# HINFormation

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

My 5 year term as director of the School of Health Information Science is quickly coming to a close this summer; for me it seems like the time has flown by! I have been happy and honored to have had this opportunity to lead the school and look forward to continuing with my teaching and research at the School of Health Information Science after my upcoming sabbatical year.

In reflecting back on my five years as director here, the School has seen a lot of changes. Our undergraduate enrollments have risen and we now have two intakes a year (with students entering the program in both January and September each year). The great effort of the faculty, staff, students and alumni to spread the word about our programs and the opportunities in health informatics has paid off. This involved a lot of hard work recruiting at career fairs, open houses, student events and just plain old "word of mouth". Thanks to everyone for helping here! In addition, our most dramatic increase in enrollment was in the area of graduate education, with our number of graduate students rising about six fold since my arrival (with now over 80 graduate students). An important part of this trend was the launch of the distributed (distance) Masters program which allowed students from around Canada and the world to do graduate degrees in health informatics while continuing to work. We now have plans to launch a unique dual degree Masters program in nursing and health informatics, where students will receive both a Masters in

Health Information Science and a Masters of Nursing in 3 years. Also, we are completing plans for moving our PhD program from special arrangements to a flexible formal PhD program in Health Informatics.

For me a highlight of the past five years was the resurrection of the ITCH conference that had been popular in the 1990's and which we revitalized and started again in 2007 and also this last spring in 2009. This last ITCH we had over 250 participants from over 20 countries. This conference was very successful both times, drawing participants from all corners of the world and raising the profile of the School internationally.

Recently we hired a new Assistant Professor, Dr. Alex Kuo, who has expertise in database and data mining. In addition, we are in the midst of hiring a new Director, with some excellent candidates lined up. Our School has the largest number of full time faculty in health informatics in Canada and we expect the faculty to grow along with the growth in enrollments into the future.

Along another front the School has increased the number of scholarships available to students, with the Denis and Pat Protti endowment fund receiving considerable funds from corporate sponsors and a new undergraduate entrance scholarship being set up to honour the memory of Steven Huesing and his contributions to health informatics and the School (in part from proceeds from the past two ITCH conferences). In all, it has been a busy but satisfying term as director and I look forward to the coming years and continuing to work with the new director and all the faculty, staff, students and alumni into the long-term future!

Andre Kushniruk

## FAREWELL TO A GOOD FRIEND

On April 12, the School of Health Information Science lost a good friend and supporter in the sudden passing of Steve Huesing. Steve was the editor and publisher of "Healthcare Information Management & Communications Canada", Executive Director, International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) and President, Canadian Healthcare Information Technology Trade Association (CHITTA), a Division of ITAC.

Considered to be one of the "pioneers" in the field, Mr. Huesing worked in the Health Industry and Informatics for over 40 years and held senior executive, CFO, and CIO positions in healthcare facilities and government. He was the founding president of COACH: Canada's Healthcare Informatics Association, and served on the boards of many voluntary organizations as well as editorial boards of academic journals and conference proceedings. He served on several boards and advisory boards of companies and educational institutions in the health industry. COACH honored him by the granting an annual scholarship in his name to qualified Canadian health informatics students.

In 2002 he was the co-founder of the Canadian Healthcare Technology Trade Association (CHITTA) that had recently merged with the Information Technology Association of Canada. Steven was the author of numerous articles, book chapters and editorials. Most recently he was the editor of "From Mainframe to Mainstream: The Evolution of COACH and Health Informatics in Canada" published by COACH in celebration of its 30th

Anniversary. He was actively involved in Health Informatics curriculum development with several universities, colleges and associations. He also served as a visiting lecturer on the vendor marketplace, strategic procurement and the history of Canadian Health Informatics.

In recognition of the industry that had been the driving source of his career, Mr. Huesing established the annual COACH Founding President's Award in 1984, which recognizes the student at the University of Victoria's School of Health Information Science "likely to make a major contribution to the advancement of information management in the Canadian Healthcare system". He never turned down a chance to visit the School or give a research seminar. His involvement extended to the biannual international conference **Information Technology and Communications in Health (ITCH)** which the School hosts. He was a keynote speaker at ITCH 2007 and Conference Co-Chair of ITCH 2009.

Steven will be missed by all of us at the School who had the privilege to know him.

