

& arts SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN ■ SPRING 2015

**Mysteries of
ancient bones**

**Technology
in the
classroom**

**Odyssey to
Canada**

GREEN & WHITE EDITION

Angela Lieveise, Department of Archaeology & Anthropology



arts & SCIENCE

**ARTS&SCIENCE
SPRING 2015**

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Director of College Planning
Andrea Wasylow-Ducasse

Editor
Christopher Putnam

Contributors
Brittany King, Ashleigh Mattern, Trevor Pritchard, Christopher Putnam

Designer
Amber Moon

Principal Photography
David Stobbe, Stobbe Photography

Advertising & Subscriptions
Blessing Mudauko
(306) 966-2097
cdar@artsandscience.usask.ca

Produced by
Communications, Development & Alumni Relations
College of Arts & Science,
University of Saskatchewan
235 Arts Building, 9 Campus Drive
Saskatoon SK S7N 5A5

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Write for us

We know there are great writers amongst our students and alumni, and also talented artists and illustrators. Want to be a contributor? Contact communications@artsandscience.usask.ca

Send us your ideas

We want to hear from you! Please send story ideas that might be of interest to Arts & Science students, faculty, staff and

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UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

College of
Arts and Science

Visiting professor Ken Dryden lectures students at the U of S while interacting in real-time with classes on four other campuses across Canada—one example of how modern technology is changing the classroom. See story on page 8.

Cover: Angela Lieveise, associate professor of archaeology. DAVID STOBBE

Inside Cover: CHRISTOPHER PUTNAM

Contributors



Brittany King

Brittany King is in her third year of a four-year BA in English at the U of S. She is completing a term as a communications intern at the College of Arts & Science, developing her skills in writing, editing, and working in an office environment. Brittany hopes to become an editor at a book publishing house after graduation.



Ashleigh Mattern

Ashleigh Mattern (BA'11) is a full-time freelance writer based in Saskatoon. She graduated from the College of Arts & Science with an English degree and a great hands-on education in journalism from working at the U of S's student newspaper, *The Sheaf*. Learn more about her work at ashleighmattern.com.



Trevor Pritchard

Trevor Pritchard (BA'01) is an associate producer and occasional traffic reporter with CBC Ottawa. Every year he makes a pilgrimage back to Saskatchewan to enjoy the open skies, the grain elevators and a pint or three of Paddock Wood. Follow him on Twitter at @tcpritchard.



Christopher Putnam

Christopher Putnam (BA'07) is the editor of *Arts&Science*. He worked as a reporter in weekly Saskatchewan newspapers, as a researcher in Canadian crime television and as an online writer before joining the College of Arts & Science as a communications officer.

A note from Dean Peter Stoicheff



The many alumni I'm privileged to meet are pleased to know that their College of Arts & Science comprises approximately half of the university in terms of student enrolment and research funding.

In fact, we are one of the very few colleges in Canada that offers a full array of art, social science and science programs. We are a flourishing hub of creativity and research, guided by student program goals such as communication skills, inquiry-based learning and world-minded citizenship.

Our Aboriginal Student Achievement Program supports Aboriginal students—

academically, financially, socially and culturally. It has helped more Aboriginal students to stay in their degree programs and to achieve better grades.

The College of Arts & Science is always imagining and offering innovative academic programming that aligns with the real problems facing the world. Please stay in touch with your college community—we'd love to hear from you again. ■

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2015 TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Left to right: Loleen Berdahl, Marie Lovrod and George Patrick

DAVID STOBBE

Every spring, the College of Arts & Science recognizes one outstanding instructor from each of its three divisions with the Teaching Excellence Award. Loleen Berdahl, Marie Lovrod and George Patrick are the 2014-15 recipients.

Loleen Berdahl, an associate professor of political studies, received the award for the Division of Social Sciences.

Berdahl says she wants her students to be informed and engaged citizens who leave her classroom with more than just textbook knowledge. She tries to foster critical

thinking skills that will benefit students for their entire lives.

“I greatly enjoy getting to know my students, and the most rewarding aspect of teaching for me is when I see a student work through and understand a key idea,” says Berdahl. “Witnessing that ‘aha moment’ is a great pleasure.”

Marie Lovrod, assistant professor of English and women’s & gender studies, received the Teaching Excellence Award for the Division of Humanities & Fine Arts.

Lovrod says she tries to bring a collaborative learning model to the classroom in which her role is that of an experienced learner in a community of co-learners and researchers.

“I remain deeply committed to establishing an empowering classroom with students, where assumptions can be challenged and issues explored,” says Lovrod. “Therefore, I encourage students to make experiential connections to the issues they study, situating their own perspectives through critical social, political and historical analyses of contemporary contexts.”

George Patrick, a full professor in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics, was the recipient of the award in the Division of Science.

