New building named for “gumboot fisherman”

The University of Victoria’s newest and largest building was officially opened on Nov. 24, adding another world-class research and teaching facility to the campus.

The new building—known as the Bob Wright Centre, Ocean, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences—is named after the president and CEO of the Oak Bay Marine Group of Companies. Wright, who refers to himself as “just a gumboot fisherman,” donated $10 million toward the cost of the new building, as well as $1 million for student scholarships.

“A lifelong passion and affinity for the sea has underscored my concern about the impact of global warming on our oceans,” says Wright. “As a community and as a country, we must expand our investment in solid scientific research so we can pass on a healthy environment for generations to come.”

The total construction costs were $86.6 million, with the provincial government contributing $37.5 million and the remainder provided by UVic and other donors.

“The Bob Wright Centre showcases our position as a global centre of excellence in ocean, earth and atmospheric research, and will take our scientific research and teaching to an even higher level,” says UVic President David Turpin. “We’re grateful to the provincial government for its commitment to scientific research and to this outstanding new facility, and to Bob Wright, whose vision and generosity have made this building a reality.”

“Our investment is yet another example of this government’s commitment to building world-class facilities at BC’s public post-secondary institutions, giving our students more choices, more access, closer to home,” says Minister of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development Murray Coell. The new building units under one roof all members of the School of Earth and Ocean Sciences (SEOS), who were previously spread out among seven buildings on campus. It also hosts the Canadian Centre for Climate Modelling and Analysis, a research division of Environment Canada.

“For the first time, this building brings together as a community, biological and chemical oceanographers, physical oceanographers and applied mathematicians, and climate scientists and solid-earth geologists,” says Dr. Tom Pedersen, dean of science.

“This community of scientists will work together to help answer some of the most compelling questions facing our planet.”

The building also house synthetic chemistry labs, “clean rooms” for means...
**Linguist to receive top Japanese award**

By 2012, over 25 per cent of today’s public service employees can retire, including almost half of those in executive level positions. Faced with this challenge, UVic and the Government of Canada are working together to attract more students and grads into careers with the federal government.

As part of a unique pilot project that could serve as a model for the rest of the country, the federal government, public administration, co-operative education and career services hosted a free career conference on Oct. 21. “Put Your Talents to Work: Canada’s Future Through You” allowed students and grads to discuss their views on public policy with senior decision makers. They heard 20 speakers—government, deputy federal ministers, assistant deputy ministers and UVic faculty—discuss a variety of topics including climate change, healthcare, homelessness, global trade, human rights and privacy.

Attendees also visited information booths staffed by employees from 33 federal departments and ministries. There were on-the-spot job interviews, job offers and a chance to hear from UVic students who work for the Government of Canada. In all, more than 2,700 students and alumni attended the conference.

**AQUACULTURE CONTINUED FROM P.1**

Research and Training (CART) multi-disciplinary network at UVic, along with co-director Dr. Mark Flaherty, aUVic geographer and expert on aquaculture’s impacts upon governments and community issues in tropical regions.

The CART research team is taking the lead on this coast—with the SEAlarm facility in Kyuquot Sound as a possible platform—in a five-year national research initiative currently under the review of the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council to explore the environmental and socio-economic issues related to integrated aquaculture (SEA systems) on the east and west coasts of Canada. The CART team is also investigating the possibilities of energy alternatives to operate the SEAlarm and the potential for creating bioethanol from the kelp as a clean fuel for the farm.

Aquaculture and the industry are vulnerable to controversy. Primary concerns are issues of sea and interactions with wild fish, human food safety questions related to anthracite and pesticide use, and the need to use fish meal and oil food pellets to feed the farmed fish.

“We are the only lab in the country that has been able to grow our own food,” says Cross. “Instead, we use a growing demand worldwide for seafood. This method of aquaculture can help enhance production, diversify the seafood industry and even test practices. It’s in all our interests to design food production systems to be both sustainable and economically sustainable.”

