



University
of Victoria

50
YEARS

SPEED READING

UVIC'S NEXT PRESIDENT

Meet & greet Jamie Cassels

Everyone is invited to meet UVic President-designate Jamie Cassels at an informal gathering Thursday, Jan. 17 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the University Centre foyer. Join colleagues, coworkers, friends and others to meet Cassels and wish him well in his new position, which he will assume on July 1.

PARTICLE PHYSICS

Top of the (physics) world

In December, one of the world's leading physics magazines, *Physics World*, named two projects with strong UVic connections to its top ten list for 2012. The award for breakthrough of the year went "to the ATLAS and CMS collaborations at CERN for their joint discovery of a Higgs-like particle at the Large Hadron Collider" in which the UVic-ATLAS team played a key role. Among the remaining nine on the list was the BaBar collaboration, an international high-energy physics project based at the SLAC National Accelerator Lab in California under the leadership of principal investigator and UVic physicist Dr. Michael Roney. <http://bit.ly/ZcRzy8>

UNDER THE SEA

NEPTUNE Canada celebrates with a new book

NEPTUNE Canada, the world's largest and most advanced undersea observatory network, has published a lavishly illustrated new book highlighting its first year of research and operations. *An Invitation to Science* is an overview of deep-sea technology and research projects at each of the five node sites along the 812-km cabled undersea network. <http://bit.ly/TVb5Qe>



THE RING

MIGRANTS' RIGHTS FORUM

P.4

JANUARY 2013

The University of Victoria's
community newspaper

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UVIC'S NEXT PRESIDENT

Cassels speaks at the announcement of his appointment as UVic's next president, as Board Chair Susan Mehinagic looks on. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

7TH

CASSELS WILL
BE THE SEVENTH
PRESIDENT IN
THE 50-YEAR
HISTORY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
VICTORIA

Cassels to succeed Turpin in July

Professor Jamie Cassels will serve as the University of Victoria's seventh president. UVic Board of Governors Chair Susan Mehinagic announced Cassels' appointment Dec. 20 at the university's Welcome Centre.

Cassels, 56, is a legal scholar of international stature, a nationally recognized master teacher, and a talented university administrator noted for his outstanding leadership and vision. He was UVic's vice-president academic and provost (VPAC) from 2001–2010, and, before that, dean of law. His five-year term as president will begin July 1, 2013.

Cassels' appointment received unani-

mous approval from the university's board of governors, after a unanimous recommendation by a 20-member search committee. The search committee was broadly representative of the university community, including members from the board, senate, the faculties, the graduate and undergraduate student societies, staff and the alumni association.

"We interviewed many exceptional candidates, but the committee was unanimous in its assessment that Jamie Cassels is uniquely qualified to lead the University of Victoria as its next president," says Mehinagic. "He has a track record of outstanding leadership at this university, keen insight

into the opportunities and challenges for UVic nationally and internationally, and the integrity, passion and vision to take us to the next level."

"Jamie has an exceptional reputation as an outstanding scholar and leader with a clear vision of the essential role that universities can and must play in the social, cultural and economic development of society," says UVic President David Turpin. "He is a visionary who brings an extraordinary mix of passion, dedication, hard work and enthusiasm to every challenge he faces."

SEE CASSELS P.7

Coast Salish traditions shared

BY ANNE MacLAURIN

"Learning Coast Salish traditional knitting from Elder May Sam and knitters Joni and Adam Olsen was a wonderful experience," says anthropology student Rosa McBee.

May Sam, Joni Olsen and Adam Olsen—all knitters from the Tsartlip First Nation—taught students the basic art form of traditional Coast Salish knitting each week as part of the third-year Anthropology of Art course

last term. Students were required to complete two 12-inch squares for the creation of a large blanket as a class project. The course also included a world survey of art studies by anthropologists.

"We were given the chance to see how, outside of the production of the art, there was a lot more going on in terms of running a business and being a part of an economy," says anthropology student Silas Holdstock. "I came away with a sense of how these important art forms can have more profound connections to people and communities than we may realize."

As part of the Salish Artist in Residence program, the knitters also created a traditional sweater, boots, hat, bag as well as a couture outfit. These garments will be placed on permanent exhibition in the Cornett Building as part of the contemporary Salish art collection.

The Salish Artist in Residence program is made possible through the gen-

erous support of George and Christiane Smyth.

"Our work with the knitters is an example of the efforts we are making in our anthropology classes to build relationships with local First Nations within whose territories the university students and faculty are working and living today," says Dr. Andrea Walsh, visual anthropology professor.

At the end of the course, the students raffled off the blanket and are giving the proceeds (approximately \$1,700) to the Tsartlip First Nation for a new stove in their longhouse.

"The students wanted to give back to the community for the knowledge shared in the class; the funds raised by the raffle will be gifted to the Tsartlip First Nation in the new year in recognition for the teachings," says Walsh.

Walking tour of the Cornett Contemporary Salish Art Collection (PDF): bit.ly/V500AN



Tsartlip Elder May Sam assists anthropology student Silas Holdstock with his knitting project. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

ringers

Department of Writing student **Aysia Law** has been named the City of Victoria's inaugural Youth Poet Laureate—a first in Canada. Law will be performing her work at a number of events throughout 2013 and receives a \$1,500 honorarium, plus \$1,000 to develop and complete a major project that engages youth through poetry. “She’s such a passionate and dedicated writer with a great sense of humour and a natural instinct for language,” say Lee Henderson, one of Law’s writing professors.

Art education doctoral student **Connie Morey** will have a solo exhibition of her work Feb. 1–24 at Xchanges Gallery. Entitled *Ba_ble*, the mixed-media exhibition of two-and three-dimensional works will explore the complex relationships between humans and other animals, including animals as sources of inspiration, subjects of research, providers of nourishment and companions. The exhibition showcases the studio research component of Morey’s doctoral work, which focuses on the ecological foundations of the creative process. Opening Feb. 1, 7–9 p.m. at Xchanges, 2333 Government St., suite 6E. www.xchangesgallery.org

Great teaching in Alumni Week spotlight

BY MIKE MCNENEY

Two educational leaders who are respected for their proven abilities to inspire and challenge students will receive the prestigious Alumni Awards for Excellence in Teaching at an awards celebration during Alumni Week, which runs Feb. 3–9 this year.

Dr. Annalee Lepp (women’s studies) is this year’s recipient of the Harry Hickman Award (faculty category) and Dr. Alex van Netten (physics) will receive the Gilian Sherwin Award (instructors category) from the UVic Alumni Association.

