

# WESTERN NEWS

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Western's newspaper of record since 1972

## 'Working wounded'

Study shows massive scope of persistent pain experienced by firefighters

story // page 10

## Mental health plan calls for expansions, streamlining

BY DEBORA VAN BRENK

**S**tudent mental health must be stitched into the fabric of Western, according to a new draft strategic plan that recommends both expanding academic and social supports and consolidating health-and-wellness care.

In the works for 18 months, the *Student Mental Health & Wellness Strategic Plan* is now open for further comment until Feb. 9, looking for final approvals in April.

The document notes a healthy campus is one that promotes a better balance between prevention and treatment. It outlines a broad framework of strategic objectives, with dozens of goals and recommended strategies.

Among the goals of providing more accessible services, it recommends "unification of all services designed to support student mental health and wellness" as a way of reducing the fragmentation and siloing of supports.

"Clearly, there would be one point of access,"

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- Or visit the Health and Wellness website at [uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing).

said John Doerksen, Vice-Provost (Academic Programs) and co-chair of the Student Health and Wellness Advisory Committee. "There certainly will be an effort to reorganize ourselves in the context of a health-and-wellness centre."

Some of that movement towards a single point of entry is already taking place, said Rick Ezekiel, co-chair of the committee and interim Senior Director (Student Experience). For example, electronic health records are shared, as needed, among health professionals so the process is more streamlined.

"It takes time to work out the right model," Ezekiel said. Space and organizational realities mean there is no quick way to "flip a switch" that would provide a single point of access overnight.

The draft plan emphasizes the link between mental health and academic performance.

"Health, including mental health, is central to educational success. Moreover, while stress and adversity can have negative effects on longer-term mental health and functioning ... certain types of stressors have the potential to enhance the capacity for resilience, with downstream

benefits to student mental health and wellness," the report states.

The draft plan's four strategic objectives call for the university to:

- Develop a more resilient campus community;
- Develop and deliver health communication and promotion;
- Build inclusive curriculum and pedagogy; and
- Provide accessible and effective mental-health-and-wellness services.

The plan includes everything from supporting students as they leave high school to training more people in mental-health first aid; from recognizing unique needs of international, Indigenous and marginalized students to building stronger partnerships with families and community agencies; from developing a centralized mental-health-and-wellness website to reviewing best practices for medical accommodations.

➔ MENTAL HEALTH // CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Western

Western News (ISSN0316-8654), a publication of Western University's Department of Communications and Public Affairs, is published every Thursday throughout the school year and operates under a reduced schedule during December, May, June, July and August.

An award-winning weekly newspaper and electronic news service, Western News serves as the university's newspaper of record. The publication traces its roots to The University of Western Ontario Newsletter, a one-page leaflet-style publication which debuted on Sept. 23, 1965. The first issue of the Western News, under founding editor Alan Johnston, was published on Nov. 16, 1972 replacing the UWO Times and Western Times. Today, Western News continues to provide timely news, information and a forum for discussion of postsecondary issues in the campus and broader community.

WESTERN NEWS

WesternNews.ca
Westminster Hall, Suite 360
Western University
London, ON N6A 3K7
Telephone 519-661-2045
Fax 519-661-3921

PUBLISHER
Helen Connell
hconnell@uwo.ca,
519-661-2111 Ext. 85469

EDITOR
Jason Winders
jwinder2@uwo.ca,
519-661-2111 Ext. 85465

REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER
Paul Mayne
pmayne@uwo.ca,
519-661-2111 Ext. 85463

REPORTER/PHOTOGRAPHER
Adela Talbot
adela.talbot@uwo.ca,
519-661-2111 Ext. 85464

PRODUCTION DESIGNER
Frank Neufeld
fneufeld@uwo.ca,
519-661-2111 Ext. 89334

EDITORIAL SERVICES
COORDINATOR
Angie Wiseman
angie.wiseman@uwo.ca,
519-661-2111 Ext. 81530

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
Debora Van Brenk
deb.vanbrenk@uwo.ca,
519-661-2111 Ext. 85436

