

# UBC REPORTS

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## Robo-Fly

*The future of robots is positively buggy.*

BY MICHELLE COOK

For all those who've ever wanted to be a fly on the wall, scientists John Madden and Joseph Yan are working to build low-cost, insect-like robots capable of flying on their own to do the eavesdropping for you.

The electrical and computer engineering professors paired up earlier this year for a pilot project to study the feasibility of using electroactive polymers – high-tech plastics that can mimic human muscle – in designing robots.

The robosect they envision would resemble a dragonfly in size and shape, sport two sets of wings, weigh less than a dime and cost about \$1 in materials to make. Equipped with its own onboard power source and a microconductor for a brain, it could dart into areas devastated by earthquake to search for survivors, glide behind enemy lines to do surveillance work, or conduct power line and other urban inspections. Or it could simply buzz around the backyard entertaining the kids.

If it all sounds too sci-fi, Madden and Yan say many of the technological tools and materials needed to build robosects already exist. Advanced battery and microtransmitter technologies, for example, can provide the means to power up and communicate with such a machine. Researchers in California have gotten a larger-scale, bird-like robot aloft and, in his previous work at the University of California, Berkeley, Yan proved

*continued on page 11*



*Is it a bird? A plane? Electrical and computer engineering professors Joseph Yan (left) and John Madden are designing a dragonfly-like robot capable of autonomous flight.*



## University Teaching, University Research: Conflict and Co-operation

Two senior UBC academics look for balance. BY CRISTINA CALBOREANU



The relationship between teaching and research in modern Canadian universities is a complicated one.

While some analysts claim that the two successfully reinforce each other for the benefit of students, others argue that, in fact, research and teaching compete for prestige and resources.

Over the last decades, Canadian universities have invested ever-larger amounts of financial and human resources in the development of a strong research base. Currently, university research in Canada represents direct investments estimated at \$6.8 billion annually and involves more than 100,000 faculty, technicians, and students. Through its various funding bodies, the federal government invests over \$1.3 billion annually in university research.

Meanwhile, funding for teaching and basic infrastructure has been cut back by provincial governments. Issues such as class sizes and the tenured faculty/student ratio are constantly plaguing universities, and full-time enrolment is expected to increase 20 to 30 per cent by 2011.

UBC Reports invited two senior UBC academics to discuss the relationship between research and teaching.

### Promoting Teaching, Promoting Teachers page 8

Donald Brooks (top left) is a professor of pathology and laboratory medicine and chemistry. An alumnus who joined UBC in 1974, he was appointed Associate Vice-President, Research in July 2001. He plays a leading role in building UBC's research capacity and competitiveness by assisting faculty to take full advantage of new funding initiatives and by promoting and co-ordinating interdisciplinary research.

Allan Tupper (top right) is a professor of political science. He was appointed Associate Vice-President, Government Relations in February 2002. His research interests are in the areas of Canadian politics, public management and public policy, as well as North American higher education, the Supreme Court of Canada and Canadian provincial politics. He is the author, with Tom Pocklington, of *No Place to Learn: Why Universities Aren't Working* (published by UBC Press), a poignant critique of the structure and functioning of modern Canadian universities.

*Teaching vs. research: what do you think is a university's primary function?*

**Don Brooks** > I think it depends on what kind of university you're talking about: are you talking about UBC, or are you talking about a university? Universities are of various sorts, there are some universities that are clearly focused on undergraduate teaching, that don't have a significant graduate program; then you come to a place like UBC, research-intensive in all of the faculties, across all the disciplines. We choose to do research, we attract good faculty but we want people who have a good research background as well as the potential for strong teaching, so I don't think UBC has one primary function. I think we have the functions of teaching and doing research, and I don't think they are very different.

**Allan Tupper** > I think universities are unique because they are society's principal institutions for the analysis of ideas. No other institution in modern society is exclusively

*continued on page 7*

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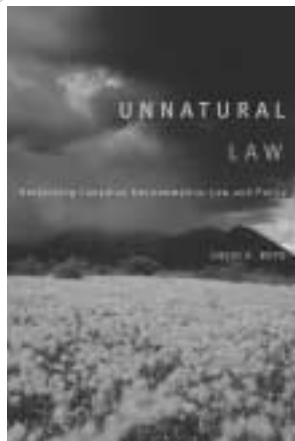
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with a foreword by Thomas R. Berger

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— Dr. David Suzuki, Chair of the David Suzuki Foundation

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12:30 – 2:00 PM**



## IN THE NEWS

Highlights of UBC Media Coverage in August 2003. COMPILED BY BRIAN LIN

### Tuition Keeps Rising

A recently released Statistics Canada report shows undergraduate students will pay on average 7.4 per cent more in tuition fees, the biggest increase in four years. This year, the cost of tuition in B.C. will rise 30 per cent on the heels of a similar increase last year.

UBC Vice-President **Brian Sullivan** told *The Globe and Mail* that schools in the province have just been playing a game of catch-up to the rest of the country in order to provide increased capacity and quality education to its students.

While acknowledging that paying these extra fees has been challenging for students, Sullivan said the university has made available more financial assistance and tried to expand employment opportunities on campus.

### Freeze

UBC law and sociology professor **Richard Ericson** told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that many of the new security guards are being hired to do "what public police used to do, public-order policing on the street itself."

"Although they're only making citizen's arrests, they are indeed making the arrests. They may give people their rights in turning them over to police, and because they made the observation, they actually write out reports for prosecutors. The public police only come in after the fact to detain or release the people officially and then process them further from there."

Last year, California licensed 15,450 new security officers, for a total of 185,000. Of that number, an estimated 14,000 are licensed to carry guns.

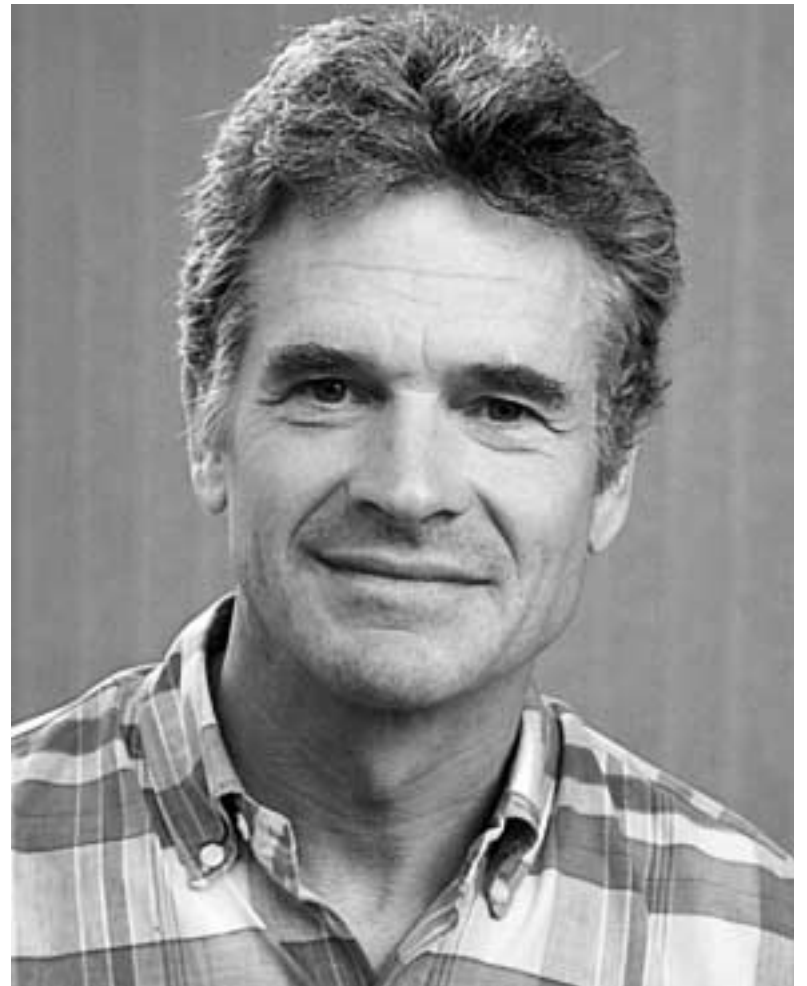
### Caution on New Drug

Commenting on Seasonale, a new drug designed to reduce the number of menstrual cycles a woman undergoes from 13 a year to four, UBC endocrinology researcher **Christine Hitchcock** told *The Economist* that there isn't enough research to show the long-term effects of the extended use of oral contraceptives on the breast.