Nominators underscored Lepp’s life-changing impact on learners through her undergraduate teaching and guidance of graduate students in the Department of History, where she is a member of the graduate faculty. Lepp consistently demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of diverse topics covered in her courses, including North American gender and legal history, sex work, human trafficking and feminist research methods.

Lepp has also been a driving force behind UNI 101, the free program for students who might not otherwise have access to university teaching. Her scholarly work in women’s studies and gender issues continues to have a significant national and international impact, and she currently serves as na-

tional president of Women’s and Gender Studies et Recherches Féministes.

Physics can be a daunting subject, but van Netten’s enthusiasm and imaginative teaching, particularly in PHYS 102 (for non-physics majors), manages to break down the barriers. For example, he built a wooden spindle, bow and board for demonstrations of fire-starting techniques used by the foraging peoples of Indonesia.

His overall effectiveness has been rated as either excellent or good by 98 per cent of his students.

In his role as his department’s Experience UVic outreach coordinator, he created a whirlwind presentation on The First Million Years of Physics. The talk takes the audience from the origins of fire making to the theory of quantum physics.

Last summer, the International Space University invited van Netten to give a presentation, via videoconference, on his model for a supersonic wind tunnel.

Lepp and van Netten each receive a \$2,000 prize from the alumni association, and their photo portraits will be permanently displayed in the McPherson Library, joining a gallery of 46 other outstanding educators who have received Alumni Awards for Excellence in Teaching since 1989.



van Netten. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES



Lepp. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

The Teaching Award Celebration will also feature the presentation of the Andy Farquharson Awards for Graduate Teaching to Jessica Blythe (geography), Scott Kouri (child and youth care), and Iman Moazzen (electrical and computer engineering).

The year’s faculty and department teaching award recipients will also be acknowledged. The event begins at 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 5 in the University Club.

Alumni Week’s line-up of 17 events includes a Feb. 7 tribute to 50 alumni who have made a difference to the growth of UVic through their ongoing support and involvement in university life.

Renowned *National Geographic* photographer Paul Nicklen, BSc ’90, will give a talk and slide presentation on Feb. 6 in the Farquhar Auditorium. “Polar Obsession” is part of the Faculty of Science/AXYS Group distinguished speaker series. It’s free, but tickets must be reserved in advance through the UVic Ticket Centre.

All alumni are eligible to enter the Alumni Week grand prize draw for a \$2,500 flight voucher from UNIGLOBE Geo Travel.

Complete listings of Alumni Week events and registration information: alumni.uvic.ca

A crowdsourced history of UVic

If you’re lucky enough to already own a copy of Ian MacPherson’s recently published history of UVic, *Reaching Outward and Upward*, you might want to make just a little bit of room on the shelf next to it for this year’s special anniversary edition of the *UVic Annual Review*.

Available for free in publication boxes across campus beginning on Jan. 15, the annual review features 50 of the nearly 250 engaging achievements, individual reflections and events nominated by members of the university and the local community that have helped transform our university during the last 50 years—along with a few of this year’s remarkable achievements that are poised to define our future.

At a slim 28 pages, *Great Moments in UVic History* is a brief look back at the first 50 years of the university. Many of these moments, as seen through their sources in crowdsourced mini-histories, have contributed to UVic’s development into a world-leading research-

intensive university; others have helped UVic make a difference in the world. Best of all, the great moments reflect a wide sampling of voices and accomplishments—from remarkable athletic achievements and philanthropy to a rising commitment to Indigenous education, and from sustainability initiatives that are more than 35 years young to discoveries and inventions that are helping people today to live better, healthier, and more active lives.

With milestones drawn from every decade of the university’s history, this trip down memory lane is a great reminder of how early efforts helped establish some of UVic’s distinctive strengths—in co-operative education, sustainability, distance education and community-involved research, among many others. And it’s a potent reminder that, as UVic President David Turpin explains, “Our history is rich, and it continues to influence our extraordinary capacity to shape our future—on campus, in our region, and around the world.”

Ring around Andromeda challenges galactic ideas

BY MITCH WRIGHT

A surprising discovery about dwarf galaxies orbiting the much larger Andromeda galaxy suggests that conventional ideas regarding the formation of galaxies like our own Milky Way are missing something fundamental.

In a paper published Jan. 3 in the prestigious journal *Nature*, an international team of astronomers—including two University of Victoria professors—describes the discovery that almost half of the 30 dwarf galaxies orbiting Andromeda do so in an enormous plane more than a million light years in diameter, but only 30,000 light years thick.

The findings defied scientists’ expectation—based on two decades of computer modeling—that satellite galaxies would orbit in independent, seemingly random patterns. Instead, many of these dwarf galaxies seem to share a common orbit, an observation that currently has no explanation.

“It’s a very unusual, unexpected configuration,” says UVic astrophysi-

cist Dr. Julio Navarro, a co-author of the paper. “It’s so unexpected that we don’t know yet what it’s telling us. The fact that it is there at all is pointing us toward something profound.”

The paper is based on data collected as part of a project led by UVic adjunct assistant professor Dr. Alan McConnachie, of the National Research Council of Canada’s Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics (NRC-HIA) in Saanich.

McConnachie, another co-author of the *Nature* paper, is principal investigator of the Pan Andromeda Archaeological Survey (PAndAS), which used the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope between 2008 and 2011. Examination of the data collected provided the first panoramic view of the Andromeda galaxy, the Milky Way’s nearest galactic companion, and the surprising discovery.

Understanding how and why the dwarf galaxies form the ring around Andromeda is expected to offer new information on the formation of all galaxies.

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UVic delegation builds connections in India

In early December, a presidential delegation from UVic visited India to formalize relations with leading Indian universities, explore potential partnerships with other post-secondary institutions and celebrate the launching of the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.

“There is great interest and potential for further expansion of faculty and student exchanges, experiential learning opportunities, research collaborations and community engagement initiatives between UVic and institutions in India,” says Vice-President Academic and Provost Dr. Reeta Tremblay.

At the University of Calcutta, Vice-Chancellor Suranjan Das and UVic President David Turpin signed a memorandum of understanding between the two universities that will help pave the way for faculty and student exchanges and research collaboration. The two institutions share a particular interest in nanotechnology. The University of Calcutta has recently opened a new campus that houses its Centre for Research in Nano Science and Nano Technology, and a tour of the labs was given to UVic’s Dean of Science Robert Lipson, Associate Vice-President International Andrew Marton, and Associate Director of the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives (CAPI) Helen Lansdowne.