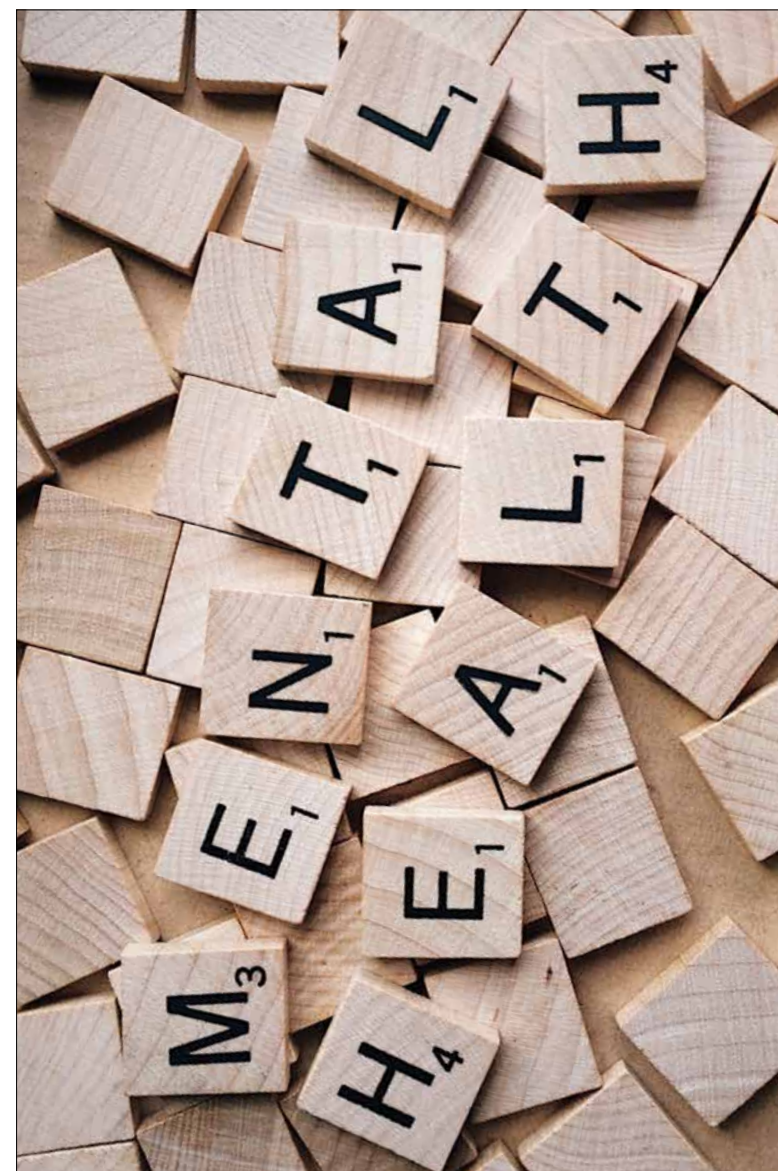
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-L.T. Moore, University Relations and Information director, Nov. 16, 1972

MENTAL HEALTH // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Doerksen added he hopes those who review the draft plan make note of how wide-ranging it is.

"First, there's an increasing recognition that mental health is related to academic success and, in the last number of years, we're starting to think more holistically about mental health. Second, the report recognizes we all have a role to play in mental health on campus, each in our own way," he said.

In a classroom or lab setting, for example, that could translate into more co-ordination among faculty on project deadlines or adopting a universal design of learning that embeds flexibility into teaching and evaluations.

"We can achieve the overall academic outcomes we're looking to achieve, but perhaps in a different way," Doerksen said.

As at other postsecondary schools, the incidence of mental-health concerns at Western is growing. Data from the 2016 National College Health Assessment survey shows 9.2 per cent of Western students reported having a psychiatric condition (3 per cent higher than in the same survey in 2013), higher than the 2016 Statistics Canada national average of 7.4 per cent.

Also in 2016, 48.5 per cent of Western students reported stress as having a negative impact on their academic performance - an increase from the 33 per cent who answered the question in 2013.

That ramped-up need reinforces the importance of working with partners here, and in the broader community, for prevention and supports, Ezekiel said.

Mental-health planning and care is no quick fix on campus, or anywhere else. "It's recognizing the demand for

mental-health services continues to rise and a reactive approach that simply expands services and makes it scalable isn't really effective or sustainable. I hope faculty, students and staff will recognize mental health is a whole community effort. It's not just the folks who provide mental-health services who should focus on improving mental health on campus."

TIMELINE

- 2015. Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health formed and begins work.
Spring 2016. Mental-health strategist hired to scan internal and external processes, policies and services for mental health on campus.
August 2016-February 2017. Consultations with more than 500 staff, senior leaders and students; also hears from 1,500 people via campuswide email survey.
2017. Committee translates research and comments into draft plan.
January 2018. Draft mental-health strategic plan released for comment.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Public comment period open until Feb. 9. Comments may be sent to mentalhealthplan@uwo.ca;
Senate Committee on University Planning reviews plan at its Feb. 5 meeting and recommends any further changes at Mar. 5 meeting;
Senate votes on plan Apr. 13; and
Board of Governors votes on plan Apr. 26. If approved, implementation begins.

BEST BETS

Visit the Western Events Calendar at www.events.westernu.ca for a full look at the week ahead.

FEB. 1 | 5:30-7:30 p.m., University Community Centre, Room 41



BOLLYWOOD NIGHTS
Immerse yourself in a new culture and language through a free international film series. Enjoy a weekly rotation of popular and critically acclaimed films. This week features Dhobi Ghat.

FEB. 2 | 3-5 p.m., International and Graduate Affairs Building, Chu Centre



AFRICA INSTITUTE SEMINAR SERIES: BRIDGING THE GAP
Join the Africa Institute for an interdisciplinary event focusing on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Western researchers will share their diverse approaches to good health and well-being; quality education; and partnerships for the goals.

FEB. 5 | 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Western Student Services Building, Room 3134



PUTTING OFF PROCRASTINATION
Learn how to move from avoiding important academic tasks to taking purposeful action that brings you closer to your goals.

FEB. 6 | 4:30-5:30 p.m., University Community Centre, Room 147



CAREER WORKSHOP: THE 2-HOUR JOB SEARCH
Work smarter and faster to land interviews and learn how to make your job search more effective. This workshop will help you develop an organized and precise approach to your job search, resulting in more interviews.

FEB. 7 | 8 p.m., Don Wright Faculty of Music, von Kuster Hall



GUEST ARTIST CONCERT
A duo recital by Véronique Mathieu, violin, and Stephanie Chua, piano, featuring works by Willan, Schmidt, Molinari, Fehner, Scime and Harman. Admission is free.

Campus and Community

Overdose prevention key to local health tool

BY ADELA TALBOT

As the city forges ahead with plans for a permanent supervised injection site, its new temporary site is an important step in fostering health and preventing overdose deaths, according to one Western professor.