“The discipline of mathematics itself is in conflict with the practice of effective teaching,” says Patrick. “Mathematics says: abstract, deepen, generalize. Effective teaching says: simplify to the essentials; be an expert guide. Much of the value of an instructor of mathematics comes from making choices about what to include, what to simplify and what to cut. I make choices so that the knowledge and skills that students must have are, as much as possible, transferred to the entire audience.”

Winners of the Teaching Excellence Award receive public recognition and \$2,500 toward their professional allowance accounts. ■

CORRECTION: 2014 TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Page 7 of the spring 2014 print edition of Arts&Science omitted the recipient of the 2013-14 Teaching Excellence Award for the Division of Science. We apologize for this error.

Hugo Cota-Sanchez, a professor in the Department of Biology, received the 2013-14 Teaching Excellence Award for the Division of Science.

Drawing on a fascination he has had with cacti since he was a teenager, Cota-Sanchez’s research centres on plant systematics with a focus on the *Cactaceae* family. He works to further science’s understanding of *Cactaceae* lineages such as the epiphytic cacti—cacti that have evolved to grow on host plants in rainforests rather than on desert ground.

Cota-Sanchez, who also curates the W.P. Fraser Herbarium on campus, tries to create a teaching atmosphere that is both intense and fun.

“My education philosophy is just being myself,” he says. “I love identifying myself with the students and not building barriers that impair communication.” ■



Holding a cutting from a cotton plant and dressed in an outfit of natural fibres, Hugo Cota-Sanchez demonstrates to students how some of humanity’s most important materials are sourced.

CHRISTOPHER PUTNAM



Nicole Paul's "Keeper of the Voice" is a statement on the preservation and loss of Aboriginal languages.

STUDENT'S PAINTING WINS NATIONAL AWARD

A fourth-year fine arts student's provocative painting has brought her national acclaim and helped to further the dialogue about a critical cultural issue.

Nicole Paul's painting "Keeper of the Voice" won first prize in the age 19-29 (senior) arts category of Aboriginal Arts & Stories 2014, the largest art and creative-writing competition for Aboriginal youth in Canada.

The painting is a massive eight-by-eight-foot mixed-medium self-portrait of Paul, a 22-year-old native of Prince Albert with Métis, Cree and Sioux heritage.

"I wanted to make a commentary on the dying Aboriginal languages within North America," says Paul. "I wanted to bring attention to the need for restoration and conservation towards these languages."

Her inspiration for the painting came as she worked on the Department of Art & Art History's The Child Taken project, which involved art students interviewing residential school survivors from across Canada.

"One of the things they all stressed that affected them the most was how they lost their language," says Paul. "It's such a big part of Aboriginal identity."

Paul's father is himself a residential school survivor who lost his language at a young age. Paul has since begun to study Cree as an adult, but wishes she'd had the opportunity to learn from her father.

The artist says she is thrilled to win the competition because of the much greater exposure the prize will bring to her message. She hopes more young Aboriginal people will make an effort to regain their lost languages.

Having finished her degree this spring, Paul plans to pursue a career in art conservation. She hopes to restore traditional works of art such as the petroglyphs in Canada's North as another way of preserving Aboriginal heritage.

Paul's win in the competition came with a \$2,000 cash prize and a trip to an awards banquet in Ottawa last summer. Later, in November, she received a medal at the Governor General's History Awards. ■

Learn more online.
See Nicole Paul's online portfolio at
www.nicolepaul.ca

WIND ORCHESTRA TO PERFORM ON INTERNATIONAL STAGE

The University of Saskatchewan Wind Orchestra has earned an invitation to the prestigious World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles (WASBE) Conference in San Jose this summer.

It is "exciting and humbling" to be one of just 15 ensembles from around the world invited to the biennial international conference, says Darrin Oehlerking, professor of music and director of the Wind Orchestra.

"It's fantastic. We have exceptional talent here, and it's just a wonderful feeling to be recognized at such a high level by peers from across the world."

The Wind Orchestra was chosen to attend on the basis of a recorded performance it submitted in late 2013. A blind jury considered

the submissions.

Attendance to WASBE 2015 comes with the opportunity for the orchestra's 45 student musicians to give three performances in Northern California during the week of the conference, July 13–20. One of the only invited ensembles made up entirely of undergraduate students, the U of S Wind Orchestra will be in the company of elite musicians from Israel, Japan, Germany and across the United States.

Hard work and dedication brought the orchestra this far, says Oehlerking, but the work is far from over. Instead of ending rehearsals in April as they normally would, the students will return to campus in early summer for four intensive weekend retreats to polish their performance in time for the conference. In

total, Oehlerking says the orchestra will put in another full semester's worth of rehearsal hours after classes end.

