

The Social

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Message from the Dean, Robert Andersen

Excellent full-time professors are the key to a university’s success. This has become increasingly so with the growing prominence of university rankings, most of which put great emphasis on research. Full-time faculty are also very important to the student experience. Compared to part-time instructors, they are able to spend more time on campus, on important committees, developing innovative courses, and conducting world-class research.

In contrast to the trend across most Canadian universities, the Faculty of Social Science at Western has made a deliberate effort to employ more full-time faculty and fewer part-time faculty. Without question, we have made great strides. Just three years ago, fewer than 45 per cent of courses offered in the Faculty were taught by full-time instructors; in the 2018-19 academic year 78 per cent of our courses will be taught by full-time instructors. This change will have a huge impact on both our research output and educational experience.

In this edition of *The Social*, you will meet some of our new faculty members. These excellent scholars are joining us from universities across the world, bringing a wealth of experiences and energy with them. They join an already accomplished Faculty. This newsletter also highlights some of the major accomplishments of our well-established faculty members. As you will see, their outstanding contributions to teaching and research have been recognized with important awards during the past year.

We are also collaborating with other faculties at Western to build on our success. The Management and Legal Studies module, a partnership between Faculty of Law and the DAN Department of Management & Organizational Studies, launches this year. We have also started the process to appoint the first Dancap Private Equity Chair in Corporate Governance, one of three endowed chairs made possible from Aubrey Dan’s recent \$5 million dollar gift to the Department.

I hope you take the time to read this newsletter to learn about the accomplishments of our Faculty. For more information about our strategic goals, take a look at our [2017 annual report](#).

I also hope we have a chance to connect during Homecoming. Our annual [Meet the Dean and the Ceeps](#) event will be Friday, October 19, 2018

Sincerely,

Bob Andersen
Professor and Dean

“Without passion, teaching is like a body without a soul.”



“Every time I go to class, I feel like it’s a new day,” said Shahbaz Sheikh. “I always feel that if I can’t make an impact, the students don’t need me.”

Sheikh, an Associate Professor of Finance in the DAN Department of Management & Organizational Studies is the 2018 recipient of the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in the Faculty of Social Science.

In his 13 years as a faculty member at Western, Sheikh has worked to keep his courses interesting and innovative, and most of all, applicable to the real world.

Sheikh teaches courses in Corporate Finance, Derivatives and Risk Management. His research is also focused on issues in Corporate Finance and Corporate Governance.

Sheikh ensures his courses are not just focused on theories in finance, but include applications from the real world on Bay Street and Wall Street. This makes his courses more interesting to students and helps students find jobs in the financial industry. He opens his classes with discussions of current financial news and shows his students how the textbook theories and his own research explain those events.

“I try to make things as practical as possible by giving students projects based on current financial data. I break complex concepts into small pieces, so it is easier to understand, and then put them back together to show the big picture,” said Sheikh.

This approach is intended to instil critical thinking. “I teach them, but I want them to use their critical sense and ask questions,” said Sheikh. “I try to make them think out of the box. I convert my classroom into a business boardroom where future leaders engage in discussions”.

Sheikh also links financial concepts to everyday life, giving examples of day to day financial decisions we all make. He makes his students think about why opportunity costs are important and how to make the best decisions based on the available resources.

For Sheikh, it is important to connect with students, and help them feel more comfortable. “Passion is very important,” said Sheikh. “Without passion, teaching is like a body without a soul. And the students know if you really care for their success.”

Sheikh acts as a mentor to his students both inside and outside the classroom, helping them to look for opportunities and motivates them to keep working toward their success. He encourages his students to have short, achievable targets, which, if successful, will lead to long-term goals.

“My motto is, you never fail; you just give up,” said Sheikh. “If you knock on the door and it doesn’t open, then it’s not your door.”

Students have told Sheikh that while his courses are much more difficult than others in the department, they enjoy his courses the most. Many students stay in contact even after graduation, letting him know about their career moves and achievements.

“A student who failed my course told me that, even though he failed, I was still the best prof at Western,” said Sheikh. “That student came back next term and passed the course.”

In his time at Western, Sheikh has witnessed the development of the department, from the Bachelor of Administrative and Commercial Studies, to the Management & Organizational Studies program, and then to the full DAN Department of Management & Organizational Studies. Sheikh looks forward to the further development of DAN Management with new graduate program options and new faculty joining the Department.

“The overall collegiality in the department is great,” said Sheikh, “It’s like a family. We have some of the finest teachers and everyone is very happy for me to receive the award.”

Established in 2016, the Dean’s Award for Excellence in Teaching recognizes full-time faculty members who have demonstrated excellence in teaching. By honouring such individuals, the Faculty of Social Science demonstrates its commitment to teaching as a scholarly endeavor, and highlights the importance of outstanding teaching to our Faculty.



New Anthropology professor focuses on ethics of mining

Lindsay Bell is joining the Department of Anthropology as Assistant Professor. Bell completed her PhD at the University of Toronto, and comes from a role as Assistant Professor at State University of New York, Oswego.

Bell researches the ethics and culture of mining industries and corporate-community relationships around resource development projects.

Focusing on resource extraction in the circumpolar world, Bell has looked at diamond mining companies operating in northern Canada, and Canadian companies operating in other first-world countries.

In 2017, Bell completed a fellowship through the Finnish Academy of Sciences. She researched how mining companies have tried to take approaches to ethical mining, developed in Canada, and implement them in other Arctic regions.

"My research has tracked the slippage between nationality and ethics," said Bell, "the way Canadian-ness becomes a stand-in for ethics. Notions of ethics and transparency need to be investigated rather than assumed."

"Canada is a country that exports a lot of ideas about ethics," said Bell. "Policy makers often assume policy is just policy; but it requires a cultural translation of ideas. Regulations that land in a new setting need to adapt to local conceptions of the environment and different cultures of work".

"Mining often gets proposed as a way to solve economic inequality. I am interested in how this proposal shapes ideas about those on the margins and how this model of development narrows the possibilities for making a future," said Bell.

Bell said that most corporate ethics programs are fairly short-sighted, with plans focusing on individual communities and individual mining projects. People living in a region with a dense history of extraction, however, have a longer term vision.

"Even if one mine doesn't deliver on promises, most people have a sense that there is a way to improve the process, or they have their own unique ways of carving out meaningful lives," said Bell.

While much of Bell's research has focused on mining projects in the circumpolar world, her future research will focus on transparency in the mineral sector more broadly, looking at the culture of mining-connected corporate and NGO structures, around the world. This work is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropology.

"I'm taking my existing work and going up a level to gain an understanding of the transnational politics and governance of mining and the mineral sector," said Bell.

Bell is excited to come to Western to join a "big department committed to interesting interdisciplinary collaboration and high calibre teaching."

"The Anthropology department is so vibrant," said Bell. "There are so many talented people who are committed to staying in conversation with each other."

New Anthropology professor examines humanity in times of crisis



Greg Beckett is joining the Department of Anthropology as an Assistant Professor. Beckett studies crises, disaster and trauma, from the standpoint of moral experience.

"I am interested in how people make sense of exceptional events and also in the ethical and political relationships that emerge in and around responses to crisis, especially in forms of humanitarian intervention," said Beckett.

Beckett focuses on the Caribbean, specifically Haiti, where he has worked for about fifteen years.

In a recent article, "A Dog's Life: Suffering Humanitarianism in Port-au-Prince, Haiti," published in *American Anthropologist* in 2017, Beckett explored how recipients of aid, and aid workers, both used the figure of the street dog to talk about the moral experience of people affected by the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Beckett has also recently completed a book manuscript called *How Crisis Feels: Living and Dying in Port-au-Prince, Haiti*.

Drawing on over a decade of research, the book "shows how people navigate the ruins of ecological devastation, economic collapse, political upheaval, violence, and humanitarian disasters," said Beckett. The book will be published by the University of California Press in February 2019.

Beckett completed his PhD at the University of Chicago, and before that completed his BA and MA in Anthropology at Western.

"I am thrilled to be joining the Anthropology Department at Western. My interest in anthropology began here and as an alum of the department, I know firsthand how excellent the program is," said Beckett. "I am delighted to be returning and to be joining a department that is committed to excellence in both teaching and research."