"This has been a decades-long concern for those who provide healthcare in our community around the negative and unintended consequences of substance abuse, particularly injection drug use," said Abe Oudshoorn, who teaches in the Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing and is a prominent voice for homeless and health-compromised Londoners.

The London program will be located at 186 King St. in London, at the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection where a busy exchange program for needles and syringes already operates.

In January, Ontario Health Minister Eric Hoskins approved the creation of several such facilities, including one in London. Two weeks ago, the Middlesex-London Health Unit announced the city's temporary facility would open in mid-February. (A process is still under way to determine a potential permanent site.)

This new site - also dubbed an overdose prevention site - is essential for the city, Oudshoorn noted. A rash of overdose deaths spread across the province last summer. Just two months ago, London police issued a public warning after potentially deadly carfentanyl - a synthetic opioid 10,000 times more powerful than morphine - was found in seized drugs.

Just days before the temporary site was announced, London police alerted the public to three sudden overdose deaths that occurred in less than 48 hours.

"We have continued to see increases in overdose deaths in the London area, even after the provincial government implemented some policies to try to reduce them," Oudshoorn noted.

The province introduced OxyNEO to address Oxy-Contin abuse and provincial-level prescription databases to watch for over-prescription of opioids, documented as higher-than-average in southwestern Ontario.

"But ultimately, we've really seen no reduction in overdose deaths. It was time to do something which we've known we've needed to do for a long time. And although (a supervised injection site) is not a permanent recovery for folks, it is a way to at least keep them safe," he said. "While we always hope for people to move to recovery, while they find their way to that path, we need to do everything we can to keep them as safe and healthy as possible."

A supervised injection site can also prevent abscesses and heart disease related to infection from injection drug use, as well as prevent the spread of communicable disease, Oudshoorn explained. In other communities, notably in Vancouver, it has shown "incredible



Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing professor Abe Oudshoorn said plans for a permanent supervised-injection site in London - also dubbed an overdose prevention site - is essential for the city in fostering health and preventing overdose deaths.

"While we always hope for people to move to recovery, while they find their way to that path, we need to do everything we can to keep them as safe and healthy as possible."

- Abe Oudshoorn
Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing professor

impact," he added. Vancouver's InSite facility, the first of its kind in Canada, prevents hundreds of overdose deaths each year and offers entries towards recovery.

"As InSite and others have demonstrated, it's not a good time to have that conversation when someone is in withdrawal and suffering from seeking their next substance. When they are calm and the immediacy of that anxiety has been addressed, then that is a good time to have a conversation about what they need, what they want and what recovery might look like for them," Oudshoorn said.

"It's very effective; they've seen folks moving into withdrawal management, residential treatment, counselling - all sorts of long-term supports - and that will be an important part of the model here," he added.

What makes London's site and plans for a future facility promising is the collaboration and integration of community services, support agencies and healthcare providers, he continued. The health unit, the London Homeless Coalition, the mayor's poverty panel, research

centres, healthcare and addiction service providers are working together to promote health and address overdose deaths in the community.

Oudshoorn said this collaborative approach helped lead the province to a rapid approval of the city's proposal for a site.

"Five years ago, when there wasn't the same political will towards this, there wasn't the same community will, either," Oudshoorn said.

He credits municipal and provincial leaders for recognizing something needed to be done to address overdose deaths in our communities.

"While you still hear some concerns, I think there's much more general acceptance that overdose deaths should be prevented and we need to have more pragmatic solutions to addressing that. Part of that is just leadership saying everyone in the community matters and we need to be concerned about everyone. This is one way we can help improve health outcomes for people who have some of the poorest health outcomes in our community."

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Campus and Community

# Western sports venues chosen for Ontario Games

BY DEBORA VAN BRENK

Western will be teeming with the province's top teen athletes in August as several sites on campus are host to the 2018 Ontario Summer Games.

The Games committee has newly announced its venues for the event, which takes place Aug. 2-5 and is the premier showcase for young, high-performing athletes in Ontario.

In addition to being home to the Athletes' Village and Games headquarters, Western facilities will be used for five different sports events:

- Athletics (TD Waterhouse Stadium)
- Field Lacrosse (Mustangs Field)
- Hockey (Thompson Arena)
- Rugby (Alumni Field)
- Volleyball (Alumni Hall, Student Recreation Centre)

"They go through qualifying events to get here so we know they are the best of the best in the province," said Dave De Kelver, general manager of the Games. "For most, this will be their first multi-sport event."

Most Olympic athletes will have first achieved success at their province's or territory's Games, he noted.

And Western is the ideal hub to showcase that excellence, he said.

"Western is a great location for us in part because it provides that Olympic Village style we like. We're using six different (university) residences."

As many as 3,500 athletes, aged 13 to 20, will eat, sleep and socialize on campus - and get a good look at the facilities and venues Western has to offer.

"They're going to get an early taste of what the university experience is," De Kelver said.

Athletes and coaches will experience Western hospi-



SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

tality as will their families and friends and other supporters - who will also gain a close-up view of campus and the broader community.

"This is great for the city because, not only are we bringing 3,500 participants, we're going to bring in their parents and their supporters" and bolster the local economy at restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions, he said.

Opening ceremonies will also take place on campus, on Thursday, Aug. 2.

London is solidifying its role as a sports centre, having been host in 2004 to the Ontario Summer Games and 2001 to the Canada Summer Games.

Other venues in and around the city include moun-

tain-biking at Boler Mountain, sailing at Fanshawe Conservation Area, baseball at Labatt Park, swimming at the Canada Games Aquatic Centre, basketball at Fanshawe College and triathlon in Denfield.