Hitchcock is alarmed that some people talk about Seasonale in the same way they might talk about taking a daily vitamin pill.

### Animal Welfare Leap

UBC animal behaviour and welfare professor **David Fraser** told *USA*



UBC VP Students, Brian Sullivan, says more financial assistance is available to help students cope with increased tuition.

Today that the period from 1999 to 2002 was a "watershed" in animal welfare worldwide.

Over the past five years, the push for more humane care is coming from companies with the economic clout to make producers sit up and take notice – supermarkets and fast food restaurants, including the world's most famous purveyor of beef, McDonald's.

"It was as if a crucial mass had been reached and animal welfare and assurance programs became the thing to do," Fraser said.

### Women Run Business Like Men

UBC organizational behaviour professor **Nancy Langton** told the *National Post* that there is no evidence women run businesses any differently than men do.

Since 1995, Langton and her colleagues have tracked the owners of 229 small businesses in Vancouver, 141 of which were owned by men and 88 owned by women.

"Women are saying they're using a more collaborative style," said Langton. "They make it seem like it's run in a more female way,

but men and women are doing it the same way."

Langton said the results should reassure banks that might be hesitant to lend money to women, or companies that might waver in choosing a woman for a top managerial role.

### Forest Fire Dissected

UBC forest sciences professor **Michael Feller** told the *Vancouver Sun* that a forest fire, at its ferocious worst, can reach temperatures as high as 800 degrees Celsius and feed voraciously on fuel, oxygen and heat.

A forest fire needs heat, wind and an unstable atmosphere to get going, exactly the conditions currently present in much of southern B.C., said Feller.

Despite the terror they cause in people, fires are not only natural to B.C.'s forest, they're essential for the survival of many of its species. "Whenever there's a fire close to houses and cities, there's a lot of hype and media coverage. But when you look at the figures and compare them to historical figures, we haven't had a particularly heavy fire season." □

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# Bike Hub Re-born in SUB

*Bike Kitchen cooking with consolidated programs.* BY MICHELLE COOK

The university has approved \$137,500 in funding for the Bike Co-op to set up a full-service facility in the Student Union Building (SUB) for UBC's two-wheeled commuters.

The funds, matched by the Alma Mater Society, will be used to renovate an undeveloped space in the SUB basement adjacent to the Co-op's retail outlet, the Bike Kitchen. The new Bike Hub will allow the Co-op to consolidate its programs and activities in one location for the first time since the club was formed in 1998.

"There are 3,000 bike trips made daily to campus," says Geoff Atkins, associate vice-president of Land and Building Services. "We wanted to ensure that since we're leading North American campuses in sustainability, and in initiatives like U-Pass and the TREK Program, that we keep the momentum going for all the great things the Bike Co-op has been doing."

He adds that the Bike Co-op is an integral part of the university's strategy to move people out of single occupant vehicles.

The university will fund the Hub renovations through the UBC TREK Program, which promotes sustainable transportation alternatives on campus, and the new Sustainability Co-ordinator Disbursement Fund (see sidebar).

Bike Co-op president Melissa Niemeyer says the amount of money the university is providing is unprecedented for a bike project, and has helped the club realize its long-term goal of finding a prominent location on campus.

"The SUB is really the best place we could be in the long run," Niemeyer said. "We've been featured three times in the *Maclean's* [magazine] university rankings issue and we get calls from around the world asking for advice on setting up a bike co-op, but the feeling is that we're still not well known on campus."

"I'm excited that now more people will see us and become interested in getting involved."

In addition to repairing and selling bikes and selling new

and used parts at the Bike Kitchen, the Co-op operates a build-a-bike program and the campus fleet of purple and yellow loaner bikes. It has been looking for new space for the Bike Hub since learning, last January, that Land and Building Services needed

for bike commuters. Until renovations are complete, the Co-op will operate out of the Bike Kitchen, a temporary office in the SUB and a fenced-off area near Gage Towers. Some existing programs will be put on hold until the new space is ready. □

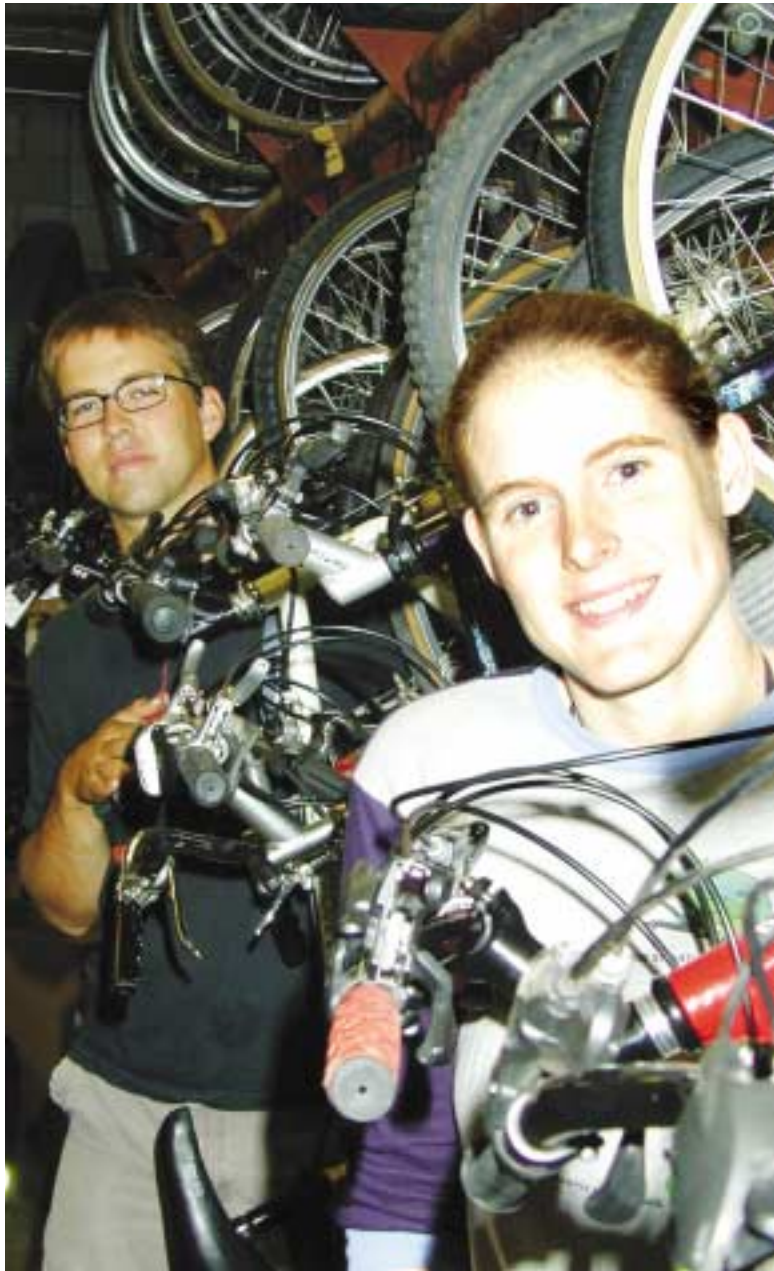


PHOTO: MICHELLE COOK

*Bike Co-op past president Jesse Jackson (left) and current president Melissa Niemeyer say the SUB is the best place for the new Bike Hub.*

to demolish the shed it had been using behind the MacMillan Building to make room for additional campus parking.

When it opens in January 2004, the 234-square-metre facility is expected to offer a range of end-of-trip services

## Hydro Savings Power Programs

They turned off lights and encouraged their colleagues to use less paper in the photocopier and the efforts of UBC's 125 Sustainability Co-ordinators (SCs) saved the university \$75,000 worth of electricity reductions in 2001.

This year, the Sustainability Office recycled those savings into the Sustainability Co-ordinator Disbursement Fund to increase sustainability in departments with SCs and invited coordinators and their colleagues to submit proposals for new projects. The SCs were then asked to vote on which projects to fund.