The UVic delegation also laid the groundwork for the fostering of new relationships, such as working with Jadvapur University to bring faculty and graduate students to UVic in 2013 for a humanities-focused conference on Imagined Nationalisms: Canada and India. This conference will be organized by UVic Associate Dean of Humanities Sikata Banerjee and CAPI and will be the first phase of what is hoped to be a longstanding partnership between UVic and Jadvapur University.

As well, Marton and Lansdowne visited with the deans of international relations, Drs. Anand Prakash and K. Sreenivas, of the University of Delhi to discuss possible areas of collaboration.

While in New Delhi, the delegation met with Canadian High Commissioner to India Stewart Beck to learn about current Canadian post-secondary involve-

ment with India. During the past year, approximately 23,000 Indian students attended post-secondary institutions in Canada. This number will continue to grow, particularly if the growing middle class in India learns about what Canada has to offer in the area of higher education.

A final highlight of the trip was the India launch of the jointly held UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education. This UNESCO Chair is shared by Dr. Rajesh Tandon based at the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and Dr. Budd Hall from the University of Victoria, symbolizing the longstanding relationship between the two institutions.

The chair promotes community-university research partnerships and collaborations to build institutional capacity and training in the theory and practice of community-university research around the world.

The celebrations took place at the campus of Jamia Millia Islamia and included President Turpin and PRIA Board Chair Sheela Patel signing a memorandum of understanding outlining the expectations of the jointly held chair. This was followed by a symposium recognizing the tremendous work undertaken in the past by Drs. Tandon and Hall. The India launch was the first of two introducing the work of the chair to national and international communities; the second will be held at UVic on March 4 and 5.

A previous UVic delegation visited India in November 2011. At that time, UVic’s Faculty of Law signed memoranda of understanding establishing faculty and student exchanges, research collaborations, seminars and possible joint graduate programs with two leading Indian law schools: the National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR) in Hyderabad, and West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (WB-NUJS) in Kolkata. (See: <http://bit.ly/VyY5OM>).

And UVic’s Department of Geography, in partnership with PRIA, operates a successful India field school program, which offered 20 students an unparalleled experiential learning opportunity during its first season in August 2011. (See: <http://bit.ly/Tz8OdM>)

Co-op students of the year

In late November 2012, three outstanding students were named Co-op Students of the Year by their respective co-op program areas.

Jason Deglint (electrical engineering) is Co-op Student of the Year for Engineering, Computer Science and Math. Deglint has worked with Research in Motion and recently completed an international work term with aerospace company NLR Amsterdam, a placement he initiated himself, as a first-generation Dutch-Canadian, out of his desire to work in The Netherlands. “Jason quickly adapted to The Netherlands and the NLR organization, showed initiative in his work ethic and executed his project within the limited timeframe,” says supervisor Gerald Poppinga. “His project resulted in many recommendations that will contribute to future work at NLR.”

Jenna Ries (biochemistry) is Co-op Student of the Year for Optional and Professional Programs. She has completed work terms with the National Research Council of Canada and the BC Cancer Agency Deeley Research Centre, where she worked on a project investigating novel drug combinations for targeted therapy of ovarian cancer and co-authored two papers in the peer-reviewed scientific journals *Autophagy* (Landes Bioscience) and *The Journal of Pa-*

thology (Wiley Publishing). “Jenna’s work made it possible for us to publish our findings in a short period of time, which undoubtedly helped to raise the profile of our research both regionally and internationally,” says supervisor Dr. Julian J. Lum of the BC Cancer Agency. “I would rank her performance, productivity and contribution in the top 5 per cent of all students at her career stage.”

Wyle Baoween (MBA) is Co-op Student of the Year for Business. During his summer 2012 co-op work term as a strategy analyst with Seaspan Marine Corporation, he worked to restructure the company’s pricing strategy. “Wyle was able to create an understandable ‘story’ of where we are, and presented his findings to the Seaspan management team thoughtfully and professionally, earning tremendous respect from all in the boardroom,” says supervisor Steve Roth. “His contribution to a critical component of our strategic plan will have a positive impact for years to come.”

Co-op Students of the Year are nominated by their employers and supervisors. The winners will be recognized at the Co-op and Career Employer Appreciation Reception on Feb. 26 in Victoria, and a video showcasing their experiences will be published on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/uviccoopandcareer.



Deglint



Ries



Baoween

ringers

Val Napoleon (law) has been selected to teach a one-week intensive course as part of the Canadian School of Peacebuilding (CSOP), an annual summer program of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. Napoleon will teach “Human Rights and Indigenous Legal Traditions” in the 2013 program’s first session June 17–21. The CSOP aims to educate on peace and justice issues and encourage discussion in a collaborative environment.

In December, **Andrew Rippin** (History) joined a team of international scholars in Kuwait organized by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs to develop a charter and action plan recognizing that those who study Islamic civilization from outside the Muslim world can make a contribution to “positive interactions and a spirit of shared human concerns” in their work. Given the tensions that have existed over the past 150 years or so of “Orientalist” scholarship, the tone of cooperation that marked this meeting signifies a major shift in attitude for the Arab world.

The Master of Global Business (MGB) program at the Sardul S. Gill Graduate School, Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, has been honoured for the high-quality international education it provides. The Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE) gave the MGB its Outstanding Program Award in November. The award recognizes creativity and high quality in international education. The one-year MGB program sees students work and live on three continents as they study international business practices, develop leadership skills and learn at least one new language.

Nicholas Galanin, the 2012 Audain Professor in Contemporary Arts of the Pacific Northwest with the Department of Visual Arts, has won a \$50,000 Rasmuson Fellowship from the United States Artists organization. The Sitka-born Galanin is a multi-disciplinary Tlingit/Aleut artist whose teaching term with UVic ran throughout fall 2012. A visual artist and musician, he creates multimedia pieces that often involve computers, video, photo manipulation or sculpture in a variety of forms.



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around the ring

LEED Gold for South Tower
 UVic’s South Tower residence building has become the sixth campus facility to achieve national recognition for environmental design and sustainability. On Jan. 3, the Canada Green Building Council officially recognized the building, opened in 2011, with gold-level certification in its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building program. Sustainability features of the South Tower, which was constructed on a former parking lot, include indoor bicycle storage, exterior charging stations for electric vehicles, efficient energy and water management measures, locally sourced materials, natural landscaping and enhanced indoor air quality. The 106-bed residence provides barrier-free rooms for disabled students, dormitory-style rooms and larger suites for graduate and mature students. It is the first UVic residence building to achieve LEED certification.