De Kelver said the event will need about 1,000 volunteers and, while volunteer registration doesn't officially begin until later in February, about 400 people have already expressed an interest in donating their time to make visitors feel welcome and help events run smoothly.

More information about the Games can be found at [www.london2018.ca](http://www.london2018.ca) and on its social media accounts @OSGLondon2018.

Research

# Solving brain trauma, through an engineering lens

BY PAUL MAYNE

Haojie Mao is working to understand traumatic brain injury (TBI) through collaborations with Western neuroscientists and neurobiologists. And those researchers are looking to crack the brain-injury code with help from Mao, a world-class engineer.

"When we're wanting a better understanding of cognition and the effects trauma can have on the brain, you need engineering. When you're talking cognition, it starts from engineering," said the Mechanical and Materials Engineering professor who, before joining Western last summer, worked as a research scientist for the U.S. Medical Research and Materiel Command.

"Impact is trauma; the force that caused it, that's engineering. That's why I'm so interested in working with medical scientists and the folks at the Brain and Mind (Institute). The brain is so complex, but we are still very early in learning all about it. I'm coming at it with engineering."

To help individuals deal with the effects of TBI, it is critical to understand how immediate brain biomechanics affect brain cells and networks that link to short- and long-term brain dysfunction, added Mao.

His work underlines the importance of interdisciplinary research in solving big problems.

With collaborations that already include Health Sciences, Robarts Research Institute and fellow engineers, he is developing experimental and computational methods for analyzing the biomechanical and biological responses of brain tissues to trauma. These include sports-related collisions, blast waves, automotive accidents and falls.

The computational head models developed by Mao allow researchers to visualize and quantify stresses and stretches across the entire brain - allowing for a better understanding of the causes of TBI and its links to cognitive dysfunction. The results can improve brain health with better protection, diagnostics and therapies.

"We want to see what these forces that affect the brain cells are actually doing, not just what it looks like externally," said Mao, the Canada Research Chair in Head Mechanics. "It links to brain tissue and that links to damage. We want to reduce the load into the brain."

Injury statistics have found the most common accident situation to be an oblique impact, such as a collision between two football players, which causes both linear and rotational acceleration.

In linear acceleration, the brain moves through space abruptly, but without a change in direction.

Brain injury from rotational acceleration takes place when unrestricted movement of the head occurs out of sync with the movement of the neck or the rest of the body, which twists the



PAUL MAYNE // WESTERN NEWS

Haojie Mao, Mechanical and Materials Engineering professor and Canada Research Chair in Head Mechanics, is working to understand traumatic brain injury and improve brain health with better protection, diagnostics and therapies.

brain within the skull.

Mao said the brain is most sensitive to rotational motion, which is a better indicator of TBI than linear acceleration.

"Rotational (acceleration) stretches more and can cause more damage," he said. "Our muscles, or our heart and lungs, they can stretch. The brain is still, so any sort of force on it is very damaging. I get a cut on my arm, it will heal. I

break a bone, it will heal. The brain is very hard to repair. When we understand the mechanisms of the brain, and can diagnose earlier, we can treat earlier."

Mao will also collect biomechanical data beyond the brain. This will help improve the accuracy of brain biomechanics and allow for a better analysis of the responses of other systems in the head, such as the eye, ear and facial

bones. His research interests also extend to safety- and injury-related topics, such as improving vehicle structures for occupant and pedestrian safety; designing safer seats for minimizing blast-induced lumbar spine injuries; understanding pediatric biomechanics; and developing better protections to reduce impact- and blast-triggered head injuries.

## NOMINATIONS WANTED for the UWOFA Board of Directors

The UWOFA Nominating Committee invites members of the Association to volunteer or to suggest names of members for consideration by the committee.

The positions open for election are the following:

- **Vice-President** (who succeeds to the Presidency)
- **Treasurer** (two year term)
- **Two members of the Board of Directors** (two year terms) who will represent the membership at large. Of these two seats, one must be filled by a librarian or archivist member.
- **One part-time member of the Board of Directors** who will represent the part-time membership (two year term, elected by Association members who hold a part-time appointment)
- **One limited-term member of the Board of Directors** who will represent the limited-term membership (two year term, elected by Association members who hold a limited-term appointment).
- **Six members of the Board of Directors** who will represent their Faculties (two year terms, elected by Association members in the relevant Faculty).

Faculty of Education	Faculty of Law
Faculty of Engineering	Faculty of Music
Ivey Business School	Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

- **Speaker for UWOFA** (one year term, renewable)
- **Speaker for UWOFA-LA (Librarians & Archivists)** (one year term, renewable)
- **Secretary for UWOFA-LA (Librarians & Archivists)** (one year term, renewable)

All full-time and part-time members of the Association are eligible. The term of office begins July 1, 2018.

Please send queries or nominations by **February 12, 2018** to:

Ann Bigelow, Chair, Nominating Committee  
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## Campus and Community

# Moving pictures

Documentary project celebrates the legacy of **Expo 67**



PAUL MAYNE // WESTERN NEWS

Modern Languages and Literatures professor Constanza Burucúa's documentary project, *1967: Canada Welcomes the World*, is a visual ode to Expo 67 through a series of archival images and short documentaries focused on the national pavilions of the 60 participating countries.

BY ANIRUDDHO  
CHOKROBORTY-HOQUE

For Constanza Burucúa, capturing the spirit of the 1967 World Exhibition in Montreal – known simply as Expo 67 for the last half century – required something special.

