

THE OPEN STANDARD

The Newsletter of the Open Learning Division of Thompson Rivers University

Fall Issue

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OPEN for Learning

TRU hosts successful launch of the OERu.

By Lindsey Norris



Three years ago, the Open Educational Resource university (OERu) existed largely as an idea, a wiki and an agreement among founding partners to find a way to grant students formal academic credit for the learning achieved by taking free online courses.

Today, it has grown into a partnership of 30 post-secondary institutions located around the world, with a new website that offers resources for organizations and students interested in open education.

On October 31 and November 1, Thompson Rivers University (TRU) hosted the official launch of the OERu and the second meeting of OERu anchor partners (visit wikieducator.org/OER_universityHome to view OERu founding anchor partners and anchor partners). The event was a collaborative effort organized by Irwin Devries, Director of Curriculum Development, Ronda Olds, Assistant to Director of Curriculum Development, Brian Lamb, Director of Innovation, and many other Open Learning staff, as well as individuals from partner institutions.

The new OERu website was made live and shown to the public at 10 am by TRU President Alan Shaver and TRU Doctorate Sir John Daniel. It is now available at oeruniversity.org and provides a list of available open courses.

In addition to the launch, the meeting included a free public discussion delivered by Sir John Daniel entitled *Open Educational Resources and MOOCs in a Time of Economic Crisis*. There were also panel discussions and roundtables to discuss topics such as how to build free courses using open educational resources, use exams to assess learning and offer credit earned through prior learning assessment.

Local media, including the Kamloops Daily News and CFJC TV, covered the event and stories are available online. ■

THE OPEN STANDARD

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THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY
OPEN LEARNING

OL Faculty Achievements

HILDE wins doctoral competition

It is official; Open Learning Faculty Member Dr. Rosalie Hilde has the best dissertation, according to the prestigious Academy of Management (AoM) conference. In August 2013, Dr. Hilde was presented with the 2013 best dissertation award of the AoM Critical Management Studies (CMS) Division business conference in Orlando, Florida, which is the leading international conference in the field of management.

Dr. Hilde not only achieved the amazing honour of winning the annual doctoral competition, but she did so in a year that saw double the number of applications of high calibre submissions making the competition particularly tough, according to co-chairs of the AoM CMS Division.

Hilde won for her study 'Workplace (in)equality: Making critical sense of immigrant experiences in the Canadian workplace.' Vanessa Iwowo from the London School of Economics shared the glory for her thesis focusing on 'Knowing in context: A postcolonial analysis of contemporary leadership development and leadership education.'

The organizer of the competition, Dr. Sarah Gilmore, describes Hilde's thesis as focusing on the experiences of Hong Kong Chinese immigrants in the Canadian workplace and arguing for a rethinking of the current role of ethnic service organizations in the immigration system. "The reviewers praised the high quality thinking, writing and research witnessed in Hilde's study - especially the rich, nuanced empirical material which lies at the heart of the work," Dr. Gilmore said. ■



About Rosalie Hilde

Dr. Rosalie Hilde is one of the first Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) graduates in Canada. She studied at the University of Athabasca where her research project explored practical, current issues requiring in-depth knowledge and analysis. Hilde also achieved the highest grade point average of the graduating class of 2013. She is an instructor at the College of New Caledonia in Prince George, BC and an Open Learning Faculty Member at Thompson Rivers University's Open Learning Division where she has instructed BBUS courses for almost seven years.

BC Accountant Association recognizes ROSS

Helping to advance the next generation of accountants has given Kathie Ross even more than just personal satisfaction. Ross recently received the 2013 Chair's Award for Education from the Certified General Accountants Association of British Columbia (CGA-BC). This award recognizes individuals who have, through leadership and dedication, provided distinguished service to CGA-BC as an educator in the student or continuing professional education program. Ross has worked as an instructor, tutor and exam invigilator with CGA-BC, as an Open Learning Faculty Member at Thompson Rivers University since 2009, and as an instructor at SAIT Polytechnic, University Canada West, Camosun College, the University of Victoria and is currently associate faculty at Royal Roads University. She has taught courses and developed curriculum on subjects encompassing accounting, international tax and financial management. Through this work, Ross has supported and advanced the education of many CGA-BC students and members. ■



About Kathie Ross

Kathie Ross has over three decades of business experience including industry, government and the banking sector. She has worked as an accountant in public practice and as an auditor at both the BC provincial government and Canada Revenue Agency. She has both CPA and CGA designations and holds a Master of Education in Distance Education and a Master of Business Administration. Currently, Ross is based in Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK, where she is concentrating on completing her PhD in Accounting at Newcastle University. Her thesis will utilize oral history interviews to examine how continuing professional development experiences affect the identity of women professional accountants in Canada.

