

reach

FACULTY OF
SOCIAL
WORK
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



Photo from the "Coming Together" project of the Arts and Social Work Research Initiative (see page 3)

Social Work and the Arts

New initiative uses art to bring research alive

There's nothing like a provocative piece of art to get people talking, whether it's an unsettling photo, a challenging play or a compelling painting. With the launch of the *Arts and Social Work Research Initiative*, the Faculty of Social Work will employ all of these media to share scholarly activity with the community, encourage dialogue on important issues and promote social change.

"More and more of our faculty and students have been making use of the arts in their projects recently, and we wanted to build on the momentum and create a catalyst for this kind of activity," says Professor Adrienne Chambon, who founded the new initiative along with Professors Ernie Lightman and Izumi Sakamoto. This is the first time a school of social work has formalized the trend to incorporate an arts-based approach in research. "It's a trend not only in social work, but also in the health sciences," says Chambon. "Now it's trickling down to the social sciences, and we're establishing the Faculty as a leader in this emerging area."

The initiative will bring together social work faculty members, students, community partners, alumni, artists and scholars from other disciplines to share in arts-related research projects, conferences and seminars. Though it has

only been a few months since the official launch, it has already attracted significant interest from all of these groups.

Chambon says the appeal of art lies in its accessibility and ability to transcend the academic world. When researchers present their findings in journals, they reach a very narrow audience. Yet when research participants share their emotions and beliefs through a photograph or a poem, or when researchers translate their work into an image or a drama, the potential audience is unlimited. Art is uniquely suited to communicating research in social work, which often deals with painful or challenging aspects of life. "Art is a rich way for dealing with these experiences," she says. "It makes them real. It can be very evocative and can galvanize people, making them feel much more connected to the issues."

Three faculty members have already received funding for major arts-based research projects and several new collaborations with community partners are in the works. "We are giving visibility to something that many scholars and practitioners are already doing individually," says Chambon. "Now it's becoming a movement."

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4 High-tech boost for child welfare research



5 New faculty members bring diverse expertise



6 Generous alumni help ensure Faculty's bright future



7 Imminent PhD graduates set to make their mark



8 Preparing for HIV vaccines: Hope and harsh realities

Blazing new trails



The Faculty of Social Work is committed to staying ahead of the curve when it comes to advances in research and practice. We are known not only for excellence in traditional scholarship and teaching, but also for innovation in research dissemination, community partnerships and international collaboration.

In this issue of *Reach* we highlight the new *Arts and Social Work Research Initiative*, a project that is breaking new ground through its unique approach to transferring research findings out of the academic world and into the wider community. This interdisciplinary initiative reinforces the Faculty's ongoing efforts to make social work research relevant and accessible to the people it affects most directly – those who are part of vulnerable communities in our society.

To stay connected to the many communities we serve, we rely in large part on our dedicated faculty members and their wide-ranging research interests. They are constantly forming new research alliances, pursuing novel areas of inquiry and taking a fresh perspective on longstanding social problems. This summer the Faculty of Social Work will welcome four new faculty members, and I am delighted to introduce you to them in these pages. We also present an overview of the leading-edge HIV prevention research of Professor Peter Newman, a faculty member who takes a truly global approach in all of his investigations.

Tomorrow's social work leaders – our PhD students – also help sustain the depth and breadth of the Faculty's research program. These diverse individuals and their committed supervisors play a crucial role in building knowledge that will inform the profession's critical practice in the future. We are excited by the many strengths our PhD students will bring to the next generation of social work education, research and practice, and we are proud to profile several imminent graduates on page 7.

We also highlight several alumni and friends in this issue who help the Faculty maintain its place as an innovator in the field. Whether they choose to fund specific research initiatives like Mr. and Mrs. Li Shun Xing, to share their experience with young social work professionals like Stuart Goldman and Lisa Freud-Goldman, or to remember the Faculty in their estate planning like Douglas G. Gardner and Ruth Manke, they allow us to continually move forward, and we are grateful for their support.

Cheryl Regehr

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Interested in Reconnecting with the Faculty?

The Alumni Association is currently looking for new board members to get involved in areas such as Continuing Education, Advocacy and Faculty liaison. For more information, please contact us at alumni.fsw@utoronto.ca or 416-978-4437.

Do Internationally-Educated Social Workers Have Fair Access to Professional Positions in Ontario?



AN EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOP PRESENTED BY

Faculty of Social Work Alumni Association Thursday, May 17, 2007, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto Room 320, 246 Bloor St. West

A panel representing internationally-educated social workers, employers, professional regulatory bodies and researchers will address such questions as:

- What barriers do these social workers face? • What resources are available to help them?
- Will recent provincial government initiatives such as the *Fair Access to Trades and Professions Act* help?

PLEASE NOTE:

Annual General Meeting of Members 5-5:30 p.m.