The students have also been hard at work outside of the concert hall. The total cost of the trip is estimated at \$100,000, and there is a long way to go before that fundraising goal is reached.

"They've sold ice cream sandwiches. They've sold perogies. They've sold tickets. They've started a RocketHub [crowdfunding] campaign," says Oehlerking.

Additional funding is coming from the U of S President's Student Experience Fund and the Division of Humanities & Fine Arts.

This is the third time in its 54-year history

TANYA TAGAQ: PROTEST WITHOUT WORDS

On Feb. 24, Inuit throat singer and 2014 Polaris Prize winner Tanya Tagaq delivered the 2015 Gail Appel Lectureship in Literature and Fine Arts at the college.

The Gail Appel Lecture, founded in 2002 by philanthropist Gail Appel and her husband Mark, brings an influential artist to campus every two years to inspire students, faculty and the broader community.

Tagaq gave two presentations. The first explored her art as a form of activism, and the second discussed her personal journey in an onstage interview with CBC Saskatoon radio host Leisha Grebinski.

Tagaq spoke passionately about racism, the seal hunt, missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and more before treating the packed audience to an impromptu musical performance.

The artist showed her reputation as a fiery advocate for her beliefs to be well-earned, but said that her actions are often misinterpreted. A photo she shared of her infant daughter next to a dead seal last year, for example, prompted a storm of outrage on social media—but Tagaq viewed the image in the same innocent light as a family photo taken at Thanksgiving dinner. She is often baffled by the contradictions in Canadian society, she explained.

Tagaq sees her music as a way of being heard across that cultural divide. Her wordless songs, she said, are an attempt to speak to people in basic and universal emotional terms. ■



DAVID STOBBE

that the U of S Wind Orchestra has been invited to a WASBE conference. It attended previous conferences in the Netherlands in 1989 and in Austria in 1995, both times under the direction of Marvin Eckroth.

“I am just so lucky to have inherited such a strong program of continued excellence right from when it started with Dr. David Kaplan,” says Oehlerking. ■

ERIN FRANCAIS

Learn more online.

▶ Watch the Wind Orchestra students' fundraising video at <http://goo.gl/V9k9TV>

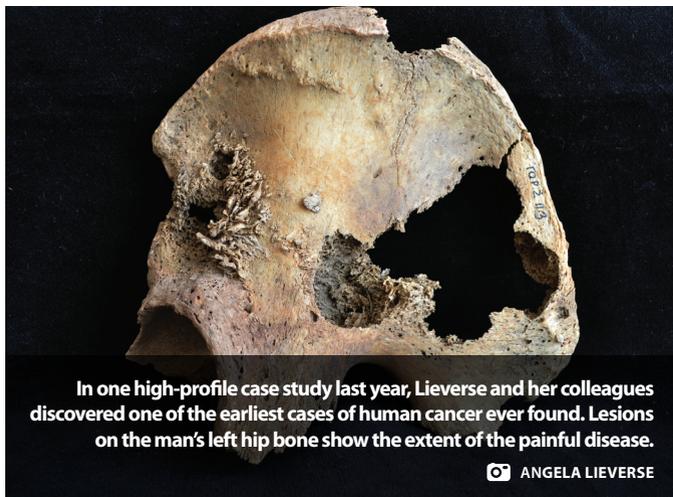


Resurrecting the past

Angela Lieverse finds poignant stories and profound lessons in the bones of ancient people

ASHLEIGH MATTERN (BA'11)





In one high-profile case study last year, Lieveise and her colleagues discovered one of the earliest cases of human cancer ever found. Lesions on the man's left hip bone show the extent of the painful disease.

ANGELA LIEVEISE



Another case study Lieveise published in February revealed an ancient tragedy: the bones of a young woman who died trying to deliver twins.

VLADIMIR BAZALIISKII

Angela Lieveise works like a detective: from the buried bones of forgotten people, she pieces together a puzzle.

Lieveise is a bioarchaeologist; she studies human remains from archaeological sites. An associate professor with the Department of Archaeology & Anthropology at the University of Saskatchewan, Lieveise is a scientist who studies both the physical world and human society.

“Archaeology is one of those sciences that bridges natural science and social science,” she says. “Doing one or the other would be inadequate. First and foremost, all archaeologists are anthropologists—we’re all interested in the human aspect of it.”

In one case, Lieveise studied the remains of a man who died of cancer some 4,500 years ago in Siberia. His bones had destructive lesions, essentially holes, characteristic of a lung or prostate cancer that had spread. It is the oldest evidence of metastatic carcinoma, one of the most common types of cancer in humans, suggesting the disease is not exclusively a modern one.

In another recent case study, she looked at a woman who died trying to give birth to twins 7,700 years ago. It is the earliest confirmed set of human twins in the world, and the oldest archaeologically documented case of death during childbirth.