Dr. Gordon Tarzwell to Helm the CVU Board

Open Learning Vice-Provost elected fourth President
and Chair of the Board of Directors.

By Canadian Virtual University (CVU)

Gordon Tarzwell, Ph.D., Vice-Provost, Open Learning (OL) at Thompson Rivers University (TRU), has been appointed President and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Virtual University consortium (CVU), a collaboration of Canadian universities specializing in online and distance education.

Dr. Tarzwell has served on the CVU advisory committee and board for the past nine years. He is the fourth President of the organization, replacing Lori Wallace, Dean of Continuing and Distance Education at University of Manitoba. Dr. Dominique Abrioux, President Emeritus at Athabasca University, was CVU's founding president from 2000-2005 followed by Denis Mayer, Associate Vice-President, Student Affairs at Laurentian University.

"The Canadian Virtual University consortium is a valuable organization for TRU to be involved with," Tarzwell said. "It allows our students greater access to a much larger variety of courses than TRU is able to provide on its own. I look forward to assisting CVU in continuing to fulfill its mandate to make distance education opportunities known to potential learners and to also advocate for Canadian distance education providers at the national level."

Tarzwell joined TRU's OL Division in 2005 after working in higher education for 16 years. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Calgary as well as a Masters of Arts and a PhD in Economics from Queen's University. ■



A+ Aa Bb Cc

Math

STUDY HALL

Science

$$2 \times 4 = 8$$

Gym

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

Reading

Art

Teaching
education

BOOKS

BACK TO SCHOOL



Masters Unveiled

Revised program offered in blended modality.

Individuals interested in entering or advancing in the field of education have more options through Thompson Rivers University (TRU)'s expanded Masters of Education (MEd) program. The revised Masters program, which will be phased in over the next year, will be offered in a blended modality including on-campus, hybrid and online courses. Developed through a collaboration of TRU's Faculty of Human, Social and Educational Development and the Open Learning Division, the MEd will focus on specialties such as educational leadership, curriculum, counseling, and special and inclusive education among others. The program emphases will include: interdisciplinary approaches; aboriginal, local and global cultural awareness; flexible learning options; and life-long learning. Irwin DeVries, Director of Curriculum Development for Open Learning, further explains that the plan is to build digital literacies into the program. "We believe that all educators of today and tomorrow need to be competent in skills related to social media and other digital tools," DeVries said. ■



Evaluating Education

Canada's labour market defines the value of a degree.

Canada's skilled and educated workforce may be in trouble according to a report by CIBC World Markets. The problem, according to CIBC Deputy Chief Economist Benjamin Tal, is that while a higher education is a necessary condition for a good job in Canada, it is no longer a sufficient condition. "Narrowing employment and earning premiums for higher education mean that, on average, Canada is experiencing an excess supply of post-secondary graduates," Tal said. "Despite the overwhelming evidence that one's field of study is the most important factor determining labour market outcomes, today's students have not gravitated to more financially advantageous fields in a way that reflects the changing reality of the labour market."

In many instances, it is the programs Canadians are choosing to study that is resulting in them falling behind in the earnings scale.

"Across subjects, the biggest bang for buck comes from specialized and professional fields such as medicine, law and engineering," Tal said. "A look at the dispersion of earnings across fields of study shows that there is a much greater risk of falling into a lower-income category for graduates of humanities and social sciences, with a limited risk for students of health, engineering or business."

"Those underperforming sectors comprise just under half of all recent graduates. In other words, Canadian students are continuing to pursue fields where upon graduation, they aren't getting a relative edge in terms of income prospects."

Tal explained that Canadians are aware of the financial outcomes of the programs they choose to study but are still loath to make the most profitable decisions in regards to field of study. The result is that Canada is now looking at an unemployment rate for university graduates of just 1.7% lower than for individuals who only hold a high school education. However, a post-secondary education will still mean better wages, it is not by much; a mere 30% premium over high school graduates.

Tal believes the solution, which is crucial to Canada's economy, is to funnel students into growth areas of the economy.

Specialized Health and Human Services programs available through the Open Learning (OL) Division of Thompson Rivers University may contribute to the upward momentum of Canada's economy. Some such programs may include the Polysomnography Certificate or the Anesthesia Assistant Post-Diploma program.

The CIBC report also indicates that engineering jobs have the highest wage premium while math, computer and physics related jobs come in second and commerce jobs come in third. As such, some of OL's programs may be of interest to students seeking a higher paying career. These include:

- **Bachelor of Commerce**
- **Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Commerce**
- **Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Commerce** ■



BREAK THE BOSS

The United Way Campaign evokes creative fundraising efforts.