In addition to putting \$25,000 toward the Bike Co-op's new Hub in the SUB, other projects funded this year include: a program to encourage labs to exchange their highly toxic mercury thermometers for non-mercury ones; a hazardous waste minimization project and initiatives to install a wood-fired heat/hot water system at the Malcolm Knapp Research Forest, and introducing "floating" SCs to serve several departments. □

The Iona Building at Vancouver School of Theology on the UBC campus. Photo: Perry Danforth

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## Annual General Meeting

Tuesday, October 28 12:15 – 1 p.m.

The 2003 AGM will be held at UBC at Robson Square, celebrating UBC's accomplishments of the past year.

**Alexandre (Sacha) Trudeau**, documentary filmmaker and member of the board of directors for the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, will be the guest speaker.

**The entire proceedings will be Webcast – all students, faculty and staff are invited to view and participate in the event.**

There will be an opportunity to submit questions to the speakers and university administration via the Webcast.

**Link to the Webcast from 12 noon onward on October 28 at [www.ubc.ca](http://www.ubc.ca)**





### University Boulevard Draft Neighbourhood Plan & UBC Campus Transit Plan

Following the June 2003 Open Houses and a Campus and Community Public Meeting, consultation will continue September 2-15, 2003 regarding the University Boulevard *Draft* Neighbourhood Plan and the preferred transit service concept.

**PLEASE JOIN US**

Attend the following Open Houses (Sep 2-10) and Campus and Community Public Meeting (Sep 15) and give us your feedback.

**OPEN HOUSES**

Come see us in our TENT in the SUB PLAZA beside the Goddess of Democracy (located south of the Student Union Building at 6138 Student Union Boulevard).

Tuesday	September 2:	10 am to 3 pm
Thursday	September 4:	2 pm to 7 pm
Monday	September 8:	2 pm to 7 pm
Wednesday	September 10:	10 am to 3 pm

**SPECIAL MEETINGS (September 2-15, 2003)**

Your group can request a special meeting from September 2-15 by contacting the University Town inquiry line at 604.822.6400 or by emailing [info.universitytown@ubc.ca](mailto:info.universitytown@ubc.ca)

**PUBLIC MEETING**

Monday, September 15 @ 7:00 pm in the Asian Centre Auditorium, 1871 West Mall. Parking is available in the adjacent Fraser Parkade.

**DIRECTIONS**

For a map showing the location of the SUB Plaza or the Asian Centre go to: [www.planning.ubc.ca/wayfinding/Finding/dbase.html](http://www.planning.ubc.ca/wayfinding/Finding/dbase.html) and enter "Student Union Building" or "Asian Centre" or call 604.822.6400 for further information.

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**HOW CAMPUS & COMMUNITY FEEDBACK WILL BE USED**

Feedback gathered through this consultation will be reported to the UBC Board of Governors in October 2003.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Linda Moore  
Associate Director, External Affairs (University Town)  
Tel: 604.822.6400  
Fax: 604.822.8102  
or [info.universitytown@ubc.ca](mailto:info.universitytown@ubc.ca)



UNIVERSITY TOWN

## First ComPASS Study Begins

BY BRIAN LIN

For the first time in Canada, researchers will study if a community transportation pass will reduce traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Led by UBC's TREK Program Centre and funded in part by a \$100,000 research grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the current phase of the pilot project will give 14 families in the UBC neighbourhood a free community transportation pass for two months this fall.

The ComPASS will be modelled after the student U-Pass, approved by a student referendum with the largest voter turn-out in UBC's history. Starting this month, U-Pass gives students access to transit across three zones and costs \$20 per month, less than one-third of a one-zone bus pass.

The families' experiences will be documented by video and an in-depth study will determine whether access to low transit fares, car-sharing, bicycle programs and a guaranteed emergency ride home will increase transit use, says TREK Director Gord Lovegrove.

A preliminary study last fall surveyed 250 families in the Vancouver West Side. Half the families then received a free bus pass and researchers recorded changes in their transportation use.

"We chose this neighbourhood because we know it is already well-served by public transit," explains Lovegrove. "A main component of any community transportation pass program is

reliable transit service."

Later this year, a random survey of 1,000 families in the GVRD will help determine the overall response to such a program.

"TransLink and the City of Vancouver are both partners in this project," says Lovegrove. "The results of all three phases of this project will be used in future discussions with TransLink and other community partners, such as Co-operative Auto Network, about the possibility of providing community transportation passes to the entire GVRD area." □

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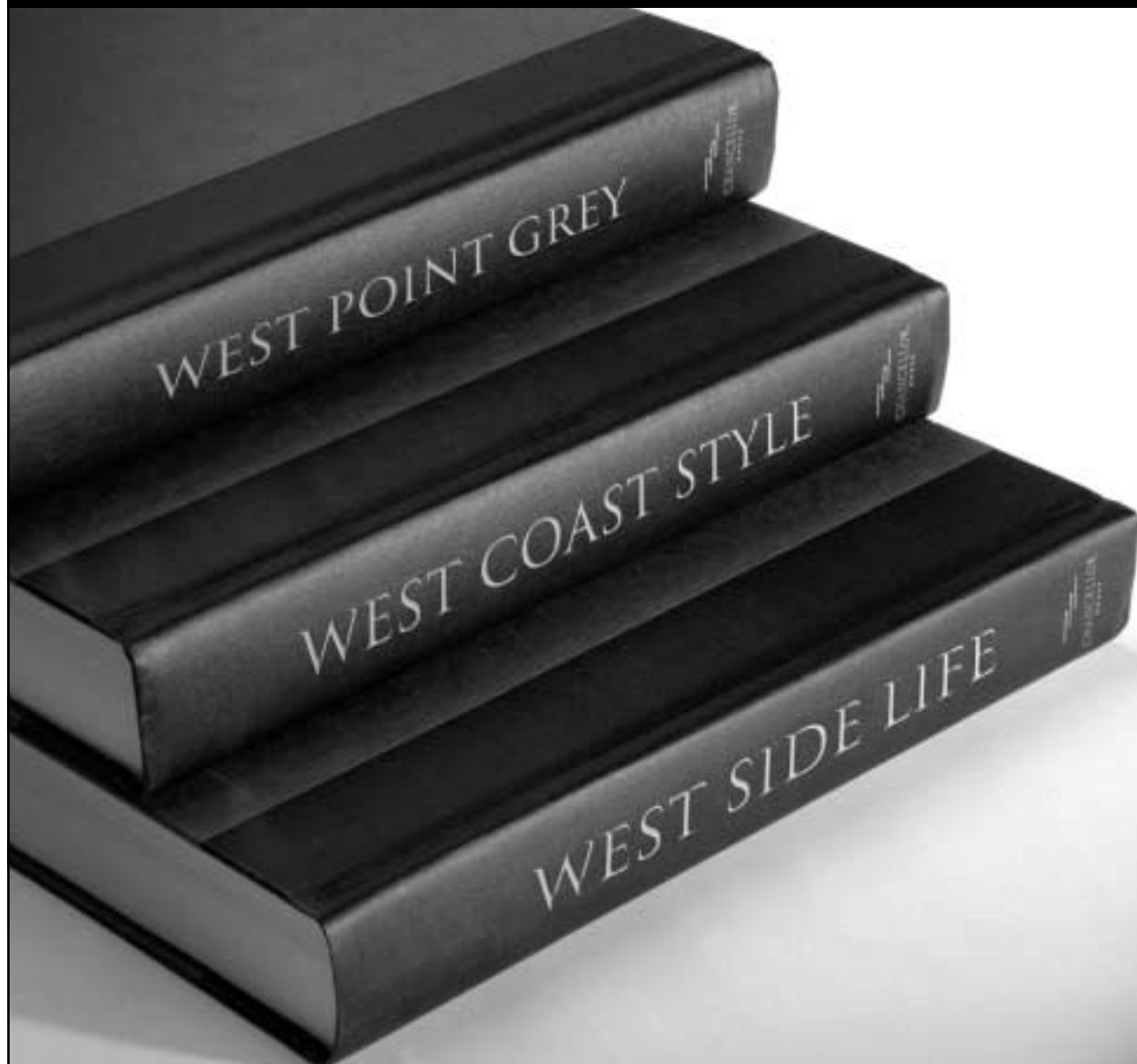
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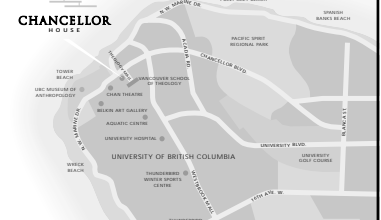






PHOTO: MICHELLE COOK

*Re-shaping history. With some help from Botany Dept. workshop technician John Gourlay (left), retired forester Les Jozsa uses his chain saw to give 775-year-old "Stumpy" a new look.*

# Saving Stumpy

*Chainsaw trim preserves ancient cedar.*

BY MICHELLE COOK

Nobody remembers exactly how "Stumpy" got to UBC, but the massive slice of western red cedar has been a mainstay of the Biological Sciences building for more than half a century.