**RISING SUN, GOLD RAYS WITH NECK RIBBON**

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**WRIGHT CENTRE CONTINUED FROM P.1**

Using minute concentrations of elements in water, a rooftop observatory, two large lecture theatres, offices, labs, meeting rooms and food services. The university’s astronomy observatory group is renowned internationally for its advances in the development of plastic magnets, data storage and the study of genetics and proteins, particularly the roles they play in mediating diseases such as cancer. The rooftop observatory will be home to the best academic tel-escope in Canada (to be installed in late 2009), putting the university at the forefront of astronomy education. UVic is home to some of Canada’s leading researchers in cosmology and observational astronomy.

PUBLIC SERVICE CAREERS BEGON

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"My years at the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives were probably the most fulfilling of my career at UVic in trying to achieve something for us on the larger world scene," says Kess. Reminding Canada of its necessary commitment to Asia in general and Japan specifically, is something that CAPI does well, and it’s gratifying to know that the Japanese government has recognized us in this way.”

Kess is widely recognized as a leading scholar of psycholinguistics, the study of the native and learned mechanisms that enable humans to acquire, use and understand language. His primary theoretical interests have focused on psycholinguistic aspects of language processing and language performance. His research interests also encompass sociolinguistics and the relationships among language, ethnicity and the discourse of identity. He has worked on a variety of languages including Tagalog and other Philippine languages, Japanese in Japan and Hawai`i/Moti and Kuanam from Papua New Guinea; Slovene in the former Yugoslavia; and Ahoosah and Haida in BC.

A fellow of the RSC (Royal Society of Canada), Kess is also a recipient of the Faculty of Humanities Award for Teaching Excellence. He has written, co-authored or co-edited 14 books.
Uvic research still best in the west

The University of Victoria continues to lead all other comprehensive universities west of Ontario in terms of research effort, according to the 2008 ranking of the country’s top research universities by Research Infosource.

In the Research Universities of the Year ranking, among full-service comprehensive universities, UVic placed third behind Ontario universities Waterloo and Guelph. Comprehensive universities are those with a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs.

“The three top universities ‘demonstrated superior achievement both in earning research income and in publishing research in leading scientific journals,’ says Research Infosource.

“These data, once again, confirm the excellence of the research conducted at UVic,” says Dr. Howard Brun, UVic’s vice-president research. “However, the value our research has for the people of the province, Canada and the world goes well beyond these rankings. The contribution of our researchers to the social, cultural, economic and intellectual health of society is the real measure of what makes UVic such a valuable institution.”

The rankings are based on the 2007 fiscal year and reflect sponsored research income and research output indicators such as number of publications per full-time faculty member and publication impact.

On the blended list of Canada’s Top 50 Research Universities, UVic placed 17th, showing a sponsored research income total of $899.3 million. This total is a drop from 2006, but it has already rebounded—UVic figures for the 2007/08 fiscal year show research income at an all-time high of more than $106 million.

For the first time, Research Infosource reported this year on income growth over the previous six years (2002–07). UVic placed second in the comprehensive category, with a growth rate of 4.4 per cent, far above the national average of 4.6 per cent for comprehensive universities and 4.9 per cent for all universities.

The data to determine Canada’s Top 50 Research Universities and Research Universities of the Year drew on Statistics Canada and the Research Infosource Canadian university R&D database.

Research Infosource Inc., a division of The Impact Group, produces specialized reports from its extensive database. To view the entire rankings and analysis visit www.researchinfosource.com.

Uvic stays at the top among comprehensive universities

The University of Victoria has maintained its first-place position for the second year in a row as the top comprehensive university in Canada in the annual university rankings by Maclean’s magazine, this time tied with Vancouver’s Simon Fraser University.

“UVic’s consistent high ranking is a testament to our people, the students, faculty and staff who make UVic what it is today,” says UVic President David Turpin. “It also is gratifying every year to see the attention paid to post-secondary education by a national magazine. The annual rankings emphasize the integral role played by universities in a changing world. Just like last year, UVic scored well in every ranking category and finished in the upper half in all 13 categories. UVic ranked particularly high in the categories of faculty awards, medical science grants, research activity, scholarships and bursaries for students and the library.