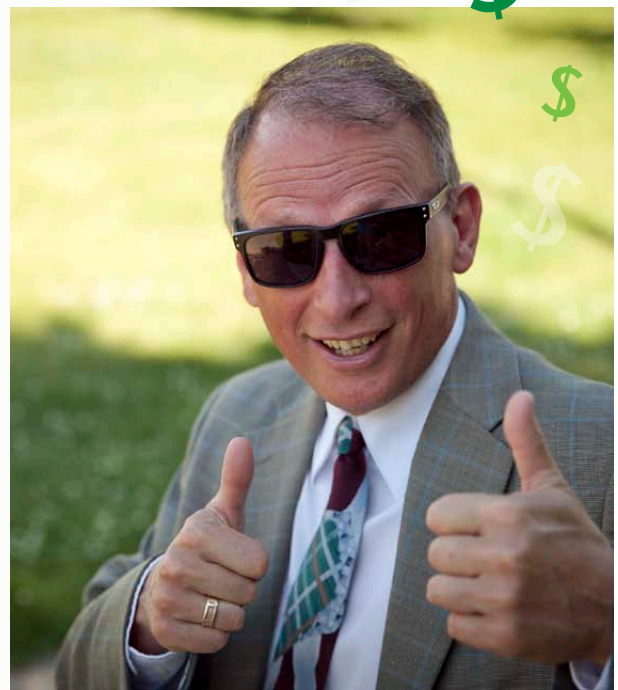
The United Way Employee campaign is not new to Thompson Rivers University (TRU). However, last year only 112 individuals institution-wide participated, with 16 of those people being from the Open Learning (OL) Division. Gordon Tarzwell, Vice-Provost of OL, devised a plan to help change those numbers for 2013. This year Tarzwell challenged the staff, faculty and Administration of OL to “Break the Boss.”

Tarzwell kicked off the United Way campaign at TRU with an email to OL staff introducing “Break the Boss,” through which he committed to make a personal contribution to the campaign equaling the total amount of all donations made by OL employees by end of day on November 1. That means whatever OL Faculty, staff and administration paid, so too did Tarzwell. “The concept of giving back to your community is a concept that I fully support,” Tarzwell said. “I believe the United Way is one of the many organizations that assist people in doing this and the TRU United Way campaign is a way of facilitating this activity in the work environment.”

The “Break the Boss” challenge provides a great opportunity to double the amount of funds that the United Way will receive from any planned donation a single OL member makes, according to Tarzwell. “It is my hope that the ‘Break the Boss’ campaign encouraged some people to start the giving process, or to restart the giving process, and that it will instill in them a sense of good works that will live on beyond this campaign,” Tarzwell said.

The final total on the evening of Friday, November 1, was 49 contributors from OL for a donation of \$7,535. With Tarzwell matching this amount, OL has already contributed \$15,070. This is a hefty increase over last year, which saw only 16 contributors from OL for a total donation of \$1,683.

Donations are still being accepted. Visit <https://www.tru.ca/forms/unitedway> to access the online form and make your contribution today. ■



Moving on Up

Former OL student realizes personal and professional successes.



Just over four years ago *The Open Standard* introduced Meaghan Pacheco, working woman and single mom who completed her post-secondary education through Open Learning (OL) and changed careers.

In February of 2009, Pacheco was working full-time as a Land Development Administrator and a Realtor in Kelowna while juggling her other responsibilities as a mother and online student. Pacheco successfully completed a Bachelor of Arts with OL and then moved on to achieve her Post-Baccalaureate Diploma in Commerce (Accounting). Pacheco said her post-bacc diploma has been a great addition to her resume. "I haven't been turned down for a contract since I received my credential," Pacheco said.

In the four years since Pacheco was first introduced on the pages of *The Open Standard*, she has not only changed careers to become a consultant for accounting firms but also gave birth to her second child in August 2013.

Currently in the works for Pacheco is a CGA designation, which she plans to complete by 2014. Not stopping there, Pacheco intends to move on to a Masters program to continue in her upward journey. ■

Student Storytellers

Challenging students to tell how their research affects lives, world and future.

Students studying in the humanities or the social sciences could win big if they put their creativity to the test.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) has launched a contest entitled *The Storytellers* that challenges "post-secondary students to show Canadians how social sciences and humanities research is affecting our lives, our world and our future prosperity."

Submissions are being accepted from November 1, 2013 to January 15, 2014 in the form of a three-minute pitch explaining why their SSHRC-funded research project matters. Submissions can be delivered via podcast, op-ed, video or infographic. Students are asked to answer the questions "where is the research taking us," "what is the story," and "how does it impact Canadians."