"I wanted to do something different from a mere academic study," the Modern Languages and Literatures professor explained. "I wanted to capture personal memories, inspire optimism and share something visceral and immediate with the general public. You cannot do this with a formal academic paper."

"I chose film because it is a great format for the old generation to return to, and relive, a historical moment in their lives in a completely new way; you can see the world moving and be in that world."

Burucúa's documentary project, *1967: Canada Welcomes the World*, is a visual ode to Expo 67 through a series of archival images and short documentaries focused on the national pavilions of the 60 participating countries. The project debuted last year at the Oakville and Elgin County museums as part of their sesquicentennial efforts.

Expo 67, according to Burucúa, was a perfect opportunity for many countries – some with their newfound sense of identity and confidence – to

present themselves to the world. Each country did so by exhibiting its arts and crafts and advances in science and technology.

That also held true for Canada. "It was setting itself up for a big change that also coincided with its centennial celebrations," Burucúa said.

Expo 67 captured a new spirit of national identity. In fact, the aim, according to its official documents, was "to provide an explanation of the world to each and every one of its visitors." For Canada, it was an invitation, rich with optimism for the future.

"There is a direct link between 1967 and 2017," Burucúa said. "I live in the suburbs, which have a stereotypical image of uniformity. Believe me, that's not true. All the different families and cultures I see here are the direct result of the cultural wealth inaugurated in 1967. We are a consequence of that today."

Burucúa spent more than two-and-a-half years researching and collaborating on this project with her husband, documentary filmmaker Juan Andrés Bello.

"One of my fondest memories is one week my husband and I spent at Library and Archives Canada, which coincidentally was inaugurated in 1967," Burucúa said. "It was like a treasure hunt." Together, they browsed through photos – she looked through 5,000 images daily – archival footage, promotional material and architectural drawings, all related to Expo 67.

"Everyone who grew up in that era, from 5-year-olds to teenagers, has a memory of Expo 67. People who attended the exhibition or found the project's Instagram page have since provided memorabilia from when they (or their relatives) attended. I love how generous people are with sharing these materials," she continued.

The work also produced a spin-off piece. Rebecca Bugg, an undergraduate student volunteering with the project, also made her own short documentary, *Hello, Canada*, based on archival images Burucúa unearthed. Funded by Western's Canada 150 Student Fund, the project recently received the Award of Commendation at the Canada Shorts Film Festival and the Award of Merit at the Headline International Film Festival.

"Young people nowadays relate to short audio-visual formats. This project is presenting the age-old question of national identity to the current generation in a new way – if, among them, there are future academics who want to study it further, even better," Burucúa said. ☐

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

Watch Modern Languages and Literatures professor Constanza Burucúa's documentary project, *1967: Canada Welcomes the World*, and Western Arts & Humanities student Rebecca Bugg's own short film, *Hello, Canada*, by clicking on this story at [westernnews.ca](http://westernnews.ca).



LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA // SPECIAL TO WESTERN NEWS

**Alumni**

# Ivey grad turns wanderlust into career



Chris Clark, HBA'96, bottom right, took his love for travelling and founded Terraficionados Travel Society and Journeymakers, a luxury adventure travel business which tailors trips for other like-minded travellers.

BY DAVID MCPHERSON

Chris Clark, HBA'96, has an incurable wanderlust. Discovering the world one country, one city and one neighbourhood at a time is a passion that has shaped his life. He even met his wife, Andrea Gilbert-Clark, BFA'96, BEd'97, in Greece while backpacking in Europe between degrees.

After more than a dozen years working for Bain Consulting, Clark used the sales, marketing and business principles he gleaned in his corporate career – and drew on what he learned during his Western undergraduate education – to launch Terraficionados, a luxury adventure travel business that tailors trips for other like-minded travellers.

"I have always loved to travel and learn about the world by experiencing it first hand," Clark said. "I will continue to explore the far corners of the globe to expand my mind and fill my soul. I love nothing more than sharing my travel experiences with others."

In 2009, Clark founded Terraficionados Travel Society and Journeymakers because he figured he was not alone in his quest to see the world. While the travel bug bit him in his 20s, he realized he loved the business of travel while working with a private equity fund that was rolling up the luxury/soft adventure travel market. He left Bain for a two-year externship, joining that company – Grand Expeditions – as its Vice-President (Operations), where he integrated eight businesses into a new company.

The seeds for his solo leap were sown. Clark's real education began in 1993 – in the classroom at the Ivey Business School.

"My HBA experience was a fantastic and wonderful

two years," he said. "I was interested in the full breadth of subject matter – from finance to marketing to accounting." After graduating, he first interned at Bain and then joined the top-tier global consulting company. "It was like finishing school for me," Clark said. "I was getting exposed to all kinds of industries and issues; Ivey equipped me wonderfully for that."

Clark stayed at Bain full-time (with a few twists and turns) until 2009, taking a break to complete his MBA at the Tuck School at Dartmouth College, when he launched Terraficionados.

As Clark grew his travel business, he recruited a small team of like-minded associates, fellow journey-makers he calls society members. They are all travel enthusiasts, eager to show clients the world.

In 2013, Terraficionados – which is industry accredited – teamed up with Ivey to help create a customized international work placement program for students as part of the company's special-interest travel service. The first group travelled to India that year, spending 10-12 weeks working in a variety of industries. Ivey professor Darren Meister described the trip as "a life-changing experience for the students."

