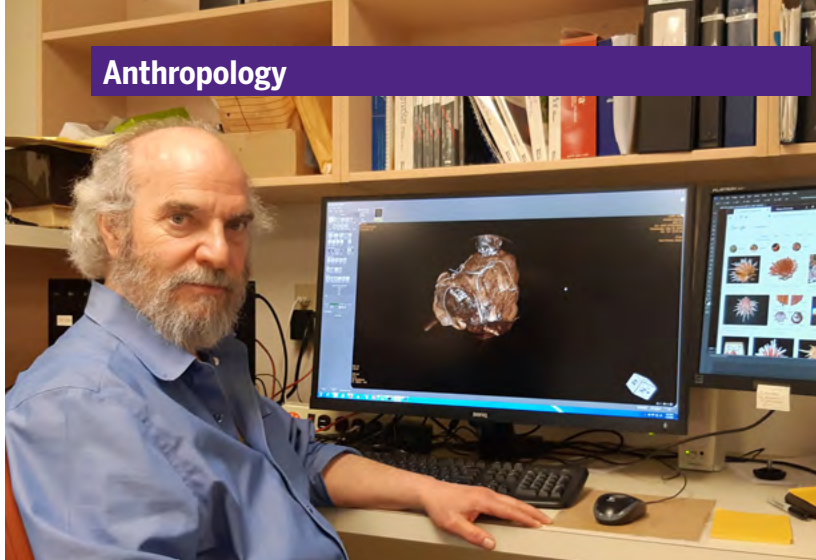
“It’s important to be able to introduce them to the topic of Indigenous history, because it’s very important for first-year students to know,” said Longdo, who now works at the Atlohsa Native Family Healing Centre, where she focuses on the homeless population. “There are a lot of students coming out of high school who didn’t learn much about Indigenous culture. There’s a difference between hearing about it and learning about it.”

Quan-Haase was thrilled to collaborate with Longdo on the project.

“We came together and were able to discuss so many topics we thought would be important for first-year students. I really connected with her,” she said. “We would talk almost every day, would question each other, and came up with some interesting material.”

There are certain topics central to teaching an introductory Sociology course like this, added Quan-Haase, with the challenge for sociologists being building bridges and creating linkages among a number of questions – Indigenous issues being one of them.

“Kristen’s view is always looking towards the future – how can we use this to develop healthier relations, better communities, strengthening of social relations within and across communities,” she said. “She is much closer to the experiences and her own life story can provide a lens into such historical events. I really value her perspective.”



The mummy as a microcosm of a society

In 1438, an empire began, starting from the city of Cuzco, and spreading across the Andes. Within three generations, the Inka Empire had spread to encompass parts of modern day Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Bolivia and Argentina.

Using diplomacy and military strength, the Incas built, what was then the largest expanse of civilization in the Americas.

Andrew Nelson, Professor in the Department of Anthropology, has received a 3-year, \$253,435 SSHRC grant to examine mummy bundles to determine the impact of the takeover on the peoples of the central coast of Peru.

In the northern highlands of Peru, the population was subject to military conquest by the Inka, and the burial practices of the population changed completely. The area on the central coast, in contrast, underwent a more peaceful political takeover.

Nelson investigates mummified remains, and through the construction of an osteobiography, tells the story of a person's life through their bones, teeth and preserved soft tissue.

The Inka mummies are placed in a flexed position are wrapped in burial shrouds to create a bundle. Through the use of non-destructive x-ray technology, Nelson looks inside the bundle to gather evidence about the living conditions and health of the person.

Trauma, such as broken bones, could be evidence of warfare. By examining mummified soft tissue, diseases such as tuberculosis can be diagnosed. Measuring bone length and dental age can provide evidence of conditions such as stunted growth.

Examination of how they were treated in death, including artefacts included in the bundle, provide evidence of their social standing and situation.

Nelson is interested to see if there is evidence of new diseases, and other health impacts, spurred by the spread of the Inka road system and trade.

In his project, Nelson will be working with Maria del Carmen Vega Dulanto, who completed her Anthropology PhD at Western, and received a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship. Vega is now in charge of the physical anthropology collection at the Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Antropología e Historia del Perú in Lima.

The project will also provide experiential learning opportunities for two undergraduate students and one graduate student.

The project furthers a theoretical focus on the bioarcheology of imperialism, studying expansionist events by means of studying human remains.

The Inka Empire was one of two that existed in Precolumbian Peru, and the Inka Empire was in turn defeated by the Spanish conquistadores in 1532.