Even though she works with human remains, Lieveise says she doesn’t find the work emotionally difficult. At least not usually.

“It is [difficult] when they’re very small children, or infants, or in the case of the twins, where you see this young mother who died in pretty much the most tragic death ever,” she says. “Maybe it’s because I’m a mom, too.”

Case studies get the most attention because they remind us that ancient humans were just like us. Both of the aforementioned studies were featured in national and international news media, including CBC science radio show *Quirks and Quarks*. Yet Lieveise says most of her research and publications aren’t the kind the public would find interesting.

For that work, she looks at big samples, reconstructing activity patterns, mobility, general disease and population health. This kind of research may not be as popular, but Lieveise notes it’s still essential to understanding the case studies; the interpretations she makes about those studies are only relevant because they can be put into a broader context.

Lieveise often works out of Russia, visiting the country almost every year since she first started working there during her master’s degree in 1997. Russia in particular offers opportunities difficult to find elsewhere in the world. The country’s Irkutsk region features an immense collection of human remains from a time period when most people didn’t bury their loved ones. And perhaps even more importantly, it’s not a problem politically or socially to dig up and study these remains.

In this part of Russia, the local Indigenous people don’t identify as being descendants of these early period individuals, who date from the middle Holocene epoch 4,000 to 8,000 years ago. The Russians also have a keen interest in their country’s history and prehistory.

It all comes down to respect, as much for living people as for the remains of the people she studies.

“I would never excavate remains if there were living people today who associated with those remains, who identified with those remains, and had a problem with it in any way,” Lieveise says. As a result, she rarely works in North America.

This year, she’ll be excavating in the Lake Baikal region of Irkutsk along with a colleague and students. They’ll be looking at cemetery usage, learning about the social structures of these ancient Siberian foragers and learning about their health by studying their bones.

Although she’s working to uncover the distant past, Lieveise’s findings may be able to help answer questions we have about humanity’s present and future. One of the major projects she is currently involved in looks at human adaptation and human transition with environmental change.

“This is really relevant to what’s happening in the world today,” she says. “How do people adapt culturally and physically to a changing world? While we’re experiencing unprecedented environmental change now, there has been environmental change throughout the history of humankind.”

Even when her work doesn’t have a direct impact on modern life, there’s still great value in her ability to paint a fuller picture of humanity’s lost past, which in turn provides a surprising existential comfort.

“I think the more we understand past people, the more we understand ourselves,” she says. ■



The classroom reinvented

Ken Dryden's "Making the Future" course uses technology to link his Saskatoon classroom with classrooms on four other Canadian campuses.
 CHRISTOPHER PUTNAM

CHRISTOPHER PUTNAM (BA'07)

Looking beyond laptops and Smart Boards, instructors in the College of Arts & Science are using the latest technology to bring new ways of learning to students

Connecting campuses

When Ken Dryden speaks to his class in Saskatoon, he speaks across Canada.

Dryden—politician, author, Hockey Hall of Famer and now a visiting U of S professor—teaches his interdisciplinary course INCC 398: "Making the Future" simultaneously on five university campuses.

"Making the Future" began in 2012 at McGill University. Dryden envisioned a class that challenged students to propose their own solutions to the biggest issues of Canada's future, from health care to energy.

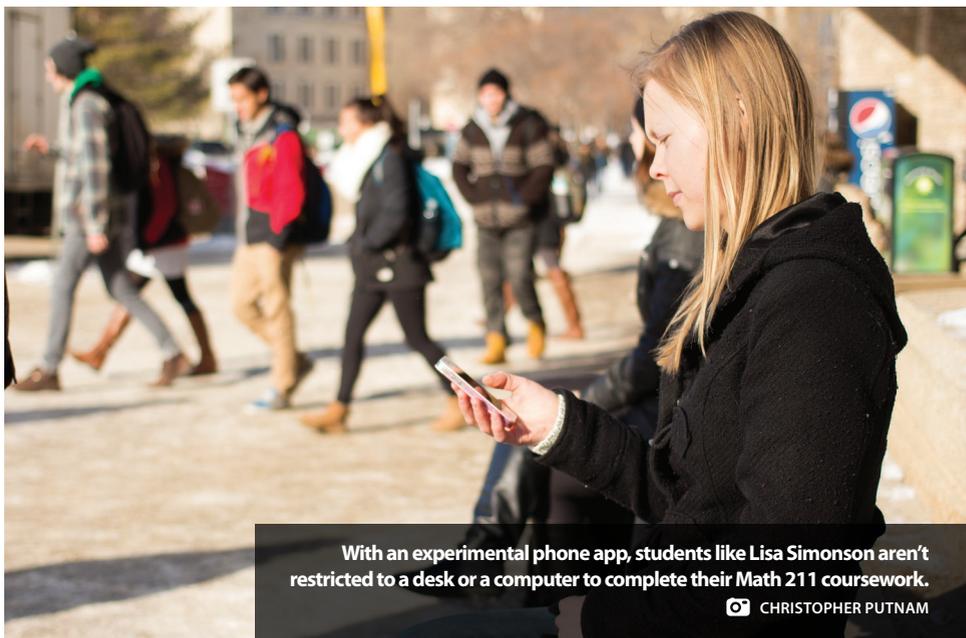
It soon grew beyond McGill. After all, thought Dryden, a course about Canada should include the whole country. But the typical online class arrangement of a student alone with a screen didn't seem right.