Register now for Connect U
 Registration is now open for the second Connect U conference, Feb. 20 and 21 in the Cadboro Commons Building. This professional development conference is free and open to all UVic employees. Build skills, learn more about the university, network with your colleagues, take behind-the-scenes tours and have fun. The 2012 President’s Distinguished Service Awards and 2012 Sustainability Award will be presented in conjunction with this year’s conference, to recognize the outstanding contributions of university employees. For more information and to register, visit www.uvic.ca/connectu. Please register early to avoid disappointment. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/connectu.

Nominations welcome for Craigdarroch Research Awards
 A new year means another chance for faculty members to put a spotlight on research or creative excellence in their unit with one of five Craigdarroch Research Awards to be given this spring. From now until Jan. 28 you can nominate an extraordinary researcher or artist who takes centre stage in original, productive and groundbreaking knowledge creation at the University of Victoria. Established in 2003, the Craigdarroch Research Awards are celebrating their tenth anniversary of recognizing outstanding research-focused contributions in every unit at UVic. Nominations are welcome from across campus in five categories, including career achievement, research excellence, artistic expression, innovation and entrepreneurship and knowledge mobilization. For eligibility criteria and a nomination package: www.uvic.ca/craigdarrochawards or contact Brad Buie at awardfac@uvic.ca.

“Migrants’ rights are human rights”

BY ADAM TAYLOR TRAN

From the movement of the early *Homo Sapiens* out of the continent of Africa, to the ancient exchanges between Indian and Chinese merchants and monks along the Silk Road, to the boat people who fled the aftermath of the wars in Vietnam and Cambodia in the late 1970s, to Canadian retirees who today are selling their belongings and moving south—the process of human migration is by no means new. It has facilitated exchanges and interactions between people that have powerfully shaped human history, thought, religion, politics, language and more.

What *is* (relatively) new, however, are the impacts of the neoliberal model of globalization, which have resulted in pressures and dangerous conditions for the migrants of today and their family members.

UVic’s Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives (CAPI) has recently turned its attention to the contemporary context for migration by connecting student interns with migrants’ rights organizations throughout Asia.

From June to December 2012, Cate Lawrence, George Benson, Chandra Merry and I were placed as CAPI interns with NGOs in the Philippines, Bangladesh and India. Our respective host organizations are members of the Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA) network, one that is comprised of over 200 rights-based members and partners focused on migration issues in the Asia region.

This year, MFA hosted the fifth annual World Social Forum on Migrations (WSFM) from Nov. 26–30, in Manila, Philippines, and all four of us, in addition to three UVic alumni, had the opportunity to assist and participate in the forum.

Broadly speaking, the WSFM strives to create a space dedicated to exploring alternatives to the neoliberal world order, specifically focusing



Adam Tran (top right) with CAPI Interns, UVic alumni and event coordinators at the World Social Forum on Migrations, Manila, Philippines.

on issues related to mobility and migration, including labour migration, domestic work, refugees, trafficking of people and climate change.

The vast majority of the 1,800 overseas and local participants agreed that the rights and powers given to profit-driven multinational corporations have resulted in a system designed to benefit a privileged minority. This system relies on lowering the cost of flexible labour and exploiting natural resources from the Global South. The consequences of this system have contributed to today’s financial, environmental and global social crises that disproportionately and systemically oppress migrants due to practices that lead to outsourcing, importing

temporary labour, environmental degradation, low wages and human and sex trafficking. Thus, of the estimated 740 million international and internal migrants throughout the world today, many are pressured to migrate under dangerous conditions that often leave them vulnerable, victimized, and/or criminalized.

Although global communication can be accessed with the click of a button, the WSFM was able to facilitate global collaboration, something that, in my opinion, is less easily fostered by e-mails and phone calls. The forum impressed upon me the importance of dedicating space to tackle issues facing humanity by coming together at a very human level.

Furthermore, it allowed those of us interning with CAPI to come together and deeply reflect and connect with each other. I believe that the reflections and connections that were made by all participants will contribute to the growing movement that is pushing for global recognition and action towards understanding migrants’ rights as human rights.

More information on the forum: www.wsfm2012.org

More about CAPI and its intern program: www.capi.uvic.ca

Adam Tran is a fourth-year student in the Department of Political Science and the Intercultural Education Training Diploma Program.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS

New office provides focal point for interdisciplinary programs

BY ROBIE LISCOMB

The large and complex challenges facing society today don’t respect the boundaries of traditional academic disciplines. In support of research and education that address such problems, UVic has—for decades—offered a growing number of programs that integrate approaches and insights from different disciplines, providing students with deeper and more holistic understandings of complex issues.

But such interdisciplinary programs often encounter difficulties operating in an environment of administrative systems and structures created to serve traditional discipline-oriented units. For example, programs that cut across borders between faculties lack visibility compared with faculty-based schools and departments and information about them can be difficult to find.

To provide assistance, the vice-president academic and provost has recently established the Office of Interdisciplinary Academic Programs. It will provide services to undergraduate and graduate interdisciplinary academic programs that involve more than one faculty.

“We would like to foster the continued growth of interdisciplinarity at UVic,” says Dr. Reeta Tremblay, vice-president academic and provost. “We

have established this office to help reduce the administrative workload for interdisciplinary programs and to provide innovative and creative structures to facilitate their growth while maintaining their academic autonomy.”

Dr. Michael Webb, faculty member in the Department of Political Science and associate dean academic in the Faculty of Social Sciences, is serving as acting director of the office, which will operate for an initial three-year period after which it will be reviewed. It will be responsible for policies and procedures, reporting and budget administration, advocacy and promotion for the programs with which it works. Funding decisions will remain with the deans.

“We want to help directors of interdisciplinary programs focus their energies and resources on the academic programs rather than administrative tasks and to make it easier for people with good ideas to put them into effect,” says Webb.

“We see this initiative very much as an ‘open tent’—creating opportunities for the further development of interdisciplinary programs and helping to distinguish UVic as a leader in interdisciplinary education,” says Associate Vice-President Academic Planning Katy Mateer. She points out that the centralization of administration will

“Such programs are pathways along which students can develop the critical frameworks of understanding needed to address the pressing issues facing us.”

not involve additional costs. “This is an initiative that will help build on UVic’s established strengths even in the current environment of budget reductions.”