"The health impacts of conquest are huge," said Nelson, "with people being treated as slaves, food insecurity, and diseases introduced and spread."

Examining the remains provides a more complete picture of the impacts.

"There is no better way to understand a culture of the past than to understand the people themselves; both how they lived and how they died," said Nelson. "The mummy is a microcosm of their culture and health, all wrapped in a neat bundle."



Changes in faculty 'a clear success'

Bob Andersen reflects on the successful shifts in Social Science as he moves to a position with Ivey Business School

Bob Andersen is proud of what the Faculty of Social Science has been able to accomplish in a short time.

"It is remarkable this worked," said Andersen, as he looks back at his tenure as the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science. As of January 1, 2020, Andersen ends his term, and will be taking a position as Associate Dean, Faculty Development, at the Ivey Business School.

In his time as Dean of Social Science, there have been more than 50 new tenured or tenure-track faculty members hired, and a shift to courses being taught by full-time faculty, at a time when universities and departments across the country have slowed or stopped hiring. Following the changes, Social Science at Western is ranked 84 in the 2019 QS World University Rankings, surpassing 64 other institutions since 2015.

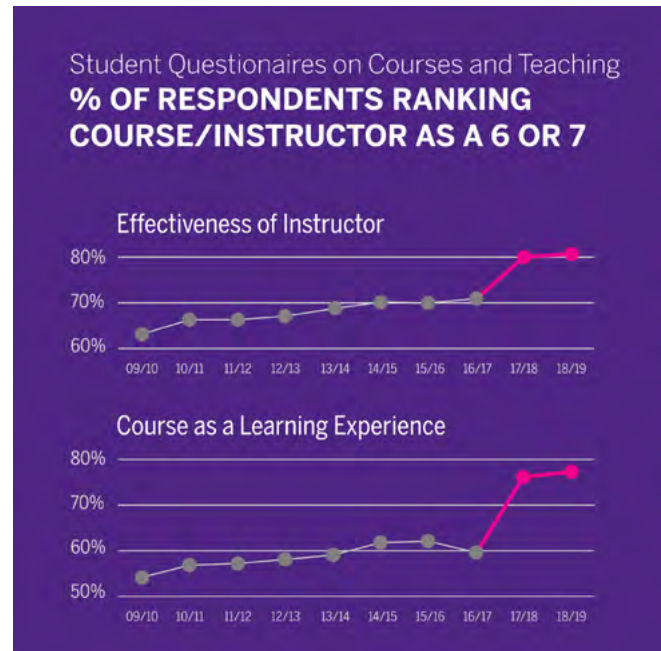
Andersen came to Western from a position as Chair of the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto, and quickly set to work making big changes in the faculty. When he took on the role, it was a homecoming of sorts, as he was raised in London, and completed his BA and MA at Western.

"I didn't know exactly what I was going to do until I got here. I had to spend time talking to people to get an understanding of the issues facing the faculty," said Andersen. "I knew that in some way we needed to move the research needle. Eventually we developed a compelling vision to move our research profile forward."

A believer in the scholar-researcher model of university teaching, Andersen identified that the faculty had an over-reliance on part-time instructors for teaching, and had not experienced much faculty renewal in recent years.

"It was clear the way forward was increasing the number of full-time faculty, and the only way this could be done was through a new hiring strategy," said Andersen.

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Determined to change the approach of “chasing bums-in-seats” Andersen asked departments to identify courses that were not taught by full-time professors, and which were not considered essential and valuable to the major and discipline.

For every eight sections removed, Andersen committed to hiring a new tenure or tenure-track faculty member in department, so long as the department could also focus on hiring in an area where it could become “the best in the country.”

“It was presented as an option; no department had to do this,” said Andersen. “I told them if you don’t do it, it’s business as usual; no penalties.

It turns out people wanted change.

A key to having people buy into the vision was a sense of trust, and transparency in leadership. Andersen said he purposely did not set targets, as he wanted to encourage buy-in and allow departments to identify their own targets and metrics for success. With the vision laid out, departments responded.

“The uptake by departments was staggering,” said Linda Brock, Director of Administration for the Faculty of Social Science. “Any doubts about the success of the plan were quickly blown away.”

“This is something we’ve done together; this was not an individual effort.”

- Bob Andersen

Over a span of four years, departments removed 279 courses, which, along with a retirements taken in response to a faculty-specific retirement incentive, made \$7.5 million in base budget available. These funds were reallocated to tenure track positions. There have been more than 50 new tenure and tenure-track hires made since Andersen started his position.

