



# Multiplicity

A bi-annual newsletter from the Diversity Advisor,  
Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost

Spring/Summer 2009



University  
of Victoria

Andrew Carnegie is a man who, after having made his fortune in business, turned his interests to education. He founded the Carnegie Corporation in New York, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He was particularly supportive of the self-education of the common person and, to that end, funded the creation of 2,509 public libraries around the world, including the one in Victoria. "Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision, the ability to direct individual accomplishment toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results," Carnegie said.

In difficult times the first casualties are often diversity and equity, yet I am inspired by Carnegie's words. At UVic, diversity and equity have grown out of our shared vision and by working together we can defy the usual outcomes to keep these concepts vibrant and growing.

In this time when resources are diminishing, I would like to pose a multi-faceted challenge to the UVic community. How do we support the journeys of those around us while pursuing our own? How can we use networking to ignite our own passions and the work we do? How can we continue to support each other when resources are tight and times are competitive? How can we continue to move our objectives on diversity and equity forward on our campus?

I invite you to share your vision so that, together, we can continue to build capacity to attain uncommon results.

Grace Wong Sneddon  
Diversity Advisor to the Provost

## Contact Us

Please send your articles, photos, art or feedback about how *Multiplicity* can better serve you to [multi@uvic.ca](mailto:multi@uvic.ca) or [gwongsne@uvic.ca](mailto:gwongsne@uvic.ca).

For more information check out the diversity website at <http://web/uvic.ca/vpac/diversity/>.



## Braille is beautiful! An invitation to Louis Braille's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday

By Frederick Driver | UVic Libraries

January 2009 was the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Louis Braille's birth. Louis, who was blind, developed an efficient system of raised dots for reading and writing. It revolutionized education and independence for blind people and is now in use across the world.

Braille is not a specialized or esoteric skill. The ability to read and write Braille is to the blind what print is to the sighted—basic literacy. Sadly, the emphasis on Braille in education has declined in recent years. Students with

## A First Peoples House at UVic

By Roger John | Indigenous Advisor, Human and Social Development

K'alwhalahap/Hello to all of you,

My St'at'imc name is Tlalhelem ("becoming grizzly") and I am Tsalashmec of the St'at'imc Nation. My English name is Roger John and I am the Indigenous Advisor for the Faculty of Human and Social Development. I acknowledge the territory of the Coast and Straits Salish peoples whose land I have lived and worked on now for 20 years.

There is a new building coming into being in the heart of the UVic campus. This building will be the intellectual, social, spiritual and physical centre for Indigenous students, staff, faculty and community members at the University of Victoria. The architect selected to design First Peoples House, Alfred Waugh of Alfred Waugh Architect in Vancouver, is Chipweyan (Fond du lac Band) and was raised in Yellowknife, NWT. He employs three Aboriginal architects in his firm, who specialize in incorporating traditional design practices with the latest sustainable technology to create beautiful and functional buildings that are culturally respectful.

The design for the 12,160-square foot First Peoples House is based on research on pre-contact longhouses in Coast Salish territory. The design is intended to reflect a blending of traditional Coast/Straits Salish bighouse design and contemporary, sustainable practices. As a result, the house has strong Salish roots as well as LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design green building rating system). An interesting feature of the design is the use of rammed earth to pay respect to the pithouses of Interior Salish and other plateau peoples.

The primary objective of First Peoples House is to serve students by providing a space to gather, conduct ceremonies, welcome Indigenous community members and facilitate access to services, faculty and staff.



When the building opens its doors in welcome in the summer of 2009, it will create a sense of Indigenous space at the heart of the campus. As requested by Indigenous community leaders, the House will be open to all – to act as both a place of strength for Indigenous peoples and a space for sharing with non-Indigenous peoples. The building will serve as a reminder of the past and continued presence of Coast/Straits Salish peoples on the land where UVic is built.

Website: [web.uvic.ca/fphouse](http://web.uvic.ca/fphouse)

some residual vision are often encouraged to focus on their weakest sense, struggling at a disadvantage, rather than acquiring Braille literacy, which might help them succeed. The National Federation of the Blind, the most influential organization of blind people in the world, says that "only 10 per cent of blind children are learning to read Braille in school. This continues despite the fact that studies have shown that 80 per cent of all employed blind people read and write Braille fluently." These studies reinforce what the NFB has been advocating for years: Braille literacy is the key to employment and full participation in society.