First Nations Studies

New courses to give context to current issues in Indigenous rights

Diana Lewis is joining the Department of Geography as Assistant Professor and will teach courses in the First Nations Studies program.

Lewis is coming from Dalhousie University, where she was a lecturer and coordinator of the Indigenous Studies Program.

Lewis will teach a course on historical issues, covering from pre-history to the 1969 White Paper, the Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian policy. "History did not start when settlers arrived," said Lewis. "We have a long history on this continent."

"I welcome students from any number of faculties," said Lewis. "I think it's a history that students have not received, and when they take my courses, the most common reaction from students is 'Why have we not been taught this before?'"

She will also teach a course on contemporary issues, starting with the 1969 White paper, and covering issues of Aboriginal titles and right, continuing to current events.

"I want to try to give students an understanding of the context that is happening in our current times, and an understanding of how media portrays issues from certain perspectives, to encourage people to be more critical of the portrayals," said Lewis.

"It can be a fun course to teach," said Lewis. "You can really see the learning process in students."

Lewis will also offer a third-year course on Indigenous Methodology, focusing on research methodology for working with Indigenous communities.



Start-up business provides opportunity to put learning to work

Staying on top of school work can be a challenge. Doing that while also launching a successful new business can be even more so. But it's a challenge Alysaa Co and Divyansh Ojha have jumped into.

The pair recently completed their 2nd year in the Consumer Behaviour module of DAN Management. During that year, they were launching FoodFund, a subscription-based produce delivery company focusing on reducing food waste by delivering misshapen and surplus foods from farms, greenhouses and distributors to customers.

The pair initially met through a case competition, became friends soon after and then developed their business.

Ojha was inspired to start the company after noticing the amount of food being thrown out by major retailers, while also seeing the contrast of people in London looking for food or shelter. He began to work on a business case and presented the idea to Co to get her feedback.

By August 2017, the company launched what was intended to be a 4-week pilot. Within eight days of promotion, 90 people had signed up, and the pair knew they had something.

"We figured it out as we went," said Ojha. "We didn't have to do much to get people to see what was wrong once they were made aware."

"We believe in offering fair wages to farmers for all their products" said Alysaa. "We don't think farmers should have to accept discounted prices based on how their produce looks."

The business is currently focused on deliveries in London and the surrounding area, but there has been interest

from customers as far away as Toronto, and Co and Ojha say they may consider expanding there in the future.

While they faced extra stress as they balanced school and business, the education provided through DAN Management provided valuable insight as they developed.

"DAN Management is a program that gives a lot of depth and breadth of business knowledge. It gives a lot of understanding that other programs lack. It does a lot to prepare you for business," said Co.

"It was good to be taking courses while running a real business," said Ojha. "I want to see more entrepreneurship fostered through courses."

"I wasn't actively thinking about it, but the things we learned in class really resonated when we were working on the business," said Co. "We were able to apply learning from our courses to our own problems. People often say you won't use what you learn in university, but it really does come into play."

"The beauty of being in consumer behaviour is that it is so qualitative, so it was very applicable to what we were doing, it really helped us understand the interest of the farmers and of the customers," said Ojha. "It's a program you can come into with limited previous knowledge and you can build from the ground-up. DAN Management builds on learning, not just piling on knowledge."



Funny bone offers serious insight into personality

Story by Aniruddho Chokroborty-Hoque

Research linking humour styles and psychology suggests your responses to a joke may provide insight into your personality.

DAN Management professor Julie Aitken Schermer, in the first work of its kind, recently showed a person's genetics, plus the environment around them, might influence the relationship between who they are and what they find amusing.

In other words, you inherit a particular sense of humour from your parents. But your classmates, work colleagues, and individual experiences ultimately shape your humour style.

Schermer's research linking psychology and humour has serious implications. "It's the self-deprecating humour style that I am particularly worried about," she said.

Schermer was one of the world's first researchers to uncover the link between excessive self-deprecating humour and suicidal thoughts, anxiety, depression and borderline personality disorders. Her new work could help counsellors, psychologists, therapists and clinicians treat mental illness in Canada using humour.

"They could benefit from being more aware of the functions of humour in their patients' lives and how maladaptive humour plays a role in their psychological dysfunctions," she said.

As important, Schermer's work reduces the stigma of mental illness by helping to uncover possible biological and environmental explanations for linking humour and mental illness.

Apart from self-deprecating humour, maladaptive humour can also be characterized as aggressive humour and bullying, which often provide devastating experiences for Canada's school-going youth. According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), about 14 per cent of Ontario's high school students indicate a serious level of psychological distress.

Self-deprecating humour often becomes a coping mechanism for bullying.

Schermer plans to work on developing tools school psychologists and academic counsellors can use that delve deeper into what patients find funny and use positive humour styles that help ease personal stress and enhance interpersonal relationships.

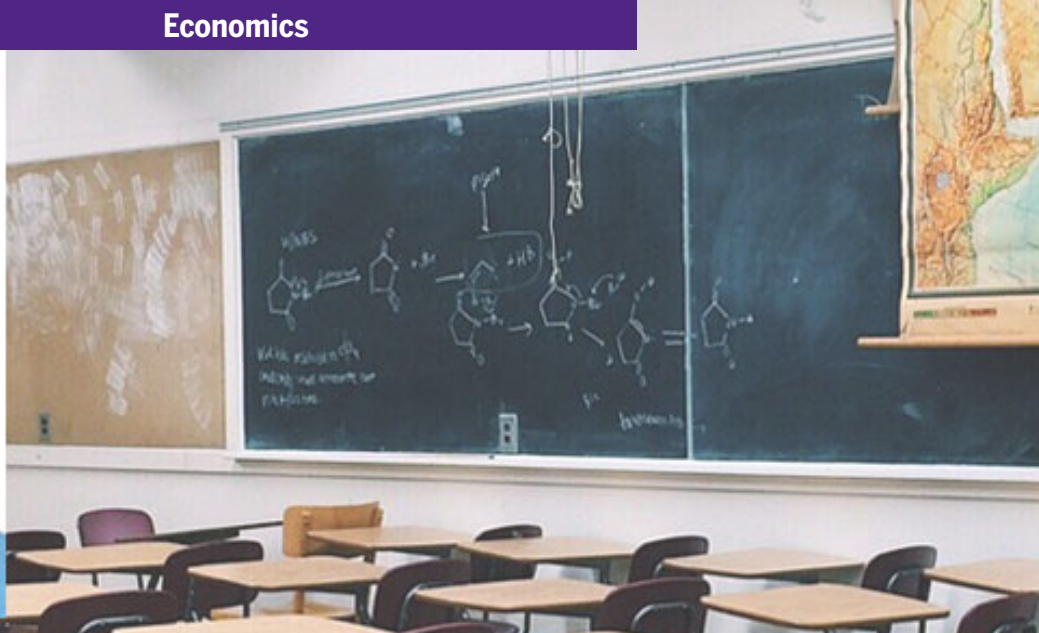
She hopes these potential psychological tools can also help students cope with mental illness.

"Cognitive behaviour therapy rarely looks at humour as a problem-solving tool," Schermer said. "Instead, counsellors and psychologists tend to focus on what individuals want to complain about."

People are more likely to admit, 'Yes, I find that funny,' than to speak negatively about colleagues – what they laugh at can speak volumes about how they conduct interpersonal relationships.

Counsellors, therapists and clinicians might also be able to help some patients by using humour as a tool to appreciate something funny and lighthearted around them.

"If you are having a hard day you can either fixate on the negative aspects and criticize yourself, or you can tell yourself something funny and lighten up your own personal mood," Schermer said.



A new option to study education options

Nirav Mehta, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, is interested in studying the effectiveness of different approaches to education, but ran into difficulty with the standard approach to studying the topic.

“Experiments can answer a very narrow set of questions very well, but they are expensive,” said Mehta. “In themselves, experiments generally only tell you about the effects of specific interventions.”

To address this, Mehta developed and estimated economic models to consider education policy. Mehta applied the approach to two issues: charter school policy, and the impact of ability tracking on students. In the first case, Mehta considered whether flexibility of choice in charter schools is good for students.