Initially, the office is working with the undergraduate programs in European studies; Indigenous studies; social justice studies; human dimensions of climate change; technology and society; and with the graduate programs in cultural, social and political thought; and social dimensions of health.

The office will also serve all new cross-faculty interdisciplinary programs, several of which are currently in the preliminary stages.

“Already I’ve had a steady flow of inquiries from colleagues interested

in developing programs and even cross-faculty courses,” says Webb. “For example, as acting director, I’m taking the lead in developing a new interdisciplinary program in international development with colleagues from the faculties of social sciences, humanities and human and social development, with funding from UVic’s Learning Without Borders program.”

The interdisciplinary office, with a new and prominent website, will also serve as a university-level focal point for interdisciplinary programs, helping to address their relatively low visibility and the fragmentation of information about them.

In the end it’s all about providing enhanced opportunities for students, says Mateer. “There is great student interest in interdisciplinary studies. Such programs are pathways along which students can develop the critical frameworks of understanding needed to address the pressing issues facing us. And the special designations these programs add to our graduates’ degrees help open doors to careers in which they can make important contributions to society.”

For more about interdisciplinary programs at UVic, see “The (Inter)disciplined Approach” in the autumn 2012 issue of The Torch [http://issuu.com/uvic_torch_alumni_magazine/docs/2012-autumn]

Rowing across the Atlantic—with UVic’s help

BY MITCH WRIGHT

Later this month, when four men push off from Africa’s westernmost point to row across the Atlantic, they’ll give both the mundane routine and the complexity of their daily schedules over to a computer program developed at UVic.

The Ocean Adventure Rowing (OAR) Northwest team, including Olympic gold medalist and UVic and Vikes alumnus Adam Kreek, will share a modified 29-foot rowboat for the Africa to the Americas 2012 trip, embarking from Dakar, Senegal, for Miami, Florida—a 6,700-kilometre trip across the Atlantic expected to take 60–80 days.

Every aspect of the foursome’s schedule—from taking scientific readings to sleeping to simply brushing teeth—will be increasingly governed by an adaptive scheduling system developed as part of the Computer-Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW) course in UVic’s Department of Computer Science.

Such rigorous scheduling is important because the rowers—Kreek, Markus Pukonen of Tofino, and Jordan Hanssen and Pat Fleming of Seattle—must apply their wide range of expertise, all while becoming increasingly mentally and physically fatigued, making their ability to organize otherwise simple daily tasks much more difficult.

While dealing with this challenging environment they will be making critical decisions involving meteorology, navigation, nutrition, oceanography, technology, shipboard and oceanic emergencies, expedition planning, sports medicine, interpersonal communication and leadership.

“They’ll be rowing 12 hours a day and sleeping in shifts. They need a really structured schedule,” says Alesia Knauss, a PhD candidate leading the UVic aspect of the project, which also includes master’s students Angela Rook and Jason Cummer.

A key characteristic of the program,

designed as an Android app by Cummer, is its ability to automatically make tiny incremental adjustments to update daylight time according to the longitudinal positions of the rowers on the ocean. It then coordinates with a calendar app to keep the rowers on track.

Although other programs existed offering similar features, none could adjust incrementally to changing time zones (the team will cross five) and none was easy enough to use for people under the kind of stress the rowers will endure.

The three-person programming team pulled the project—part of Knauss’s doctoral dissertation—together in a mere eight weeks. It began after Dr. Daniela Damian, who teaches the CSCW course, ran into Kreek in the airport and got chatting about the adventure and the participants’ needs.

The Canadian Wildlife Federation-sponsored expedition has partnered with

UVic and other organizations to conduct research during the trip. The boat will be loaded with various equipment powered by a wind turbine and solar panels to monitor underwater marine life sounds, ocean temperature, density, acidity and carbon dioxide levels.

The rowers themselves will also be under scrutiny, as the Centre for Sleep and Human Performance in Calgary monitors their circadian rhythms under the effects of physical stress and a disrupted sleep schedule—they’ll nod off in short shifts to keep the boat constantly under power.

That research makes the scheduling app even more vital, as any disruption could compromise the circadian rhythm data being collected.

“They see it as a fifth person on the boat who is coordinating everything for them,” says Knauss.

To track the team’s progress or for more information: <http://oarnorthwest.com> or bit.ly/VHnwQH



L-R: Knauss, Cummer and Rook, who developed a scheduling app for the team who will row across the Atlantic Ocean. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES



On an earlier row around Vancouver Island. PHOTO: OAR NORTHWEST

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Making a difference: UVic and the United Way

Thank you, UVic community! As of the end of December, the fundraising tally for the 2012 UVic United Way campaign stood at \$250,647, and the campaign had welcomed 74 new donors.

“Thank you to everyone who donated for your contributions and generosity,” says UVic campaign chair Mary Ellen Purkis. “UVic is a proud supporter of the United Way of Greater Victoria and we continue to rely on tremendous support from the campus community—both donors and volunteers—to achieve our ambitious goals,” she says.

“Special thanks to our leadership donors, who each contribute more than \$500 annually and help us to make such a difference to the local agencies and programs that are supported by the United Way.”

On-campus events raised a total

of \$18,150 from September to December 2012. Events included the Engineering Students’ Society VW Bug Push, UVic Libraries Booksale, Hearts and Hands Craft Fair, Plasma Car Races, Chemistry Show and Commerce Students Society fashion show.

Donations help nearly 128,000 Victoria residents who benefit from United Way-supported programs and services delivered through 67 agencies. The United Way of Greater Victoria celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2012.

Visit the UVic campaign site at uvic.ca/unitedway for more information. If you would like to get involved on the campaign committee or volunteer for future campaign events, please contact Mary Ellen Purkis at hdsdean@uvic.ca.



United Way
OF GREATER VICTORIA



Clean bill of health for Sedgewick Building

Air quality tests conducted in the Sedgewick Building have confirmed the building’s air quality meets all standards for office buildings. The testing followed a WorkSafeBC report in April 2012 citing employee health concerns.

An environmental consultant recommended by WorkSafeBC conducted comprehensive tests in the late spring of 2012 and found no evidence of mould or building moisture problems or of anything that would represent a general health concern.

WorkSafeBC has issued a final inspection report that was shared with employees in late November indicating UVic compliance with all orders.

As part of the compliance report, the university will develop training for managers and supervisors, and update orientation and web resources for all staff with respect to hazard reporting, investigations and safety committee roles to improve internal communication.