Stumpy, so nicknamed by admiring graduate students, is thought to be one of the last remaining cross-sections of its kind. It was probably felled in the 1950s in the old-growth rainforests of coastal British Columbia when it was 775 years old, and brought to campus to serve as a giant teaching aid. What is certain is that the magnificent specimen languished somewhat in recent years in a dusty display case outside the building's main lecture hall. It was only when planned renovations to the space threatened to turn the tree slice into a pile of firewood that the good folks in the Biological

Sciences building rallied to give Stumpy a new lease on life.

Associate Prof. Gary Bradfield of the botany department spearheaded the drive to save the cedar – no easy task when the cause in question weighed 585 kilograms and measured an unwieldy two metres in diameter.

After some discussion, the decision was made to thin Stumpy down. Enter Les Jozsa, one of UBC's celebrated Sopron foresters and chief carver of the Forestry faculty's anniversary gate. Now retired, Jozsa arrived on campus one radiant day in early August with a chain saw 1.4 metres long and sized up the job at hand. With a small crowd of loyal supporters looking on, volunteers used a sturdy trolley to wheel Stumpy from the lecture hall into the summer sun. Steadily wielding the giant

chain saw, Jozsa carved the cross-section into smaller pieces. As the first slice slid free in a gentle flurry of sawdust, those watching raised a cheer to celebrate this rare gift from nature. You see, Stumpy, despite having spent the first 200 years of its life overshadowed by larger trees nearby, is as close to perfect as a cedar can be. No rot. No decay. Not even any evidence of pest or fire damage.

A newly svelte Stumpy will make its debut this fall in a place of honour outside the revamped Biological Sciences lecture hall where future generations of students and researchers can benefit from it. □

# UBC United Way Campaign Fires up the Barbie

*This year's goal: \$500,000*

The 2003 UBC United Way Campaign kicks off with a BBQ Sept. 24 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Student Union Plaza.

BBQ fare is a burger and pop for \$5, with proceeds going to the United Way of the Lower Mainland, an umbrella body that funds many social services organizations.

Even before the kickoff, UBC students Monty Raisinghani and Sunny Aujla organized Kickstart 2003, a 10 km run around the campus on Aug. 17. Close to 150 people registered and the event raised \$2,500 for United Way.

Last year's campaign raised more than \$460,000 on campus. "We hope to reach \$500,000 this year and with the generosity

of the campus community, we are confident we can do it," says Ellis Courtney, who co-chairs the campaign this year with Deborah Austin, last year's campaign chair.

"We are always looking for volunteers," says Austin. "This is a great opportunity for staff, faculty and students to build their leadership, public speaking and event planning skills."

For more information on the campaign, the kick-off event or how to get involved, contact Liz King, UBC United Way Campaign Co-ordinator, at 604-822-8929 (UBC-UWAY), e-mail [united.way@ubc.ca](mailto:united.way@ubc.ca) or check out our web site at [www.unitedway.ubc.ca](http://www.unitedway.ubc.ca). □

## Concert for September 11 A time to Reflect

There will be a free concert:  
Thursday, September 11, 2003  
Noon to 12:45 p.m.  
Royal Bank Cinema, Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

Music provided by the Infinitis String Quartet, with readings by students from the UBC Faculty of Arts.

Seating is limited, so please arrive early  
Further info: UBC Ceremonies Office 604-822-2484

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This newly structured position will continue to be a prestigious position within the university community. The University Marshal will take the lead role at the graduation ceremonies; selecting and directing marshals and mace-bearers, directing the Chancellors procession, and other related graduation responsibilities. The appointee will also act as MC at university events such as building openings, recognition events and the UBC AGM, and interact often with the President, Chancellor and the senior administration of the University.

Reporting to the Director of Ceremonies, the appointee will be a full-time member of the UBC faculty, preferably with broad interests across campus and good public-speaking skills. The term of appointment is five years (commencing January 1, 2004) and the faculty member's department would be reimbursed an agreed percentage of the faculty member's salary per year to compensate the department for the secondment (approx. 20% time).

Deadline for applications: September 30, 2003. Interested applicants should submit a resume and covering letter c/o UBC Ceremonies Office, 2nd floor, 2029 West Mall, Campus Zone 2. A committee, chaired by Dennis Pavlich, Vice-President, External and Legal Affairs, will review applications.

For more information on this unique opportunity, please contact Ellis Courtney, Associate Director, Ceremonies Office: phone 604-822-6192 or e-mail: [ellis.courtney@ubc.ca](mailto:ellis.courtney@ubc.ca).



UBC EXTERNAL AND LEGAL AFFAIRS



## East Campus Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Consultation on the East Campus Draft Neighbourhood Plan begins September 2, 2003.

The East Campus area is located between Agronomy Road to the north, the Public Safety Building (RCMP and Fire Stations) to the south, Osoyoos Crescent and Fairview Avenue to the east and Wesbrook Mall to the west.

### PLEASE JOIN US

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For a map showing the location of the SUB Plaza or the Asian Centre go to: [www.planning.ubc.ca/wayfinding/Finding/dbase.html](http://www.planning.ubc.ca/wayfinding/Finding/dbase.html) and enter "Student Union Building" or "Asian Centre" or call 604.822.6400 for further information.

### INTERNET

Background and information: [www.universitytown.ubc.ca](http://www.universitytown.ubc.ca)

### HOW CAMPUS & COMMUNITY FEEDBACK WILL BE USED

Feedback gathered through this consultation will be reported to the UBC Board of Governors in October 2003.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Linda Moore  
Associate Director, External Affairs (University Town)  
Tel: 604.822.6400  
Fax: 604.822.8102  
or [info.universitytown@ubc.ca](mailto:info.universitytown@ubc.ca)



UNIVERSITY TOWN



# A Garden Grows in Surrey

Arts Co-op student helps transition house harvest hope. BY ERICA SMISHEK

Give a woman and her child potatoes and you feed them for a day. Teach them how to grow potatoes and they can feed themselves for a lifetime.

It's an old lesson gaining new momentum at a Surrey transition house program for women and children who have left abusive relationships, thanks in part to UBC Arts Co-op student Allison Hawkey.

During her Co-op work term this summer, the fourth-year geography major has worked

with external agencies, community partners, program staff and residents to develop a community garden that will one day supply fresh fruit and vegetables for the program's community kitchen. Hawkey started with no existing land, supplies or substantial budget – but countered with a solid knowledge of gardening and ecology, loads of creativity and the determination to make a difference.

“Gardening is a very reliable

and affordable source of food,” says Hawkey, 25. “Fruits and vegetables are more expensive in Surrey. We don't have a lot of produce markets here like you see in places like Vancouver.

“When I came here, I knew there were great socio-economic differences between Vancouver and Surrey, but didn't really understand how the politics, income assistance and legal system affected real lives,” she continues. “We've been taught in geography that the wealthier

areas like Vancouver get more programs and that the poorer ones miss out.

“But I lived in a Vancouver bubble. It's been a real eye-opener.”

Located in central Surrey, the Koomseh Second Stage Transition House Program supports women and children who have left abusive relationships and have significant barriers to affordable housing. They include women of colour and aboriginal ancestry, immigrant women who speak little or no English, young mothers with little or no education or job skills, women needing to flee a geographical area or needing extensive advocacy for court proceedings, and women coping with alcohol and drug abuse issues.