“The modal existing way to figure out whether an outcome is better or not is to try to get random assignment,” said Mehta. “However, random assignment to charter schools doesn’t exist in the real world, which forces researchers pursuing this empirical approach to study oversubscribed charter schools, which sometimes admit students by lottery. However, lottery-based studies are based on a deep conceptual flaw. You can only measure the effects of charter schools which people want to attend.”

Due to this, Mehta said studies of charter schools based on experiments do not have external validity. “The studies do not tell you how all charter schools are doing; they only tell you the effect of charter schools that are over-subscribed,” said Mehta.

In his approach, Mehta focused on developing frameworks to allow wider extrapolation than the most common empirical approach. The framework he developed allowed him to measure the average effect of charter schools over all students who attended charter schools, over a counterfactual where there was no

charter school.

Through the model, Mehta estimated that children who attend charter schools on average perform 10 to 12 per cent of a standard deviation better than students in public school. However, this average effect masks considerable variation in how students are affected.

“There is huge variation in charter schools, so some do worse,” said Mehta. “If you only measured charter schools in high demand, it would overestimate the effectiveness of charter schools.”

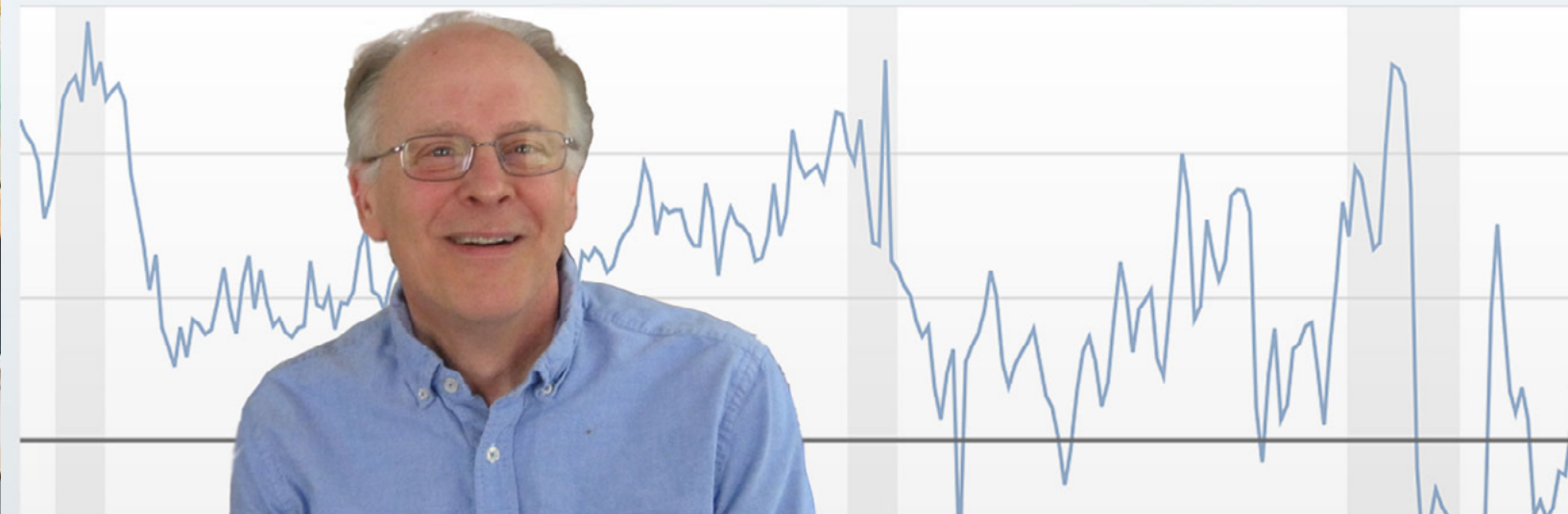
In his ability tracking study, Mehta was considering whether dividing students based on ability level helps or hurts overall performance. When students are grouped by reading ability, students with lower-level reading skills do not interact with students with higher-level reading skills.

Experiments on the topic often did not consider additional inputs parents may provide if peer interactions change due to ability tracking. Moreover, experiments can only reveal treatment effects of particular tracking configurations — those chosen by the experimenters.

Mehta’s paper was the first to take into account equilibrium interactions, or changes parents might make based on different groups. The model he and his co-author developed showed that ability tracking increased inequality in the classroom.

“Ability tracking gives resources to better-off parents, or parents of better readers,” said Mehta, “and takes resources away from poorer parents.”

“There are many questions that experiments can answer for themselves, but without further structure, you can’t understand the many crucial policy implications,” said Mehta.



Stephen D. Williamson named 2018 recipient of The Bank of Canada’s Fellowship Award

Stephen D. Williamson, professor in the Department of Economics, has been named a 2018 recipient of The Bank of Canada’s Fellowship Award.

Recognized as an international expert in macroeconomics and monetary policy, Williamson holds Western’s Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair in Central Banking, which aims to support work in the area of monetary policy. His most recent research is focused on better understanding conventional and unconventional monetary policy, how monetary policy should be conducted in a low interest rate environment and re-examining the relationship between monetary and fiscal policy.

The Bank Fellowship Award provides financial support to leading academics who are widely recognized for their expertise and excellence in areas important to the Bank’s core functions, and whose research contributes to the development of knowledge and research capabilities in those areas. The Fellowship Award provides annual funding of up to \$90,000 for a term of up to five years, and recipients are professors in tenure or tenure-track positions at Canadian universities.

“The Bank of Canada is proud to recognize Professor Stephen D. Williamson, this year’s Fellowship Award recipient, for his outstanding contributions to research in all four of the Bank’s core functions,” said Bank of Canada Governor Stephen S. Poloz. “His work is helping to expand knowledge in these fields. Moreover, his commitment to mentoring students and emerging researchers is fostering a new generation of thought leaders in central banking - not just in Canada, but around the world.”

“The Bank of Canada is proud to recognize Professor Stephen D. Williamson, this year’s Fellowship Award recipient, for his outstanding contributions to research in all four of the Bank’s core functions,”

**- Stephen S. Poloz
Governor
Bank of Canada**

In 2016, Western received a generous \$2-million endowed gift from Stephen A. Jarislowsky and the Jarislowsky Foundation, matched by Western, to establish the Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair in Central Banking with the aim to encourage excellence in teaching, mentorship and research in areas essential to central bank policy and decision-making.

“The Stephen A. Jarislowsky Chair in Central Banking was instrumental in attracting Stephen Williamson to Western University and back to Canada,” said Audra Bowlus, Chair of Western’s Department of Economics. “Having Stephen be part of the Bank of Canada’s prestigious Fellowship Program will further strengthen our ties to the Bank through interactions regarding monetary policy and the training of the next generation of policy makers.”



Creating a more flexible model for measuring productivity

It was 11 years in the making, challenged long-held assumptions in the study of economics and has resulted in interest from governments and agencies around the world.

Salvador Navarro and David Rivers, Associate Professors in Economics, have worked to develop new empirical methods for studying firm-level data, which can be used to employ richer models of firm behaviour, while reducing or avoiding restrictive assumptions.

Firm-level productivity is a key input to models in several areas in economics, including International Trade, Macroeconomics, Labor, as well as Industrial Organization. The pair, working with Amit Gandhi, Professor of Economics at the University of Pennsylvania, showed that the standard approach relied on flawed assumptions around productivity.

"A common approach to measuring firm productivity is to look at value added, taking the output of a firm and subtracting the value of intermediate inputs," said Rivers. "We wanted to point out that, by just doing that, we are missing something important. We can now look at the output of a firm and all the inputs of a firm, and how they interact."

"There was a widely used method that everyone had agreed upon being used, but red flags were being raised, and we came along and determined what was wrong, and how to fix it," said Navarro.

When economists estimate productivity, they "impose convenient restrictions on how they think a firm works, but in many cases we do not know if firms really satisfy these criteria," said Navarro.

"Our approach allows the model to be more flexible," said Rivers.

"We wanted to point out that, by just doing that, we are missing something important."

**- David Rivers
Associate Professor
Department of Economics**

The methods "allow researchers to study questions that were previously unexplored or to revisit existing ones armed with better tools," said Rivers.

"Imagine if it's the Olympics," said Navarro. "You can talk about who is the fastest man alive. You can talk about that; or you can talk about precise measurement. We have developed a more accurate 'clock' if you will."

The resulting model and code has allowed for the creation of an estimation routine that has been distributed widely, generating interest from groups that measure productivity across economies.