Open to all. For further information and to RSVP, please contact: fund.fsw@utoronto.ca or call 416-978-4437

In Memoriam: Dr. Beverley Antle



Dr. Beverley Antle, a tireless advocate for the social work profession and a respected researcher in pediatric health care and rehabilitation, died at age 47 in a car accident on Nov. 11, 2006. Beverley was an adjunct associate professor at the Faculty of Social Work, where she taught courses on health, illness and disability, and integration of research and practice. She also supervised student practicum placements, supervised student theses and presented as a guest speaker in many classes. "Dr. Antle was a highly regarded colleague and researcher, an outstanding teacher, and a dear friend to many of us in the Faculty of Social Work and the profession," said Dean Cheryl Regehr.

At the Hospital for Sick Children, she was an academic and clinical specialist in the Department of Social Work and served as director of the Phenylketonuria (a chronic genetic disorder) Program in the Division of Clinical and Metabolic Genetics. As the first social scientist to hold a leadership position in metabolic genetics in Canada, Beverley developed innovative psychosocial interventions to enhance the quality of life of children with chronic health conditions and their families.

Beverley was also the president of the Ontario Association of Social Workers (OASW). To honour Beverley, the OASW has established a scholarship in her name at the Faculty of Social Work. For further information or to donate, please contact:

The Beverley Antle OASW Scholarship
Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto
246 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON, M5S 1A1
Phone: 416-978-4437 Email: fund.fsw@utoronto.ca

First MSW Career Fair a Resounding Success

On March 22 the Faculty of Social Work held its first Career Fair for Master of Social Work students. Over 50 representatives from approximately 30 community agencies attended, reflecting all four specializations in the MSW program: Children and their Families, Diversity and Social Justice, Mental Health and Health, and Social Work in Gerontology. The fair attracted 150 first- and second-year MSW students.

"It was an ideal opportunity for students to begin networking with key social work professionals, from executive directors to professional leaders of social work departments," says Cheryl Mitri,

MSW Student Co-ordinator. "It was also an opportunity for agencies to network among each other and get updated on the things they're doing in the field. Last but not least, it was a really nice way of bringing the community and the Faculty together for a day and strengthening that important relationship."

While most of the agencies at the Career Fair were from Toronto and the surrounding area, several international agencies were also in attendance. Each one of them indicated that they would return for next year's fair. "Our plan is for it to be even bigger and better next year," says Mitri.

Research Funding and Award Highlights

- The following faculty members recently received grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC): **Professor Marion Bogo** – Evaluating social work students' practice competence: Integrating performance assessment and reflective practice dialogues; **Professor Ernie Lightman** – Beyond Work-First? Future directions in social assistance policy; **Professor Aron Shlonsky** – Risk and response: A mixed methods approach to enhance decision-making in child welfare
 - **Professor Faye Mishna** received a grant from The Provincial Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health at CHEO for research on school-based treatment for abused and neglected children.
 - **Professor Izumi Sakamoto*** was the runner-up for the Community-Based Research Award of Merit for her leadership of the *Coming Together: Homeless Women, Housing and Social Support* project. The award is jointly sponsored by U of T's Centre for Urban Health Initiatives, the Wellesley Institute and University College.
- *Correction from Reach, Fall 2006: Professor Sakamoto's project (Re-examining the "Canadian Experience" and acculturation: The missing context of Canada's high-skilled immigrants) was funded by SSHRC.

The Arts and Social Work Come Together

Arts and Social Work

The following three arts-based research projects by members of the Faculty of Social Work were primarily funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Expanding Social Work Knowledge Through the Arts

Professor Adrienne Chambon

(Visual Art, Multimedia Installations, Film and Poetry)

From 14th-century Italian frescos to contemporary multimedia installations, Professor Adrienne Chambon's research aims to open up a conversation between art from diverse genres and social work. "The principles used in the arts for knowledge creation and transmission can be transposed to social work," says Chambon, whose recent project was called "The heuristics of arts practices for social work." She launched the project – which expands social work knowledge by exploring works of art and art writing – after a period of drawing on the arts in both her writing and teaching.

"The artworks I selected to study are complex and inspiring," she says. "The Italian fresco called *The Effects of Good and Bad Government on the City and on the Countryside*, for example, raises questions about the changes in notions of public space and the space between bodies. Then there is a parallel to the fresco in a photo-video installation called *Every Building on 100 West Hastings Street* by Canadian artist Stan Douglas, which deals with the abandoned and derelict spaces – and thus people – in the city of Vancouver."

Chambon also examined works by Toronto-based artist Vera Frenkel, who uses a mix of realism and fiction in web-based and multi-media installations. "Frenkel raises questions about memory, migration and the problematic aspects of institutions." In addition to focusing on single artworks and artists, Chambon's research brought together a combination of contemporary film, installation works and poetry around the question of refugees, war and immigration policies.

Chambon's research showed that certain features of "activist" art can be combined with more traditional forms of social work inquiry, and she has been using it more and more in her own schol-

arship and teaching. "Students are keenly interested in being involved in arts-related activities for means of expression and for social activism," she says. She is currently supervising several doctoral students whose theses incorporate photography.