The top 25 finalists will receive a \$3,000 cash prize, registration and accommodation at SSHRC's Congress 2014 conference May 24-30, 2014, at which they will promote their project and participate in a research communications workshop. The 25 finalists will deliver their pitch in front of a panel of experts who will ultimately select five individuals to present a final talk as part of the SSHRC Impact Awards ceremony in the fall of 2014 where they will be covered by national media, promoted by SSHRC and showcased as part of the ceremony.

Visit www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca for more information and to submit your pitch. ■



The SSHRC is a federal research funding agency that promotes and supports post-secondary-based research and training in the humanities and social sciences. The Council, which reports to Parliament through the Minister of Industry, was created by an act of Canada's Parliament in 1977.



Social Sciences and
Humanities Research
Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches
en sciences humaines
du Canada

Canada

TRU *story:*

Open Learning helps one student sail towards the career of her dreams.

Tradition dictates that, while still in our teens, we graduate from high school, enroll in post-secondary studies and set out an educational path for our future careers. This tradition, however, does not work for everyone and is being challenged by informed young adults who are aware that what they like today may not resemble their future passions. Mariah McCooley was one such student who challenged the norm and designed her own unique educational path.

Like many others, McCooley began university fresh out of high school, however it took her a mere semester to realize that the bricks-and-mortar experience was not for her.

"I love to learn, but after doing only one semester (on-campus) I decided it was not the way I needed to learn," McCooley recalled. "I decided to take correspondence courses that interested me, while working, until I really knew what I wanted to go for."



McCooley has been taking online and distance courses for the past ten years. She took whatever appealed to her at the moment from Mass Communication and Canadian Government and Politics to the Sociology of Crime, BC History and Macroeconomics. Her intention was to remain a course-taking student through the Open Learning Division (OL) of Thompson Rivers University (TRU) and eventually enroll in a two-year Communications program through Royal Roads University. However, her rule to follow her interests and go with her instincts landed her a job on a sail-training ship where she developed a love of the sea life. At this point, years after graduating from high school yet maintaining her love of learning through online and distance studies with TRU, McCooley had a solid idea of what a lifelong career could look like for her.

Back on land, McCooley applied to the Coast Guard Officer Training program based out of Sydney, Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, she lacked a couple of the prerequisites (Physics 11 and 12) required for acceptance into the program. Not to fear, McCooley knew just where to go to promptly begin working on these requirements for entry.

"I immediately enrolled in both courses through Open Learning and finished them in a matter of weeks and gained acceptance into the four-year Bachelor's degree and Watchkeeping certification program," McCooley said. Not only was Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) instrumental in getting McCooley into the program quickly and on time, TRU also provided her a high quality experience with post-secondary studies. "The process was easy, fluid and flexible," McCooley said of her engagement with online and distance studies through TRU. "Student services was amazing and the course formats and delivery were simple and uncomplicated."

After graduating from the program in 2011, McCooley has enjoyed working as a Navigation Officer in the Canadian Coast Guard aboard a 200' Fisheries Patrol/Search and Rescue Vessel but once again found herself following her interests and instincts back to the virtual classroom.

"I felt like I would only find the challenge I was looking for in a shore-side, maritime policy or operations position," McCooley explained. In order to get there, McCooley needed to return to her online and distance studies through TRU-OL and begin working towards the prerequisites she required to upgrade her education through Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN)'s Masters in Maritime Management program. "Every step of the way, Open Learning has made my next move possible," McCooley said explaining that in addition to getting the prerequisites required, one Open Learning Faculty Member she worked with took the time to write her an incredible academic reference that she is certain was a big part of her successful acceptance into the graduate program.

"Looking back over the past decade of my life I have to say TRU has been hugely instrumental in bringing me to the position educationally and professionally that I am in today," McCooley said. "Without Open Learning, I would not have been able to get into the Coast Guard College program in time and without completing that program, the Masters program would have been inaccessible to me. Even the credits I did a decade ago turned out, miraculously, to be prerequisites for the MUN program." ■

LIFE in OL

The Kiwanis Club and the Open Learning Division of Thompson Rivers University (TRU) are sponsored a sold out fundraiser to supplement medical costs for the family of a former TRU employee. On November 20, “**Love and Laughs for Lizzie**” was held at The Dirty Jersey Sports Bar and Grill in order to raise money for Jen Harbaruk’s family to help them offset the cost of their daughter’s chemo treatments at Children’s Hospital in Vancouver. Lizzie Harbaruck is a beloved five-year-old girl who is bravely fighting her second bout with kidney cancer. Lizzie has to visit the hospital for a week every month for treatment which creates a great financial cost related to time off work, transportation, food and accommodation. The event, which raised \$3,641.35 for the Harbaruk family, featured a buffet dinner, comedian and silent auction. The \$20 price tag for tickets covered the cost of the buffet and venue while all other funds went directly towards the Harbaruks. Open Learning supported the Kiwanis Club in promoting this event by creating the posters and tickets. Open Learning made a further monetary donation of \$200 while together, staff at the BCCOL contributed more than \$800 towards the cause. If you would still like to donate to help Lizzie get the medical attention she needs please contact Sheryl Aselstyne. Please show your love and support.