UVic’s annual high ranking is testament to the calibre of faculty, students and support at UVic and although it is only one measure of success (the University of Victoria uses various measures such as a regular survey of students and measures to determine quality of experience), the Maclean’s rankings serve as a useful resource for students considering a post-secondary education.


Uvic’s LENONET project—a groundbreaking pilot project that measures ways of improving the retention and success of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education—is making a big difference in students’ lives.

The LENONET Interim Evaluation Report, issued Nov. 25, indicates that the project has created a welcoming institutional climate, provided better financial aid, created links with surrounding First Nations communities and contributed to the students’ decision to return to school the following year. LENONET (le-non-get) is a Senecotan (see-lane-chen) word meaning “success after enduring hardships.”

“The LENONET project has opened up so many doors for me, both culturally and professionally,” says Kendra Underwood (history). “It has assisted me to work in my home WSANEK community (Tsawout Nation), and helped me to view my time at the university not just academically but holistically as well.”

The majority of the 139 participants (77 per cent) reported that their participation in the program contributed to the development of their sense of self as an Aboriginal person. Even more (87 per cent) agreed that their participation in the programs contributed to their sense of connection to the on-campus Aboriginal community.

LENONET comprises four components: Survivors, research apprenticeships with faculty and graduate student advisors, community internships in Aboriginal communities and organizations, and peer mentoring, matching upper level/Aboriginal students with new students. The project participants each took part in one or more of the components between August 2005 and December 2007. The average age of student participants is 29.9 years old and the majority of the participants are female (65.9 per cent).

The LENONET program will run until July 2009 and qualitative research will continue until then.

“UVic’s support for the project puts it at the forefront of national issues of access to post-secondary education,” says Norman Riddell, the Canada Millennium Foundation’s executive director and CEO. “The foundation hopes that groundbreaking research of this kind may eventually lead the project to be replicated in other institutions to similar effect.” The Canada Millennium Foundation funds the LENONET project.

The number of Aboriginal students at UVic has increased by more than 700 per cent since 1999, with over 600 Aboriginal students attending classes on campus.

The executive summary of the LENONET Interim Evaluation Report is available at www.millenniumscholarships.ca/en/research/AllPublications.aspx. The complete interim report will be available later this month.

Winter 2009

Doors open when learning continues

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The Ring December 2008 Page 3
Reseaching climate change in Canada’s Arctic

BY TARA SHARPE

It’s not good news for Santa that the North Pole is melting, and just before the holiday season a trio of researchers affiliated with the UVic ArcticNet network which, together with the ArcticNet network, provided the trip’s funding opportunity available for co-op students the Graham Buxton Endowment Fund. Recipients of this award now automatically receive the Thouvenelle scholarship, so that they can cover all or part of the co-op program fee, which can be a big help.” Prior to 2008, there was only one funding opportunity available for co-op students the Graham Buxton Endowment Fund. Recipients of this award now automatically receive the Thouvenelle scholarship, so that they can cover all or part of the co-op program fee, which can be a big help.”

New co-op scholarship gives students a boost

BY JOY POLIQUIN

Last summer, an interest in international development led Anthropology Co-op student Claire Doherty to Uganda as a volunteer for a not-for-profit organization. It was a new experience for Doherty, so it was fitting that her work term was partly funded by a brand new co-op scholarship.

Doherty is one of 32 co-op students who have received the Thouvenelle Co-op Scholarship since May 2008. Named for donor Jarmila Von Drak Thouvenelle, the award is granted to undergraduate and graduate co-op students who aspire to conduct work terms related to community development or service learning.

“We are excited to offer this new funding opportunity to students who are pursuing such valuable work experiences,” says Co-operative Education Program Executive Director Norah Mclnnes. “The award is intended to cover all or part of the co-op program fee, which can be a big help.”