Voices from the Margins: From Research to Policy Through Community Theatre

Professor Ernie Lightman

and Professor Adrienne Chambon

(Theatre)

It all started with a trip to the theatre. While he was on sabbatical last year in London, England, Professor Ernie Lightman went to see a play called *The Permanent Way*. Written by David Hare, a well-known British playwright and left-wing activist, the play was based solely on the transcripts of a judicial inquiry during the Margaret Thatcher era. "As I sat in the audience, I had a flash of insight that this kind of political theatre could be very effective for communicating our research on welfare and workfare in Ontario," he says. "I saw that it could make the transition from academic research to real-world relevance."

On arriving home again Lightman shared his inspiration with his research team on the "Social Assistance in the New Economy" program, which has been examining welfare reform in Canada – particularly in Ontario and Toronto – for the past several years. Soon after, he applied for and received a special grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for novel and innovative methods of disseminating research findings.

Once the project had a green light, Lightman knew exactly which part of his research would lend itself to dramatization. Since 2002, he has been conducting annual in-depth interviews with approximately 100 people who have been on social assistance about their experiences in negotiating the welfare system. The play will bring these real voices to the stage.

Once it is complete, the entire text of the play will be available online, so that anyone in the community can access, adapt and use it. There will also be a detailed workbook to facilitate debate and analysis of the issues. "We want the play to lead to discussion," says Lightman. "If you want to get

people engaged, you have to speak on levels they understand."

Coming Together: Homeless Women, Housing and Social Support

Professor Izumi Sakamoto

(Photography, Painting and Drama)

Professor Izumi Sakamoto heard some powerful personal stories in her study of women who have been homeless or marginally housed, stories that were more suited to visual than verbal expression. "You can't express everything in words," she says. "Sometimes you can capture things much better and more succinctly through non-verbal media."

In order to understand how homeless women and transwomen find the strength and support to survive, Sakamoto's study began with a series of interviews and other traditional research techniques. Then, armed with preliminary findings, she and her research team – which included advisory board members who had experienced homelessness themselves – formulated a few core questions on the subject and took them to four local drop-in centres for homeless women and transwomen. In this second phase of the study, the researchers asked the women to share their experiences through painting, drama and photography.

The women's response to this exercise was overwhelmingly positive, says Sakamoto, something she attributes to the lighthearted arts-based approach. "Art has a playful aspect to it. If we're just interviewing someone and asking them question after question, it can be a bit boring and limiting. But art creates space to explore alternative answers to difficult questions. It allowed the women to express not just their marginalization, but also their hopes and vision for the future. Some of the images are depressing, but some are uplifting and invigorating."

The arts component of the research project allowed women to take part who otherwise might not have because of language barriers or unease in traditional discussion groups. "The women all had different capacities and comfort levels, so there were different kinds of participation – both behind-the-scenes and in front of the camera."

The artwork from the project has been exhibited at the Faculty of Social Work and Metro Hall in Toronto.



Participants in the "Coming Together" project expressed themselves through photos with painted backdrops such as this one

Better Services for Children at Risk

New database will revolutionize child welfare research in Canada



Children at risk of maltreatment will ultimately have better life chances thanks to a new child welfare database currently under development at the Faculty of Social Work.

The Children's Services Database will allow researchers to monitor exactly what happens to children after they come in contact with the child welfare system, and then use this knowledge to help determine which policies and practices are more likely to result in better outcomes for children. It is the first project of its kind in Ontario, bringing

together data from the Children's Aid Society of Toronto and the Catholic Children's Aid Society to form a single, powerful source of information for researchers, practitioners and policy-makers.

"We'll be tracking kids in the child welfare system over time, looking at issues such as their length of stay in foster care, the types of placements they go to and how a placement affects the likelihood of adoption, the number of incidents of re-abuse and the rates of family reunification," says Professor Aron Shlonsky, the scientific director of the database and the director of the Bell Canada Child Welfare Research Unit. "This is the first time we'll be able to look in a true, longitudinal way at what's happening after children enter the system," says Shlonsky.

The new database will strengthen the Faculty's national position as a leading repository of child welfare data. In 1998, U of T social work faculty members led the first Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, which examined the number and characteristics of children reported for maltreatment. "This new database will enable us to link original maltreatment reports to what happens next to the children in the system," says Shlonsky. The Faculty is one of five Canadian organizations comprising the Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare, which will help disseminate the research findings generated by the database.

MR. AND MRS. LI SHUN XING: A GIFT FOR CANADA'S CHILDREN AND CANADA'S FUTURE

The Children's Services Database was made possible by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Li Shun Xing. Mr. Li attributes their decision to contribute to this unique initiative to their strong belief in the importance of children's well-being to the overall health and strength of society. "It is far more effective to intervene and help people at the beginning of their lives than wait until they are grown up and experiencing serious problems," he says. "Children are the most vulnerable sector of our society, and we feel a responsibility to give them the best possible start."