Navarro has had meetings with representatives from the central banks in Mexico and Colombia to talk about the methods.

Requests have come in from around the world, including from Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, China, Chile, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The World Bank, Microsoft Research, the Federal Reserve Board, the United Nations and the OECD have all requested the code.

New hires helps Geography become more Spatial

The Department of Geography is building on its expertise in Geographic Information Science (GIS) with the addition of two new faculty members.

Agnieszka Leszczynski is joining the Department of Geography as Assistant Professor. Leszczynski completed her PhD at the University of Washington, and comes from a position as Senior Lecturer at the University of Auckland in New Zealand.

Leszczynski focuses on GIS, Digital Geographies, and Social Geography.

Beyond simply applying digital techniques to the subfields of geography, Leszczynski considers how digital tools change the definition of geography itself. In her latest paper, Leszczynski and colleague Sarah Elwood trace new horizons of contemporary digital geographies scholarship that engage queer and critical race theory, postcolonial feminism, and black and queer code studies.

"I am thrilled to be joining Geography at Western, which has historically been an iconic GIS department both in Canada and internationally," said Leszczynski. "Coming to Western represents a rare and welcome opportunity to rejoin the Canadian academy after many years abroad, and to do so at one of Canada's most esteemed institutions."

Jed Long is joining the Department of Geography, as adjunct professor in July 2018, and will be named Assistant Professor in January 2019.

Long completed his PhD in Geography at the University of Victoria and comes from a position as Lecturer in Geoinformatics at the School of Geography and Sustainable Development at the University of St. Andrews.

Long uses GIS and other spatial analysis techniques in the study of movement. Long is interested in applying GIS to study how human activity in natural environments impacts wildlife behaviour, including a project looking at how hikers influence the behaviour of deer, and a project focused on how hunters impact deer.

"I am thrilled to be joining Geography at Western, which has historically been an iconic GIS department both in Canada and internationally,"

**Agnieszka Leszczynski
Assistant Professor
Department of Geography**

Using GIS and spatial analysis to study movement "allows us to better understand the behaviour of individuals in the context of their fine scale behaviour. By understanding individual movement, we can make inferences about how movements influence spatial and temporal behaviour," said Long. "A lot of social science research depends on where and when people go places."

In coming to Western, Long and Leszczynski join a Geography department that has recently been named an ESRI Canada Centre of Higher Education Excellence, as part of a regeneration of GIS faculty and teaching.

"I'm excited about the opportunity," said Long, "excited to join other new staff members developing and increasing prominence in GIS and spatial teaching, and working with other colleagues who are investigating a variety of research problems using GIS and spatial data."



Michael Dove and Michelle Hamilton receive Award for Excellence in Collaborative Teaching

Friends for more than two decades, colleagues for one decade, Michelle Hamilton and Mike Dove have been recognized for their commitment to collaboration.

Hamilton, Assistant Professor, and Dove, Associate Professor, are the recipients of the 2018 Vice-Provost (Academic Programs) Award for Excellence in Collaborative Teaching. This is the second year in a row with winners coming from the Faculty of Social Science.

Hamilton and Dove co-administer the Public History program at Western. The M.A. in Public History was established more than 30 years ago. Since 2008, Hamilton and Dove have redesigned the program, taught the core courses and jointly led and administered the program.

Upon taking on the administration of the program, the pair worked to extend the community connections, including increasing the number of community-linked partnerships, creating relationships with more partners, and giving students an option to act as Research Assistants for a community partner, in lieu of a teaching assistant position.

"We really extended the range for students, which has led to more collaboration and partnerships," said Hamilton. "It has led to wider exposure for what the program does in the community."

They play a critical role in developing and maintaining community partnerships that, since 2006, have allowed students to work with more than 100 organizations across Canada, including Museum London, Banting House National Historic Site, the Royal Canadian Regiment Museum, the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, and Parks Canada.

Dove said much of their work is about raising the profile of the study of history itself. "People often ask what historians do. Our work is about raising historical consciousness," said Dove. "It's a privilege to be able to work with students to follow their passion and equip them with skills to succeed."

"Half of the work we do is relationship building," said Hamilton. And these efforts have paid off. "Our experience with the community partners means that they are more likely to take our interns and graduates for projects. They trust the training."

Hamilton and Dove feel the partnerships better prepare students to apply their training in the job market. "After our program, students have communication skills. They can share, compromise, and collaborate," said Dove.

"Our students feel more polished and professional," said Hamilton. "We try to transform them from undergraduate students so they see themselves as public historians by the time they leave."

Receiving the award is an "acknowledgment and validation," said Dove. "I see it as a commitment that collaborative teaching and working with the community is valuable and will continue to be supported."

Established in 2017, the Vice-Provost (Academic Programs) Award for Excellence in Collaborative Teaching recognizes instructors whose exemplary collaborations in university teaching enhance student learning. The 2017 award recognized Andrew Walsh and Ian Colquhoun, Associate Professors in the Department of Anthropology, for their work with the Université d'Antsirananana in Madagascar.



Lisa Hodgetts receives 2018 Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching

Lisa Hodgetts, Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology has been recognized for excellence in teaching, with the 2018 Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching.

Lisa Hodgetts' teaching philosophy states, "We learn best by doing." Her courses in the Department of Anthropology illustrate this drive for active learning. She brings the field into the classroom with teaching innovations that range from blogs, YouTube videos, and board games to 3D prints and virtual-reality viewers.

From first-year to graduate courses, she creates an interactive learning environment and provides opportunities for hands-on activities and experiential learning. She recently redesigned the graduate professional development course to enhance learning opportunities and provide students with concrete outputs to further their careers.

"My approach to teaching is to try to engage students in the practice of archaeology, because we all learn best not by listening or reading but by doing. That means involving them in everything from critically analyzing others' arguments, hands-on labs to learn the basics of identifying artifacts and animal bones from archaeological sites, interpreting mock data sets, and presenting archaeological information to the public," said Hodgetts.

"While many of our undergraduate and graduate students will ultimately pursue careers outside of archaeology and anthropology, I try to equip them with a suite of transferrable skills that will be valuable whatever they go on to do."

"I'm very lucky to work in a department that prides itself on strong teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and many of my colleagues are wonderful teachers and mentors."

**- Lisa Hodgetts
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology**

Hodgetts dedicates considerable time to educational outreach activities – both spearheading the creation of workshops to introduce high school students to anthropology, and through capacity-building among Inuvialuit youth.

"I'm very lucky to work in a department that prides itself on strong teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and many of my colleagues are wonderful teachers and mentors," said Hodgetts. "It makes for an environment where we all share ideas on teaching and learning, try new things in the classroom and generally encourage and support each other in doing the best we can for our students."

In 2017, Hodgetts received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

The Edward G. Pleva Award for Excellence in Teaching was established to recognize continuing members of full-time faculty at Western and at its Affiliated University Colleges.

Toward a new understanding of Indigenous Health

“Academics can’t just do research on Indigenous communities; they have to do research with Indigenous communities,” said Chantelle Richmond.

For Richmond, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, it is time for Indigenous health research to fundamentally change.

Richmond is the newly named Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Health and the Environment. She is part of a growing movement of academics and Indigenous community members who feel that much of the research involving Indigenous communities is too narrowly focused, and does not take into consideration the deeper and more complex situations facing many communities.

In July, Richmond was joined in the Department by Diana Lewis, Assistant Professor, who will also teach courses in the First Nations Studies program. Lewis is coming from Dalhousie University, where she was the inaugural coordinator of, and lecturer in, the Indigenous Studies Program.

Lewis’ PhD research focuses on resource development, and the impacts of resource development on the health of Indigenous peoples, using a methodology that combines both Indigenous and western-based sciences.

Lewis researches issues of bio-politics and bio-power, or when and how the state controls the narrative around groups of people. She is also working with Indigenous communities to counter those narratives.

“A community based approach is important when doing research with Indigenous communities,” said Lewis. “It allows communities to be equal partners in what the research questions are, so the research is more relevant to their needs.”

In January, Richmond was also part of the launch of the Indigenous Mentorship Network Program of Ontario, which includes 13 research institutions and a team of 70 researchers, trainees and community collaborators.

