SADLY, MY DOG THROWING HERSELF AT THE WINDOW TO defend me from the approaching snowplows is a telling sign that spring is not fully upon us. But the end of term is in sight.

And fortunately the weather cooperated for March Break Open House. Student, faculty, and staff volunteers once again put on a great show for prospective students and their families. Best of all, I was told repeatedly by our visitors how much they appreciated the warm welcome they received. We are currently working through the recommendations from the Strategic Enrolment Management Report as well as the most recent data from the National Survey of Student Engagement to refine our recruitment efforts for the next cycle. Stay tuned for more information on how we can all play our parts.

We have also been busy on other fronts. We continue to increase outreach partnerships in the wider community with this month’s Kitchener Public Library panel on the refugee crisis - featuring our colleagues Suzan Ilcan, Marlene Epp, and Lamees Al Ethari. Once again it was standing room only and we received a favourable notice on the late night news. This is the third interdisciplinary panel that we have held in partnership with the local libraries and given the enthusiastic response to date, we will be planning more.

The Department of Sociology and Legal Studies brought Chief Willie Littlechild, one of the three TRC commissioners, to campus. His lecture was a very moving reminder of the scars left by the Residential Schools yet he also managed to instill hope that institutions such as ours have an important role to play.
play in partnership with First Nations to redress the historic wrongs.

Closer to home, I would like to congratulate our colleagues who were given tenure and/or promotion. It has been a busy couple of years for our hardworking Faculty Tenure and Promotion Committee and I could not be more delighted at the outcome. In terms of age profile we have one of the youngest faculties of arts in Canada, and the recently completed Annual Performance Review cycle provides abundant proof of the Faculty’s pursuit of the highest standards of teaching and research.

Speaking of excellence, we will be moving our annual celebration of teaching, service, and research – including Arts Awards - from the fall to the spring. I hope you will be able to join me on April 25 as we honour many contributors to our dynamic community. I am looking forward to next year’s awards when we can recognize our colleagues within the new Hagey extension – which I’m delighted to say is on schedule for its grand opening this fall term.

Inside Philosophy

» CHRISS LOWRY
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PHILOSOPHY

If you were telling someone from away about your department, what would you want to say about it first?

This is a philosophy department that takes applied philosophy seriously. Many of the department’s faculty and graduate students do research and teaching that can be described in some meaningful way as applied. We will soon be starting an applied philosophy PhD program. The attitude here is that applied philosophy is real philosophy deserving to be done well. It is a big part of what drew me to the department.

Tell us about a popular course offered by Philosophy?

If I were a student, I would want to take PHIL 202 Gender Issues. In addition to the fascinating and important content, it is often taught by (Arts Teaching Fellow) Shannon Dea, whose rigour and charisma must make the classroom environment quite something.

Are there any odd or unique rituals/traditions in the Philosophy department?

Nearly every day within the first few minutes after noon, I get a knock on my door from a randomly rotating handful of colleagues with the question, “Lunching?” We have a friendly lunch room. It is often filled with chats about pedagogy, someone’s latest conference trip, or, when the crowd is especially lucky, one of (Associate Dean, Research) Tim Kenyon’s stories. Witnessing his retelling of the time he tried to solve a gopher problem definitely felt like a kind of initiation into the life of the department.

What do you, personally, like about living and working in the Kitchener-Waterloo?

I left my previous position in Hong Kong to come here in search of colleagues and graduate students with research interests that overlap and challenge mine. Along with that, I found collegiality and an atmosphere of pedagogical commitment.
I am a fan of the ridiculousness of the campus geese and the shivers I get when the trees and evening sky over Waterloo Park are covered with crows.

I enjoy KW’s nerdiness and its good bunch of vegan-friendly places to eat like the Downtown Crepe Cafe, Pyrus, Guanaquita, and East African Cafe. I like that I get to walk or bike through greenery most days to and from work. commute after this!

Inside Sociology & Legal Studies

If you were telling someone from away about your department, what would you want to say about it first?