There was a further push toward building a research culture, through the strengthening of support for grant applications, identifying clear areas of research strength within departments, and the establishment of the Network for Economic and Social Trends (NEST), which brought together the existing research centres in the faculty.

Andersen said the changes went against the general pattern in universities, and seemingly against the incentives.

“We undertook these changes despite having a budget model saying we should be chasing bums in seats,” he said. “But the wrong incentives can lead to wrong behaviours.”

Noting increases in positive course evaluations, and a stronger research culture, “it’s clear it was a success,” said Andersen.

His success and leadership is recognized by his colleagues and administrators within other faculties as well.



“As a pragmatic leader, Bob offered informed viewpoints that provided opportunities for frank and insightful conversations. Throughout those conversations his honesty allowed us to get to the heart of the matter, with a level of transparency that was appreciated and welcomed around the deans’ table,” said Betty Anne Younker, Dean of the Don Wright Faculty of Music. “That, and his sense of humour, will be missed around that table!”

“I have really enjoyed working with Bob. Bob immediately made me feel welcome to the Dean’s table and, as a new Dean, I learned a lot from his example. On a personal level I really enjoyed Bob’s direct “say it like you see it” manner,” said Matt Davison, Dean of the Faculty of Science. “I am sorry that Bob is moving on from the Dean of Social Science role but am thrilled that we at Western will still benefit from his outstanding skills.”

“Bob Andersen has been an important voice around the Deans’ table, challenging us to think strategically and to promote Western’s research mission as a top priority,” said Erika Chamberlain, Dean of the Faculty of Law. “He has also been a great collaborator, working to dismantle some of the barriers between programs and build mutually beneficial initiatives. From Law’s perspective, for example, we’ve been able to work more closely with Indigenous Studies, Economics, and the DAN MOS program.”

Within Social Science, the impact of the changes will likely be felt for years to come. More than a

quarter of the tenured and tenure-track faculty complement in Social Science have been hired in the past five years. Currently, more than 70 per cent of courses are taught by full-time faculty. Andersen expects the rankings will continue to move up in the future.

“A lot of the hires are young people, so the future looks bright,” said Andersen.

With the changes well underway, Andersen was looking for new challenges, and saw an opportunity with Ivey. “If I stayed longer, I felt I would be going through the motions,” said Andersen. “That’s not good for me or anyone.”

Andersen believes there is continued room for the faculty to grow, noting the potential for NEST to push research forward, but he does not intend to try to define the path of future administrators.

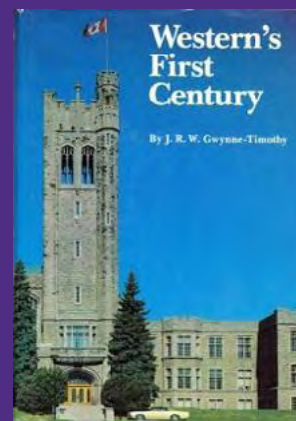
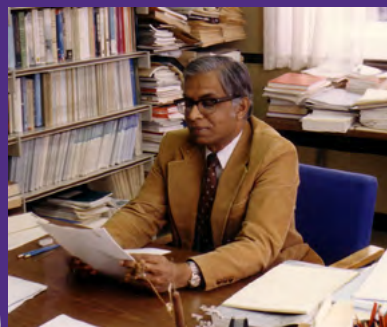
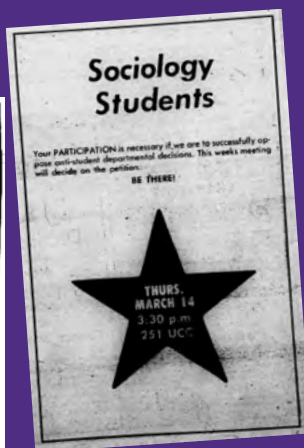
“I’m the kind of guy that, when I’m done a job, I’m done a job,” he said. “I won’t be evaluating the next leader, but I will help with guidance and support, if asked.”

Looking back, Andersen feels good about his term, and sees more success for the faculty in the future.

“The response and the change in our rankings is proof of our accomplishments,” said Andersen, emphasizing the collective achievement. “This is something we’ve done together; this was not an individual effort.”



SOCIOLOGY STUDENTS barred the entrance to the Sociology Departmental office.



Share your stories and photos!

Working with students in the minor in public history, we are marking the history of the Faculty of Social Science, and we want your help!

Do you have any interesting stories or insights from your time at Western?

If you wish to contribute content (ie. events, images, audio, video, etc,) you can share them with the project coordinator at mdove2@uwo.ca

Your submissions may be used in an interactive timeline as well as other future projects.



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