## *Message read at memorial service, April 22, 2009*

Dear Family and Friends,

As much as I want to be there with you today to honour and bid farewell to Steven, regretfully I am not able to do so. Therefore, I have prevailed upon Linda Miller to eulogize the memory of Steven on my behalf.

When I heard the news of the passing of Steven, I must say, like all those who knew him well, that I felt an overwhelming amount of sadness and sorrow. But this sense of loss was quickly replaced by a strong feeling of joy as I reflected back on my memories of this man and of my enormous good fortune in having known and loved a guy like him for so many years.

To me Steve was a mentor, a friend, and quite frankly, an inspiration. I could and can only admire his

visionary and pioneering work in the field of health informatics. An industry to which I belong and one that owes a great deal of gratitude to a man who painted visions of where the industry needs to go; a man who put his "money where his mouth is" through the creation of organizations and forums to allow our industry and its community to grow and flourish; a man who was never bashful about poking and prodding the industry to greater heights by publishing his many provocative editorials over the years.

Steve had the gift of speaking his mind and never really changing it – it must have been that stubborn Germanic trait he had in him :-). In any event, he never really alienated or antagonized the opposition for too long. I marveled at his leadership and relationship skills – how else can one account for a guy living in a prairie town who built and sustained two national organizations – COACH and CHITTA along with Canada's most loved health informatics journal – without the talent that attracts folks to work with you year after year, to grow and sustain his original ideas and creations.

I first met Steve when I was a rookie Chief Information Officer at the Department of Health in Alberta. To this day I am not sure what it was that I said or did (possibly my Irish blarney!!), but Steve decided to become my patron and sponsor. This manifested itself in advice, critique and the utmost promotion of me and the work that I have been engaged in over the years. For all of that, and for his caring, I am most deeply grateful. As the years skipped by, because of distant location, we met less and less, but on those occasions that we did meet, we used those precious moments to speak more of family and friends and less of our work and the industry. But, I could tell from the look in his eyes and the joy on his face that he exhibited the traits of a proud father in terms of the progress we had made as an industry.

And, speaking of being a proud father, Steve introduced the TRUE pride and joy of his life – his kids – to us at a very early age. Elaine and Christina were often seen helping Dad at one conference or another. And it did not take long for them to become part of the larger health informatics family in Canada.

So, in these latter years, I could relate to our personal conversations, when he confided in me stories of love and affection for his expanding family – including his grandchildren Tessa and Liam and, if course, his beloved Shirley. To all of you I say you had in individual in your lives who was a man in a million.

Steven Huesing - you will be dearly missed, but your work, your love and your legacy will sustain you. For Canada and for all of us whose lives you have touched, we are in a better place for having known you.

Farewell my friend.

With love and deep respect...............
Dick Alvarez.

## *Steven A. Huesing Memorial Entrance Scholarship*

On March 14, 2003, the School thanked Steve Huesing for 20 years of support by presenting him with a plaque at a dinner held in his honour. This year, we are establishing the Steven A. Huesing Memorial Entrance Scholarship.

Scholarships up to $2,000, will be awarded to academically outstanding undergraduate students entering the University of Victoria's School of Health Information Science from secondary schools or post-secondary institutions.

Anyone wishing to contribute to this award can do so by sending a cheque made out to the Steven A. Huesing Entrance Scholarship to the School of Health Information Science. We will look after having it processed. A tax receipt will be issued by the University.

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# STUDENTS

Haley Moore, is this year's recipient of the COACH Founding President's Award. The award is accompanied by $500.00 in cash, complimentary registration for the e-Health 2009 Conference by COACH: Canada's Health Informatics Association (this year in Quebec City, May 31 – June 3, 2009) as well as complimentary membership to COACH for 2009.

# ALUMNI –


Amelie French

Andy French ('00) and wife Lise welcomed daughter Amelie Leah Marie French into their lives Feb 2, 2009 and report she is a tremendous joy at all times of the day and night.

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We are proud to announce that Brian Chou, one of our recent graduates of the School of Health Information Science, has gained recognition as a part of the (unofficial) UVic kickboxing team. Five UVic kickboxers won fights against international challengers at the kickboxing competition at the Victoria Dance Connection Studio on January 24th. Congratulations Brian!

\*\*\*\*\*


Catherine and Erik

Congratulations to Catherine Claiter ('00) and Erik Larsen on their September 6, 2008 wedding in Tofino. After a weekend celebration with close family and friends, they went to Kauai for their honeymoon.