I actually get asked about our department quite a bit, particularly in relation to our growing Legal Studies program. One of the first features I mention about it is the tremendous transition that has occurred here over the past few years. The growth of Legal Studies, combined with a number of new faculty hires, expanded the department’s research profile considerably, adding to its dynamism. We now have expertise in a number of new areas including, migration, digital and gaming culture, science and technology studies, surveillance, and gender violence. These topics complement the department’s existing expertise in terrorism, policing, social networks, religion, social and political thought, health, and education. In addition, almost half of the department –seven out of seventeen –is now comprised of junior faculty. The changes are exciting and have allowed those of us who are new to play a major role in re-shaping the department’s identity.

What’s an especially popular course offered in Sociology or Legal Studies?

One of the most popular courses offered in our Department at the moment is our recently developed, specialized Introduction to Sociology course, which is tailored specifically for first year students expressing an early interest in majoring Sociology. Janice Aurini designed and teaches the course. The idea for it emerged during our department retreat when we decided that it might be useful to provide a smaller, seminar version of Intro to Sociology, rather than the typical, first-year lecture course, which generally draws in between 200 to 400 students. Each week is based on a dissecting a well-known adage, such as “numbers don’t lie,” “you get what you pay for,” and “you were just born that way.” Through this process, students learn how
to examine statistical trends and are introduced to a variety of sociological concepts, including social stratification, social mobility, socialization, and norms and values. In addition, they also have the opportunity to go out into the community and conduct their own research. Few first-year, introductory courses offer students the chance to leave the classroom and apply what they have learned to the world around them so early on in their undergraduate careers. Based on what we’ve heard, the students genuinely love the class.

Can you tell us about any unique or surprising aspects of UW’s Sociology & Legal Studies?

I think our Legal Studies program is unique for its breadth of content, theoretical and methodological perspectives, and interdisciplinary course offerings. We have put together a strong curriculum where students have the abilities to learn about the law as a sociological phenomenon through both quantitative and qualitative studies, a variety of theoretical frameworks, including critical race theory, feminist theories, and governmentality, and a number of different disciplines in both the humanities and social sciences. While we are continuing to expand, the program is already developing a reputation as being “up and coming” in law and society circles. Also, our recent rankings indicate that we are now one of the top five Sociology departments in Canada and top 100 in the world.

What do you, personally, like about living and/or working in the Waterloo area?

Prior to moving to Waterloo, I was fortunate to have had the opportunities to live in a variety of big cities, including New York City, London, England, San Francisco, Toronto, and Chicago. Many people were shocked to hear that I was moving to Waterloo and slightly concerned that I would struggle with the adjustment of leaving the city life! Although I wasn’t worried about this transition, at the same time, I didn’t realize that it would be so easy.

After living here for a few years, I’ve found Kitchener Waterloo to be an incredibly unique and heterogeneous city. You can’t quite define or pigeon hole it, which is precisely what I like the most about it.

On the one hand, it’s a typical college town with a village like feel. On the other, it is also a major hub for the technology sector. In addition to this, the city has a history of social justice activism. It is the first place in Canada to experiment with restorative justice programs, is well known for organizations such as the Working Centre, and was at one point, the headquarters of a number of activist organizations involved in anti-globalization protests. Combined with all of this is Kitchener’s identity as a manufacturing town. Although many of the old factories have now been turned into condos and offices (and we need to be critical of gentrification), most of the old buildings still exist. The Warehouse District in downtown Kitchener is my favourite neighborhood. Finally, I also want to mention that, even though I did not know anyone before moving here and I arrived on my own, I’ve found it very easy to meet new people and to develop a community. Most of my friends are other junior faculty at the University of Waterloo from a variety of departments. So, overall: so far, so good. And to be honest, I hardly ever miss living in a big city. I thought I’d end up spending more time in Toronto, but the truth is I’m rarely there.
Arts HeForShe Advocates speak about their disciplines and equity

» HEATHER SMYTH
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, ENGLISH

Why is it important to you to be an Arts HeForShe Advocate?

Equity, including gender equity, is a big part of what motivates me to be a teacher and to do my research. It’s important to me to bring that commitment to all the areas of my work and personal life, so I’m happy that I can do this kind of work within my academic “home,” the Faculty of Arts. The role of co-Advocate also means getting a chance to find out how much energy, insight, and commitment to gender equity the students, staff, faculty, and alumni have in Arts.

How does your research and teaching contribute to gender equity?

One simple contribution I try to make is ensuring that my syllabi and works cited lists have a broad representation of writers of all genders. I watch for who is participating in class, and how, and try to ensure the discussion formats and dynamics in class include all students.