Mr. Li says they chose to give to the Faculty of Social Work because of its reputation for excellence in child welfare. "While research in this field takes place over the long term and cannot offer the same sort of instant gratification as research in an area such as high technology, we feel this type of work on behalf of children is crucial to Canada's future, and we are very proud to support it."



Mr. Li Shun Xing

The Mentoring Relationship: Sharing the Rewards

Husband and wife team pass on their experience to new graduates

After more than two decades of acting as career mentors to each other in the mental health field, Lisa Freud-Goldman and Stuart Goldman are now sharing their rich professional experience with the next generation of social workers.

The couple joined the Faculty of Social Work Mentorship Program four years ago and have found great satisfaction in their roles as advisers and sounding boards for students and new graduates. While the players are different, it's a relationship they're both very familiar with because they've been providing that same kind of support to each other since they were newly married and launching their careers.

"We've always worked together like a team," says Stuart. "It's wonderful to be able to discuss difficult clients or issues with somebody who understands." He and Lisa were acquaintances in high school and distinctly remember having a conversation about their common ambition to become social workers.

It wasn't until several years after graduation, however, that they reconnected following a chance meeting and picked up that same topic. "You could say social work brought us together," says Lisa.

They both completed their Master of Social Work degrees at the Faculty – Stuart graduated in 1990 and Lisa in 1991 – then went on to work with people with serious mental illness in residential and institutional settings. Stuart is now manager of the Assertive Community Treatment Team, the Addiction Program, the Day Treatment Program, a Geriatric Outreach Team, and the Mental Health

and Justice Treatment and Support Service at North York General Hospital.

After 12 years as a case manager at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre, among other positions, Lisa moved into private practice four years ago as a psychotherapist, consultant and trainer in Critical Incident Stress Management. Stuart works alongside her on the weekends, which has only reinforced their mutually supportive professional relationship. "Lisa is a very skilled therapist, and I learn a lot from her in that respect," he says. Lisa, on the other hand, says she benefits from Stuart's expertise in organizational and systems issues.

When Lisa was building her private practice, she sought advice from another family member and graduate of the Faculty, Bill Stern, who also happened to be running the mentorship program. "As soon as Bill asked me about getting involved, I immediately said yes because he's been my mentor," says Lisa. Stuart also agreed, because he wanted to give something back to the place that gave him his start.

In addition to helping students plot their career path, Lisa and Stuart look for opportunities to share some of the insight they've gained into the profession as a whole. One piece of wisdom they both try to impart is that working with people with serious



Stuart Goldman and Lisa Freud-Goldman

mental illness is a valuable, though challenging, experience. While acknowledging that it's not glamorous work, Stuart strives to help students see just how crucial it is. "Some young social workers have this idea that upon graduation they're going to work in a nice office and see highly insightful, motivated clients, but for most that's unrealistic. Social work's roots are in social welfare, in working with the disadvantaged. Some of the most important social work is still with those groups."

Whether or not they change students' perspectives along the way, the Goldmans understand the value of talking things out with someone who understands, and they want to pass it on. "When a student says to me, 'You've given me something to think about,' that's my best reward," says Lisa.

Fresh Faces at the Faculty of Social Work

Four new faculty members set to come on board this summer

From HIV/AIDS and child maltreatment to cross-cultural psychotherapy and Aboriginal healing, the diverse areas of expertise of these four new faculty members will enrich the teaching and research environment at the Faculty of Social Work.

DAVID BRENNAN

In 1983 David Brennan read a *New York Times* article on a mysterious and frightening new disease called AIDS, and it set him on a career path that continues to this day.

At the time, experts said that AIDS presented a risk to the “Four H’s”: homosexuals, heroin users, hemophiliacs and Haitians. “I remember feeling very scared, not just potentially for myself but for these other communities who were getting a disease no one knew anything about,” says Brennan. “One of the ways I deal with fear is to just get involved and confront things head on, and that’s what I did with AIDS.”

Brennan began volunteering with the group that eventually became the AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts, New England’s oldest and largest AIDS service organization. After completing his Master of Social Work degree at Boston College, he moved on to positions of increasing responsibility in the field – from bereavement counselor and hospice social worker to program manager and psychotherapist.

After many years on the frontlines, he decided to further his education at Boston College – where he is currently a PhD candidate – so that he could have a different kind of impact through teaching and research. “I wanted to stimulate more interest in the field, and I wanted to better understand how we can improve services for people at risk of HIV/AIDS or living with it.”

Brennan has presented and published on the subject of risk behaviour in HIV/AIDS and will continue this research at the Faculty of Social Work, in addition to exploring disparities in health prevention and promotion among disenfranchised populations.

BARBARA FALLON

When Barbara Fallon was a Master of Social Work student at U of T completing a placement at the Children’s Aid Society, she could not have imagined that a decade later she would play a pivotal role in Canada’s first national study on the incidence of child maltreatment. What she did know from the start, however, was that she would dedicate her career to helping children at risk.