# MISCELLANEOUS

## *Articles Published in Electronic Healthcare!*

Two recent graduates from our Masters Program, two current Graduate students and our very own Francis Lau, Associate Professor in the School of Health Information Science, have articles in the current "Electronic Healthcare" publication. Elizabeth Peloso, graduate of the Distributed Master Program, May 2007, has jointly written the article "Targeting Adoption, Training and Device Deployment Strategies. Francis Lau co-authored with Dennis Lee, graduate of May 2008, "An Exploratory Review of the National Health Service SNOMED CT to ICD-10 Cross Map". Alan Yung and Yan Yan Li, both current Distributed Masters students in our school, co-authored "A Literature Review of Developments in Health Information Banks".

## *eHealth Observatory to Monitor the Effects of Health Information System Deployment in Canada*

### Overview

The eHealth Observatory is headed by Dr. Francis Lau, Associate Professor in the School of Health Information Science, and Applied eHealth Chair, co-sponsored by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and Canada Health Infoway. The College of Pharmacists of British Columbia has also sponsored path-finding research focused on medication management (eDrug).

The aim the eHealth Observatory is to monitor the effects of HIS deployment in Canada and to serve as a laboratory where researchers employing innovative HIS methodologies can evaluate the effects of HIS through the entire system lifecycle from requirements, deployment, and use, to adaptation. This new knowledge will be shared to advance the field.

### Objectives

a) Apply rigorous models, methods and metrics to evaluate HIS adoption/use and impact;
b) Engage the eHealth community in knowledge translation (KT) to synthesize, share and use the knowledge gained; and
c) Build research capacity in HIS implementation and evaluation with education and training.

### Scope

a) HIS for medication management including their integration with electronic records in physician offices and healthcare organizations; and
b) Secondary use of HIS in performance management.

### Contexts

System – Electronic medication management, or eDrug, is a province wide initiative underway in BC to deploy a set of enhanced PharmaNet2 system and tools for physicians,

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pharmacists, other authorized health professionals and Ministry of Health with ePrescribing, eSpecial Authority, medication profile and point-of-care clinical/financial decision support features. Electronic records for physician offices is the new Physician Information Technology Office (PITO) initiative from BC Medical Association in collaboration with Ministry of Health to equip BC physicians with electronic medical records (EMR). Electronic records for healthcare organizations cover electronic health records (EHR) with data from multiple sources including admission/discharge, medication, laboratory, service and health assessment. Given these HIS are in different stages of the system lifecycle, multiple research methodologies will be used to evaluate their effects from initial requirements to deployment/use process to overall impact on patient care/outcome. The eHealth Observatory will draw on these new initiatives planned/ underway in BC as the means whereby innovative HIS methodologies can be refined/adapted and applied, then generalized as best practice benchmarks for the broader eHealth community.

Social/Healthcare Contexts – The "eHealth community" refers to decision makers, IT professionals and researchers involved with the deployment, use, evaluation and support of HIS in different care settings such as hospitals, health authorities and their jurisdictions, and in private practice such as community pharmacies, physician offices and primary care clinics. Decision makers include clinicians and managers responsible for care/service delivery, and administrators for policy development and implementation in the broader health system. To ensure relevance, primary care across home/community, acute/tertiary and continuing care settings will be the initial clinical domains addressed.

## Components

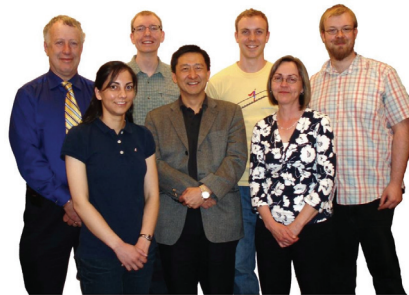*Research Innovation* – Three research activities with six projects will be undertaken by the eHealth Observatory:

a) Consolidate existing evidence base of HIS models, methods and metrics;
b) Apply rapid methods to evaluate HIS adoption/use and impact; and
c) Apply rapid methods to evaluate secondary use of HIS data in performance management.

*Mentoring/Education* – The overall approach is to create a nurturing HIS research and training environment using an experiential, collaborative, lifelong learning mindset. Two projects are planned:

a) Create eight learning modules with the new HIS knowledge;
b) Create on-line HIS implementation and evaluation learning modules; and
c) Formalize the modules as part of health informatics education/ training programs.

Linkage/Exchange – The eHealth Observatory will engage Infoway and jurisdictional partners in two integrated KT projects to create a pan-Canadian BE community KT forum, and to conduct KT workshops as part of this forum to co-produce and share ideas/knowledge.