Prior to 2008, there was only one funding opportunity available for co-op students the Graham Buxton Endowment Fund. Recipients of this award now automatically receive the Thouvenelle scholarship, so that they can cover all or part of the co-op program fee, which can be a big help.”

For Doherty, who was a recipient of both awards, the financial assistance went a long way. As a volunteer community-based research officer for the Africa Community Technical Service (ACTS) in Uganda, a not-for-profit based out of Comox, BC, it was important that she focus on the job rather than on her pocketbook. “I was hired to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the Lake Bunyonyi Development Company (LBDC), a Ugandan organization that is affiliated with ACTS,” she says. “This means that I spoke with villagers who had received help from LBDC and I worked with a translator to collect their feedback.” At the end of her work term, Doherty provided the LBDC and ACTS with a written report of her findings.

Doherty credits her time in Uganda for giving her a broader global perspective. “I’ve known since childhood that people in other parts of the world have lifestyles that are very different, and in many cases less privileged than my own,” she says. “My experience in Uganda drove this point home and equipped me with newfound insight and valuable skills for a career in international development. I am immensely grateful.”

Doherty joins dozens of other co-op students who have received the Thouvenelle Co-op Scholarship for work terms focused on community development. Students have worked for employers as far-reaching as a hospital in Nicaragua, a bird sanctuary in California, a kids’ cancer care facility in Alberta and a cultural festival in Victoria.

Doherty with Ugandan boy on her community service work term in Africa

The Coolest Milk 2 Go!

The Ring December 2008

Page 4
Shedding light on dark matter

BY ROBIE LISCOMB

The search for dark matter—the mysterious substance that accounts for 85 per cent of the mass of the universe—has dominated cosmology for many decades. With the help of UVic researchers, that search may soon come to an end.

More than 75 years ago, scientists inferred the existence of dark matter by its gravitational effects. Most cosmologists believe that dark matter is composed of as-yet undiscovered particles or is a new kind of elementary particle yet to be discovered.

On an intergalactic scale, evidence for dark matter has remained stubbornly invisible to astronomers’ telescopes. But research by an international team of astronomers including UVic’s Dr. Julio Navarro is providing direction on where best to point NASA’s Fermi satellite telescope in the search for the telltale gamma radiation signature of dark matter. They published their most recent results in the Nov. 8 issue of Nature.

"There is a tremendous sense of anticipation in the astrophysics community that we may be within a few years of solving one of the main outstanding puzzles in our understanding of the universe: the nature of dark matter," says Navarro. "Our computations are the starting point of a map where the particles collide and annihilate each other in a puff of radiation."

The computer simulation took 3.5 million processor hours to complete and showed that by far the most easily detectable gamma ray signal should come from regions 10 to 20 degrees from the centre of the Milky Way. Previously, cosmologists had argued that the Milky Way’s satellite galaxies, such as the Large and Small Magellanic Clouds, would be the ideal place to search for gamma rays, since their centres should be very dense.

The Vingo Consortium involved scientists from UVic, the Max Planck Institute for Astrophysics in Germany, the Institute for Computational Cosmology at the University of Durham in the UK, the University of Massachusetts and the University of Groningen in The Netherlands.

Navarro with an image from the team’s simulation of dark matter halo. PHOTO: UVIC PHOTO SERVICES
Healthy relationships
Helping youth negotiate the minefield of interpersonal relations

BY EMILY AGOPSOWICZ

A group of fourth-year UVic nursing students is taking a proactive approach to educating youth about healthy relationships.

Your Right to Respect: A Guide to Healthy Relationships and Decision Making is a program aimed at high school students, created by Tamara Slow and Tamara Barnett during a practicum at St. Michael’s University School in January 2007. There are now five nursing students involved in the program, which has been piloted at Claremont and Belmont secondary schools, as well as S.J. Willis alternative school.