Enrolment Services welcomes **David Wells** to the position of Enrolment Services Officer. Prior to joining Open Learning, Wells worked at TRU’s IT Service Desk and has previous experience in private sector computing science. Enrolment Services also welcomes **Damaris Ronmark** to her position as an Enrolment Services Officer. Ronmark graduated from TRU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology and a minor in Psychology. She later completed a Post Baccalaureate diploma in Human Resource Management from TRU. She has a strong customer service background including several years in a call centre. **Holly McLean** has also joined the team for a one-year term as an Enrolment Services Officer while **Marnie Storie** has also joined for a one-year term as a Program Advisor.

The Records department welcomes **Toni Faulkner** to their team.

The Instructional Design Group welcomes **Ken Monroe** to the team as the newest sessional Instructional Designer. Prior to joining Open Learning, Monroe worked as the Coordinator of Technology and Education at Sprott-Shaw College in Kamloops and has also served as the Executive Director of the Mission Community Skills Centre Society where he designed and developed education and training programs with government agencies, industry groups and employers. Monroe holds an MA in Learning and Technology, an MA in International Development and a BA in English Literature.



The Production team in Curriculum Services welcomes **Stephen Eaglestone, Thomas Sandhoff** and **Cory Stumpf** to their positions as Development Support Officers.



This past August, the OL Materials Group joined the Program Delivery team. The Materials team now reports directly to **Matt Dyck**, Manager of Program Delivery. This transition is intended to further enhance OL's focus on the student and the service the Division provides.



The Instructional Design team welcomes **Loretta Teng**, PhD to her position as Instructional Designer. Tang previously worked for the University of Calgary where she served as the Interim Coordinator in the Teaching Enhancement program. She has held a number of previous faculty positions at universities in the US, UAE and Taiwan, working in areas that include curriculum development, adult learning and counseling. Tang holds a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction (Widener, PA) and a PhD in Counselling and Career Development (Colorado State University).



Planning, Metrics and Analytics welcomes **Austin Wang** back to Open Learning. Wang previously held a term position with OL and has returned as a Data Analyst.



Congratulations go out to **Eric Youd** who recently graduated with a Masters in Business Administration and to **Gail Morong** who recently graduated from Open Learning's Graduate Certificate in Online Teaching and Learning program.



Warmest wishes go out to **Thriza Kennedy** who gave birth to Braden Alvin Kennedy Schmidt on September 27 and to **Kim King** who gave birth to Brooklyn Sierra King on October 4.



The **LOL Club** wants to thank all of its members for their amazing efforts in planning and organizing the many fun events over the past year. They encourage everyone to join in the fun and be sure to continue to circulate the Owl Awards to let coworkers know they have made a difference. If you are interested in joining the LOL Club please email Jen Read at jread@tru.ca for more information. ■



TRU NEWS

By TRU Marketing and Communications

TRU Trades Training Gains Funding

TRU has received part of the \$1.8 million the government has devoted to support targeted trades training at post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. On October 30, Advanced Education Minister Amrik Virk announced the one-time funding, which is provided by the BC Jobs Plan and Skills and Training Plan, will support 456 seats in 2013-14 at 10 public post-secondary institutions. "Trades will continue to be a vital component of our economy now and even more so in the future," Virk said in a news release. "In addition to targeting specific trades, the funding also supports the trades discovery program that gives young people an insight into what can be an exciting career and will put a pay cheque in their back pocket." At TRU, a portion of the money has been allocated to Culinary Arts, which is administered by the Faculty of Adventure, Culinary and Tourism. The remainder will support programs in the School of Trades and Technology. At the Kamloops campus the funding will support: 16 seats for Parts Person; 16 seats for Professional Cook 1, Aboriginal Students; 16 seats for Trowel Trades/Mason; and 36 seats for Trades Discovery. At the Williams Lake campus the funding will support 12 seats for Professional Cook 1. ■

Wilderness and Research Centre

On October 5, 2013, Thompson Rivers University (TRU) commenced development of its Wilderness and Research Centre in Wells Gray Provincial Park. World-renowned naturalist and wildlife painter Robert Bateman was given the honour of turning the first shovelful of sod during the groundbreaking ceremony. The building will host workshops, conferences, research activities, planning retreats and other activities. The one-story structure will be approximately 2,100 square feet, have five rooms with four beds in each, accommodate food service for 30 and have a large living area. The building, which was designed by Blake St. Peter who graduated from TRU's Architecture and Engineering program, will include energy-saving options such as high-grade insulation and eventually solar panels. ■