For more information, please watch for our upcoming website.



**eHealth Observatory Research Team** From left to right: Jeff Barnett, Jes Bassi, Dr. Morgan Price, Dr. Francis Lau, Tyrone Austen, Theresa Hunter, Jesse Gardner (missing: Heidi Bell, Dr. Stan Bardal, Dennis Lee, Ju Yang, Dr. James Lai, Dr. Colin Partridge)

## *Integrating Electronic Health Records into Health Professional Education*

Over the past two years Dr. Andre Kushniruk and Dr. Elizabeth Borycki have worked on integrating electronic health records into the education of medical, nursing, allied health professional and health informatics students through support from the BC Ministry of Health and Hewlett Packard. This project has lead to the design and implementation of an electronic health record (EHR) Educational Portal, which houses a number of working electronic health record systems (including the Veteran Affair's Open Vista system) that can be remotely accessed by students from anywhere in the world over the WWW. Working with Brian Armstrong and a number of colleagues at major universities worldwide (including UBC, the University of Arizona and universities in Europe) the portal has been used to help bring electronic health records into health professional training. For example, in a pilot run of the approach last year all fourth year medical students in the province received education about EHRs when the portal was used to allow students to retrieve and work on hypothetical patient records using differing EHRs available on the portal. In the past year over 150 nursing students at the University of Victoria were exposed to EHRs in a course on trends in nursing and plans to extend use of the portal to interdisciplinary health education are currently underway. We also plan to continue our work to extend use of the portal to be integrated into courses in HINF and look forward to new collaborations aimed at increasing adoption of EHR through integration of this important technology with education.

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## ITCH 2009 Memories

Information Technology and Communications in Health (ITCH 2009), held February 19 – 22, 2009 at the Inn at Laurel Point, Victoria, BC, was a huge success. The conference attracted over 230 health professionals, clinicians, information technology experts, researchers and academics from across Canada and the US as well as Australia, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Sweden, Taiwan, Tasmania, and the UK.

The theme of the conference was "Revolutionizing Health Care with Informatics:  From Research to Practice."

To quote one delegate, "ITCH 2007 was memorable and this one beat that conference hands-down".

The School of Health Information Science was well represented by faculty, adjuncts, alumni and students. The keynote speakers were alumna Jennifer Zelmer ('93), Adjunct Associate Professor Don Juzwishin, and Dr. Michael Bainbridge from the UK's NHS.


Andre Kushniruk  and Mike Bainbridge

All three keynotes were presented with original paintings donated by HINF graduate student and sessional instructor, Alex Kuo. Alex painted the three Victoria scenes specifically for this event.

The conference started with a full day of pre-conference workshops followed by three days of papers presented in four tracks and two panels on the final day.  The final program can be viewed at http://itch.uvic.ca/documents/final.pdf


Grad Conn

Networking opportunities were abundant at this year's conference. The opening reception Thursday evening followed the student poster contest.  Delegates spent Friday evening at a reception at the Royal British Columbia Museum.  Saturday evening, following the Gala dinner, they were entertained by the after dinner speaker, Grad Conn, Senior Director, Global Consumer Health Strategy, Microsoft Corporation.

## Volunteers

This conference would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of the volunteers, in particular the members of the Steering Committee and the Scientific Program Committee.  Special thanks are extended to HINF alumnus Jim McDaniel (PhD ´94 ) who not only was co-program chair, but also edited the Proceedings.  For the first time in its 22 year history, the ITCH Proceedings were Medline indexed, and published by IOS Press.

HINF student, Noah Matsell (in picture), logged close to 200 hours assisting with the registration process and conference planning. Noah, along with a group of volunteers, staffed the registration desk for the three days of the conference.



## Student Poster Winner

There were  a record number of entries in the student poster section this year  with First Prize going to HINF MSc student, Jason Bond, for his poster "Evaluating Access to Health Care Services Using GIS: Why Should BC Health Policy Makers Care?" Jason received a cheque for $500 plus a complimentary full registration for the conference. Second and third prize winners also received complimentary registrations and cash prizes of $300 and $200 respectively.