The program represents a fundamental reorientation in how health research takes place in First Nations communities, said Richmond, who serves as the Network’s

program leader.

“For the first time, we are connecting the networks of the Indigenous community with the networks of academia,” said Richmond. “We are putting communities in the driver’s seat on health research that matters to them.”

When researching health, for instance, researchers often focus on narrow areas such as disease burden or behaviours, without considering the other issues that may determine the health and situation of Indigenous people. This could include reverberations and continued effects of the Indian Residential schools, lack of healthy food options, and lack of continued and appropriate access to health care.

Researchers may also view issues from a biomedical perspective “that too often forces dichotomies of health and well-being,” said Richmond, not giving proper consideration to Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous approaches to health, which generally consider health on a continuum of wellness.

Richmond’s CRC will build on the concept of relational accountability to examine the processes that both support and constrain relationship building in Indigenous health research. Richmond will consider how to help bridge gaps that may occur as partners view the world through different experiences and philosophies. This includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews, but, as many of the problems are multi-faceted, it also includes bringing together researchers from different fields to share knowledge.

“Sometimes we are coming from different worlds and perspectives,” said Richmond. “How do we overcome that?” The change, Richmond says, has to happen with academics, and trainees, connecting them with community members.

Changing the approach can have an impact beyond research. “If we can have better understanding of the different ways of knowing, we can better move toward reconciliation,” said Richmond.

Lewis is focused on providing communities with the opportunity to collect and control their own health data. For the past seven years, her research has focused on the



Chantelle Richmond

impacts that a pulp and paper mill has been having on the health of Pictou Landing First Nation. Government has never investigated the health concerns of the community, despite the community being exposed to contaminants for 50 years. The community had no baseline health data to evidence how the community has been impacted over the years.

Together, with the women of the community, Lewis developed an environmental health survey to collect data for the community, using a methodology guided by the principle of Etuaptmunk, or Two-Eyed Seeing, which calls upon researchers to approach research using Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge, drawing upon the strength of both approaches.

“Now they have their own data, which belongs to the community, to show how their health has been impacted,” said Lewis.

“Despite an increase in research on Indigenous topics in Canada, inequities are growing and outcomes are not improving,” Richmond said. “The only way to change that landscape is to work with the community, through diverse, interdisciplinary teams of trainees who know intimately the landscape of the communities.”

“When you restrict research to a Western perspective, it can’t go deep enough to get to the Indigenous worldview,” said Lewis. “A community-based approach can honour an Indigenous methodology, and gives you space to bring in



Diana Lewis

how Indigenous people relate to the land and environment around them”. “The relationship to the land and environment is sacred, and when it is severed, it is traumatizing,” said Lewis. “I am, in part, using quantitative analysis to demonstrate the strength of that relationship.”

“What’s needed is to recognize that health is infused with cultural, social, political, geographic and environmental context,” Richmond said. “Studying Indigenous health must then include a deep understanding of traditional knowledge about the land and the people’s place in it.”

“The University is focused on what it does well, but if it wants to make big changes, we have to re-think our approach to the topics,” said Richmond. “Indigenous research can no longer be a theoretical exercise; we must do research that will not only ensure real impact in the communities we work with, but it should also bring communities closer to their goals of self-determination.”

“The answers will not come merely from doing more (or spending more on) research,” said Richmond, “but will be realized through a fundamental reorientation of how we do research.”

Chantelle Richmond’s CRC will connect and expand upon three projects Richmond is already working on: the Interdisciplinary Development Initiative on Applied Indigenous Scholarship, which focuses on the academic environment; the Indigenous Mentorship Network Program of Ontario, which focuses on health training environments; and an international SSHRC

Insight Grant, which focuses on global Indigenous connections with the land.

The Ontario-based network aligns with the other seven provincial nodes of the Indigenous Mentorship Network Program, which is funded by the Canadian Institute for Health Research.

The network will provide researchers with well-supported training opportunities and environments for community-based learning and research. It will offer scholarships, seed grants, webinars, research innovation and publishing opportunities to trainees, postdoctoral fellows and new investigators.

Hundreds of young researchers will receive training through the program.

It will operate from Western on funding of \$1 million from the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) and \$1.2 million from other partners during the next five years.



Margolis and Navarro named as 2018 Faculty Scholars

Two members of the Faculty of Social Science have been named as Western University Faculty Scholars for 2018: Rachel Margolis, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology, and Salvador Navarro, Associate Professor in the Department of Economics.

Established in 2005, the Faculty Scholars Award recognizes significant recent scholarly achievements in teaching or research. Nominated by faculty deans and selected by the Faculty Selection committee chaired by the Provost, the recipients have an international presence in their discipline and are considered all-round scholars.

Margolis is examining how kinship networks are thinning in North America and Europe, and the policy implications that may have. Margolis also studies how the probability of becoming a grandparent has changed over time, as have the timing and duration of grandparenthood among those who experience it.

Margolis has examined how difficulties surrounding the transition to parenthood contribute to the currently low levels of fertility in many countries.

Margolis is extending this research to examine how parental leave policies shape family dynamics by affecting who takes leave within a family, whether the couple has an additional child, and whether family friendly policies in Canada affect the level of fertility, overall or for subpopulations. Margolis has produced highly cited articles discussing each of these topics

Margolis has made significant contributions to teaching at Western University, and she has an exceptional record of teaching and mentoring graduate and postgraduate students. Dr. Margolis developed a very popular undergraduate course, Sociology 2180, Development and Health Inequalities. This course draws students from

multiple faculties and introduces them to the study of population health and health inequalities. Each semester, students note that it was one of the best courses they have taken.

Navarro's research is "grounded on the idea that one can apply economic theory paired with cutting edge statistical methods to better understand the common determinants of the differential success" of economic agents.

In recent years, researchers and statistical agencies throughout the world have made available new, detailed, firm-level data sets, and Navarro's research has played an important role in our understanding of the lessons we can learn from them, and the ways in which we can measure and improve the performance of a range of economic agents.

His research has reached a world-wide audience. Navarro has published 14 peer-reviewed articles and three book chapters, has given invited seminars in more than 60 universities, research institutions and central banks, and 48 conferences talks.

Navarro has made significant contributions to teaching at Western, teaching courses in Labor Economics, Social Networks, and Econometrics in the Ph.D. program. He also developed a new curriculum for the Advanced Methods for Applied Economics class that all second year Ph.D. students are now required to take, and which students from Ivey regularly take. In this class, he teaches students computational methods that are at the forefront of what quantitative researchers employ in Economics.

Award winners hold the title "Faculty Scholar" for two years and receive \$7,000 each year for scholarly activities, as well as receiving a citation.



Maya Shatzmiller receives Hellmuth Prize, celebrating elite research

Maya Shatzmiller, professor in the Department of History, has been awarded the 2018 Hellmuth Prize for Achievement in Research, in recognition of her ground-breaking research that has challenged widely-held assumptions about the medieval Islamic world.

Shatzmiller has studied Arabic chronicles and compiled numeric data relating to economic markers, such as the price of commodities, amount of coinage in circulation, exchange rates and cost of goods. Using the data, she demonstrates that the medieval Islamic world functioned well, producing wealth and a standard of living higher than anywhere else in the world at the time.

In the 500-year period following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, the economy and social structures in Europe declined. During the same period, people in the Middle East had higher literacy rates, Islamic scientists maintained the knowledge of Greek and Roman thinkers lost to Europe, and developed new medicine and scientific techniques.

"Islamic economies in middle ages were well developed and had strong division of labour," said Shatzmiller. "Islamic manufacturing was very efficient, was very specialized. Europe did not see this type of specialization until the 17th century."

In her research, Shatzmiller has focused on determining what moved the economy of the medieval Middle East forward, in the nearly 900-year period from 650 to 1517.

Shatzmiller's research is supported by information and data drawn from contemporary sources, information she has made available on an open database, *Measuring the Medieval Islamic Economy*. The approach, while time-consuming, is important. "Unless you understand the economy, you can't understand how

people lived or made a living," said Shatzmiller. "The expansion of Islamic sciences was based on the economic success of medieval Islamic society."

Shatzmiller has also focused on addressing the belief that Europe has succeeded in the modern world due to the influence of Protestantism, and that the Middle East did not because of Islam.