Technologies such as computer speech and talking books, while useful, are not substitutes for literacy. Imagine the uproar if the sighted were told they didn't need to learn to read and write—that speaking and listening were good enough. The blind have as much right to literacy as the sighted. It is imperative that all legally blind citizens have the opportunity to master Braille.

Louis Braille's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday is a global celebration of literacy. Everyone is invited to the Canadian Federation of the Blind convention, *Louis Braille: From Literacy to Liberty – a Louis Braille Birthday Bash*, May 1-3 in Victoria. Check the website for details at [www.cfb.ca](http://www.cfb.ca).

## A new study researches Indigenous student participation in co-operative education

By Joy Poliquin | Co-operative Education



UVic's Indigenous student population is growing every year, thanks to innovative programs, a supportive environment and new resources like the soon-to-be-completed First Peoples House. So it may come as a surprise that one of UVic's academic pillars—the Co-operative Education Program—has seen very low participation from Indigenous students.

Enter Dave Nagel, a graduate student pursuing his MA in leadership studies. In the fall of 2008, Dave was hired to undertake a joint research study for the Director's Office of Co-operative Education and the Office of Indigenous Affairs (INAF). His goal? To examine the factors that encourage or dissuade Indigenous students from joining UVic Co-op.

"It's a very exciting project," says Dave, who spent the fall consulting with self-identified Indigenous students as well as representatives from INAF, UVic Co-op and other departments and services on campus. "This is the first partnership of its kind

between INAF and Co-op, and it's already generated some promising ideas. I'm really interested in the community focus of the research, and its potential to strengthen 'true partnerships' between the university and Aboriginal students and communities."

According to Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi, director of UVic's Office of Indigenous Affairs, "the far reaching benefits of the co-op program are immense. We want to ensure that Indigenous students' work placements play a key role in their future career choices and give them experiences that help them contribute to the long-term development needs in their communities." Norah McRae, executive director of UVic's Co-operative Education Program, is equally enthused about the project's implications for future co-op development. "This is a dynamic project," she says. "The outcome of Dave's research will help guide our planning as we work to better support this important student group."

To date, Dave has worked with the Office of Research Services' Human Research Ethics Board to create a survey that will be handed out to Aboriginal students who have participated in UVic Co-op, as well as students who have not. Once the data is compiled, he'll look for trends and write a report that will outline ways to enhance Indigenous student access to and participation in co-operative education. The project is expected to wrap up in early 2009.

"My hope is that this research will represent Aboriginal perspectives regarding co-operative education in an honest and respectful manner," he says.



## LE,NONET preliminary research results signal success

By Yvonne Rondeau | LE,NONET Project Manager

The LE,NONET Research Project was developed by the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation in partnership with the University of Victoria to pilot and evaluate a series of programs to support the success, retention and graduation rates of Aboriginal students at UVic. The goals of the project were to:

- change the reality of the experience of Aboriginal students attending UVic to a more visibly positive one, and
- increase accessibility to the university through an effective and readily available program of support services that will enhance student success.

Between August 2005 and December 2007, 139 Aboriginal (Status/Non-Status First Nation, Inuit and Métis) students participated in one or more LE,NONET program. The five student-focused components include bursaries and emergency relief funds, a preparation seminar (with enrollment limited to Aboriginal students), research apprenticeships, community internships and peer-to-peer mentoring.

During the winter of 2007, short-term and interim impacts of the programs were assessed through interviews and questionnaires conducted with student participants. The majority of participants interviewed said that their participation in LE,NONET programs contributed significantly to their success at UVic. 77 per cent of participants indicated that their participation contributed to the development of their sense of self as an Aboriginal person, and 71 per cent said LE,NONET contributed to their understanding of Aboriginal culture and traditions. In addition, 87 per cent agreed that their participation in the programs contributed to their sense of connection to the on-campus Aboriginal community.

Preliminary quantitative research comparing term to term retention and graduation rates of LE,NONET participants to a historical cohort of Aboriginal students who attended UVic between 2000 and 2005 indicates that LE,NONET participants are somewhat less likely to withdraw from school and are more likely to continue with classes.

The LE,NONET office has evolved over the last three and a half years to become a central location for Aboriginal students to meet together, and a starting place for students seeking information about other resources and support. The LE,NONET Project concludes in July 2009 with plans to sustain the programs. LE,NONET has provided access for Aboriginal students to a welcoming space and great opportunities designed to support their individual successes at UVic.