“Social work’s reason for being is to work with society’s most vulnerable people, and I cannot think of a group more vulnerable than children and families who require services from a children’s aid society,” she says. “They deserve the best programs and services. We need to do for them as we would for our own children.”

During the early part of her career, Fallon gained diverse experience in both research and field work focused on women and children. She served as co-manager of the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-1998), which provided national estimates of child maltreatment for the first time ever in Canada when it was published in 2001 by the Public Health Agency of Canada. She also co-managed the 1998 study for Ontario, along with the second cycle of both the national and provincial studies (CIS-2003), published in 2005. She accomplished all this while completing her PhD at

the Faculty of Social Work. In her new contract appointment at the Faculty, Fallon will continue to focus on the management of the CIS in addition to teaching courses in the MSW program.



David Brennan



Barbara Fallon



Eunjung Lee



Cynthia Wesley-Esquiaux

EUNJUNG LEE

As a social worker who has practised in her native Korea, the United States and Canada, Eunjung Lee has firsthand experience of the challenges that can arise when clinicians and clients come from different cultures. Grappling with these issues in her professional life inspired Lee to delve deeper into the concept of cultural competence through her doctoral research.

With over 15 years of experience in community social services and mental health agencies in Asia and North America, she has extensive knowledge of the complexities of practice with diverse populations. She was also trained in the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Program at the Western Branch of the Canadian Psychoanalytic Society. So it was a natural next step to study the cross-cultural psychotherapy process in her dissertation at the Smith College School for Social Work in Massachusetts, where she is currently a PhD candidate.

“There’s so much in the research literature about cross-cultural practice and cultural competence – they’ve almost become buzz words,” she says. “Yet when I began to look into it in my research, I found there was little integration between psychotherapy and multicultural practice. My challenge has been to make the connection between cultural competence and social work practice more solid and concrete for practitioners.”

Lee looks forward to collaborating with colleagues at the Faculty of Social Work who are leading experts on cross-cultural psychotherapy, including Professors Tat Tsang and Marion Bogo, and is excited about working in one of the most multicultural cities in the world. “Toronto will be an ideal place to build on my research.”

CYNTHIA WESLEY-ESQUIAUX

In order to do effective work with Aboriginal Canadians in today’s society, Cynthia Wesley-Esquiaux says social workers must understand what happened to Aboriginal Peoples in the past.

“Social work tries to mitigate the results of historical trauma in the Aboriginal community,” she says. “What I hope to provide to the Faculty of Social Work is a dialogue on how we got here and what happened to Aboriginal people, not only in terms of the loss of land and rights, but also what happened on a psychological and social level to create the psychic trauma we’re now trying to unravel.”

With more than 20 years of experience in community empowerment and policy development for First Nations Peoples – including her own Nation, the Chippewas of Georgina Island – Wesley-Esquiaux is a widely respected teacher, speaker and media commentator. Her doctoral research at U of T examined the effects of outside intervention and the tragedy of youth suicide in a remote Ojibwe community in Northern Ontario. Since then, she has written and presented on issues ranging from Aboriginal governance structures to contemporary Native health and healing.

Wesley-Esquiaux will begin a joint faculty position in social work and Aboriginal Studies at U of T, where she is already an assistant professor. Part of her role at the Faculty of Social Work will involve mentoring Aboriginal students. “They can feel overwhelmed when they have to confront different mindsets and ways of learning,” she says, “and I hope to make that transition more comfortable for them.”

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Alumni and Friends

Gifts for the Faculty's Future

Two alumni share their reasons for making future gift arrangements to the Faculty

Alumni and friends of the Faculty of Social Work show their support in countless different ways. No matter how they choose to give, they help ensure that future generations of social work students and researchers will achieve their potential and contribute to the betterment of society. The two alumni featured here have made planned gifts, an option that allows them to meet their current financial needs while knowing they will make a difference to the Faculty in the years to come. Douglas Gardner chose to arrange a *charitable bequest* in his will, while Ruth Manke's legacy will be realized through the proceeds of a *life insurance* policy she donated. In addition to making a significant impact on the Faculty's long-term sustainability, these gift options come with tax benefits that can reduce their out-of-pocket cost, now or in the future.

DOUGLAS G. GARDNER (MSW 1958)

Douglas G. Gardner took a calculated risk when he decided to switch careers and pursue social work. He had full-time work experience and a couple of university degrees under his belt when he arrived at the Faculty, but today he says it's one of the best decisions he ever made.

"I felt so at home there and so clear that I had made the right choice," says Gardner. "My connection to the Faculty goes back to day one." This sense of connection and loyalty to the profession led him to put the Faculty in his will more than 20 years ago.

The 1950s were an exhilarating time to be a social work student at U of T, according to Gardner. "We had many of the top people in the field in Canada on faculty, people who had a serious impact on the day's social welfare legislation. They were really quite powerful in their influence," he says, citing Dean Charles Eric "Chick" Hendry as just one example. "They all had a real impact on me. I've always felt that I was lucky to be there, and I'll never forget it as long as I live. A bequest enables the cycle I was part of to continue to evolve and grow."