Today, that program has continued to thrive and expand. What began as a group of 30 students has grown into the Ivey Global Lab, the capstone of the MSc International Business Program, which sends more than 60 students to 20-plus organizations in Nicaragua, India and Vietnam. Ivey professor Andreas Schotter heads the MSc Program; Ivey professor Lynn Imai leads the Ivey Global Lab course. Clark and Terraficionados continue to be vital partners.

"The world is an amazing place," Clark said. "Experiential or soft-adventure travel connects you with the world, its many cultures, flavours, scents and vistas. It can be one of the most rewarding things you ever do." ❧

**Student Life**

# Campaign reveals variety found in grad student ranks



ADELA TALBOT // WESTERN NEWS

Taniya Nagpal, a PhD candidate in Kinesiology and the chair of the Society of Graduate Students equity committee, explained how focus groups quickly revealed Western's graduate students were affected by varied circumstances in their academic careers. Some were parents; some were working professionals; some had returned to academia after decades of doing something else.

BY ADELA TALBOT

What do you think of when you think of graduate students on campus?

Not All the Same, a new campaign run by the equity committee of Western's Society of Graduate Students (SOGS), aims to dispel common conceptions of the graduate student experience and show these students possess a diverse range of life experiences and may require more personalized supports to succeed.

The campaign came out of focus groups run by SOGS over the past two years in an effort to learn more about the university's graduate student community, explained Taniya Nagpal, a PhD candidate in Kinesiology and chair of the SOGS equity committee.

"We wanted to create an advocacy campaign that highlights the various experiences and backgrounds graduate students come from. We wanted to break the stereotypes, the main ones being we are all young; that we all have all the time in the world to dedicate solely to research; that we come straight from undergrad and go directly into grad school; that some of us never left school; that we have no work experience and only research and school experience," Nagpal noted.

To highlight these diverse experiences, SOGS is interviewing students who might not fit that stereotypical graduate student bill, then sharing their experiences on the campaign website, [nats.sogs.ca](http://nats.sogs.ca), by way of student profiles. The goal is to tackle one stereotype per semester – the current one being age – and expand that to dispelling two or three misconceptions per term, after the campaign takes

off. There is no end date for the campaign. The website will archive all experiences so students can scroll through year-round and identify resources and stories that might help them in their studies and navigation of academia.

"We want to inform faculty members that, within their departments, they will have students who come from a variety of different experiences, and hopefully, that impacts how they supervise students, as well," Nagpal continued.

"This does not mean one student is better than the other, but that we have different experiences we bring to our graduate school work. This benefits students also by helping them see variety of experiences among their peers and colleagues and it is a benefit to SOGS and Western, in general. One of the key questions we ask is, 'What can Western do to better serve you?' And that's what SOGS works with."

Being aware of the different experiences and lifestyles of graduate students is important to ensure all have the same access to supports to do the best they can in graduate school, she added.

"One of the interviewees just wants to expand her wealth of knowledge and that was so inspiring; everyone should be doing that, despite what their age might be," Nagpal said.

"It also helps to meet people outside of your department, which is beneficial. You're kind of in silos as a graduate student, but when you get involved with something like Not All the Same, you get to meet students doing research about different things, and I think that helps you grow as a researcher yourself. We're not saying if you fit the stereotype that something is wrong. It's just emphasizing we are one big community that needs to celebrate its differences." ❧

## HONORARY DEGREE NOMINATIONS

The Senate Honorary Degrees Committee will meet in April to select candidates for honorary degrees to be awarded at Western's Autumn convocation scheduled in October 2018. To ensure that consideration is given to as many worthy candidates as possible, the Committee invites the submission of nominations from any member of the university community.

Nomination forms may be downloaded from the following website: [www.uwo.ca/univsec/senate/convocation/honorary\\_degrees.html](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/senate/convocation/honorary_degrees.html) and submitted electronically to [kkwan63@uwo.ca](mailto:kkwan63@uwo.ca) prior to **March 30, 2018**, for consideration by the Honorary Degrees Committee.



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## President's Medal for Distinguished Service

### Call for Nominations

Senate has established the President's Medal for Distinguished Service to recognize those individuals who have provided exemplary service to the university, over a sustained period of time, over and above the normal requirements of their positions.

The award is intended primarily to recognize staff, but faculty may also be considered for work or achievements that would not already be recognized by the professor emeritus designation or other service awards (such as teaching awards) in place.

Nominees must have been retired/resigned from the university in any capacity (including Board or Senate membership) for at least one year prior to consideration and have no ongoing formal relationship with the university.

A nomination form and additional information about the award can be found at:

[uwo.ca/univsec/senate/convocation/service\\_award.html](http://uwo.ca/univsec/senate/convocation/service_award.html)

The deadline for nominations for 2018 is **March 14th**.



## Research

# 'Working wounded'

## Study shows massive scope of persistent pain experienced by firefighters

BY DEBORA VAN BRENK

A recently released Western co-authored study is providing an eye-opening look into how physical pain and discomfort have become a way of life for many firefighters across the country.

According to the study, the longer a firefighter's career the greater the chances of suffering from persistent neck, back and limb pain. Further, 70 per cent of all active firefighters studied said they had experienced at least some pain in their arms, legs and back during a 13-month span.



MACDERMID

"They call themselves the 'working wounded' sometimes because they're well aware they're suffering musculoskeletal issues," said Joy MacDermid, a Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry professor affiliated with the Bone and Joint Institute.