"What all of us wanted was to find a way where the class feels like a class," says Dryden.

That meant trying something new: a full classroom of students on one

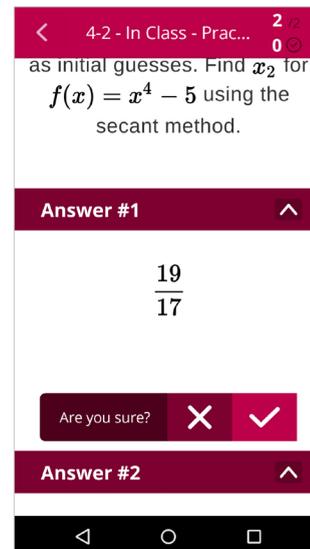


Students in the other four classrooms can see and hear Brayden Fox when he asks a question in class.
 CHRISTOPHER PUTNAM



With an experimental phone app, students like Lisa Simonson aren't restricted to a desk or a computer to complete their Math 211 coursework.

CHRISTOPHER PUTNAM



An image from the Practi app by Mathtoons Media

campus linked through technology to rooms full of their peers on other campuses. In January, the U of S, Ryerson and Memorial universities joined McGill and the University of Calgary in the largest “Making the Future” experiment yet.

To create a space able to host the class—and future classes like it—the university and college IT units joined a planned renovation to Thorvaldson 159, adding \$150,000 of electronics to bring the room to the cutting edge of communications.

“Having five universities from across Canada, in four different time zones, and making all this seem as perfect as everybody wants it to be—that was the challenge,” says Gary Brunet, director of college IT.

Four 80-inch screens, 45 button-activated microphones and three motorized video cameras were part of the upgrade. All of them are connected. When a student touches her microphone to ask a question, two cameras automatically turn towards her location. Her voice and image are broadcast to the other four campuses. Meanwhile, the local screens show a live feed from those other classrooms.

For Dryden, who delivers his lecture from a different campus each week, connecting students this way is about more than just exposing them to other viewpoints. It has a practical benefit, too.

“It is going to be a more connected future in whatever it is you do,” he says. “You are going to have to find a way of working with people [across distances]. So let’s get at it and start to get comfortable with it.”

Political studies student Brayden Fox says the class shook him from his comfort zone. Instead of doing group projects with friends he knew from outside of class, as he usually would, he was assigned two partners in Montreal.

“When you’re dealing with somebody who you don’t know, who you just talked to over Skype briefly to find a topic, it makes you really self-analyze very quickly what your strengths are,” says Fox.

In a course about the future, Fox and his classmates may have gotten a true glimpse of what’s to come.

Mobile mathematics

Ray Spiteri was coming to a disturbing realization.

“I felt I was losing touch with how students think.”

Spiteri, a professor of both mathematics and computer science at the U of S, found that his students weren’t responding to the study methods that got him through university—reviewing mock final exams, for example.

Then, during a trip to B.C. at the end of 2013, Spiteri met Kristin Garn, director of Kelowna-based mobile software company Mathtoons Media. Her team was seeking a professor to test their new educational software: a “superuser” who could “work with us at the cutting edge of what we plan to do,” according to Garn.

Mathtoons was developing an app for Android and Apple devices called Practi that seemed to be just what Spiteri was looking for.

Every math teacher knows that the key to learning mathematics is practice.

“When Newton was asked how he figured out his law of gravitation,” says Spiteri, “his answer was, ‘By constantly thinking about it.’”

Practi is meant to help students do just that. At its most basic, the app is a method of delivering quizzes that students can complete on their phones anywhere. Starting in January, Spiteri’s Math 211 students were required to complete three Practi quizzes, written by Spiteri, for every lecture. By latching onto an electronic device students have chosen to keep front of mind, Spiteri hopes to help them keep the material front of mind as well.