After graduation, Gardner went on to make his mark in the child welfare field as a practitioner,



Douglas G. Gardner



Ruth Manke

"No one should ever be prevented from entering the profession because of financial issues."

administrator and consultant. Among his many achievements, he advised the Ontario Government on child welfare legislation and directed the central branch of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto for a decade. Later in his career, he returned to the Faculty of Social Work as a faculty-based field instructor.

"As professionals, we really need to support the places that equipped us with the tools to carry on successful careers. When I'm finished with this life and there's something left, I feel I should be making a bequest to the institutions that have been the most significant in my life," he says. "It's perfectly logical. After all, you are what you are partly because of that institution."

RUTH MANKE (MSW 1966)

It's been more than 50 years, but Ruth Manke still remembers vividly the day when an immigration officer in Germany asked her what she planned to do with her new life in Canada. "I told him I was going to go to university and become a social worker, and that's what I did," she says, "though realizing that ambition was not easy."

She and her mother arrived in Toronto in 1951 from Eastern Europe after living as refugees after the Second World War. They had very little money and few connections in the community, but Manke managed to work full-time while earning her undergraduate degree, enabling her to eventually complete her Master of Social Work degree at the Faculty. This firsthand experience of struggle inspired her decision to help succeeding generations of social work students through a gift of life insurance.

Though she never spoke of her financial challenges while she was a student, news of her plight travelled to former Dean Albert Rose, who quietly established a fund out of his own pocket to help her and others like her. "It was a gesture that I will never forget," she says. "I look back with gratitude to the people who helped me through my years at the Faculty, and that gratitude comes with a responsibility."

Manke held positions in child welfare and vocational rehabilitation before launching a successful 25-year career in school social work. It wasn't until after her retirement from the school board that she learned about the possibilities for planned giving to the Faculty. "It was exactly what I'd been looking for, and the rest is history." She says her only regret is that she didn't arrange the gift of a life insurance policy earlier.

"I'm very proud of my profession, and I feel that no one should ever be prevented from entering it because of financial issues. There isn't enough support available to students in need today, and I believe it should come from within our own ranks – from those of us in the profession who are in a position to give back."

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Soon-to-be PhD Graduates Poised to Make Their Mark

In the last issue of *Reach* magazine, we profiled the career paths of several recent PhD graduates. In this issue, we present five PhD students who will soon be defending the dissertations outlined below. All of them bring rich experience in a variety of social work settings to their scholarship and teaching. As they graduate in the months ahead and take up teaching positions at universities across Canada and the world, they will play a role in shaping the future of social work research and practice.

GINA DIMITROPOULOS

gina.dimitropoulos@utoronto.ca

Supervisor: Dean Cheryl Regehr

Families Caring for Individuals with Anorexia Nervosa

Using a cross-sectional design, Dimitropoulos disseminated self-report measures to families of individuals struggling with long-term eating disorders in tertiary care and community-based settings. This research has resulted in the development of an innovative model for explaining the caregiving experience, with a particular emphasis on the adverse effects of stigma on family functioning. In addition, the study revealed interesting gender differences in the experience of caregivers.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SCHOLARSHIP

- Twelve years of experience as a clinical social worker in a variety of settings with children, adolescents and adults, with particular expertise in family and couple interventions
- Teaching experience at the undergraduate and graduate level, including courses in family theory, group work and conflict resolution
- Expertise in quantitative and qualitative methods, with main research interests including: effects of stigma on families, caregiver burden, and design and evaluation of interventions aimed to improve the experience of caregivers of individuals with long-term mental illness

LYNN LAVALLEE

lynn.lavallee@utoronto.ca

Supervisor: Professor David Hulchanski

Threads of Connection: Addressing Historic Trauma Of Indigenous People Through Cultural Recreational Programming



Lynn Lavallee

An indigenous research framework formed the basis for Lavallee's dissertation, beginning with the medicine wheel teachings of health based on balance between physical, emotional, spiritual and mental well-being. The community-based research project focused on the delivery of a cultural and recreation program in Toronto's urban Aboriginal community. Lavallee explored the impact of physical wellness and the interconnection to mental, emotional and spiritual well-being in urban Aboriginal adults. The participants' stories were captured with sharing circles and a method that Lavallee developed called Anishnaabe Symbol-Based Reflection.