Over the years, the university has responded to individual complaints and undertaken improvements to the Sedgewick Building, most significantly

sealing off the building’s crawl space with a vapour barrier in 2011 to address complaints about an occasional “musty” odour in the building, and reactivating the ventilation system in 2012 to deal with slightly elevated carbon dioxide levels, the by-product of normal office activities and respiration by building occupants.

WorkSafeBC had ordered the university last April to conduct further sampling for airborne contaminants and take action to address any problems due to continued reporting by a few employees of symptoms such as chronic coughing and runny noses, itchy eyes and the onset of allergies when in the building.

WorkSafeBC is satisfied that the university has completed the appropriate building investigation and air quality tests and confirmed that the air quality meets regulatory requirements.

Occupational Health, Safety and Environment will conduct periodic indoor air quality checks in Sedgewick throughout the next 12 months to ensure the ventilation system is operating as designed.

around the ring

Registration opens for Diversity Research Forum

How has activism changed in 50 years at UVic? Find out at the Provost’s Diversity Research Forum, *Critical Conversations: Rethinking Realities*, taking place on campus on Wednesday, Jan. 30 (4–6 p.m.) and Thursday, Jan. 31 (9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.). This annual conference brings together UVic faculty and students, and community members to share and discuss groundbreaking research and engage in critical conversations on a wide range of equity and diversity topics, including teaching and learning methodologies. Keynote speakers are The Honorable Jim Munson, who will speak about his interests in the rights of children and people with disabilities, and Olivia Barr, a member of UVic’s first graduating class and the first woman elected as a student council president at a co-ed Canadian university. Two of the panel sessions will reflect on diversity, including the closing plenary, *50 years of activism: Then and now*. Registration is free and all rooms are accessible. Everyone is welcome: faculty, staff, students and community members. www.uvic.ca/diversity/forum2013

Indigenous governance focus of special edition of *Arbutus Review*

Check out the latest issue of UVic’s online peer-reviewed journal of outstanding undergraduate research papers, guest edited by UVic doctoral student and sessional instructor Adam Gaudry. This special issue is focused on Indigenous governance, with articles exploring the WSANEC Nation’s relationship with its traditional territories, how the Canadian Constitution hinders the development and restricts the scope of Indigenous rights, the different conceptions of place and citizenship within the Zapatista movement and those within Canadian multiculturalism, the ways in which Indigenous women are othered by the proceedings of the Missing Women’s Commission of Inquiry, the danger of recognizing Aboriginal rights through the lens of a Crown-Aboriginal fiduciary relationship, and contemporary Indigenous photographers’ use of humour to turn the colonial gaze back on itself. *The Arbutus Review* is produced with the support of UVic’s Learning and Teaching Centre. <http://bit.ly/VAuNSy>



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Learning through community service

BY SARAH RAVLIC

In 2012, UVic offered its first two courses focused on community service learning (CSL). UVic Co-op and Career partnered with the Faculty of Social Sciences to provide a 300-level CSL course called Working in Community (SOSC 300) in the fall and spring 2012 semesters. Co-op and Career and the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies also offered a second-year CSL course called Intercultural Service Learning (PAAS 209) last September, which had 15 participants and was supported by the Learning Without Borders Fund offered through UVic's Learning and Teaching Centre.

I was one of 39 students who participated in the new Working in Community course this year, which included four weeks of classroom theory, followed by seven weeks (30 to 40 hours) of volunteer community work. We spent the final two weeks back in the classroom to reflect on our experiences and ended the course

with a final presentation. Throughout the course, the instructors' diverse areas of expertise made for a dynamic learning experience.

For my CSL placement, I worked with the Saanich Volunteer Services Society (SVSS) to research accessible transportation for seniors in the Capital Regional District.

This experience related directly to my career interest in urban planning and helped me secure a place at the University of California Berkeley's [IN]City summer institute in city and regional planning.

The people I met during my CSL placement and their gratitude for my work impacted me greatly; at no other time in my undergraduate experience can I remember feeling so valued for my skills and education. Since graduation, I have continued to volunteer on the SVSS board of directors.

The SVSS has been an extremely warm and welcoming organization to work with and have benefited significantly from the CSL program.

"Sarah's engagement, knowledge and approach brought fresh energy to a longstanding need for seniors' transportation improvements," said my workplace supervisor, SVSS executive director Susan Zerb. "SVSS and our greater Saanich community will experience direct benefit as a result of UVic's community service learning project."

CSL is exactly the creative approach to teaching and community involvement that UVic strives for according to its strategic plan. Many community organizations are stretched for resources, and the CSL experience directly benefits these organizations while providing students with valuable, relevant experience.

CSL brought my learning to life, improved my leadership skills and helped me to become a more engaged citizen and better able to contribute to my community. I couldn't wish for a more fulfilling experience for future students.



Susan Zerb, executive director of Saanich Volunteer Services Society, and Ravlic outside the Saanich Volunteer Services Society building.

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calendar highlights

Events free unless otherwise indicated. For a complete list of events, visit the online calendar at www.uvic.ca/events

at the galleries

www.uvac.uvic.ca
250-721-6562



“View from the old coal dump, Ladysmith” E.J. Hughes, 1970

■ **Honoris Causa: Artist Honorary Degree Recipients.** Until March 9. An exhibition featuring works by many artists who have been conferred honorary degrees by UVic and who are represented in the UVic Art Collections, including E.J. Hughes, Carole Sabiston, Robert Davidson, Jack Shadbolt, Bill Reid, Ted Harrison, Pat Martin Bates and Susan Point. Legacy Main and Small Galleries, 630 Yates St.

■ **Understanding Place in Culture: Serigraphs and the Transmission of Cultural Knowledge.** This exhibition presents a selection of prints from the George and Christiane Smyth and Vincent Rickard Northwest Coast Print collections that focus on representations of place and Indigenous knowledge production. Maltwood Prints and Drawings Gallery at the McPherson Library

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10

■ **Studies in Religion & Society Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *Can We Reason Our Way to Enlightenment?* Meditation Trends in the Wake of Tibet’s Great Debate. David Higgins, Dept. of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, Univ. of Vienna. Social Sciences & Math A110. 250-721-6325

■ **Other.** 6 p.m. *Wisdom Jesus Circle.* Jan. 17/24/31 & Feb. 7. Henri Lock, United Chaplain, Multifaith Services. Chapel. 250-721-8338

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 12 p.m. *Making and Breaking Memories in Mice.* Dr. Sheena Josselyn, Hospital for Sick Children and Univ. of Toronto. Medical Sciences 160. 250-853-3129.