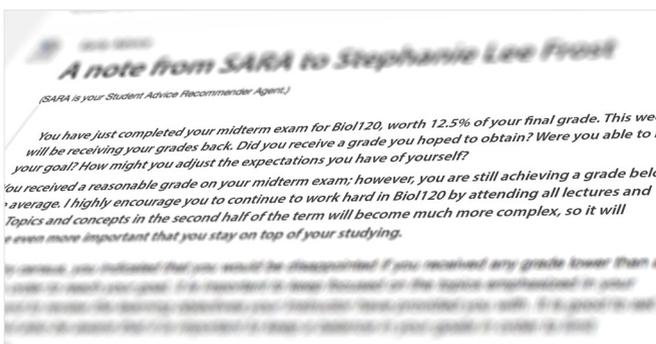
For a data-driven teacher like Spiteri, however, the true appeal of the software is in what it can tell him: not just whether his students are studying, but when—in the final frantic minutes before class, for example—and how successfully.

Practi’s analytics, still under development, will send Spiteri back a wealth of data on every question he assigns. If many students choose the same incorrect answer, it might demonstrate a need to clear up a misunderstanding about a certain concept. If students scroll up multiple times to reread a question before answering, it might hint at confusion or hesitancy. The app can even track how forcefully an answer button is pressed—showing confidence in a right answer, perhaps, or frustration with a wrong one.



The Department of Biology is testing technology as a way to give more personalized attention to students in its massive first-year classes—classes such as Professor Ken Wilson's section of Biol 120.

CHRISTOPHER PUTNAM



“We’re right at the tip of the iceberg on [the analytics],” says Spiteri.

For a generation of students accustomed to limitless flexibility and instant feedback through technology, the mobile app is already making a difference.

“Rather than just attending a lecture and then not really thinking about it until the next class,” says Math 211 student Lisa Simonson, “I’m constantly learning.”

The SARA project

“At this time in the term, you appear to be just passing Biol 120. Use this as a signal that much more effort is needed to succeed.”

Like any good teaching assistant, SARA takes an interest in her students’ academic performance as well as their personal lives. She is upbeat about their progress and blunt when they need to improve.

SARA is a piece of software.

Developed in-house at the U of S, SARA (Student Advice Recommender Agent) was piloted this year with the students of Biology 120: “The Nature of Life.”

More than 1,500 students take Biol 120 each year on their way to degrees in nursing, pharmacy, medicine and more. In such a popular course, large class sizes are unavoidable.

Professor of Biology Ken Wilson, who teaches some of the largest Biol 120

sections, knows how challenging it is to give students individual attention in that environment.

“[In a small class], you can go, ‘Hey Mike, you look like you’re having a hard time with something,’” says Wilson. “But in this class, you have this sea of faces that you’re staring at each day.”

The Department of Biology knew that many students weren’t performing to their full potential. And so last spring, a conversation began between the department and the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching Effectiveness, a part of the University Learning Centre (ULC).

Three ideas resulted. First, the ULC would offer weekly peer-led study sessions to first-year biology students. Second, students would be required to complete weekly online quizzes. Third—the idea that would “tie it all together,” according to ULC director Jim Greer—the SARA project.

Developed by a team at the Gwenna Moss Centre and launched last fall, SARA is intended to help give students some of the personalized attention they need. Every week, Biol 120 students receive an online message from SARA, written in plain English, that updates them on their individual progress and suggests the resources that will help them most. SARA automatically constructs the unique messages from a vocabulary of words and sentences written by her creators.

SARA doesn’t just consider academic performance. Drawing on sources such as the Student Entrance Census, the software agent might know if a student is the first in his family to attend university, for example, or if he moved to Saskatoon from a distant hometown. Those students are given extra encouragement to pursue social supports on campus that might make their university transition easier.

The results so far appear “very, very encouraging,” says Greer. Out of 1,200 students who took Biol 120 in the fall, about 100 fewer than normal received “D” and “F” grades. Fifty more students than usual scored “A.”

“You could see the students just sliding up the grade distribution,” says Greer.

It’s too early to say which of last year’s additions to Biol 120 made the biggest difference, or if, as Wilson believes, it was the combination of all three. For now, the Biology Department and the ULC are eager to try again in the fall and to see if students in other programs might benefit from SARA’s sage advice. ■



In his Irvine, California home, That Ngo displays his multitude of books, patents and degrees. Ngo was admitted as a fellow of the American Institute of Chemists in 1991, the National Academy of Clinical Biochemistry in 2005 and the Royal Australian Chemical Institute in 2006.

ERROL HIGGINS

The chemistry of That Ngo

An escape from persecution and a turning point at the U of S—critical elements in one man's remarkable life

TREVOR PRITCHARD (BA'01)

It was 1966, and That Ngo (BSc'69, SC'70, PhD'74) was on a plane to Saskatchewan with 50 dollars smuggled in his tie—and not much else.