Koomseh, a First Nations word, means wholeness and well-being. Its umbrella organization, Atira Women's Resource Society, takes its name from Atira, a First Nations female deity symbolizing a bountiful harvest, strength and power without being warlike.

The 12 women and 23 children currently in the Koomseh program live in a unique complex of 11 townhouses and can access various on-site support programs, including the community kitchen.

Program co-ordinator Linda Djadidi explains that most of

soil, rakes, shovels, hoes, children's gardening tools and seeding trays for next year. Local nurseries and farms generously donated plants.

“I write good letters,” Hawkey explains. “My strategy was to ask lots of businesses for smaller donations. Everyone has been very generous. Everywhere I stopped they said, ‘Here, take a flat of plants.’”

Hawkey contacted the City of Surrey Parks and Recreation department, which is exploring developing a municipal community garden managed by local participants, and was quickly recruited to its community garden committee. The City and Atira are now looking to combine their needs into a community garden that serves both.

Hawkey has attended City meetings and been actively involved in site selection, assessing locations for proximity to high-density housing, visibility, accessibility to water, public transportation and parking, and soil suitability, and she is now recruiting volunteers to help organize an open house to unearth potential gardeners.

As a small scale back-up plan in case this municipal garden does not see fruition, Hawkey also applied for and received permission from the housing society where Koomseh is located to develop a small garden at a site selected using

**“The sad reality is that what's given to families by the Food Bank is through donation and much of the food is not very nutritious and rarely includes fresh produce.”**

the residents have a lower socio-economic status and struggle financially, with little money for food by month's end.

“When I started here it was during the bus strike (2001),” says Djadidi. “I saw that the women had no way to get to the Food Bank. We started to provide rides and child care. We finally arranged a bi-weekly food pick-up at the Food Bank.

“The sad reality is that what's given to families by the Food Bank is through donation and much of the food is not very nutritious and rarely includes fresh produce.”

Women meet weekly to prepare meals together. They exchange favourite recipes from their cultures, cooking tips, lessons and stories as they chop vegetables and stir the steaming pots.

“The issue was poverty,” Djadidi says. “It was also a way to bring people together with a group activity. Cooking is a really good way to build community while providing nutritious and economic meals. They cook together and share the food and have some to freeze for future meals.”

Djadidi imagined a community garden as a way to supply the kitchen and “try to become as self-sufficient as we can.” A position was posted for a Community Garden Co-ordinator with UBC Arts Co-op, which had supplied students previously to Atira.

The energetic, articulate Hawkey, whose family lives on a farm and who has spent many an hour building her own patio garden, got the job and was soon contacting area businesses for donations of plants and gardening supplies and encouraging residents to tackle planting in their backyard garden areas.

Hardware/home improvement retailer RONA has been a big supporter, donating fertilizer,

aerial photos obtained through the City of Surrey.

“Gardening is very rewarding. Especially for people who will be here at the end of the harvest, it's a great feeling when you can pick your own tomato to eat,” says Hawkey. “But even people who are not here from the planting to the harvest can still participate. It gives people the opportunity to get together. It's therapeutic and fun and social.”

Residents concur.

One woman, whose identity cannot be revealed, kept a garden in her former home and worried she would miss it after leaving her abusive partner. When she arrived at Koomseh, she was thrilled to pull up the huge weeds in her backyard and plant some vegetables and flowers.

“It has made it very cozy, made it my own space,” she says. “I find gardening very peaceful. It makes me relax, it's tranquil – and it's a great hobby, something I can share with my daughter.”

Another resident, who has volunteered to serve on Surrey's community garden committee, says gardening “is a healthy thing to do. It's a good social thing and it helps us communicate with the community and with each other.”

Hawkey has developed a formal plan for next year's growing season, mapping out when vegetables need to be seeded and when and where they can be planted outdoors. She says the itinerary should make next year's garden bountiful and allow the community kitchen to plan meals around the harvest seasons.

Though she returns to UBC this month, she will remain part time at Koomseh as the community kitchen co-ordinator.

“I'm glad I'm staying on. I started something and I feel like I want to see it through.”

Spoken like a true gardener. □



PHOTO: ERICA SMISHEK

Arts Co-op student Allison Hawkey in one of the backyard gardens planted by a resident of the transition house.

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# University Teaching, University Research

continued from page 1

dedicated to the analysis of ideas, and that, to me, is the essence of the university – less so its functions. Many other institutions can undertake functions, but none has that more general obligation and duty and characteristic of being a community of people dedicated to the larger ideas that shape their society, generating them, in the sense of certain forms of research, analyzing them, in the sense of reflective inquiry, criticizing them. Everyone essentially argues there are three principal roles of a university: teaching, research, and public service, in all their dimensions. Of these, teaching is the pre-eminent duty of the university – it is not possible or desirable to try to generate a strong research base either nationally or within a university without basing that upon the strongest possible undergraduate teaching, which is foundational to all forms of research.

*How do you see the relationship between research and teaching?*

**Don Brooks** > I find them inextricably linked in many ways. I went through Honours Physics myself here at UBC, and I can remember physicists that taught us enlivening the lecture by talking about the person they did their PhDs with, or famous people they worked with, or famous stories in the physics world. I wouldn't necessarily describe them all as great teachers, some of them were really quite boring and we would have liked to send them to a little teaching school. But they got me excited about physics, and at the end of the day, I don't remember particularly what the lectures were about, but I certainly took away that kind of excitement, and that wouldn't have been there if those folks hadn't done research themselves. I know that some of our biggest courses are taught by some of our best research people, and they get fantastic reviews, because they can bring that background to the classroom. Certainly we would like to have the best research people be the best teachers; that would be an ideal situation. I do think there are issues – and they are recognized around the community – around delivering quality undergraduate education to non-Honours students. You're going to ask me how to solve this – I don't have the answer; however I don't think the answer is don't do research, that's not acceptable socially or to the government, or to most of the faculty.

**Allan Tupper** > It all depends on what you mean by research: if you define research in the classical sense of what we call reflective inquiry – deep, disciplined thinking about your subject and about how your subject relates to other subjects and about the major questions in those fields, what we know and don't know – that form of research fundamentally strengthens the teaching activities of the university, because the earlier years of university must establish the foundations and the major dimensions. If you mean teaching the particular specialized research activities of modern university professors as part of your curriculum, that's where we part company with a lot of people, because it might be interesting in the short term, but it doesn't establish the broader foundations of learning. So in other words, the teaching and research relationship is very multifaceted: it can be very powerfully reinforcing, if you have a very expansive view of research. It can be quite narrow and stale if you have a narrow definition of



Assoc. VP, Research Donald Brooks (l) and Assoc. VP, Government Relations Allan Tupper discuss the multi-faceted relationship between teaching and research in modern Canadian universities.

research. Under certain circumstances it just becomes an assertion in a big university that teaching and research reinforce each other beneficially, when, in fact, there's substantial evidence by the very practices of the university that they don't reinforce each other, that they actually conflict.

*While Ottawa's investment in university research has grown by 54 per cent since 1998, funding for teaching and basic infrastructure has been cut back by provincial governments. Canadian universities face a projected 20 to 30 per cent increase in enrolment over the next 10 years. How will these growing pressures affect the overall quality of teaching in Canadian universities?*

**Don Brooks** > Provincial governments want us to train more students, and they're not telling us how to do that; they are willing to let us be creative. But they're not giving us a lot more resources, so we're not increasing the numbers very much. I think there's a fairly well understood balance there. But I think there's room for us, as we get more resources, to increase the number of students *and* increase the quality of the education they're given. We just have to pay more attention to it, and get more people to pay more attention to it. If we are to increase enrolment, we're going to have to have more teachers and more facilities; in that sense, it shouldn't make a difference. But if we have to increase enrolment without receiving the necessary resources, then that's going to pose a bigger challenge.