For more information, please visit the website:  
<http://web.uvic.ca/lenonet/home.html>



## African Partnerships Network at UVic

By Moussa Magassa | Equity and Human Rights

The African Partnerships Network (APN) is a forum of university faculty and staff who are actively involved in projects and organizations in Africa or have strong academic interests in African issues through their research or teaching. APN provides an opportunity for these scholars and staff to create synergies and develop new programs with an African focus at UVic. The network also coordinates and facilitates a monthly guest speaker series featuring practitioners and experts in the fields of human rights in Africa, international development and capacity-building.

The network's initiatives include the credit course Interdisciplinary perspectives on Sub-Saharan Africa (CYC 360/HSD460). This 1.5-unit course brings together a panel of 12 instructors plus international guests

to teach the different modules of the course on issues as diverse as paleo-anthropology and HIV/AIDS, African art and children's well-being, the private sector in Africa and the exploration of traditional African conflict resolution approaches.

On March 19, the African Partnerships Network marked its first anniversary with an event featuring high-profile African performers at Vertigo in the Student Union Building. The event raised awareness about the Network and connected students, staff and community members to celebrate Africa and Black History Month.

For more information, please contact Moussa Magassa at [mmagassa@uvic.ca](mailto:mmagassa@uvic.ca).

## World University Service of Canada (WUSC)

By Kate Dearden



Every year UVic's World University Service of Canada (WUSC) Committee sponsors three international students from refugee camps to study at UVic. The Student Refugee Program (SRP) supports these students to live and study at UVic for one year.

The students who are accepted into SRP undergo life-changing experiences when they come to Canada to attend a university. Many of them have grown up in refugee camps, living

and studying under difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions.

Students who are selected into the highly competitive and academically rigorous program receive funding to cover the cost of accommodations, tuition, books and other living expenses for one year. UVic's WUSC Committee also provides logistical and community support to the sponsored students. Through social events, tutoring assistance, peer support

and more, the committee helps the students establish social and academic networks. Although the SRP only covers living expenses for one year, the students can apply for student loans and/or Uvic bursaries to help them continue their studies.

UVic's WUSC Student Refugee Program is funded by the university, donations and undergraduate and graduate student fees. WUSC is a national organization with 70 local committees on college and university campuses across Canada. WUSC believes that education is a human right and works to ensure that underprivileged students can pursue their post-secondary studies in Canada. Over 1000 students have studied in Canada in the Student Refugee Program since 1978.

For more information or to find out how you can get involved, email [wusc@gmail.com](mailto:wusc@gmail.com).

## Human Rights Volunteer Program

By Moussa Maqassa | Equity and Human Rights

A new initiative, the Human Rights Volunteer Program (HRVP), is currently creating awareness about human rights and equity issues on the UVic campus. Launched in December 2008 by the Equity and Human Rights office (EQHR), the program aims to involve the wider community in promoting a more inclusive, respectful and welcoming environment at UVic.

The goal of the HRVP program is to provide educational workshops and resources about social justice and human rights issues to campus community members who participate as volunteers. Volunteers may choose to help create educational campaigns, assist with projects already underway or develop new initiatives according to their interests.

For more information and to find out about volunteering, visit <http://web.uvic.ca/eqhr/volunteer/hrvp.htm> or contact the Equity and Human Rights office at 250-721-8488.

“ Human rights are important, but often these ‘rights’ are not universally enjoyed; sometimes they are abused or taken for granted. Programs like this get me to think about what my own views are, and why it is that other people have different ways of knowing, being, thinking—and it’s all okay. ”

## Critical Conversations Continue

By Grace Wong Sneddon | Diversity Advisor to the Provost

The *Indigenous and Diversity Research Forum: Critical Conversations Continue* on February 12- 13, 2009 was an opportunity for almost 200 presenters and participants to share and to hear diverse research, acknowledge faculty working with diverse scholarship and to have critical conversations about key areas of diversity, equity and Indigenous knowledge.

The goal of the conference was to bring a more integrative approach to diversity and Indigenous research and practice. We also wanted to bring greater awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion, to challenge the categories themselves and to encourage an analysis of the interrelationships. One of the biggest challenges of diversity and

equity work is getting people to acknowledge their locations within positions of privilege and oppression and to recognize that we are all implicated in the relationships of power based on the different dimensions of equity.