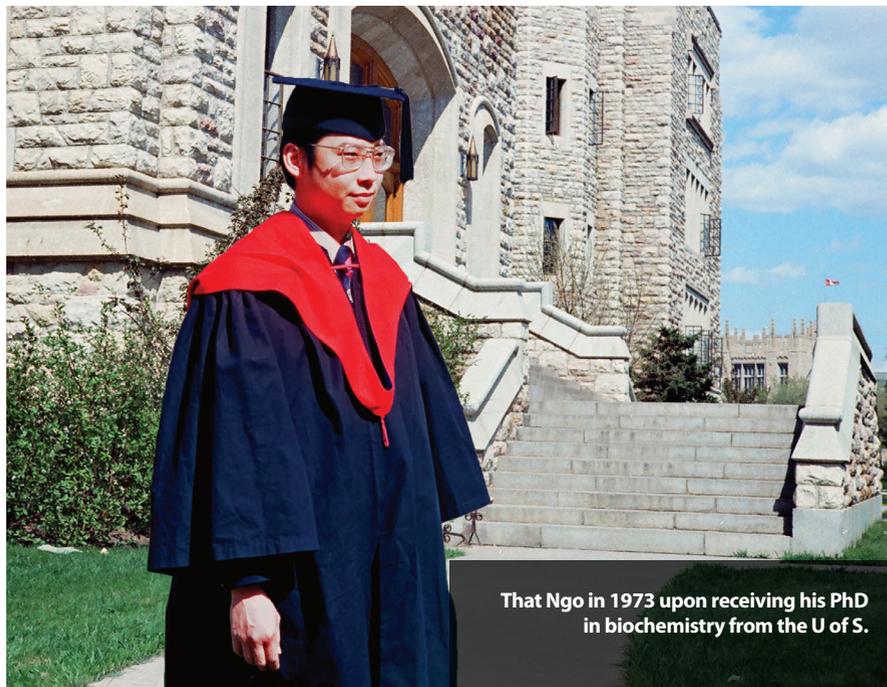
“It was a huge decision,” recalls Ngo, now 71 and retired in Irvine, California after an accolade-filled career as a University of Saskatchewan-trained biochemist. “I didn’t have much of a chance to [go to university] in Indonesia.”

Ngo may no longer be toiling away in the lab every day, but he’s arguably working as hard as ever. It’s just that his current work has a more literary focus. Since retiring, he’s written poetry, newspaper articles, four cookbooks, and the memoir *Chinese-Indonesian: An Odyssey through Racism, Ethnicity and Science*. It’s a highly personal look at the prejudice

and hardships that Chinese immigrants to Indonesia faced in the 1960s under the Sukarno and Suharto regimes.

Published in 2013 and currently being translated into Indonesian, *Chinese-Indonesian* is a detailed exploration of Ngo’s life as a young man in his family’s adopted homeland, from his time in a Chinese private school to his eventual decision to leave Indonesia behind and move to Canada to study.

In one chapter he describes being spit upon by a member of an Indonesian student militia simply for being a “cino,” a racial slur commonly directed towards Chinese-Indonesians. Later, he writes about being “spared the



That Ngo in 1973 upon receiving his PhD in biochemistry from the U of S.



Now retired, Ngo's laboratory today is his kitchen. He is the author of four cookbooks.

ERROL HIGGINS

agony” of having to change his name to something less Chinese-sounding—a policy instituted by the Suharto government after he left.

“I wanted [my daughter] to know how I came about, how my parents and my grandparents came from China to Indonesia, what I went through,” says Ngo, explaining why he wrote the memoir. “It’s become a family history.”

Ngo’s family were Chinese immigrants; he was born in a small Indonesian town in East Java at the foot of an active volcano. But because of his parents’ immigrant status, and the fact that Ngo wasn’t old enough to apply for Indonesian citizenship, he was barred from state-run schools and attended a private Chinese-language institution instead. When he graduated, the Indonesian government refused to recognize his diploma, leaving him few opportunities for post-secondary study in the country.

Ngo did have an uncle who’d moved to Saskatoon a few years earlier, however: a doctor who cared for tuberculosis patients at the city’s former sanatorium. And he was more than willing to help with his nephew’s transition.

It was midway through the first semester when, in October 1966, Ngo arrived at the U of S. His English was poor, and he could barely understand what his professors were saying. On his first chemistry midterm, Ngo barely got 20 per cent, and his next exam didn’t go much better.

But Ngo knew it was the language barrier that was his impediment, not the equations and formulas. Nights of hard work paid off; Ngo would ace his third exam with a perfect score, and in 1970 he received his degree, with honours. Three years later he would leave the U of S with his biochemistry PhD securely in hand.

“The people in Saskatoon were tremendous,” says Ngo, who supported himself by working at the university’s library after the newly installed Suharto government confiscated his family’s business back in Indonesia. “I can’t thank them enough.”