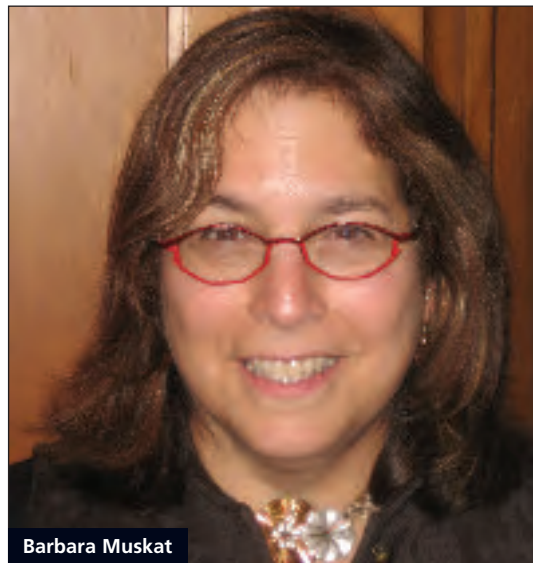
HIGHLIGHTS OF SCHOLARSHIP

- Operationalizing an indigenous research framework
- Teaching in the university setting since 1997 and currently an Assistant Professor at Ryerson University School of Social Work
- Passionate about bringing indigenous ways of knowing into the academy through teaching and research

BARBARA MUSKAT

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Supervisor: Professor Marion Bogo
Identity Formation in Early Adolescents with Learning Disabilities



Barbara Muskat

Muskat's dissertation employed a modified grounded theory approach to develop a model describing identity formation in early adolescents with learning disabilities. Her research found that a key factor in the process of integrating the learning disability label into adolescents' identity was the stigma that continues to be associated with the label. The model has applicability for the development of educational and support programs for early adolescents with learning disabilities, as well as for challenging peer, familial and community attitudes about the learning disability label.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SCHOLARSHIP

- Experienced social work clinician; involved in social work practice research in the areas of children's mental health
- Presented at national and international conferences on the topics of mental health needs of children and youth with learning disabilities
- Taught social work courses at the University of Toronto and Renison College, University of Waterloo; developed and instruct an online course in social work with groups
- Developed a workshop on understanding learning disabilities that has been delivered to thousands of individuals throughout the province

MICHAEL A. SAINI

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Supervisor: Dean Cheryl Regehr

Parent Functioning After Divorce: Exploring the Relationship to Attachment and Conflict

Differences in parenting functioning are a result of a highly complex interaction, particularly at times of stress such as separation/divorce and involvement in legal proceedings. To explore these complex interactions, Saini surveyed 253 parents participating in a court-based mandatory family law information session. His analysis investigated why some parents are able to work through feelings of preoccupation, hostility and loss towards their ex-partners, while others remain caught in inter-parental conflict which prevents them from moving into workable co-parenting relations and thereby sheltering their children from the negative effects of conflict.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SCHOLARSHIP

- Currently the Systematic Review Specialist for the Research Institute for Evidence-Based Social Work at the University of Toronto



Michael A. Saini

- Teaching experience at the undergraduate, masters and PhD levels, including courses in evidence-based social work practice, qualitative methods and strategies for addressing conflict
- Over 10 years experience in clinical and direct practice with children, parents and families, including custody and access evaluations, child protection and working in young offenders' facilities
- Presented at both academic and professional conferences and published in the fields of divorce, conflict, child welfare, social work education, health and adult mental health

SANDRA TAM

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Supervisor: Professor Sheila Neysmith

Understanding Young Women's Provisioning: The Social Organization of Youth Employment



Sandra Tam

This qualitative study aimed to produce new understanding about young women's working lives from their own perspective. It was part of a larger multi-site research project entitled "Provisioning, Women and Community" funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Tam used the concept of provisioning to capture a wide range of work activities such as paid employment, domestic work, caregiving and postsecondary education. She demonstrated how social policies that organize the Canadian labour market shape the conditions under which marginalized young women make decisions about jobs, education, careers and family life.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SCHOLARSHIP

- Actively involved with community organizations committed to social justice and equity, in addition to contributions to theoretical development and social policy analysis of young women and social programs in the academic arena
- Past member of the Chinese Canadian National Council's research committee, editorial member for the *Women and Environments International Magazine*, and community editorial board member of the *Toronto Star*
- Teaching experience at the undergraduate and graduate levels in women's studies, social work and writing across the curriculum

HIV Vaccines: If We Build It, Will They Come?

Professor Peter A. Newman tackles the social and behavioural challenges of preparing for future HIV vaccines

When Bill Gates joined with the Canadian government this past winter to launch a multi-million dollar initiative aimed at accelerating the development of an HIV vaccine, the announcement generated widespread media coverage and sparked countless water-cooler discussions. It did not, however, raise the hard questions that Professor Peter Newman has been asking in his unique research program on HIV vaccine preparedness: Who exactly will participate in HIV vaccine trials? How will HIV vaccines be distributed across the world once they are ready? And most important: Will HIV vaccines be accessible and acceptable to the vulnerable communities most affected by HIV/AIDS?

For Newman, who has spent over 15 years as a practitioner and researcher in the HIV/AIDS field, increased funding for HIV vaccine development is good news on several fronts. For one, it will mean more biomedical research, more clinical trials and more momentum towards the best long-term hope for controlling the global epidemic. The funding boost will also help transform the once hypothetical HIV vaccine into more of a reality in the eyes of research granting agencies, which may then be more inclined to support his investigations into vaccine planning. Until the last few years, when a few more researchers started examining the social and behavioural issues around dissemination of future HIV vaccines, Newman and his handful of collaborators were virtually alone in this specialized field.