**Allan Tupper** > My sense is that the federal government is increasingly cognisant of the fact that universities are very unique institutions with a highly developed set of interdependent functions, and that the tremendous strengthening of the research capacity, which now exceeds that of most other countries, will be followed, over the next decade, by a much larger federal presence in most of the other activities of the universities. The provincial governments have pursued quite vigorous cost-containment strategies in their educational, health, and social assistance systems for more than a decade. I

think that will begin to change – the question is only how far have different institutions, jurisdictions, fallen behind. Higher education is central to an advanced society, and the provincial governments have great roles in that – I think in the next 10 to 15 years either they will aspire to a much larger role in rebuilding the institutions in partnership with the federal government, or else the federal government will, as I said earlier, do it themselves. And there will be some very substantial pressures on provincial governments that will lead them to act. So I'm not particularly pessimistic on that front, actually. That said, we will have to

do things on our own – it's not exclusively a public policy question, there are certain things that universities will have to do to deal with greater numbers of students in more creative ways. You want to use these pressures to be creative, not to simply rely on what you've done before and say, we'll just keep doing what we've done before with more people. We'll have to make some structural adjustments. Universities are very creative, they're very adaptable, and I think the next decade and beyond will really put that adaptability and creativity to the test.

[for Don Brooks] Canadian

*universities perform a third of the country's research and development. What makes a university, as opposed to a specialized institute, an appropriate environment for research activities?*

One reason that we do research in universities is to train researchers: almost all the places where research is done that aren't universities train no graduate students. Besides, in a corporate environment, and even in government institutes, it's quite different, they just don't have the same mix and the kind of excitement; 5 o'clock, most people go home. You come to

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## The Cecil H. and Ida Green Visiting Professorships of Green College

Nominations are invited for the position of Cecil H. and Ida Green Visiting Professor. The main criteria for selection are the proposed visitor's distinction, public speaking ability and appeal to a broad spectrum of student, faculty and off-campus audiences. Performing artists may also be nominated. The visits are usually for one concentrated week during February, March, October or November and require a substantial commitment of time from a faculty coordinator.

### Green Visiting Professor in Residence

Nominations are invited for the position of Cecil H. and Ida Green Visiting Professor in Residence. Nominees must be exceptional researchers from outside UBC whose work has the potential for significant impact in more than one discipline. The appointee will live at Green College for three months, conduct a term-long seminar under the auspices of the Individual Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program, give a general lecture, and make a research-in-progress presentation.

#### Permanent deadlines: February 15 and October 31

Nominations are accepted at any time for the next competition. For detailed terms and procedures, contact Dene Matilda at Green College, 6201 Cecil Green Park Road, V6T 1Z1; dmatilda@interchange.ubc.ca

# Promoting Teaching, Promoting Teachers

BY CRISTINA CALBOREANU

A common theme in most Canadian universities is that teaching and research rank equally and reinforce each other. But, as Assoc. VP, Research Don Brooks explains, "it's a lot easier to assess somebody, when they're being promoted or given tenure, on their research side than their teaching side. Most universities haven't really evolved a way to encourage the faculty to expend more effort on their teaching."

"As you're moving through the system as a professor," says Brooks, "there's a whole bunch of pressures, and we need to find some way to not make teaching seem like the least important one to respond to, as it seems to be in some cases."

According to Brooks, who is a professor of pathology and chemistry, "we [in the Faculty of Medicine] have promoted or given tenure to people predominantly on the basis of their teaching performance. They were innovative, and brought together some new elements or started new courses. They've been promoted and are moving through the ranks quite happily without doing very much research at all."

Assoc. VP, Academic Programs Neil Guppy agrees that the Faculty of Medicine has led the way in this area, but adds that "at UBC you can receive tenure or promotion based on teaching in any faculty." He points to the new Guide to Promotion and Tenure Procedures at UBC (<http://www.facultyrelations.ubc.ca/forms/guideword.rtf>), which states that "creative or professional work of distinction" (which includes the scholarship of teaching) ranks equally with scholarly research. Among the criteria for evaluating the scholarship of teaching are originality or innovation, demonstrable impact in a particular field or discipline, and substantial and sustained use by others.

Gary Poole, the director of the UBC Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth (TAG), agrees that "the challenge never ends in a place this size where research is important – and so it should be." But, he adds, "it would be really wrong to give the

impression that there was complacency on the part of the university."

A wide range of resources are available to teachers through TAG – including support for new faculty, peer coaching for faculty and teaching assistants, seminars and institutes, and an annual two-day learning conference on the scholarship of teaching. With a budget of \$600,000 a year and the equivalent of eight full-time positions, TAG is "one of the largest and most active instructional development centres in the country," says Poole, who is also the President of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (Canada's national organization dedicated to the enhancement of post-secondary teaching). According to Poole, the Faculty Certificate Program on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education is the most comprehensive program of its kind in Canada.

TAG is also actively promoting problem-based learning (PBL), through the PBL Network, and inquiry-driven learning, which allow the students to take responsibility for their own learning and help bridge the gap between teaching and research. "We must rise to the challenge to make it clear to our students that attending a research-intensive university like UBC is a great advantage," says Poole.

As part of these efforts, TAG is organizing the second Undergraduate Multidisciplinary Research Conference in March 2004. At the inaugural conference in September 2002, nearly 70 undergraduate students from all disciplines presented their research work.

"In a research university, where the students are surrounded by faculty who learned by curiosity-based inquiry," says Poole, "wouldn't it be nice if that became contagious and if what they learned from faculty members wasn't just the knowledge of the subject area, but knowledge about research processes – how you go about learning about something, without having to rely on sitting in a classroom and waiting for someone to tell you?" □

## University Teaching, University Research

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UBC on the weekends, and you find all kinds of labs full of faculty and students, so I think there's a very strong argument on the research training side for universities doing research, as well as other centres.

[for Allan Tupper] In your recent book [No Place to Learn], you argue that "Teaching and research are generally in conflict with each other. The mutual enrichment thesis is an impediment to necessary university reform." How and why do university teaching and research come into conflict?

I make no presumptions that university professors willfully place research in front of teaching. But research is very time consuming and leads to an orientation towards one's professional colleagues, and not directly towards one's students – not in every instance, but in a general sense. One other issue is the transformation of the professor from a thinker to an expert, and it's a big difference. An expert knows a lot about something small, a thinker knows or tries to know a lot about a lot of things, and how they interconnect. We have to re-establish that everybody's duty around a university is to be a thinker, not simply an expert, and that's really where the teaching and research come into conflict again, the question of the breadth and depth of all of us in a modern university. Are we increasingly experts at the expense of what people generally used to aspire to be, a thinker? That balance needs to be re-struck.

[for Don Brooks] In the October 2002 issue of the University Report Card, UBC was rated 19 (among 29 universities) in quality of education. One UBC student was quoted as saying "Many of the faculty fail to put any effort into teaching, which I feel is what university is all about. Learning ahead of research, teach the students well and we will come." How does the strong focus on research affect the amount of time and effort university professors put into teaching?

I think it's terrible to hear a quote like that, I really don't like to hear it at all. What do we do about it? I don't have the answer, but I think we do have to undergo a process to look at the problem in a balanced manner, particularly with respect to undergraduate students. I think the graduate training is much different, people like to do it because graduate students are close to them, being in the labs and that kind of thing. If you ask most graduate students to comment on the quality of their graduate education, they're really positive. And I think they are because we do have a good research community, we do have good facilities and it's an exciting place in the research world. I think we do a good job there and I think there are lots of examples where that excitement gets rubbed off on the undergraduates, but it's got to be the undergraduate himself who is excited, or excitable.

[for Allan Tupper] A 1998 report commissioned by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada concluded that "university research is society's most fertile environment for training people and generating new ideas": universities produce knowledge and also equip individuals with the skills necessary to put this knowledge to work. Why do you consider this model flawed?

We fully understand that research is essential to a health society, and not only to a healthy society, to a very strong and vigorous economy. Again, the question is what we mean by research, where it should be done and in what capacity. Universities are distinguished from other research institu-

tions by the fact that they also must teach. Eighty to 90 per cent of our students are undergraduate students; we do not doubt for a second the fundamental importance of research, but we should not forget the fundamental importance of our instructional roles in the deepest sense as institutions. Universities are evolutionary, and developmental in a classic sense: they change all the time, they move into new areas, and so on; we have to be constantly looking at the balance and the way they're adjusting. I think it's time to re-examine where the institutions are going.