Strategic Priorities Consultations

This September, TRU embarked upon a comprehensive consultation with the many communities it serves— internal and external, international and local. This consultation is intended to guide the establishment of key strategic priorities for TRU over the next five years. On Wednesday, October 15, the first of two public surveys became available online at [tru.ca/strategic priorities](http://www.tru.ca/president/strategicpriorities). This survey presents priorities extrapolated from existing TRU planning documents, including the TRU Government Mandate, the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan, TRU Mission Statement and the TRU Academic Plan. Survey participants will be providing input regarding how TRU should allocate resources over the next five years, from among these priorities. On October 28, 2013, TRU conducted a second survey asking survey participants to rank the top five priorities. Results from both surveys will be available on the Strategic Priorities website at: <http://www.tru.ca/president/strategicpriorities> ■

Sustainability Grant Fund

TRU students have the chance to receive up to \$50,000 for their idea to make the campus more sustainable. The money is contributed through the TRU Sustainability Grant Fund, which was created in order to advance the University's environmental sustainability. Approximately \$50,000 will be available for each application intake for which there will be two per year. Grants are awarded to improve TRU's operational environmental performance, foster environmental literacy and campus community engagement, advance applied research, and demonstrate the viability of sustainability technologies. The fund accepts small or large project proposals from TRU students, staff, and faculty. Proposed projects must support the goals and objectives outlined in TRU's Environmental Policy and must be consistent with the major planning documents of the university including the Campus Master Plan, the Strategic Plan, The Academic Plan and the Campus Sustainability Action Plan. Before applying, prospective applicants should consult the following five documents: Terms of Reference; Pre-Proposal; Proposal; and Budget Template and Purchasing Guideline, both of which accompany the Proposal. All Proposals must be accompanied by a 90-120 second YouTube video.

Spring Intake Deadlines: Pre-Proposal February 28, 2014, and Proposals March 31 ■

WHAT'S NEWS

IN OPEN LEARNING



Holland College, the PEI government and Bluedrop Performance Learning have established a partnership that will provide local businesses with access to 2,000 free, online professional development course bundles. Up to 8,000 online courses will be available through the program over the next two years. "eForcePEI" will use Bluedrop's online learning platform **CoursePark.com** to provide access to the courses. "We are committed to supporting the sustainability of our province by providing training opportunities in a variety of ways to give all Islanders the ability to participate in life-long learning," Holland President Brian McMillan said. PEI is supporting this project with \$275,000 in support for Bluedrop and a further \$242,000 to help Holland with delivery and promotion of the eForcePEI initiative.

The Canada-based education-technology company **Desire2Learn (D2L)** has been piloting its own open-learning platform called **OpenCourses**, and has partnered up with major colleges and universities. Most of the over 50 courses offered by D2L courses last five to six weeks, are free and are taught by professors from partner institutions. The company explains that OpenCourses win over massive open online courses because universities and lecturers own their own content.

Canada requires an online education strategy according to the founder of online education initiative **Wide World Ed**. In a *Globe and Mail* opinion editorial, founder Jenni Hayman stated that Canada needs its own unique, online education system reflective of the educational expertise and cultural identities unique to Canada. She discussed the creation of **Open2Study** in Australia and **FutureLearn** in the UK, which were both created as not-for-profits and have funding and promotional support from federal governments, in comparison to the present situation in Canada, where "each province and territory in Canada seems to be working on its own open, and tuition-based online solutions, with a strong perception of competitiveness." With many possible benefits to open, online education, Hayman suggested that collaboration is the key to the successful establishment of a national open, online education platform.

The BCcampus Strategic Council has chosen 16 students, faculty members and other representatives from across BC's higher education sector to advise on the province's open textbook project. In October, BC announced the move to offer students free online, open textbooks for 40 high-enrolment and high-impact first- and second-year post-secondary education courses. The subcommittee will provide feedback on: identification and prioritization of the courses for which textbooks will be prepared; selection criteria for candidate texts and supplementary resources; the call for proposals; the identification of additional consultation and engagement opportunities; and the quality assurance process for updating the resources once they are published.

The Council of Ontario Universities is creating a consortium called **Ontario Universities Online (OUO)** that will build upon the thousands of university courses and many degree programs already available through online delivery. COU president Bonnie Patterson said the OUO will improve access to high-quality courses and programs, streamline the transfer of credits between universities and support collaboration among institutions in developing and delivering online and blended courses. Brock, McMaster, Ryerson, Guelph, Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier and York have committed resources to provide the core leadership required to finalize details of the plan. The OUO will be in a position the fall of 2013 to invite other provincial universities to join the initiative. The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Association favours a consortium model that allows institutions and faculty members to retain control of their own courses, while maintaining academic freedom and autonomy in academic planning.