After graduating, Ngo would go on to a lengthy career as a biochemist, first in academia and later as the president and CEO of multiple private firms, both in Canada and the United States. He has published more than

140 articles and is the holder of 14 different patents, although not for perhaps his most significant accomplishment: being the co-discoverer of a procedure called the Ngo-Lenhoff assay, which eventually allowed for the development of OneTouch home blood glucose tests for diabetes patients. (As Ngo says, he and his colleague were “old school,” too focused on the research to realize its monetary value.)

Now, Ngo hopes the translation of his memoir into Indonesian will be completed in the coming months.

He says he won’t be surprised if the book gets a “mixed reaction” among Indonesian readers, but he’s not shying away from some of the difficult truths.

“Some Chinese-Indonesians didn’t like the memoir. Some [native] Indonesians may not like it either,” admits Ngo. “But whatever I’ve said in there, it’s completely true.”

Of course, not all of Ngo’s written exploits handle such sensitive subject matter. He’s also written those aforementioned cookbooks—one of which is available on Amazon, Ngo notes—that feature recipes he’s perfected over the years.

“I’m an experimental biochemist ... so I use my kitchen as the lab,” says Ngo. “And my wife and daughter, they are the guinea pigs.”

One of his favourite, family-approved dishes is gado gado, an Indonesian salad that features boiled vegetables, sliced eggs and peanut sauce. It might seem like a curious choice, given his fraught relationship with his homeland, but Ngo—who still has a brother and sister living in Indonesia—says it’s not the people or culture of Indonesia that trouble him.

Rather, it’s the long line of corrupt officials who’ve regarded the country as “their own personal fief.”

“I still have a strong tie to Indonesia. I love Indonesian food,” says Ngo. “I hope the newly-elected president, Joko Widodo, can clean up the government and not cave in to special interest groups.” ■

The Intensely Vigorous College Nine



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

The Intensely Vigorous College Nine pose in drag at the University of Saskatchewan Homecoming Parade in 1960.

The Nine play at a U of S football game in 1963, wearing mismatched uniforms.

A band member runs from police in 1964, escaping them at the rear fence of Griffiths Stadium. He later turned himself in.

A performance at a Huskies football game in 1954.

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"It ain't much for music, but it's hell for spirit!"

BRITTANY KING

For "lending their unusual talent and original arrangements to the world of music," read an Oct. 5, 1954 article in *The Sheaf*, "the Intensely Vigorous College Nine have been chosen as Men of the Week."

A few days earlier, a group of uproarious University of Saskatchewan students debuted the Intensely Vigorous College Nine marching band, a name decided upon after many other versions, including the G.B. Armstrong Memorial Vegetable Soup Contest and Tug O' War College Marching Band.

It was the beginning of a U of S legacy that would span six decades.

The band quickly became known for its comical personality. In the words of one band member quoted in *The Sheaf's* 1954 article: "It ain't much for music, but it's hell for spirit!"

Unlike most marching bands, the Intensely Vigorous College Nine dressed up in mismatched clothing—sometimes in drag. The band was more than a spectacle, however; they were talented musicians. Though rumoured to only know one number, they in fact could play a range of music from military marches to TV and movie themes—any song that could be easily hummed. From the beginning, the Nine always played by ear, never from sheet music.

The marching band entertained at many Huskie volleyball, basketball and football games, playing music and reciting their original chants. They were popular with the home crowd, but some opposing teams found

their performances obnoxious. Police even publicly chased down band members at Griffiths Stadium for beer possession during at least one Huskies football game.

The band's members were not troublemakers, however—just very enthusiastic and proud members of the campus community. Many members went on to great achievements in their lives and careers. Thomas "Bobs" Caldwell (BA'54, LLB'57), one of the founding members of the Nine, became a provincial court judge and the president of the Saskatoon Jazz Society. Ramon John Hnatyshyn (BA'54, LLB'56), Governor-General of Canada from 1990 to 1995, was another founding member. Throughout the years, the members of the band changed, but the Nine remained a staple on campus.

The Intensely Vigorous College Nine became popular outside of campus as well; they were sometimes booked for four different gigs in a day. In the mid-1990s, this popularity caused a dispute between the USSU and the band in regards to the ownership of the name. Afterward, the Nine became their own company outside of the university and continued to play at many events. They have performed at 18 Grey Cup Parades over the years, the latest in 2013 in Regina.

The band's most recent appearance was in December 2014 at the Sundog, an arts and entertainment fair held in Saskatoon. The Intensely Vigorous College Nine are already booked for the Sundog in 2015. ■

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Left to right: Piya Chattopadhyay, Dean Peter Stoicheff, Donald Kerr

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