"The societies I research worked, they were progressive," said Shatzmiller. "To say it is the fault of Islam has no basis." Shatzmiller points to issues with corruption, a lack of resources, beyond oil, and poor education as factors limiting development in the modern Middle East.

Through her research career, Shatzmiller has published articles and books focusing on different strategic factors of the economy in the Middle East. She is now working on a book to create a synthesis of the economic performance of the medieval Middle East.

The value of her work has been recognized by other academics and by policy makers, She was named as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 2003, and has served on the board of several research institutions and journals.

The Hellmuth Prize provides another mark of distinction for a successful research career.

"I feel very proud to get recognition from my own university," said Shatzmiller.

The Hellmuth Prize for Achievement in Research recognizes faculty members with outstanding international reputations for their contributions in research.



A Noble gift in support of Public History

Thanks to a gift from a Western alumna, and a bit of serendipity, students in Western's Masters in Public History program will have a funded internship opportunity with Canada's History Society.

The Nobleman Scholars program was created to provide internships at Canada's History for graduate students from Western University. The program was established in 2017 by Dorothy Hollingsworth, alumna of Western University, to honour her husband, William (Bill) Nobleman, founding director of Canada's National History Society (Canada's History), who passed away in 2016.

In Spring 2017, Hollingsworth received an invitation to an event hosted by the Society. She began to think about what she might do to honour Bill's memory and felt that whatever it was, it would be connected to the Society. "Bill was very interested in education, but was also very knowledgeable in History in general," said Hollingsworth.

Hollingsworth asked the Society what they may want support in. The Society told her that, since 2006, they have endeavoured to host interns from Public History, as funding allowed. Support to continue that opportunity would be appreciated.

Joel Ralph was the first intern from the Western Public History program to work with the Society, in 2006. He is now Director of Programs for Canada's History.

"We've had four more Western Public History students since, and four of the five still work with the society," said Ralph. "We've had a great connection with the program."

"I thought it was great. It combined Bill's interests, combining education and his interest in history," said Hollingsworth. "I was so surprised that it was going to be a Western grad. It seemed very serendipitous."

"We are fortunate that Dorothy saw it as an opportunity to create a lasting legacy to recognize her husband's work with the society," said Ralph. "It is critical in giving a foundation to the internship. It's wonderful that we found a connection to Dorothy and Bill, and to Western."

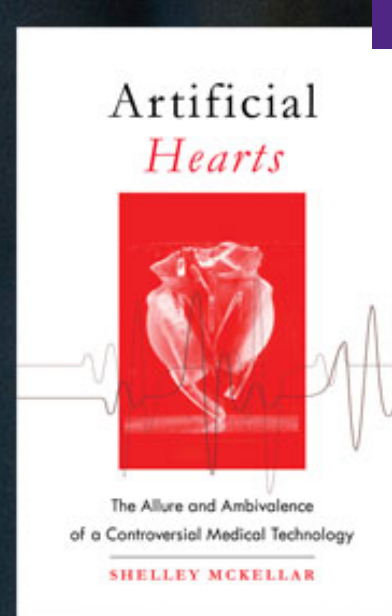
Brooke Campbell will be the first Nobleman Scholar, working as a digital media intern with Canada's History.

"Western's program is very hands-on; everything had a community partner, so it's not just theoretical," said Campbell. This experience will serve her well in her internship. "One really unique aspect, as part of application, I proposed a project, a unique idea, and I get to do it. This is an industry where you have to be really creative."

While students benefit, Ralph said the Society does as well. "We benefit a great deal, more than anything," said Ralph. "The public history program pulls together and graduates students that are ready to do a wide-variety of tasks with a wide-variety of skill sets."

"It's a great networking opportunity," said Campbell. "It's a great way to hone those skills and apply everything we've been working on for the past eight months. It will take all those skills and put them in a more professional experience."

"For us to be able to provide an internship year in, year out is tremendous," said Ralph. "The gift is a gift to both the society and to the Public History program at Western."



New book gets to the heart of the matter

The heart is physically and symbolically one of the most important organs in the human body. As such, efforts to repair or replace hearts are celebrated among the highest achievements in modern medicine.

Shelley McKellar examined the history of these efforts in two recent works: "Clinical Firsts – Christiaan Barnard's Heart Transplantations" published in the December 7, 2017 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* and her book *Artificial Hearts: The Allure and Ambivalence of a Controversial Medical Technology*, published in January 2018.

McKellar is Associate Professor in the Department of History and holds the Hannah Chair in the History of Medicine. McKellar was drawn to the story of the artificial heart because she "thought it would be a great case study of a failed technology."

While the first total artificial heart implant occurred in 1969, the progress on the technology and methods was not always successful. Even today technological, medical and bio-ethical concerns exist around the process.

"There are a couple of key parts in its history that should have broken the march toward progress," said McKellar. "The allure of it was enough to offset the ambivalence of the flawed technology."

"There is an allure of replaceable parts," said McKellar. "The desirability of these objects kept the drive for an artificial heart beating."

But, McKellar points out, the artificial heart was also called "The Dracula of Medical Technology" in a *New York Times* op-ed piece, as it sucked significant resources away from other potential projects.

The adoption of artificial hearts has changed how we



define concepts in society, including death, said McKellar. "A person can still be alive after the heart has stopped beating. The heart has become an organ. It's a pump and we can fix a pump."

"There is an allure of replaceable parts. The desirability of these objects kept the drive for an artificial heart beating."

**- Shelley McKellar
Associate Professor
Department of History**

This view also determined how early researchers defined success. "The initial focus of the heart as a pump was to create a pump that worked," said McKellar. "As research continued, it became more than efficacy (does it work?) but also effectiveness (does it help the patient?). The focus became how long does it help people survive, and what kind of life can they live."

For McKellar, the story of artificial hearts and heart replacement reflects the values, expectations and limitations of medical technology.

"It's an interesting case study," said McKellar. "Just because we can, should we spend so much on what is essentially a therapy for end-stage chronic disease? We could instead focus on other treatments, introduced earlier, and, of course, prevention."

Artificial Hearts was published by Johns Hopkins University Press. The book includes colour photos, the publishing of which were supported by the J.B. Smallman Research Fund.



Helping the EU tell its climate story

Radoslav Dimitrov is playing an important role in reworking how the European Union is communicating its climate policies.

Dimitrov, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science, researches UN diplomacy and international agreements, with a particular focus on global environmental politics and climate diplomacy.

Dimitrov also has had direct experience in climate negotiations. Since 2009, he has been part of European Union team at climate negotiations, through the Bulgarian government.

With this experience in mind, Dimitrov was recently invited to become a member of the EU Presidency team and was asked to re-design the political communication strategy for the EU in climate negotiations.

In January 2018, Dimitrov presented to a team of European diplomats, including the heads of delegations of 28 countries, and the chief climate negotiators of the European Union. The communication strategy focused both on persuasive argumentation to external negotiating partners, and speaking to mass media and civil society.

“The EU has somewhat of a problem,” said Dimitrov, “because it is clearly the leader in climate policy. Domestically, it has achieved emission reductions of 23% compared to 1999 levels, while also seeing economic growth of 53%.”

Despite this growth, Dimitrov said the European Union “also faces criticism because people do not seem to recognize the achievements, and other countries criticize the EU for not doing more.”

Dimitrov proposed a 10-point strategy that optimizes argumentation vis-à-vis other countries at negotiations and alleviates public relations problems with media and civil society. His plan focuses on how to reframe the discourse, and change the content of messages.

“It is exciting to be helping to re-design the communication strategy of one of the biggest diplomatic coalitions, in one of the biggest political games in global negotiations.”

**- Radoslav Dimitrov
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science**

“The overall thrust is to create a more assertive tone and more effective persuasion in the negotiations,” said Dimitrov.

Following the presentation, the decision was made to establish a new EU group on political communication to follow up on Dimitrov’s suggestions. Dimitrov has been asked to be on the committee.

“This is a new dedicated body to elaborate a negotiating strategy,” said Dimitrov. “It is exciting to be helping to re-design the communication strategy of one of the biggest diplomatic coalitions, in one of the biggest political games in global negotiations.”

The EU negotiating committee also asked Dimitrov to coordinate the EU team in the next round of climate negotiations, which occurred in May 2018.



Armstrong named as Canada Research Chair

How can new tools change social science research?