“We teach about healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to recognize the signs of both,” says Slow. “We create a safe place for youth to ask questions and we provide resources for them that come from a nurse’s perspective.”

Barnett and Slow started the project as a class assignment for Nursing 435: Nurses Influencing Change, a course that explores ways nurses can influence and create change for the promotion of societal health. They felt that as nurses there was something they could offer to the current high school curriculum: and when they brought their ideas to their classmates they found others with the same passion for youth health education.

“We wanted to do something beneficial for the community. We talked to our classmates about what they would have wanted in their high school curriculum, and we found that it was more information on relationships,” says Slow.

The group used their own experiences and classroom material to develop the program. “We don’t teach sex ed,” says Sloat. “We talk about relationships. We talk about the things that youth want to know about. We draw on our own life experiences,” says Barnett. Slow stresses that the program is not just focused on romantic relationships but all aspects of human interaction.

“The group works closely with teachers to meet the unique needs of each classroom. “The program is very interactive,” says Slow. “We play games, and give lots of time for questions. We talk about how the media influence our idea of how relationships should be.”

“They have received positive feedback from students, parents and teachers,” says Sloat. “One teacher even requested that they bring the program to her own sons class after seeing the positive response from her students.”

The program is in constant revision to accommodate community feedback.

A planned gift to the University of Victoria can create many bright futures. Just ask Nainesh Agarwal, who received a graduate scholarship from a planned gift. Nainesh now has a PhD and works for the government as a Technical Leader at the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Planned gifts are forever. “After each presentation we have students write their comments, whether they liked it or didn’t like it. We’ve also had verbal responses—people saying I need to reevaluate my relationships,” says Slow.

“This is a very sustainable program, because it fits in with BC’s commitment to healthy schools,” says Maureen Ryan, faculty liaison for the program. She says that the next step is to formally evaluate the program, share what they’ve learned with colleagues, and develop it into a more substantial program.

“This program helps the community see nurses, younger nurses, interacting with the community. Nurses have a lot to offer the community in a number of ways,” says Ryan. “A part of their education is community empowerment and community development. One of the roles of nurses is to translate the knowledge that they gain into something that is accessible to the community.”

“It was a chance to work with a Canadian researcher in the sciences, which is something that I chose to come here for,” explains Gifford. “Dr. Gifford is a leading scholar in the field of environmental psychology,” says Iglesias.

Dr. Alexandre Brolo (chemistry) developing light-based sensors for biomolecules using microstructured optical fibres modified with metallic nanoparticles.

Dr. Fabio Iglesias, also from Brazil, is working with Dr. Robert Gifford (psychology) researching environmental attitudes and behaviour, patterns of co-operation and competition for limited resources, and barriers to and facilitators for bicycle use. “I chose to come here because Dr. Gifford is a leading scholar in the field of environmental psychology,” says Iglesias.

Dr. Keillah Mara Nascimento Barbosa, from the National Institute of Amazon Research, Brazil, is working with Dr. Mayssa Costa (geography) on the use of remote sensing in the Amazon wetlands and floodplain.

Dr. Rinaldo André Mezzarane, from São Paulo, Brazil, is working with Dr. Edward Pope, from the University of Leeds, England, on theoretical models of galactic evolution, studying active galaxies and the mechanisms involved in the control and coordination of Hymatic movements of the limbs. “The experience working with new techniques will be very useful for my scientific career,” he says.

Dr. Edward Pope, from the University of Leeds, England, is working with Dr. Arif Babul (astronomy) refining theoretical models of galactic evolution, studying active galactic nucleus feedback mechanisms by which black holes at the centre of galaxies energize gas, keeping them from cooling and forming more stars.

UVic has attracted six postdoctoral fellows under a new international program supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade—more than any other comprehensive university in Canada. These fellowships offer recent PhDs from other countries the chance to work with a Canadian researcher in the sciences, the social sciences and engineering.