Campus Stores Canada released a new study on the use and perception of "access code" learning materials among Canadian students and faculty members. Access codes are a form of digital learning material in which online course content is password protected. The survey, conducted by **Academica Group**, found that two-thirds of students had purchased an access code, with two-fifths of those who had bought one this year doing so because it was required. Just over 40% of faculty members had integrated an access code into their course(s). According to the survey, technical challenges were a common problem for users with about one-quarter of responding students reporting challenges using the software. Instructors, who were usually the first point of contact for technical support, said this as a problem as they were spending too much time helping students to simply operate the software. Three-quarters of students also said the access code learning is too expensive.

Ryerson University's provost has formed two committees tasked with exploring the current and future practices of online and e-learning at the institution. A steering committee will engage in a broad discussion of Ryerson's current online learning practices, examine trends emerging in the online learning education space and help set direction for the institution over the next several years. An operations committee will support the work of the steering committee by providing insight into how potential new strategies and approaches can be implemented. It will explore issues such as technical support, instructional design and faculty training.

The University of New Brunswick (UNB)'s education faculty is conducting a feasibility study into an online Bachelor of Education degree in early childhood education (ECE). The study is intended to provide the foundational information required to develop a pathway for students to complete existing ECE diploma/certificate programs at the college level and then transfer into a UNB program and complete their education while continuing to work in their communities. The feasibility study will examine opportunities to collaborate with post-secondary educational institutions in the Atlantic Provinces in order to ensure they develop a comprehensive program that is accessible to practitioners.

The Office of Open Learning at the University of Windsor is offering a new grant program to provide assistance to departments interested in expanding their online and distance offerings. The Open and Online Learning Strategic Development Grants will provide support in three categories including developing: courses in new fully or substantially online programs (up to \$50,000); new online courses or substantial redevelopment of existing courses to an online delivery mode (up to \$10,000); and incorporating Open Educational Resources into an online course to enhance student learning. The Office of Open Learning's acting director said the grants are part of the University's investment in bringing online learning into the mainstream.

Queen's University's Senate Academic Planning Task Force (SAPTF) has released a draft report on virtualization and online learning. The report proposes 18 specific recommendations aimed at informing Queen's policy and planning around virtualization and online learning in the broader context of the overall student experience. Recommendations include that the University do a better job identifying and recognizing faculty and staff who are innovators in teaching and improving synergies between them as well as that the senate promote efforts to use online technologies that promote active learning and that the University remain involved in discussions exploring the creation of the Ontario Online Institute.

EdX open source platform will be powering China's equivalent of an open learning portal, XuetangX. A number of Chinese universities will be joining Tsinghua University in the XuetangX initiative.

McGill University has opened registration for its first massive open online course (MOOC), which will be offered on the edX platform. The University plans to offer four MOOC courses by the end of 2013. The first course, CHEM181x, is based on a course from the World of Chemistry offered on-campus at McGill.

Massive open online course provider Coursera now has 107 university partners in 20 different countries.

The World Bank and Coursera have partnered to help meet the demand for practical solutions-oriented learning in developing countries. **Massive open online courses, provided by Coursera, will be offered as part of a new Open Learning Campus being built by the World Bank.** Here practitioners, development partners and the general public can access relevant and quality learning opportunities. Under this non-exclusive partnership, the World Bank will use the Coursera platform to deliver MOOCs on frontier development topics. The partnership will also allow the World Bank to explore the specific challenges faced in developing countries such as dealing with low Internet bandwidth, customizing content for local realities and exploring the potential for mobile learning.

Massive open online course providers Coursera and edX have launched new initiatives to expand their platforms internationally. Coursera is partnering with the Chinese Internet company NetEase to create Coursera Zone, a web portal that will make the MOOC provider's content available to Chinese students. edX's open source code will power an online learning platform in France that will be available to the country's more than 100 universities. The platform will feature 20 courses that will start in January 2014.

WHAT'S NEWS

The Open University's FutureLearn, the UK's first provider of massive open online courses (MOOCs) has begun offering access from some of its 20 university partners.

The website went live as a beta test and will run as such until early 2014. Topics of courses range from history and psychology to dental photography, ecosystems, branding and web science. FutureLearn's features will include: rich learning materials in video, audio and text; community learning featuring student profile pages and interaction based on social networking principles; contextual feedback for learners including quizzes, progress pages and scores; a course creator and analytics dashboard for partners; and a record of learning for students that can be shared outside the FutureLearn community.



EdX and Google are working together to build Open edX, an open-source massive open online course platform that will be available on MOOC.org. This website will enable anyone from universities and corporations to individuals, to create online courses. This method moves towards crowdsourcing education.