Dave Armstrong has been named as Canada Research Chair in Political Methodology, with a focus on how to bring new research tools into social science.

A traditional quantitative approach in Social Science focuses on testing hypotheses in smaller group or sample and infers conclusions about the entire population from that information. These approaches, Armstrong says, are often seen as incompatible with new quantitative tools being developed by the data science community.

“There is a tension between models used for hypothesis testing and those used for prediction,” said Armstrong. His work will bridge this divide using both predictive and inferential models to their fullest advantage.

Methods being used on larger data sets allows for more predictive modelling, considering outcomes, without necessarily considering the causes or impact of various factors.

“In predictive modelling, why a model works doesn’t matter, we just care about whether we can predict an outcome from it,” said Armstrong.

As an example, Armstrong said that a researcher might want to know how development in a country or region affects the likelihood of conflict.

“Are developed countries less prone to conflict? In the usual way, we collect a bunch of data in places with or without conflict and gather development data and other things that might impact development,” said Armstrong. “We put them into a model; focus on how development relates to probability of conflict.”

“In a predictive model, we may find development matters for conflict, but often times it is difficult to understand exactly how. Maybe the relationship deviates from what we thought,” said Armstrong. “The predictive model doesn’t care about nature of relationship, it just wants to know what is more predictive.”

Armstrong aims to merge the approaches; “The two approaches can be put together, to develop a good predictive model of conflict and better sense of impact of development on conflict, for example,” said Armstrong.

Armstrong’s goal is to determine the most profitable and successful uses of the new predictive model that can be incorporated into social science investigations.

Big data and predictive models provide an opportunity and a challenge for social scientists, said Armstrong.

“There is opportunity to do something interesting,” said Armstrong. “There is also opportunity to misuse the predictive tools in work and expect them to do something they can’t do.”

Armstrong said some of the work to bring the two approaches together has already been completed in the study of statistics, but the challenge will be to convince people to use the new tools.

“Marrying these two approaches will give us more robust inferences,” said Armstrong. “It will help provide evidence that the answers we find are meaningful, and tell us something useful about the world.”



CIHR grant supports research of motor learning by observing

Can you learn by watching? Paul Gribble thinks so.

Gribble, Professor joint-appointed in the Department of Psychology and the Department of Physiology & Pharmacology, and member of the Brain and Mind Institute, has received a CIHR grant to research sensory motor neuroplasticity and motor learning by observing.

The grant will allow Gribble to build on previous research and deepen the understanding of how the brain reacts to watching others perform an action.

“It’s intriguing,” said Gribble. “When you watch someone else moving, or learning new motor skills, the parts of the brain that are normally active when you are learning, are also active.”

In his lab, Gribble asks subjects to move a robotic arm to touch an on screen target. As they move the arm, they face different levels of counterforce, causing them to change the necessary applied force. This changes the mapping between motor commands and the movement of the arm, and over time, people learn how to reshape motor commands to compensate for the robot force, and complete the task.

In the second phase, new subjects were shown videos of the first subjects learning to reach using the robot arm. They were then asked to use the robotic arm. The results show that subjects who watched a video of someone else using the arm started roughly 20 per cent farther down the learning curve than those that did not.

Along with that, fMRI scans reveal the changes in the brain that underlie observational learning. The primary motor cortex, the last stop in the brain before motor commands are sent to the spine and to muscles, and the somatosensory cortex (the part of the brain that receives signals from the body), show changes in activity during

observation—changes that can be linked to behavioural measures of learning from observing.

On the theoretical side, this represents a new way to think about how motor learning can occur.

“There is some common sense to this,” said Gribble. “When you want to learn something, you watch someone else do it, but many theoretical models of motor skill learning don’t include this idea.”

Gribble said the research could provide new basic knowledge that could someday lead to new treatment options for clinicians. “If some parts of motor skills can be primed through observation, this may provide a back door to neuroplasticity, for diseases affecting movement such as stroke,” said Gribble.

The basic science approach is important for CIHR to support, Gribble said.

“Of course applied and clinical research is important. But basic research provides the foundation for clinical advances—basic research is acquiring new knowledge,” said Gribble. “Without funding basic research, it is like we are saying we know everything. It is often the case that exciting new clinical advances come from exciting new basic research.”

Along with expanding the basic understanding of the brain, the grant will help expand the research capacity in the field.

“The main thing the grant will enable me to do will be to hire new skilled researchers and trainees,” said Gribble. “They will be trained, not just to be professors, but to go into the workforce with research skills.”



Psychology welcomes four new Assistant Professors

The Department of Psychology is welcoming four new faculty members as Assistant Professors.

Laura Batterink completed a PhD in Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Oregon, followed by a Postdoctoral fellowship at Northwestern University. Batterink’s research focuses on the neural basis of language processing and language acquisition, and implicit learning and implicit memory.

“I have been investigating how people pick up on patterns in language. We are using EEG to measure people’s brain responses to hidden patterns embedded in an artificial language,” said Batterink. “We can track changes in the participants’ brain responses as they’re exposed to the artificial language, and predict how well people are learning at an individual level, before we test them behaviourally.”

Lindsay Bodell completed a PhD in Clinical Psychology at Florida State University, and completed post-doctoral fellowships at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic/University of Pittsburgh and Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience.

Bodell’s research is broadly focused on identifying psychological and biological processes that contribute to the development and maintenance of eating disorders. Bodell examines the influence of weight-related factors, and feeding-related hormones on the maintenance of eating disorders, particularly bulimia nervosa.

“My work has found that being “weight suppressed” (i.e., having a large discrepancy between one’s highest and current weights) predicts the continuation of eating disorder symptoms,” said Bodell. “This association may be due to the influence of weight changes on feeding-related hormones and reward sensitivity.”

Samantha Joel completed a PhD from the University of Toronto followed by a SSHRC-supported postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Texas at Austin.

Joel’s research focuses on romantic relationships, and the decision making processes in relationships.

“Every long-term romantic relationship is the result of two people who consistently chose to pursue, advance, and maintain that particular relationship,” said Joel. “What motivates a person to ask someone out on a date, move in with a new partner, or persevere with a struggling relationship? I’m interested not just in the decisions that people arrive at, but also how they arrive at them, and whether certain decision strategies might ultimately lead to better relationship outcomes than others.”

Kasey Stanton completed his PhD at the University of Notre Dame, and is completing a Clinical Psychology Internship at the Brown University Alpert School of Medicine.

Stanton researches potential negative effects of positive moods, specifically looking at excessive levels of positive moods.

“This is most relevant to the study of conditions such as narcissism and bipolar disorder, as individuals with these conditions often have overly positive self-views that contribute to poor decision making and interpersonal difficulties,” said Stanton.

Stanton hopes his research will help improve diagnosis of narcissism and bipolar disorder.



Understanding numbers, around the world

A new fellowship award will help give Daniel Ansari's research a global scope.

Ansari, Professor in the Department of Psychology, has been awarded a Jacobs Foundation Advanced Research Fellowship, valued at 400,000 Swiss Franc (more than \$500,000 Canadian).

Ansari's research focuses on better understanding how children develop numerical and mathematical skills using both behavioural and brain-imaging methods. As part of his research program he is developing tools to screen numeracy skills in children aged four to five years-old. Through the fellowship funding, Ansari wants to expand his screener to develop norms of numeracy skills for use in eight different countries, including Belgium, Singapore and Chile.

"Creating cross-cultural norms will allow for comparison of early numeracy skills between different countries," said Ansari. "It will also allow us to make the tool available to educators in those countries, and make it available at no cost."

The Jacobs Foundation is a Switzerland-based foundation, focused on investing "in the future of young people so that they can become socially responsible and productive members of society."

"It's a unique foundation," said Ansari, "as it is one of the few large scale philanthropic organizations in the world focused on child and youth development."

The Jacobs Foundation has two main areas of focus that Ansari's research relates to: investigating the science of learning, and supporting early education.

"From a basic science perspective, we can explore the idea that children understand number symbols, which are cultural inventions, and look at how the brain comes to represent them over the course of children's development and education," said Ansari. "We can then turn this knowledge into applications, look at how, if we understand the mechanisms that underpin the development of early numeracy skills, we can better understand and develop intervention tools and screeners to help develop numeracy skills."