Dr. Gustavo Andrade, from the spectroscopy group at the University of São Paulo, Brazil, is working with Dr. Alexandre Brolo (chemistry): developing light-based sensors for biomolecules using microstructured optical fibres modified with metallic nanoparticles.

Dr. Jayme Garcia Armat Barbedo, from the State University of Campinas, Brazil, is working with Dr. George Tzanetakis (computer science) on digital audio signal processing. “Since Prof. Tzanetakis is one of the most important researchers on the subject of digital audio, coming here was the natural choice,” he explains.

Dr. Randal Noe Mezzarane, from São Paulo, Brazil, is working with Dr. Edward Pope, from the University of Leeds, England, on theoretical models of galactic evolution, studying active galaxies and the mechanisms involved in the control and coordination of Hymatic movements of the limbs. “The experience working with new techniques will be very useful for my scientific career,” he says.

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Successful fundraising is easier when you...
Like all wildlife, rabbits at UVic deserve to be treated with respect. It’s illegal and inhumane to harass them. Please don’t chase rabbits or pull them up. And keep your dog on a leash. Help the rabbits at UVic stay well by leaving them alone. Feral rabbits are part of UVic campus life, but their activities can have a significant impact on human health and safety, and on plants and property. To help reduce this impact, the university is developing a long-term management plan for rabbits.

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**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5**

- **Other** 6 p.m. Surplus Furniture Sales: And Dec. 12 & 19. Bricks, tables, chains, shelf units, filing cabinets, VCRs, TVs, trade millwork pieces, random misc. items. HUT 1, old tennis courts. 250-721-6218
- **Sell Out** Holiday Art Auction 6:30 p.m. Visual Arts Student Association holiday art auction, live auction, open studio tours, food, music and art show. 55 Visual Arts Building
- **Biology Seminar** 7:30 p.m. Predictive Species and Community Responses to Accelerated Global Change. What We’ve Learned from Montane Lakes and Floods. Dr. Wendy Palen, SFU. Cunningham 146. 250-721-6199

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6**

- **Music** 8 p.m. University of Victoria Chorus and Orchestra. Pekelharing’s great cantata Alexander Veremey and Handel’s Dixit Dominus (Psalm 109). Guest soloists: János Sándor, conductor; Susan Young, chorus director. University Centre Fanipal Auditorium. 5:16 & 5:12. 250-721-1904

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7**

- **Music** 8 p.m. Christmas Pipes. Paul Beauchesne, conductor. MacLaurin B105. 250-721-7904
- **Seminar** 6 p.m. Café Scientifique: The Amoeba Concerns to Your-Cay-Bone. Swans Suite Hotel, 500 Pandora Ave. Colwood Room. 250-472-4067

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 8**

- **Help: UVic Reach Lecture** 5:30 p.m. From Art Areas to Studio Spaces. Dr. Sylvia Kind, UBC. Sponsored by the Visual Arts Student Association and Arts Early Learning Partnership at UVic.

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9**

- **Other** 6 p.m. Sustainability Bistro: Open House. Members of UVic community and the general public are invited to provide feedback on UVic’s draft sustainability policy and action plan for campus operations. University Centre, lower level

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11**

- **Theatre** 7 p.m. A Christmas Carol, A karaoke Dec. 12 at 7 p.m., Dec. 13 at 2:30 and 7 p.m. Victoria Youth Musical Theatre Company presents the Broadway musical adaptation of Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol. University Centre Fanipal Auditorium. $15–25. 250-721-9140

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12**

- **Spokes Anniversary Celebration** 12:30 p.m. Celebrating five years of this innovative program that combines recycling with cycling. University Centre Parkade. RSVP to 250-721-1618
- **Greek & Roman Studies Seminar** 2:30 p.m. Science and Myth in Alexander’s Theriaca. Brian Moss, UVic. Clearihue B105. 250-721-8514

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14**

- **Music** 2:30 p.m. Tuba Xmas Reprise. János Sándor, conductor. University Centre Fanipal Auditorium. 510. 250-721-1904