Co-authored through the McMaster School of Rehabilitation Science, *Prevalence and distribution of musculoskeletal disorders in firefighters are influenced by age and length of service* was published in a recent edition of the *Journal of Military, Veteran and Public Health*. Exploring injuries among working Hamilton, Ont., firefighters, the research is the first paper to quantify, by age, sex and length of service, who is most prone to suffering musculoskeletal injury, and where and how intense that pain is.



D'AMICO

"A lot of them have to retire early or leave the job they love because of musculoskeletal injuries," said MacDermid, Director of Clinical Research at the Hand and Upper Limb Clinic at St. Joseph's Health Care London.

Even though it's a high-risk job, no one should accept or assume injuries are an expected component of the work, she said.

"Firefighters, both men and women, are all aware of that risk of injury and are prepared to accept that risk because they have such a strong commitment to serve their communities. But when there's a high risk of injury, there's always an opportunity to analyze how to reduce the risk."

During a 13-month span, firefighters tracked whether they experienced



CLAUDIO MOSTACCI // HAMILTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Firefighters suffer musculoskeletal injuries at a far higher rate than the general population says a new study of Hamilton, Ont., firefighters, co-authored by Western researcher Joy MacDermid.

pain and logged its location and severity. Of the 294 respondents, 30 per cent experienced no musculoskeletal pain during that time. Of male participants, 42 per cent experienced pain in multiple sites: shoulders, knees, back and/or neck.

By contrast, 2013 Statistics Canada data shows 16 per cent of adult Canadians sustained limiting activity-limiting injuries in the previous 12 months. While the research did not identify how firefighters' injuries took place – and some of them may have occurred outside of the job – the physically demanding work takes a cumulative toll, said Rob D'Amico, a captain of the Hamilton Fire Department.

"If we're pulling or dragging something, or walking upstairs with high-rise gear and our bunker gear, that can add an extra 100 pounds to our weight," D'Amico, Secretary of the Hamilton Professional Fire Fighters Association, said.

Add to that the heft of hoses and the stresses of working in cramped

quarters where they often must pivot and crouch, colleagues' bodies are often under a lot of strain.

"Our members get hurt doing their duties. Maybe some of those duties can be done differently and using different techniques – and having a sense of what the injuries are is a good first step."

Firefighting since 1991, D'Amico has suffered a few injuries along the way, although "nothing that took me out of my job for more than a few days." Others, he knows, continue to work through the pain on the job.

D'Amico noted firefighters took part in the study with the association's endorsement and using the facilities of the fire department, whose leadership was "100 per cent supportive" of the research.

They are part of a national program called Firefighter Injury Reduction Enterprise: Wellness Enabled Life & Livelihood (FIREWELL).

MacDermid, who serves as FIREWELL project director, said the

data suggests the cumulative effects of pulling, twisting and turning have long-term impact on firefighters' bodies.

Firefighters, older than the median age of 42, and/or with more than the 15 years of service, experienced greater incidence of pain and more severe pain. Compared with their younger counterparts, the older firefighters were:

- Four times more likely to report neck pain;
- Twice as likely to report back pain; and
- Twice as likely to have pain in their upper and lower limbs.

Among younger firefighters, upper-limb pain (often, injuries to the rotator cuff in their shoulders) was the most common.

The study included eight women, too few to make many definitive conclusions, but enough to show they too

bear a higher-than-average burden of musculoskeletal injury. That highlights the need both for early intervention and injury prevention that includes better-fitting gear. ("Women firefighters are not just 'size small' men," MacDermid noted.)

The study emphasizes the need for early assessment and intervention; examining how firefighters do their tasks; and reviewing how the team works together for ergonomic efficiency and injury prevention.

Results show gear and equipment needs to be both functional and safe; and processes must be refined to keep firefighters healthy.

Researchers are now working on video-based analysis of firefighters' tasks and the kinematic effects of various tasks to determine whether they can be adapted for injury prevention.

Screening for upper-limb musculoskeletal disabilities might also help with early intervention and treatment, according to the study. [W](#)

## Campus Digest

# Probiotics for respiratory illness could save millions

BY ROBERT DELAET

A recent study suggests the use of probiotics to prevent respiratory tract infections in Canada could result in annual savings of nearly \$100 million.

There is growing evidence probiotics can reduce the risk and duration of respiratory tract infections, as well as reducing antibiotic use and absences from work. Replicating a research model used in France, researchers examined the potential clinical and economic impacts in Canada.

Sponsored by The Alliance for Education on Probiotics, the study included researchers from Western, Lawson Health Research Institute, Laval University and Utrecht University. It incorporated two separate scenarios from two meta-analyses. A meta-analysis combines data from multiple studies using a statistical approach.

Results from the study showed regular probiotic use could eliminate as many as 2.3 million days per year of respiratory tract infections – resulting in 330,000 to 500,000 fewer sick days for Canadians and \$2,000 to \$4,000 fewer antibiotic prescriptions.

This would translate to \$1.3 to \$8.9 million in health-system savings. When accounting for productivity losses due to illness, it could save \$61.2 to \$99.7 million.

Respiratory tract infections are highly contagious infections of the sinus, throat or airways, including influenza. About 5 to 20 per cent of the Canadian population experience at least one respiratory tract infection per year, and 3 per cent of all health-care costs stem from these illnesses.

"If we could reduce the burden of respiratory tract infections, it would benefit both patients and Canadian taxpayers," said Gregor Reid, Director for the Canadian Centre for Human Microbiome and Probiotic Research at Lawson and professor at Western's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

Those who stand to benefit most include children under the age of 10, people living in a community setting (including office work in open spaces) and those not vaccinated against influenza.

