

## Tye Landels awarded one of 10 prestigious 3M student fellowships



*Photo Credit: Suzanne Ahearne*

Tye Landels (English) is one of 10 undergraduate students across Canada receiving a 3M National Student Fellowship this year, worth \$5,000. On June 18, the third-year UVic honours student will journey to Kingston, Ontario, to receive the prestigious award (modelled after the long-standing 3M National Teaching Fellowships for university professors) at an official ceremony at Queen's University as part of an annual national teaching-and-learning conference.

As current president of the UVic English Students' Association (ESA), Landels spearheaded change in the first weeks of his tenure, including galvanizing the membership to change the name from the ELITists to its current, more democratic name. He also made sure the department's library was open to all English department students, not just those in the honours program.

As a research assistant for UVic's [Map of Early Modern London](#) (MoEML), he set up encoding practices and standards for the constantly evolving digital encyclopedia.

As someone born with visual and hearing impairments, Landels has challenged preconceptions (including his own) about disability and disability culture; has helped organizations and offices such as [CanAssist](#) and the [Canadian National Institute for the Blind](#); and has developed and advised on note-taking programs, academic policies and the use of audio-visual technology in the classroom.

Here are some excerpts from Tara Sharpe's chat with Tye recently for the April 8th printing of *The Ring*:

I went to the University of Waterloo in September 2010 for my first year of post-secondary education. It was a 'misadventure.' I was given the usual 'scare line' about there being no jobs in the humanities. So I bought into it and would've left there with a professional [urban planning] designation. I quickly realized I was in the wrong discipline altogether. I returned home to Victoria and enrolled in Spring 2012 classes: English, philosophy and history in art. It was remarkable – probably the best four months of my life, academically and socially. This whole world of scholarship and knowledge opened up to me. The so-called 'attack on the humanities' is something that absolutely undermines the most important things that make us human, make our cultures interesting and what has led to the world as it is. If you want to make changes to the institutions and ideologies that inform our world, humanities is one of the avenues to do this.

The classroom has yet to become a fully accessible, egalitarian and safe learning environment for many underprivileged students. This is true not only for students with disabilities, but also for students who are 'othered' by their sexual orientation, gender, race, age or other unconforming positions from a very restrictive norm. Students and instructors must work together to challenge these prevailing norms and biases through affirmative programs, services, technology and education.

My advice to future generations is:

Do the very thing that makes you the most fully realized person you can be.

We need to refocus the discussion on what undergraduate students can do. And my answer is: 'A lot!'