The conference over the span of two exciting days provided a space for community members to be included in critical conversations. It was incredibly exciting to challenge and be challenged in collegial and academic debate.

For photos and video proceedings of the forum, visit <http://web.uvic.ca/vpac/diversity/criticalconversations2009.html>.

## Women's entrepreneurship as a force of change

By Aegean Leung | PhD, Faculty of Business

Among the world's developed nations, Japan ranks the lowest in the "gender empowerment measure" compiled by the United Nations Development Program (2006). This is an indication of extremely unequal opportunities for career advancement between men and women. Even though women make up nearly half of Japan's work force, only one per cent have attained managerial positions, according to 2005 statistics from the International Labour Organization.

However, if one looks at entrepreneurial activities pursued by men and women in Japan, it is apparent that there is equality, or even a slight advantage for women. Data released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in its Factbook shows that as of 2005, the percentage of self-employed women surpassed that of men, if only by a few decimal points (15 per cent women versus 14.6 per cent men). Mass media in

and outside of Japan are reporting an increasing frequency of success stories about Japanese women entrepreneurs.

In a country where social and cultural norms do not seem to favour entrepreneurship, and where women's roles are considered primarily at home rather than in business, such a phenomenon has significant implications. A new generation of highly educated Japanese women is making impressive progress in crafting successful careers outside the dominant corporate environment by becoming entrepreneurs. More remarkably, many do so with a strong identification with their gender roles.

Leveraging their roles as nurturers and going after untapped opportunities in the service sector, they use their intimate knowledge of consumption preferences (as they are the purse string holders and make most of the purchase decisions within

## A Taste of Thailand in the SUB

By Pat Chirapant

Following the success of last year's inaugural Thai Night, UVic's Thai Culture Club recently hosted a second fundraiser to promote Thai culture and raise money for charities in Thailand. On March 7, Vertigo in the Student Union Building was filled with people tasting exotic Thai dishes and enjoying live entertainment.

Proceeds from this year's event will be donated directly to HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Chaipattana Foundation. The foundation plays a key role in the development of Thailand's rural areas with an emphasis on sustainability. Last year's Thai Night raised \$3,197 to help build a roof for Khanongpha Primary School in Pakchong, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

Thai Night is sponsored by the Royal Thai Consulate in Vancouver, the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives, UVic's Thai Culture Club, the Diversity Advisor to the Provost, Equity and Human Rights and many Thai restaurants in Victoria.

the family) to identify new product and service opportunities. In other words, they are crafting their niches by being women rather than by trying to be the "equals" of men. Such "woman power" may just be the force to bring about change to the restrictive institutional environment for career women in corporate Japan.



## UVic Campus Community Gardens

By Kate Dearden



Many of us who live and work in the city are disconnected from the growing, harvesting and processing of the food we consume on a daily basis. UVic's Campus Community Gardens aims to provide the space, know-how and community support necessary to help anyone grow their own food.

Located on Mackenzie Avenue next to the Technology Enterprise Facility (TEF) and parking lot 7, the UVic Campus Community Gardens manages 45 individual 8 by 15 foot garden plots. The Gardens Club is run by volunteers and is supported by the UVSS Clubs and Course Unions, UVic Facilities Management and the UVic Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability.

The Gardens Club organizes frequent educational workshops, work parties and social events including canning and composting workshops, potlucks, fresh harvest vegetable stands and open food-sharing events.

"Traditionally the practice of food growth, preparation and consuming is the primary means of gathering and sharing the human condition. The Gardens Club seeks to return to these roots of our inherent community engagement, the practice of collective governance and cooperation, the creation and sharing of a communal space, and the pertinent issue of food

security," says Jesse Howardson, the group's Vice President. "It is in places such as the Gardens that we learn to communicate effectively with each other, share ideas and knowledge through experience, and increase our general social capital through getting dirty and having fun."

Currently the Gardens Club is working with the UVic Sustainability Project (UVSP) and Common Energy's Food Working Group to create a strong and supportive network of food security groups on campus.

Work parties take place every Friday from 3–5 p.m. and everyone is welcome to come and join! For more information, check out the website at [http://web.uvic.ca/~ccgarden/?page\\_id=88](http://web.uvic.ca/~ccgarden/?page_id=88).



### Spotlight on diversity

*Share a way to practice inclusion at UVic as an individual, within your department or as an institution.*

Suggestions or ideas?

Please send all comments to [multi@uvic.ca](mailto:multi@uvic.ca).



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