## CIHI Student Sponsorship


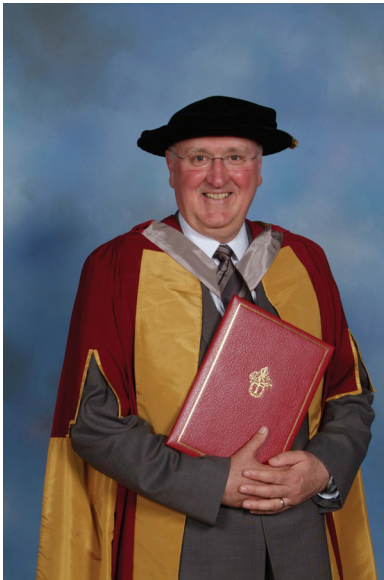Jill Strachan ('91) staffing the CIHI booth

The Canadian Institute for Health Information was a silver sponsor for the conference once again.  In addition, thanks to their generosity, 20 HINF students received a $50 rebate on their registration costs.

## Looking to the future

Looking to build on the success of ITCH 2007 and 2009, we are already starting to think about ITCH  2011. Please submit any suggestions to Leslie Wood, at lwood@uvic.ca

There are more pictures from the conference attached to the on-line version of this newsletter.

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# FACULTY



We are very proud to announce Denis Protti received an honorary doctorate from City University, London, UK on May 13th.

Professor Protti was the founding Director of the University of Victoria's School of Health Information Science in 1981, a position he relinquished in 1994. He was a founding member of COACH - Canada's Health Informatics organization. He served as its 2nd President and was granted lifetime member status in 1981. He was a founding member of the American Medical Informatics Association and in 1989 was one of the first non-Americans elected a fellow of the American College of Medical Informatics.

In 1998, Professor Protti was commissioned by the Her Majesty's Treasury to review the proposed National Health Service (NHS) Information Strategy for England prior to its release. He later developed the evaluation methodology that was used to monitor the local implementation of their national strategy – a process referred to as the Protti scores. Since then he has been invited annually by the Government and a variety of English organizations to conduct on-site reviews, give seminars, and comment on their progress with the Electronic Health Records journey.

## *New Faculty*

Alex Kuo has been hired as an assistant professor effective July 1st. Alex Mu-Hsing Kuo holds a PhD from the Department of Computer Science, University of Nottingham, UK and a MBA from the National Defense University of Taiwan. Before joining the School, Dr. Kuo was an assistant professor in the Department of Information Management at the Chaoyung University of Technology, Taiwan. Dr. Kuo's current research focuses are in health data interoperability, health database and data warehousing, data mining application in healthcare, and e-health.

Besides academic teaching and research Dr. Kuo is also a painting artist. He paints watercolour, acrylic, and traditional Chinese paintings. His paintings are colorful, vivid and realistic. He received many painting awards in Taiwan. Recently, he exhibited more than 30 paintings at home in the Gordon Head Studio Tour, Victoria.

## *Francis Lau a grandfather*



Francis and Helena Lau became first time grandparents on March 6 with the arrival of baby girl Sydney Marsh (above). The proud grandparents brought the new baby into the office for viewing in May.
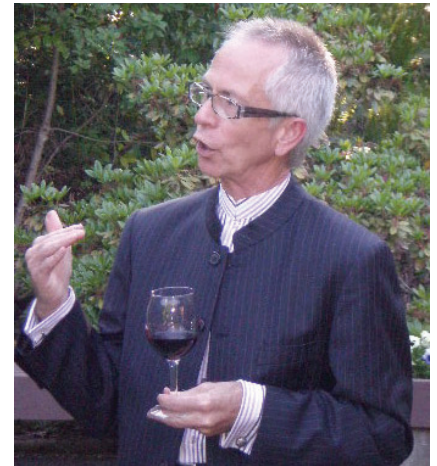
# GRADUATE STUDENTS



Graduate secretary, Shawna McNabb (centre) surrounded by the graduate students.

Graduate students from the distributed and on-campus programs are gathering on-campus for the annual May Workshop May 21 to June 2 this year. The school is looking forward to welcoming back familiar faces and meeting some of our distributed stream students for the first time.

We also wish to welcome two new MSc students in May -- Shelley Dosso (distributed) and Paulette Reid (on-campus)



Rob Tornack

In addition to the May workshop, two new graduate level courses will be offered this summer. "Deriving Value from Large Health Related Databases" is being taught by Larry Frisch. "Knowledge Management in Health Care" is being taught by Rob Tornack. Alumni will remember Rob as being the instructor for HINF 340 for many years. Rob has recently returned from a three year stint in Hong Kong.

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