UBC's Strategic Research Plan states that "UBC's goal is to excel internationally in research and teaching, and to be a leader in discovery and scholarship that is the wellspring of scientific, technological, social, cultural, and organizational innovation in the nation and the world." What measures should the university take to achieve excellence in both research and teaching?

Don Brooks > I have only been associated with executive activities here for three years, but even over that period, I now hear a lot more about the quality of teaching and the concerns about the diluted classes and senior people not teaching enough. There are some creative activities ongoing and we could do more to enhance that side without it costing us more. We are making a tremendous push to enhance our research success, to hire strong research people. It's getting a lot of attention and we're having a lot of success – we're ranked number two nationally in NSERC and SSHRC funding, number three in CIHR in the last competition, and we're number one in CFI in terms of dollars raised, it really is working. We are hiring people from all over the world. We don't yet have the international reputation we deserve, but we'll get it, slowly. The research side is actually going pretty well. I don't think we have yet brought the same energy to bear on the teaching side – I think that's something we need to discuss more as a community. We can go out competitively and hire more people if we are more successful at research because research activities can fund your salary for five years or more if you get a personal award. By this means we can build up our total faculty numbers somewhat, and those people are still supposed to teach, so that would help.

Allan Tupper > There's two or three that I think really are required to move this forward. First of all, the very great pressures for physical space in universities that allows people to interact. We've all witnessed, in all of our institutions over time, a steady whittling away of common space where people actually interact together and can do so in a reasonable way. You really know you've got a good course if students are doing a lot of work on it outside of the classroom. To do that, though, you have to have some capacity – and I'm not talking about luxurious surroundings, but you have to have good physical space. It's a very important thing, and one that has come back onto the agenda, if you just look at a number of things we're doing here. The Barber Learning Centre for example, is a tremendous kind of thing. And I think another thing we have to do is to talk a lot more openly and freely about these sorts of questions – there's been a tendency to regard some of the questions about how we conduct our activity as non-debatable, contentious, or wrong, and so on. And I think we need to have throughout our institutions a very wide range of debate about our internal priorities – it's not just what governments do, and what society expects, it's our capacity to respond. We are autonomous, we have our own capacity to shape our destinies, and we can't forget that. □

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## UBC ALUMNI

The UBC Alumni Association will honour accomplished members of the UBC community at its Ninth Annual Alumni Achievement Awards Dinner on Nov. 20, 2003, at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel. For more information and to purchase tickets, please call the Association at 604-822-3313 or visit the web-site at [www.alumni.ubc.ca](http://www.alumni.ubc.ca).



### AIDS Researcher Wins Alumni Award > Martin T. Schechter MA'75, PhD, MD, MSc

A well-recognized figure in the international research community, Martin Schechter is a pioneer in the field of HIV and AIDS research and attracts a high level of grant funding for UBC and its teaching hospitals.

Schechter began research into AIDS before the first cases came to light in Canada, and before its viral nature was established. He is now a Canada Research Chair in HIV/AIDS and Urban Population Health, studying the mechanisms of disease susceptibility among marginalized Canadians living in inner cities. His research has increased understanding of HIV transmission, leading to improved strategies for prevention.

Schechter began teaching at UBC in 1983 and now heads the department of Health Care and Epidemiology. Since 1993 he has been national director of the Canada HIV Trials Network. It links researchers, people living with HIV/AIDS, primary caregivers, pharmaceutical manufacturers and regulatory agencies, facilitating partnerships for clinical trials of promising new therapies. He is also director of the Centre for Health Evaluation and Outcome Sciences,

which pools the expertise of research scientists from various fields to examine current therapies and practices.

Co-chair of the international Conference on AIDS, held in Vancouver in 1996, Schechter is frequently interviewed by news media about the disease and his ongoing research.

Schechter was co-founder of the B.C. Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS, established in 1991, and was elected founding president of the Canadian Association for HIV Research in 1990. He has served on many panels and committees including the National Advisory Committee on AIDS, and the Management Committee of the Krever Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada. He held a Canadian Institutes of Health Research Senior Scientist Award until 2001 and was elected into the Canadian Institute of Academic Medicine in 1998.

He is the 2002 recipient of the Science Council of B.C. Award for Excellence in Research and in the same year received the Queen's Jubilee Gold Medal. He was named to the Order of British Columbia in 1994.

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<b>Pond Café</b> at the Ponderosa	M-Th 7:30am - 4:30pm F 7:30am - 2:30pm
<b>Steamies</b> at the Bookstore	M-F 9:30am - 4:45pm
<b>Trek Express</b> at David Lam Pizza Pizza, Deli Sandwich Bar	M-F 7:30am - 3:00pm
<b>Yum Yum's</b> at the Old Auditorium	M-F 8:00am - 2:30pm
<b>Sage</b> at the University Centre Breakfast M-F 7:15am - 9:00am Lunch M-F 11:30am - 2:00pm Evening Dining Th-F 3:30pm - 9:00pm	For Reservation: 604-822-0968 or <a href="http://www.sage.ubc.ca">www.sage.ubc.ca</a>

All units open Monday to Friday except Residence Dining Rooms.  
Place Vanier & Totem Park are open 7:15am - 7:30pm M-Th & 7:15am - 7:00pm F  
Weekends & Holidays 8:00am - 7:00pm (Hours of Operation subject to change.)

## Board of Governors approves UBC Visual Identity Policy



In May 2003, UBC's Board of Governors approved a Visual Identity policy, meant to guide UBC units in their use of the university's name, typeface, initials, specified colours and logo (at left), as well as their relationship to other visual features in printed and electronic materials.

The appropriate use of these elements enhances the University's reputation, leverages quick recognition, reduces design costs and inefficiencies, and demonstrates organizational purpose and accountability to diverse University stakeholders.

The policy applies to:

- campus signage;
- University print advertising;
- University Web sites and other forms of electronic promotion/communication;
- livery for University vehicles;
- University business cards, letterhead, and other stationery; and
- University brochures and other publications.

An electronic version of the full Policy and Guidelines is available at:  
[www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/policy94.html](http://www.universitycounsel.ubc.ca/policies/policy94.html)

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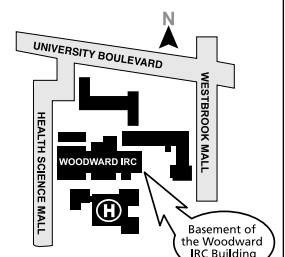
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## Exploratory Workshop Grant

The PWIAS Exploratory Workshop Program provides awards of \$15,000 to \$25,000 to interdisciplinary teams of UBC researchers to bring outstanding international experts to the University to explore new research initiatives. The proposal should be broadly interdisciplinary and involve basic research. The deadline for the Fall 2003 competition is October 1st.

For more information, contact the Wall Institute by phone (604) 822-4782, fax (604) 822-4222 or e-mail [info@pwias.ubc.ca](mailto:info@pwias.ubc.ca) or check our web site at [www.pwias.ubc.ca](http://www.pwias.ubc.ca)

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## Transported through Time



*Millennial Time Machine (above) produces this upside down and reverse image of a young sequoia tree (right) in the landscaped bowl between Koerner and Main libraries.*

#### UBC alumnus Rodney Graham

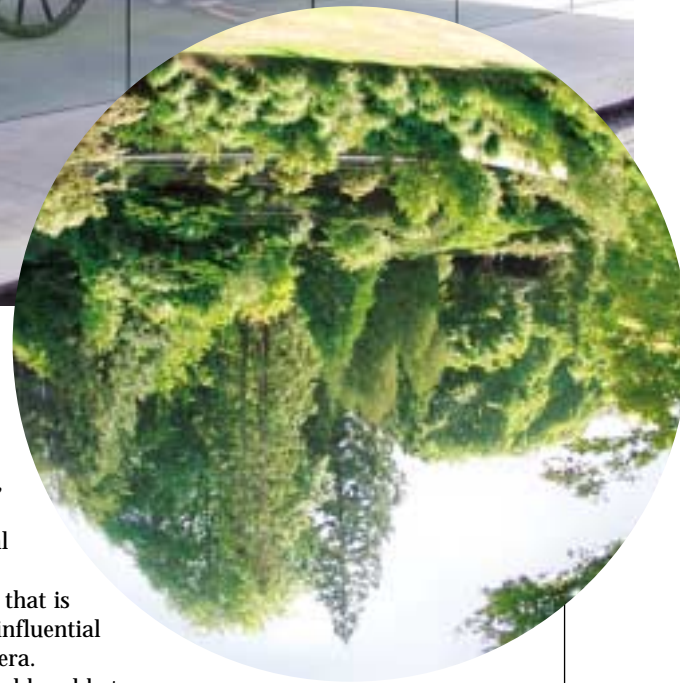
converted a 19th century horse-drawn landau carriage into a mobile camera obscura in his *Millennial Time Machine*, housed in a glass-walled pavilion at the intersection of Main Mall and Memorial Road.