"We know early math skills is an early predictor of academic performance, as well as later success in income, and better future health outcomes," said Ansari, "but we know less about early development of math skills than we do of literacy skills."

Much of the funding will be provided to support graduate students and post-doctoral fellows at Western as well as to international partners to help with data collection. Ansari said the support from the Jacobs Foundation will allow him to take more risks than he typically could.

"A study focussed on developing norms for a screener across cultural context is high-risk, and wouldn't typically be funded by a granting agency," said Ansari. "You could approach a company for funding, but then you wouldn't necessarily be able to make it available for free."

Ansari is also excited about the Jacob Foundation's commitment to building a community of researchers.

"The foundation has regular fellow meetings, where we get to interact with the best people in the field," said Ansari. "I am already looking forward to these meetings and possible future collaborations."



Sociology student receives Vanier Scholarship to transform male athletes into Allies on Campus

Leona Bruijns wants male varsity athletes to be leaders in preventing sexual violence on campus.

Bruijns, a PhD Student in the Department of Sociology at Western University, has been named as recipient of the Vanier Scholarship, worth \$50,000 a year, for three years.

The scholarship will support Bruijns as she evaluates the implementation of "Allies on Campus", a sexual violence and education program designed for delivery on campus to male varsity athletes.

"With the rise of #MeToo and #TimesUp, more light is being shone on the social pervasiveness of sexual violence," said Bruijns. "Even before these movements began, the persistent problem of high rates of sexual violence on post-secondary campuses had been a topic of great interest."

"There has been building interest in how to involve men in prevention efforts as more and more men are expressing a willingness to get engaged and work alongside women in creating a culture that supports survivors and reduces sexual violence," said Bruijns.

Bruijns will work with male varsity athletes and their coaches to evaluate the sexual violence prevention program, which is being developed by the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region and includes materials from Western's Upstander program.

"Historically, a lot of prevention efforts are driven by women and for women, and there are a lot of questions about how to engage with men and bring them into these efforts," said Bruijns. "Athletes are often looked upon as leaders on campus, and they are a wide-reaching group."

Through pre- and post-program questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, Bruijns will examine the effectiveness of the training program. The questionnaires will quantitatively evaluate specific aspects of the program, such as changes in bystander attitudes and behaviours, and the interviews will focus on understanding the experiences of athletes as they take on a leadership role and how this contributes to any shifts within the culture.

"We want to engage them as allies and as leaders to encourage a culture change," said Bruijns.

The program will initially be implemented at Laurier, but Bruijns hopes to expand the program to other campuses.

"The scholarship gives me more flexibility in my research, and the opportunity to reach out in new areas," said Bruijns. "It means that the project can be wider in scope."

"It's a huge honour to receive the Vanier Scholarship," said Bruijns. "It feels good to have all the work done before recognized, and to have support going forward. Hopefully it will allow me to make a difference in some way."

The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (VCGS) program aims to attract and retain world-class doctoral students by supporting students who demonstrate both superior leadership skills and an outstanding record of scholarly achievement in graduate studies in the social sciences and/or humanities, natural sciences and/or engineering and health.



Tracing the lasting impact of experiences

“Our lives at any given time are the result of an accumulation of experiences,” said Andrea Willson, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology.

For Willson, this is true in multiple ways. For most of her career, Willson has researched social determinants of health, or the factors in a person’s life that could impact their health. Factors like where someone lives, their education, income and quality of housing are strong predictors of health.

Willson has looked at the long-term effects of early life disadvantages, including whether the negative factors faced by parents could impact their children, and whether improvements through someone’s life would change the impact of the earlier factors.

“Health is a very salient outcome of inequality – it has been referred to by others in the area as how inequality gets under the skin,” said Willson. “You can see manifestations of inequality in individual health.”

Working with Kim Shuey, Associate Professor in Sociology, Willson used data from a long running longitudinal study, which has been collecting data on the same families since 1968.

“We found that moving out of poverty in childhood lowers the risk of experiencing health problems in midlife. Upward mobility in adulthood did not lessen this risk,” said Willson.

Willson is also focused on training the next generation of researchers. Loanna Heidinger is a PhD candidate in Sociology, focusing on the impact of early childhood neighbourhood disadvantage, specifically perceived neighbourhood cohesion and neighbourhood disorder, on mental health in early adulthood.

“Andrea focuses on the longitudinal and intergenerational impact of experiences of childhood

poverty on adult health,” said Heidinger. “Her work aligns very nicely with my overall research interests on the long-term impact of experiences of cumulative adversity during childhood on adulthood.”

Under Willson’s supervision, Heidinger is examining how the cumulative effects of a difficult childhood – bullying, parental divorce, and crime-ridden neighbourhoods, for example – impact adult mental health and educational attainment. Childhood is a critical time for development. Physical, mental and emotional forces shape and sculpt personalities, including how people respond to life around them.

“Most studies usually focus on a singular, traumatic experience like parental divorce, not on chronic and ongoing adverse childhood experiences,” Willson said.

But, childhood adversities, especially in poor families, are often inter-related. Poor households, as an example, are more likely to be located in unsafe neighbourhoods, creating a compounding effect for disadvantaged youth.

“Disadvantages and inequality in childhood have persistent and detrimental impacts that last a lifetime,” Heidinger says. “Overall, findings reveal that individuals who experience adversities during childhood are more likely to experience poor mental health and less likely to graduate from high school or college, compared to individuals who did not experience adversities.”

She stresses that current research should consider how the combined effects of multiple childhood adversities could begin and maintain economic and health problems throughout one’s life.

“There is a big push to increase educational opportunities for adults with lower socioeconomic status,” Willson says. “Unfortunately, our studies point to it being too late. We should not wait until adulthood to mitigate their problems.”



Green economy a chance for equality and social justice

The economy is changing, transitioning from a capital intensive carbon economy, to a low-carbon economy.

Bipasha Baruah believes this transition represents a chance for a transformation to a more equitable and socially-just economy.

Baruah, Professor in Women’s Studies and Feminist Research and in Geography, researches how these changes may affect employment opportunities for women around the world.

Baruah holds the Canada Research Chair in Global Women’s Issues, which was renewed in July 2017. She has researched the energy, construction, transportation and manufacturing sectors, both in Canada and around the world. Baruah plans to expand this research to include the forestry, mining and agriculture sectors in Canada.

“The carbon economy is capital intensive,” said Baruah. “Low-carbon economies are labour intensive, creating more employment opportunities.”

“It’s possible to have a more equitable economy in the future, but it has to be planned,” said Baruah. “If we don’t address it, if we don’t talk about it, make the conversation more visible, it’s not going to happen.”

Baruah ensures her research is globally-focused, documenting best practices from other countries.

“Emerging and developing economies are taking the transition more seriously, and taking issues of gender equity more serious,” said Baruah. “In Canada, a lot of the conversation of social justice and gender equity is tokenism.”

Baruah has focused on ensuring her research has a wide public audience, by sharing information through non-academic venue such as The Huffington Post and

Policy Options. Baruah also produces conceptual animation videos to simplify her findings. Through these efforts, Baruah has received invites to speak to public groups, think tanks and conferences.

“The issues I write about are not issues limited to the academy; they are of interest to everyone,” said Baruah.

“It’s possible to have a more equitable economy in the future, but it has to be planned. If we don’t address it, if we don’t talk about it, make the conversation more visible, it’s not going to happen.”

**- Bipasha Baruah
Professor**

Women’s Studies & Feminist Research

“There is a real value in getting information out. There is a need for more open access information, and a push from funding agencies for public access as well.”

While Baruah said wider public knowledge is important, it does mean there is more criticism.

“People do not take the time to understand the issue,” said Baruah. “You can wake up people who are asleep but you cannot wake up people who are pretending to be asleep.”



Join the Homecoming celebration and Meet the Dean at the Ceeps

Begin your Homecoming weekend by joining fellow alumnus and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, **Bob Andersen, BA'91, MA'94** for a complimentary beer and snacks.

This is a great opportunity for us to reminisce about our student days at Western and the Ceeps! Some of your former professors may even be there.

Friday, October 19, 2018
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
The Ceeps, 671 Richmond St.

RSVP by October 12:

<http://www.westernconnect.ca/site/Calendar?id=134990&view=Detail>



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