I also design my courses to reflect the ways that gender is lived differently depending on factors such as racialization, homophobia, class stratification, and cultural norms: there are no singular “women’s” and “men’s” experiences.

In my current research on Canadian social justice representations in literature and the arts I explore how antiracist initiatives intersect with gender equity activism.

What’s an important step that any student, staff or faculty member can take to become invested in Arts HeForShe?

Please contact us at ArtsHeForShe@uwaterloo.ca or go the Arts HeForShe website and fill in our questionnaire: this will tell us who you are and what you can bring to the campaign. It will also help us share knowledge, because we want to find out what individuals and groups are already doing on campus to work towards gender equity and address gender-based violence. At the same time, think about what you want to see changed on your campus and UW workplace: what one initiative could you really stand behind? What can you do to get it off the ground? Where can Arts make the strongest contribution to the UW HeForShe campaign as a whole?

» DAVID MOSCOVITCH
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, PSYCHOLOGY

Why is it important to you to be an Arts HeForShe Advocate?

I see my role as a Faculty Advocate for HeForShe as being very compatible with the way I approach problems as a clinical psychologist and psychological scientist. As a psychologist, I believe strongly in the idea that people can learn to become more aware of - and work hard to change - personal biases, beliefs, and assumptions that underlie dysfunctional or harmful ways of feeling and behaving. Similarly, as an Arts HeForShe Advocate, it is natural to get behind the idea of helping to guide our Arts community in the process of taking a closer look at the biases, beliefs, and assumptions we tend to hold about gender and gender-related power structures and how these tend to drive our habitual ways of behaving, which often serve to reinforce those biases and to marginalize vulnerable people and groups.

The fact that the university has made a strong and public 5-year commitment to the HeForShe Impact 10x10x10 Program is really a golden opportunity for us in Arts to come together to define what this campaign means to us and to empower Arts students, faculty, staff, and alumni to collaborate with one another to implement change.

How does your own research and teaching contribute to gender equity?

There are so many factors that interact in the onset and maintenance of mental health problems and psychological disorders, but powerlessness or perceived powerlessness is often
an important piece of the puzzle. Epidemiological research in psychology has revealed that there exists a significant gender imbalance in the prevalence of anxiety and mood disorders, with women greatly outnumbering men. I don’t think this is a coincidence. For various reasons, including personal experiences with domestic violence, abuse, misogyny, and sexism, young girls and women in our society are far more likely than young boys and men to grow up believing that they do not have power or the right to access the power and resources they might need – in their relationships, in their jobs, and in their personal choices. This mindset is driven and reinforced by cultural, societal, and often familial expectations that are instilled in young girls from an early age. The power structure of the university can further reinforce these gender-specific expectations and disparities.

What’s an important first step that any student, staff or faculty member can take to become invested in Arts HeForShe?

Visit our new Arts HeForShe website and find out how to get involved. Submit a response to our webform survey (“Gender equity in Arts: What should we do?”) to make your voice heard. We want to hear from you!

Staff International Experience Fund

Applications are now being accepted for the Staff International Experience Fund (SIEF). This incredible opportunity through Waterloo International enables university staff to take part in an international experience that will broaden professional perspectives on a global scale by travelling and engaging in collaborative work with a partner institution of choice.

To learn more about the program and hear from Waterloo staff who have benefited from this experience, register for the SIEF workshop at the staff conference on April 7 and/or attend the brown bag lunch information session on April 14. Applications are due May 16.

Join the #1000GreenUW Challenge

What’s an Act of Green? Throughout April, UWaterloo Sustainability want you to join in the 1000 Acts of Green challenge across campus. Issued by Jean Andrey, the Dean of Environment, this challenge encourages all members of the campus community to showcase our everyday sustainable actions, big and small.

Participating is easy! Simply:

1. Take a picture of a sustainable action
2. Hashtag #1000GreenUW and unit social media handle
3. Post to Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram

Each post enters your unit into the weekly prize draw for WatCard top-ups and helps the unit demonstrate good green stewardship. Whether it’s recycling, biking, turning off the lights, or buying fair trade coffee, there are lots of ways to participate. Be creative, encourage your colleagues to join, and post away!