■ **Music.** 12:30 p.m. *Fridaymusic.* A concert of varied repertoire and instruments featuring School of Music students. MacLaurin B125. 250-721-8634

SUNDAY, JANUARY 13

■ **Music.** 8 p.m. *Faculty Chamber Music Series: Music For and In the Moment.* Music composed and played by UVic music faculty members. \$17.50, 13.50. MacLaurin B125. 250-721-8634

MONDAY, JANUARY 14

■ **Music.** 8 p.m. *Guest Concert: Georgy Tchaidze, piano (2009 Honens Prize Laureate).* Supported by the Orion Fund in Fine Arts. MacLaurin B125. 250-721-8634

TUESDAY, JANUARY 15

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 6:30 p.m. *Café Scientifique. Living Apart Together (LAT) Relationships: A New Emerging Family Form in Canada.* Discussion of non-traditional families and new forms of interdependence in the latter stages of life. Strathcona Hotel, Maple Room, 919 Douglas St. Reservations required: senage@uvic.ca or 250-721-6369.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 8 p.m. *Visiting Artists Series presents Ed Pien.* Born in Taiwan, now Toronto-based artist Ed Pien has been drawing for nearly 30 years and has exhibited nationally and internationally. Visual Arts A162. 250-721-8011.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 11:30 a.m. *Engineering Stem Cell Fate.* Dr. Peter Zandstra, Univ. of Toronto. Medical Sciences 150. 250-853-3129

■ **Studies in Religion & Society Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *Exilic Meditations: Reflections on Displacement and the Impossibility of Return.* Peyman Vahabzadeh, UVic. Social Sciences & Math A110. 250-721-6325.

■ **Music.** 12:30 p.m. *Fridaymusic.* A concert of varied repertoire and instruments featuring School of Music students. MacLaurin B125. 250-721-8634

■ **Philosophy Colloquium.** 3:30 p.m. *Arabic for Eternity: Time and Timelessness.* Dr. Taneli Kukkonen, Univ. of Otago, New Zealand. Clearihue A203. 250 721-7512

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 7:30 p.m. *Victoria Natural History Society Birders Night presents Birding Adventure in Colombia with Andrew Harcombe.* Fraser 159. 250-477-5922

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 8 p.m. *Visiting Artist Series presents Blue Republic.* Collaborative multidisciplinary artists Anna Passakas and Radoslaw Kudlinski talk about their fascinating history working with other artists, groups, and international centres of independent artistic research. Visual Arts A162. 250-721-8011.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24

■ **Studies in Religion & Society Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *Religion and Science: Monstrous Births in Early Modern France.* Alison Murray Winnifred Lonsdale, Graduate Student Fellow, UVic. Social Sciences & Math A110. 250-721-6325

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 7 p.m. *Neil Burton and the Historic Debate on China’s Future: Echoes from Past to Present.* Mark Sidel, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, part of the annual Neil Burton memorial series hosted by the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives. Fraser 159. 250-721-7200

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25

■ **Music.** 12:30 p.m. *Fridaymusic.* Featuring School of Music keyboard students. MacLaurin B125. 250-721-8634

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 2 p.m. *A Celebratory*

Event for the Exhibition Honoris Causa: Artist Honorary Degree Recipients and a Talk with Dr. Robert Bateman. Legacy Gallery, 630 Yates St. 250-721-6562

MONDAY, JANUARY 28

■ **Lecture.** 7:30 p.m. *Victoria Natural History Society Marine Night presents More than Just a Pretty Beach: Beaches as Critical Fish Habitats.* Ramona C. de Graaf, forage fish specialist and executive director of the Coastal Conservation Institute of BC. Fraser 159. 250-477-5922

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 12 p.m. *The Research Agenda of the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.* Dr. Budd Hall, UVic. Human & Social Dev. A373. 250-472-4912

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31

■ **Studies in Religion & Society Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *Globalizing Islam: Malaysia’s Islamic Finance Project.* Daromir Rudnykyj, UVic. Social Sciences & Math A110. 250-721-6325

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1

■ **Lecture/Seminar.** 12 p.m. *The Role for Astrocytes in Maintaining a Healthy Brain and in Regulating Neuronal Activity.* Dr. Brian MacVicar, PhD Medical Sciences 160. 250-853-3129

■ **Music.** 12:30 p.m. *Fridaymusic.* Featuring School of Music brass students. MacLaurin B125. 250-721-8634

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

■ **Other.** 7:30 p.m. *Paul Nicklen’s Polar Obsession.* National Geographic photographer Paul Nicklen, UVic alumnus (BSc Biology 1990). UVic Centre Farquhar Auditorium. To reserve free tickets call 250-721-8480

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7

■ **Studies in Religion & Society Lecture.** 4:30 p.m. *The Battle for the Fairy Tale Under Lenin and Stalin.* Megan Swift, UVic. Social Sciences & Math A110. 250-721-6325

around the ring

CBC’s Jo-Ann Roberts speaks on campus

Popular local CBC Radio afternoon show All Points West host Jo-Ann Roberts will present a free public lecture entitled “Public Broadcasting and the Public Good” at the end of January. As the Department of Writing’s 2013 Harvey S. Southam Lecturer in Journalism and Non-fiction, Roberts will also be teaching a class on the same subject this semester. “Public broadcasting matters to every journalist in this country,” she says. “We keep the bar high, and that means private broadcasters can’t go any lower—but the lower we get, the lower their bar goes. You don’t have to be working for a public broadcaster as a journalist to care about it.” Roberts speak at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 30, in HSD room 240.

Hear Bateman at the Legacy

Famed West Coast artist Robert Bateman will give a special free talk at the downtown Legacy Art Gallery at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 27, in connection with Legacy’s current Honoris Causa exhibit. “One of the things we’re trying to emphasize with this exhibit is that these people are artists, and their work is fantastic, but most of them were also given honorary degrees for their broader contribution to the community,” says curator Mary Jo Hughes. Bateman loaned Legacy a specific painting of a porpoise trapped in a gill net for the exhibit, which Hughes says exemplifies his personal concern for the environment. <http://bit.ly/134ejnK>

How can UVic Libraries serve you better?