Although respiratory tract infections are typically viral, about one-quarter of patients are also prescribed antibiotics (which offer benefit only against bacterial infections). "Antibiotics can have serious side effects like destroying many beneficial bacteria in the human body," said Reid.

This is why the use of probiotics is an important defense against respiratory tract infections. Probiotics are "live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host" and can be consumed in products such as yogurt.

"People are increasingly making

## Let's Talk



FRANK NEUFELD // WESTERN NEWS

The Western community were once again part of the conversation yesterday as the *Bell Let's Talk* initiative shone a light on mental illness with an open discussion and offering new ideas and hope for those who are struggling.

probiotics a part of their daily diet or dietary supplements for their proven health benefits," explained Reid. "The fact probiotics can also be used to prevent respiratory tract infections makes them even more important."

The study, *The Clinical and Economic Impact of Probiotics Consumption on Respiratory Tract Infections: Projections for Canada*, is published on *PLoS One*. [W](#)

## NEWS AND NOTES

## CIHR lauds proposal

Trainees attending a national forum

on musculoskeletal health will benefit from the persistence of three young Western investigators who made it possible. It's rare such a forum is organized and grant-applied by trainees, said Physiology and Pharmacology professor Jeff Dixon, a member of the leadership team of the Bone & Joint Institute.

"All three people who led this proposal are post-docs, and they launched into an application process that's daunting, even to more senior people," Dixon said. "This shows a lot of initiative."

The Canadian Institute of Health Research thought highly enough of the proposal to rank it atop the list of

nationwide requests for a planning and dissemination grant, and to provide \$10,000.

The forum leads into a two-day national Canadian Bone and Joint Conference on May 11-12.

Leading the process were postdoctoral students Amanda Lorbergs, Health Sciences; Yara Hosen, Engineering; and Anusha Ratneswaran, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry.

## Engineering gets STEM grant

More kids will gain a solid foundation

of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) through a \$175,000 grant to Western Engineering Outreach from the national charity Actua. The grant is part of a Government of Canada funding program called CanCode to support digital education among young people.

The grant will bolster free coding and programming on campus and beyond, at camps, workshops and other opportunities for elementary and high-schoolers. Last year, Western Engineering Outreach provided programming for 9,500 youth – almost 3,000 more than the previous year.

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 Research

# 10 minutes of exercise is a brain-builder

BY ADELA TALBOT

**A**pproaching his latest study, Matthew Heath already knew aerobic exercise can be as good for the mind as for the body. What he wanted to find out was how long you need to exercise in order to reap those cognitive benefits.

There's a well-documented link between exercise and improved executive functions such as working memory and impulse control. But, until now, the brain boost following exercise has been correlated with bursts of activity lasting 20 minutes or more, said Heath, a Kinesiology professor at Western.

He teamed up with Ashna Samani, a former graduate student, to see if 10 minutes of exercise – half the duration previously documented – would provide the same cognitive improvement.

The pair recently published a study, *Executive-related oculomotor control is improved following a 10-min single-bout of aerobic exercise: Evidence from the antisaccade task*, showing that 10 minutes of exercise was, in fact, sufficient to generate a cognitive boost.

"Exercise is beneficial to this thing called executive control – your ability to remember what I just said, your ability to inhibit what you don't want to do. It's very much high-level cognitive processing and it involves a whole bunch of networks in the brain," Heath said.

"Meta-analyses, or systematic reviews, previously said 20 minutes of exercise was required to elicit any sort of benefit, but the previous studies that looked at that issue used very crude measures of cognitive performance. We had a more sensitive measure to detect more subtle improvements in executive function following exercise," he added.



ADELA TALBOT // WESTERN NEWS

Matthew Heath, a Kinesiology professor at Western, teamed up with Ashna Samani, a former graduate student, to see if 10 minutes of exercise – half of the previously documented required duration – would be enough to provide a boost in cognitive function.

In Heath and Samani's study, participants cycled for 10 minutes at a moderate to vigorous intensity of aerobic output; the pair measured executive performance before and immediately after the exercise session by examining eye movements, Heath explained.

They instructed study participants to look directly at a target in front of them, a function called a prosaccade task. We all do this about 150,000 times a day, Heath said, and it is the most well-learned task one can perform.

The challenge came from asking people to

do the opposite, he said. "A target flashes on a screen and instead of looking at it, people have to look away from it. It seems really simple to do – but because we prosaccade so often and so many times a day, it's actually cognitively very complex and involves activation of the same networks in the brain that have shown long-term benefits from long-term exercise."

Heath and Samani used this antisaccade task to measure an individual's eye movements and, by extension, measure the speed of cognitive function. The pair found 10 minutes of exercise significantly improved volunteers' antisaccade performance.

The work is particularly relevant to people with early signs of Alzheimer disease, who haven't yet been diagnosed but who have a high transition rate towards the disease.

"We've shown when these people participate in a 24-week exercise program, they actually have improvement to their executive control," Heath said.

But not all of them are physically or cognitively capable of exercising for the recommended 30-60 minutes of the exercise program he added. This study shows even short exercise periods can benefit participants' brains.

"It's not to say we advocate people should exercise for only 10 minutes; it's just in the cases where people can't go for more than 10 minutes. Next, we want to be able to find out what the intensity should be, how vigorously they should be exercising and if there is an age associated with that," he continued.

"It's probably the case that all people need to do is go for a brisk walk and that will probably provide sufficient threshold for the benefit and we are determining whether there is an age specificity with the (exercise) intensity." **WN**

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