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 15**

- **Other** 12 p.m. Café Scientifique: Where Are You? Where Am I? Dr. Marc Lapprand (French) displays a tribute volume to French writer Boris Vian—part of an extremely rare complete set of Collège de ’Pataphysique publications recently acquired by UVic Special Collections. www.mqup.ca

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16**

- **Lansdowne Lecture** 8 p.m. Richard Shiff, UVic, on Austin, scholar of modern art from 16th century to post-war American art. Hickman 105. 250-721-6111

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Victoria College, 1946–1965

Edited by Edward B. Harvey

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**Uvic Libraries get ’pataphysical**

Uvic Special Collections has acquired a rare complete set of the Collège de ’Pataphysique periodicals from 1950 and June 1965. This collection consists of 56 publications and includes writings—many otherwise unpublished—by leading artists including Alfred Jarry, Paul Valéry, André Gide, Ekke Satie and Eugéne Ionesco. The publications also include many drawings, inserted cards and ephemera. UVic’s collection is likely the only complete set in North America, and even in France one can consult this periodical collection in its entirety only at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Pataphysics, “the science of sciences” and “the science of imaginary solutions,” was created at the turn of the 19th century by Alfred Jarry, author of the Ubu dramatic saga. Under the influence of famous artists of the time, a group of writers—all admirers of Jarry—founded the Collège de ’Pataphysique publications. The Collège de ’Pataphysique publications will be on display in December in Special Collections in the basement of the McPherson Library.
A day in the life of Dinara Kurbanova, research assistant with UVic’s Centre for Aboriginal Health Research (CAHR) and communications coordinator for Network Environment Aboriginal Research Council (NEARC), involves preparing newsletters, maintaining the centre’s website, posting events, providing administrative support and answering general inquiries from the organizations’ 500+ members.

She has long been interested in working in the health field. “It’s about yourself, your body, how it works and how to keep it working well, or how to fix it,” she says. “I feel it is a privilege to have that knowledge, and in the future I hope everybody will have access to that knowledge.”

Kurbanova has been working at CAHR since July 2007. Originally from Almaty, Kazakhstan, she moved to Canada with her Canadian hus-

band, Mark, in 2003, a year after her graduation from Kazakh State Medical University. She had planned to practise medicine in Canada, but quickly discovered the difficulties that internationally trained doctors have finding residency placements. In 2003, British Columbia had only six spots available for international doctors, and while that number has since risen to 16, the competition remains high.

Kurbanova enjoys applying her medical knowledge at her job at CAHR while assisting with the production of projects, scientific papers and grant applications. And she feels a connection with Canada’s Aboriginal people. “It’s familiar to me because the same thing of type is happening in Kazakh-

istan with minority groups,” she says. Her mother is Tatar and her father is Uyghur. “My grandparents were prohibited from speaking their own language. My parents were not able to learn their language and history. Similar things happened in Canada with the Aboriginal people.”

When she is not at work promot-

ing the health and well-being of Abo-

riginal people, Kurbanova, mother of two boys, is busy advocating for her five-year-old son, Timur, who was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. Since then, Kurbanova has used her research skills to do all she can for Timur. Fortunately, she came across the Autism Research Institute based in San Diego, created by medical doctors, most of whom have children with autism. The institute approaches autism not only as a developmental disorder but also as a treatable bio-

medical condition. Kurbanova and her husband put Timur on the institute’s recommended diet and a range of supplements, and after 24 hours be-

gan to see improvements. In August the developmental pediatrician who diagnosed Timur two years ago dis-

charged him from his care because of his significant progress. “So we have a logo,” says Kurbanova.

Kurbanova is clearly committed to the people around her, but she also manages to find some time for herself. She is a serious yogi and an avid dancer who is experienced with many different dance styles, including traditional Russian folk dance, salsa and modern.

The Day in the Life series features the diversity of UVic employees who contribute so much to university life. To suggest someone to profile, contact Rob Liscum, editor of The Ring (250-721-7409 or rob@unican.com).