The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is offering XSeries, a more cohesive sequence of its massive open online courses. MITx will begin offering certificates for the successful completion of these sequences of courses. Each XSeries will cover content equivalent to two to four traditional residential courses and take between six months and two years to complete.



EdX is adding features to its massive open online course structure to offer certificates of completion using identity verification. Currently, edX allows students to audit courses or complete assignments to earn a certificate of completion based on the honour code. However, beginning in the spring of 2014 instructors can choose to implement an identity verification process that prompts students to present government issued identification at specific milestones in the course. Their identities will be verified by Software Secure. This process is intended to allow students enrolling in their courses to further their careers. Students will pay a fee for the verification service, which will vary based on the length of the course.



India's Minister of State for Human Resource Development believes distance education can play a key role in addressing the country's issue of employability.

Minister Jitin Prasada explained that in India only 1.5 million of about 8 million join the workforce and he believes the many educational initiatives taken by the government will attempt to reverse the brain drain.



If successful, the US National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) could authorize distance education providers to operate in every member state. The NC-SARA, which is backed by a \$2.3 million grant from the Lumina Foundation, is an initiative to simplify the process by which distance education providers in the US are authorized to operate in individual states. This new initiative would reduce the cost and investment of time previously required for institutions to demonstrate how their educational offerings satisfy each state's regulatory demands. NC-SARA's work will be implemented through its four regional partners, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, the New England Board of Higher Education, the Southern Regional Education Board and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.



The State University of New York, which is a system of 64 campuses, and Florida's 12-member university system are planning to begin offering new online degree programs by January 2014. This plan includes the consolidation of authority, with the system office in New York taking the lead and the University of Florida taking over online efforts in it's respective state, in order to avoid redundant efforts by different campuses.



Noodle, an education related search company established by the founder of Princeton Review, has bought Lore, a modern social learning management system with a community of hundreds of institutions. **Lore offers teachers the ability to turn their class into an online community with tools for posting assignments, updates and syllabi.** Lore was founded as Coursekit by students at the University of Pennsylvania as a startup to improve on traditional learning management systems by blending them more fully with social media. Both Noodle, and Lore are free to use.



In attempts to mitigate the potential effects of disaster, the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL) has partnered with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to develop educational radio programs focusing on disaster risk preparedness, reduction and management for rural communities. The Disaster Risk Reduction educational radio programs, which have been translated from English to Oshiwambo and Silozi, are being broadcast on a number of radio stations including NBC National Radio in order to reach targeted communities in the northern parts of Namibia. In addition to the radio broadcast, 5,000 translated CDs have been shared around the northern rural areas. The programs will be translated into even more local languages.



The University of Mysore (U of M), one of the oldest universities in India, is extending its course offerings through distance education. This is the first time the University will begin offering distance courses since Karnataka State Open University (KSOU) was established in 1996. U of M discontinued its distance courses in 1996 as it was argued that distance education was the domain of KSOU. U of M has explained that it will once again offer distance education as a method to generate resources internally.



Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), a Canadian-based intergovernmental organization that promotes open learning and distance education, have signed a memorandum of understanding which promotes technology-based education in Islamabad at the higher education level. Under the memorandum, the AIOU and COL will establish a code of practice for the implementation of the COL Review and Improvement Model at the University. The COL will provide the University with guidance and will identify and appoint an external verifier and assign a COL staff member to coordinate implementation.



Canadore College and Waterloo-based tech firm ClevrU launched a new collaboration to deliver advanced online learning opportunities to Brazil and China. Brazilian and Chinese students can access video-audio, presentation slides and various other learning resources for Canadore's Mobile Application Development program with additional courses to follow. Canadore president George Burton said that partnering with ClevrU has allowed them to utilize a platform that deals with different languages, mobile devices and operating systems that will maintain program integrity and global availability.



The Distance Education Council (DEC) of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was dissolved in June 2013. As a result, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was entrusted with all regulatory responsibilities of the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) education system. Headquartered in New Delhi, DEC was constituted under the IGNOU Act and was responsible for promotion and coordination of the open university and distance education system and determination of its standards in the country. ■



The Marketing and Communications department of Open Learning would like to offer a special prize to the eighth individual to **correctly** answer the following question.

QUESTION:

▶ **Who said that Canada requires an online education strategy?**

Answers should be sent to OLMarketing@tru.ca by 4:30 pm on Wednesday, December 11, 2013.

The winner will be informed by 4:30 pm on Friday, December 13. Details about the prize will be sent to the winner thereafter.



Story Ideas or Questions...

If you have a story idea or a question about Open Learning that you would like answered, please send an email with your ideas or questions to: efenwick@tru.ca. Watch for your story or answers to your questions in the next issue of *The Open Standard*.