“Scientists estimate that it will be up to a decade or more before an approved HIV vaccine is available, and we need to look at this window of time as an opportunity to tackle the many challenges that will come with getting a vaccine out there in an efficient and equitable way,” says Newman, who holds the RBC Chair in Applied Social Work Research at the Faculty of Social Work. One aspect of his research focuses on community engagement in HIV vaccine trials, which is not only crucial to the scientific process of vaccine development but will also influence people’s attitudes towards a future vaccine when it becomes publicly available.

Recruitment for HIV vaccine trials is understand-

THE RBC CHAIR IN APPLIED SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

Professor Peter A. Newman is the second incumbent of the RBC Chair in Applied Social Work Research at the Faculty of Social Work. Established in 1997 through a \$1-million gift from RBC Financial Group – which was matched by the university to create a \$2-million endowment – the chair plays a critical role in helping governments and agencies apply social work research expertise to “real world” challenges in society such as the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In addition, RBC created the RBC Fellowships through a gift of \$500,000, which was matched by the university and the Ontario government for an endowment of \$1.5 million. The RBC Fellowships encourage a new generation of scholars and students to bring fresh understanding to Canada’s always-changing social landscape. Newman is pleased to work with many bright and passionate MSW and doctoral students supported through RBC’s generous investment.

Photography: Jayson Gallop

ably difficult, and Newman is working to understand the barriers and facilitators to participation among vulnerable communities. “The current under-representation of women and people of colour limits the generalizability of clinical trials,” he says. “My work is focused on how we can facilitate access to clinical trials among vulnerable communities by designing culturally appropriate outreach and information that would empower individuals to decide if this is something they want to do or not.”

For both moral and practical reasons, Newman says HIV vaccine trials must adhere to stringent ethical standards and maintain transparency. For example, individuals who participate in a trial should be guaranteed access to the eventual vaccine product if it proves to be effective. “There are some places in the developing world where it’s simply not ethical to conduct a trial because there’s no health infrastructure to care for volunteers who may develop trial-related side effects or to support a vaccine’s later dissemination,” he says. Volunteers must also be guaranteed full disclosure about their role in the trial and associated risks and benefits. “In some languages, there isn’t even a word for ‘placebo,’ so how do you explain a vaccine trial? It’s challenging, but it’s essential. Because if people feel wronged by a clinical trial, more and more communities will resist getting involved and it will hurt the whole effort to develop a vaccine.”

Newman is taking an international approach in all of his investigations, studying diverse communities at high risk for HIV across three continents. Despite geographic and cultural differences, he’s found that individuals from vulnerable communities share certain concerns about clinical trial participation and HIV vaccines in general. Whether they are Latinos in Los Angeles, Black women in Toronto or gay and bisexual men in Thailand, they worry about some of the same things: vaccine-induced HIV infection, physical side-effects and AIDS stigma. “Across communities, it’s still important – even 20 years into the epidemic – to chafe away at the stigma around HIV and treat it as a public health issue, not a moral issue. One way to overcome this is to mainstream HIV services as part of routine health care, so people don’t have to wait in a line-up outside a publicly identified AIDS clinic,” he says. “It’s also important to have clear and consistent messages that it’s impossible to be infected by any experimental HIV vaccines currently in testing.”

To maximize participation in HIV vaccine trials and ensure future uptake of a safe and effective vaccine among vulnerable communities, Newman says there must be programs and interventions tailored to their unique needs and preferences. His research is providing the foundation for these interventions. “The evidence we use to design any HIV prevention strategy must be based in the communities that are most at risk for HIV. We see these communities as vulnerable, yes, but we also see them as having a tremendous wealth of knowledge and agency. They’re the ultimate experts on their own life situations.” In all of his community-based research, Newman disseminates his findings back to the communities that provided them so that they can use them in their own HIV prevention efforts.



In addition to addressing people’s fears and misperceptions about HIV vaccines, Newman’s research has demonstrated how vital it is to confront the systemic issues that hinder HIV prevention. “We increasingly see a need for structural interventions to deal with institutional prejudice, poverty, lack of access to health care and human rights violations.” His study of women attending public health clinics in Nairobi, for example, found that their striking poverty would prevent them from accessing any future HIV vaccine unless it were government subsidized. In his research on men who have sex with men in India, on the other hand, the most compelling structural issue is the criminalization of homosexuality. “When gay male outreach workers are routinely harassed by police simply for carrying condoms and HIV prevention materials,” he says, “that’s completely antithetical to public health.”

Another challenge that permeates all of Newman’s work is how to prevent people from “lightening up” on their safer sex practices when an HIV vaccine become available – especially given the fact that initial vaccines will not be completely effective. “If people stop using condoms or increase their number of sex partners, it could counteract the epidemiological benefits of a vaccine,” he says. “We have to keep the message on the radar that an HIV vaccine is not a ‘magic bullet’ and AIDS is still a dangerous disease. It’s a difficult balance: you have to maintain hope without enabling potential harm.”

reach

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