A camera obscura produces an image that is upside down and reversed, and was an influential precursor to the modern multi-lens camera.

The sculpture overlooks the landscaped bowl between Koerner Library and Main Library, with the camera obscura focused on a young sequoia tree that will grow to maturity.

The tree and location raise issues about the university as a place where knowledge, technologies and histories are constructed, according to Naomi Sawada, Public Programs/Publicity Coordinator at UBC's Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, which is administering the project.

The Canada Council contributed \$132,000 and the province gave \$12,000 to fund the pavilion, with additional support from the Morris and Helen Belkin Foundation. The artwork is a gift to the university from the artist. □



### TIME PIECE 1974



In the early 1970s, UBC students had a bizarre outlet to express their frustrations. A wave of streakers swept over the campus in the early part of the decade but the movement really came to a climax in 1974 when about 150 men, mostly engineering students, ran through and around the Student Union Building wearing nothing more than ski masks. Not amused, the *Ubyyssey* editorialized: "Streaking just plays right into the purposes of those wanting students to forget the real issues."



## Robot Insects

continued from page 1

it is possible to generate enough lift with mechanical wings to get a robot flying.

And then there are the electroactive polymers. These rubber-like materials expand when a voltage is applied to them, returning to their original shape when the voltage is cut off.

### The pair's goal isn't to invent new materials but to design a cheap robot that could fly by itself. To do this, they must figure out a way to mimic insect flight.

The muscle-like properties of these materials make them an obvious choice for the work of imitating biological movements like a dragonfly's flapping wings.

"They are capable of doubling their original length," says Madden of the newest generation of plastics. "A human bicep can only contract 20 per cent."

True, Madden and Yan don't expect to have any artificial dragonflies flying around their labs by the end of this project. But nobody else in the world of robotics research has yet been able to get an insect-sized robot flying on its own – and the pair sees that as an open challenge.

"The way we're hoping to tackle this is to combine new materials and new actuator technologies – that is, new methods of getting things to move – that will give us tremendous advantages in mechanical design and in cost,"

says Madden, who came to UBC last year from MIT.

The pair's goal isn't to invent new materials but to design a cheap robot that could fly by itself. To do this, they must figure out a way to mimic insect flight.

"It's one thing to get the robot off the ground with a wire attached to it and to be able to control it; it's another thing to be able to set it free and have it do

what you want," says Madden.

His job is to assess which of the electroactive polymers currently available could be used in the mechanical design of the robosect. The problem is that the range of materials introduced over the last decade are at different stages of development and not all their properties are known. Madden is working to identify these properties and select the best one for the job.

Yan's task is to design the robot's wing mechanism to match the polymer's properties so that it can mimic the dragonfly's wing motions, and re-create the unsteady aerodynamics of flapping wings.

Dragonflies and many other insects are able to dart, hover, move back and forth and even freeze their wings and glide. Incredible as it may seem, researchers have only recently begun to understand the mechanics of insect flight.

"One of our big challenges is

trying to generate the correct motions so that the robot will do what we want it to," Yan explains. "There have been some breakthroughs with unsteady aerodynamics, but we're still at the stage where simulations aren't as good as they should be so we need to copy and measure what the biological organism is doing."

So how do you measure a dragonfly's wing beats?

Yan is using high-speed video camera footage and large-scale wing models to measure forces acting on the wings.

By the time their pilot project, funded with \$35,000 from the Institute of Robotics and Intelligent Systems (IRIS), comes to an end in May 2004, Madden and Yan hope to have identified the most effective electroactive polymer for getting a robotic dragonfly up in the air.

Assembling a self-propelling seven-centimetre robosect, on the other hand, is a completely different matter and one best saved for future research projects.

"To put it together, you need to have micrometre level resolution in the placement of the parts," Madden says. "A typical [human] hair is 100 micrometres in diameter. We'd need to be able to orient these parts and position them on about a hundredth of the width of a hair." □

## Seriously Sick or Simply Sniffling?

Health policy researchers target heavy service users.

BY HILARY THOMSON

Are the people receiving the most health-care services really ill or are they healthy people overusing the system?

A group of UBC researchers at the Centre for Health Services and Policy Research recently answered this question in the first study in B.C. to look at how high users of health care

than three times as many different doctors as other users and they visited their doctors at five times the rate of other users. Also, those visits were more costly because of the complicated nature of patients' conditions.

The group accounted for more than 60 per cent of all

co-ordinated, multidisciplinary care, rather than treating one disease at a time," he says. "That way we'll save money, but more importantly, we'll be able to give better care to those who need the services most."

Particular savings could be found by integrating care for major psychiatric and chronic

**"A common perception has been that people are overusing the system, so cutting down on services or charging more user fees will save money,"**

differ from other residents. It is the first study in Canada in the last several decades to look at the issue in a comprehensive way, rather than analyzing costs of particular types of services.

"We wanted to provide policy-makers with a better understanding of high users of physician services," says Rob Reid, assistant professor of health care and epidemiology and lead author on the study. "If we have details about the users we should be able to draft better strategies to care for this group and save health care dollars."

The research team analyzed data on nearly three million adults registered in the B.C. Medical Services Plan (MSP) in 1996/97 and ranked them according to dollars spent in physician services. These include dollars paid to general practitioners and specialists working in offices and hospitals.

A group of 126,000 individuals were classed as high users of services. This group saw more

hospital days and almost a third of total payments made to physicians by MSP.

The most striking feature of this user group was not age but the complexity and extent of their health problems. More than 80 per cent of high users had at least six different types of illness and almost one-third had 10 or more.

"A common perception has been that people are overusing the system, so cutting down on services or charging more user fees will save money," says Reid. "That strategy would hit this population hard. They are genuinely and seriously ill and require the attention they are receiving. Extra charges would be like a tax on illness."

The findings indicate that the system is operating fairly because larger shares of available resources are directed to those who need them, he adds.

The study focused on B.C. but Reid says he would expect similar results across Canada.

"The challenge to our health-care system is to provide

medical conditions, he adds.

The report has been issued to provincial policy-makers. For more information on the study, visit [www.chspr.ubc.ca](http://www.chspr.ubc.ca). □

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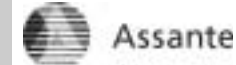
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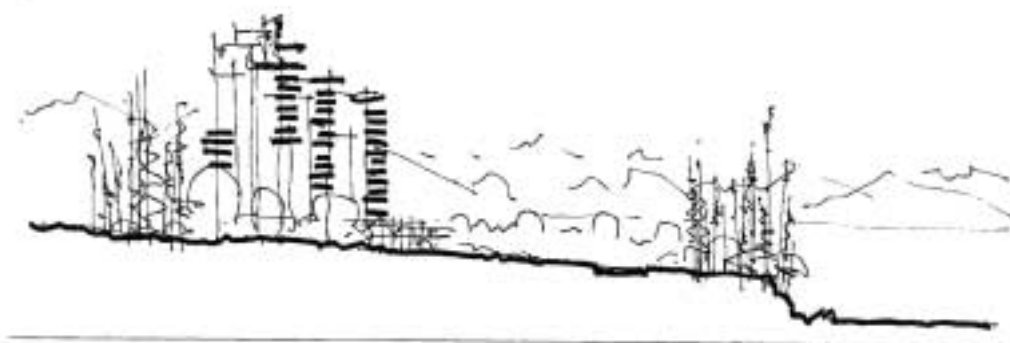
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