From Jan. 28 to Feb. 15, UVic Libraries will conduct another installment of LibQUAL+™ to survey a random sample of UVic students and faculty. LibQUAL+™ is a web-based survey developed by the Association of Research Libraries for academic libraries throughout the world. The survey is designed to assess student and faculty satisfaction with library services, facilities and resources. Participants may also enter their email address in a prize draw. More information: <http://bit.ly/VCxK2w>

Add printing funds online

Students, faculty and staff can now securely add funds to their UVic printing accounts online at www.uvic.ca/pao using VISA or MasterCard. The minimum transaction amount is \$10 and the maximum is \$100. Printing funds can be used for self-serve photocopying and printing at the Student Computing Facilities in the Clearihue, Human and Social Development, and Business and Economics buildings, the Faculty of Education Computer Labs, and the MacLaurin Curriculum Library and for printing in the McPherson Library and the Faculty of Engineering labs. In-person payments can still be made at one of the Student Computing Facilities or the main desk in the McPherson Library by cash or credit/debit card.

NEXT PRESIDENT CONTINUED FROM P.1

UVic will be extremely well served by his leadership.”

“I am incredibly excited about this opportunity,” says Cassels. “UVic has an international reputation as one of Canada’s finest research-intensive universities—indeed, among the best in the world. This is due to the efforts of its outstanding faculty, students, staff and leaders, and support from our donors, alumni, and our many public and private sector partners.”

“I’ll be spending my first months as president listening intently to what the university and the broader communities have to say about UVic’s future,” he says. “I expect to have extensive consultations both on and off campus.”

Cassels stresses the importance of building a shared sense of the university’s distinctiveness and strengths within the broad context of UVic’s strategic plan. “A president can’t do anything on his or her own; but when a community has a shared understanding of its goals, that creates the momentum needed to achieve great results.”

Cassels will go into those consultations with a strong sense of his own values and UVic’s strengths. Speaking of his hopes for UVic, Cassels, an avid boater, says, “I know where my

compass points. I’d like to further cement our international reputation as a research university and build on our strength in experiential learning, our commitment to civic engagement and the integration of education and research. This means making sure that the educational environment is truly enriched by the strong research culture of the university.”

As vice-president academic and provost, Cassels was the university’s chief academic officer, initiating and leading the university’s integrated planning process that guided overall university direction and budget development. He oversaw the renewal and growth of UVic’s faculty complement, the expansion of undergraduate and graduate student programs and services, and the development of strong programs of Indigenous education and scholarship. More than half of UVic’s current faculty—the next generation of scholars—were hired during his term.

As VPAC, Cassels was involved in post-secondary education at the provincial and national levels and acknowledged as a leader in the university system. At the end of his term in 2010, he was the country’s senior vice-president academic. Over the coming months he hopes to visit

universities across Canada and meet with other presidents.

Cassels has received numerous awards for his scholarship and teaching, including a 3M National Teaching Fellowship, Canada’s highest award for university teaching, which is awarded to those who both excel in their own discipline and demonstrate an exceptionally high degree of leadership and commitment to the improvement of university teaching across disciplines.

He also received a Canadian Association of Law Teachers Award for Academic Excellence for his exceptional contributions to legal research

and education. He is the author of numerous books and articles and is frequently cited in both the academic literature and the courts.

Cassels was named a BC Queen’s Counsel in 2004 for his scholarly and service contributions to the legal profession.

He will succeed David Turpin, who has served as the university’s president since 2000.

The public is invited to meet Cassels on Jan. 17 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. in the University Centre foyer.

A video of the Dec. 20 announcement is posted on the UVic YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/uvic>

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Bob Reimer

day in the life

BY MEL GROVES

If you’ve ever purchased tickets at the UVic Ticket Centre, you’ve already caught a glimpse of a day in the life of Debra Fitzsimmons. As supervisor of the ticket centre, she spends a sizeable portion of every day at her desk in the small recess next to the University Centre’s Photo ID Centre. It’s a bustling place, buzzing with phone calls and interruptions, and that’s just how she likes it. “This industry is not a nine-to-five one. You never know what or whom you’ll be dealing with, and it’s exciting,” she says.

Although she may not have predicted her future career path, Fitzsimmons developed an early love of the performing arts. After taking dance lessons as a youth, she became a performer and volunteer with Vancouver’s Pacific Ballet Theatre School. She realized her aptitude for business after creating a line of cards and merchandise for the school as a fundraising project.

Fitzsimmons’ professional career began with a stint as a business development officer for the Bank of Montreal MasterCard. After relocating to Victoria in 1990, she became an assistant manager at a local credit union before joining UVic in 2007. “My job is a perfect marriage of my previous experiences in performing arts and business,” she says.

The ticket centre began as an in-



Fitzsimmons. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES

house university service in 2004, thanks to the vision of Martin Segger, former director of the University of Victoria Art Collections. “The Farquhar Auditorium hosts an average of 140 performances a year plus additional events for the School of Music at the Phillip T. Young Recital Hall,” Fitzsimmons says. “We provide ticketing services for events on and off-campus, and also to off-campus organizations. We try to keep our service charges low and are responsive to community programming—it brings diversity to our events and to the UVic campus.”

On a busy day, the ticket centre receives about 200 calls, and it sells approximately 150,000 tickets a year. Fitzsimmons praises her staff—one full-time clerk and two work-study students (plus a pool of six casual employees)—to whom she provides regular coaching and mentoring. “The turnover of student staff is very high, and training is a constant,” she says. “The ticketing software is very specific, and staff need to be well oriented in order to provide superior customer service.”

Fitzsimmons also works closely

with long-term auditorium clients—such as the Palm Court Orchestra and Victoria Symphony—to implement pricing strategies, coordinate sale dates and media strategies, and assist with performances. “We want all our shows to be a success,” she emphasizes. “We’re always there to provide support and guidance.”

Away from the campus, Fitzsimmons values family time with her husband and three children on their property in rural Saanich. They also enjoy taking in live theatre and music performances whenever they can.

She admits that she watches each performance with a critic’s eye and inevitably makes comparisons to her own workplace.

“The UVic Ticket Centre is a gateway to an experience,” Fitzsimmons says. “Every event is a chance for people to be inspired, and it’s a creatively charged environment. We should be and we’d like to be a meeting place for the whole community.”

Info on upcoming events at the Farquhar Auditorium: auditorium.uvic.ca

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Paul Nicklen, BSc '90
National Geographic photographer

Polar Obsession

Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m. | University Centre Farquhar Auditorium

Page 8 The Ring January 2013