



We can't see the LEAP

AL C A F

Natalie MacDonald clearly remembers the feeling of intimidation during her first year at Saint Mary's. Most of her high school friends had gone off to other schools and she wasn't living in residence. She was worried about academics, too.

I was doing everything on my own. I was concerned about how I was going to meet new friends and I was nervous about getting all of the right courses.—

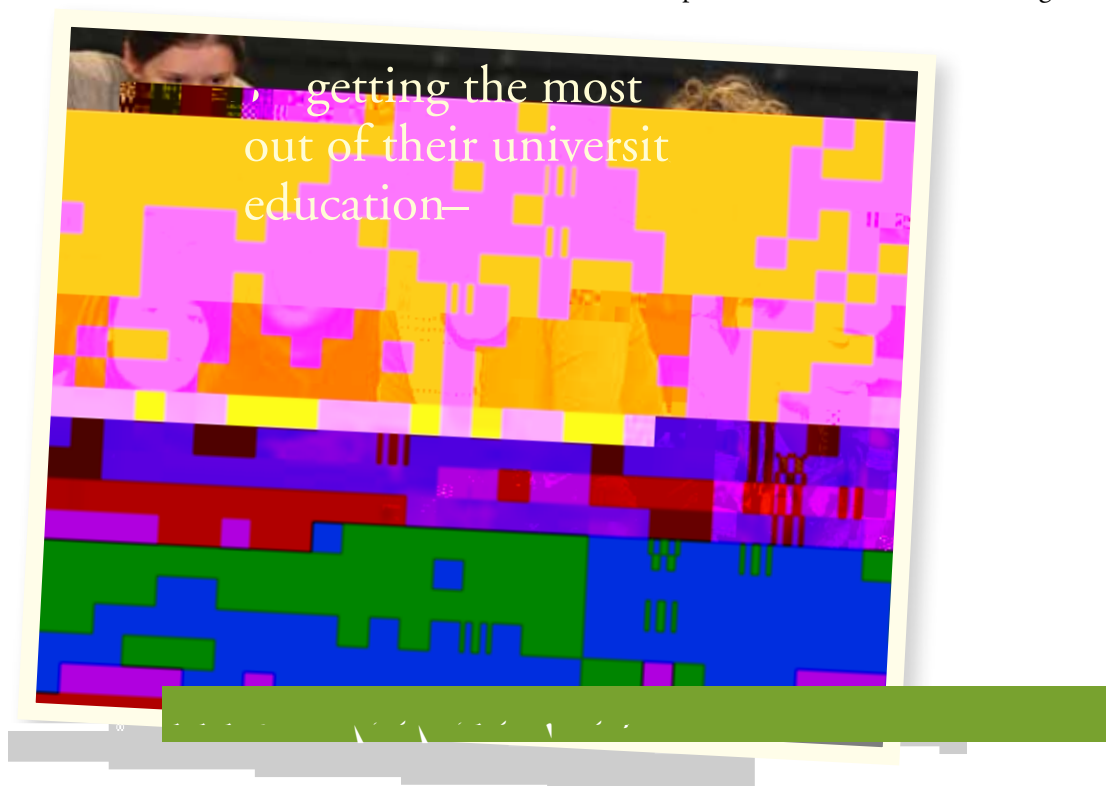
Now entering her fourth year in the Honours Political Science program with a Minor in International Development Studies, MacDonald is helping this year's freshmen make the transition from high school to university. She is working as a peer mentor with the new LEAP program (learning, engagement, achievement, peer mentors).

LEAP consists of five communities: two in Arts, two in Business, and one in Science. Each community is made up of 30 first-year students, three first-year courses, six learning strategy workshops, as well as peer mentors such as MacDonald. The students in each community take the three first-year courses together, and then select two more courses to make up a full course load of five. The learning strategy workshops cover such topics as coping with stress, money management, study skills, and career planning. The peer mentors help guide the way and answer any questions.

LEAP Coordinator Bernadette Gatiens says the students, peer mentors, professors, and Saint Mary's University student services staff are all looking forward to the opportunity to network with LEAP. She says parents are also excited about the program, especially those whose children are the first in the family to attend university.

The parents want to know their kids are safe and getting the most out of their university education.—

MacDonald says she will keep in touch with her students through social networking as well as face-to-face meetings. She says working as a peer mentor will no doubt trigger memories of her first year at Saint Mary's. It will be good to be able to share those experiences and relive those feelings.—



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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE Dr. Gene Barrett Teaching Excellence Award

Ever one remembers their favourite professor. The Saint Mary's University Students' Association (SMUSA) certainly does. This past year SMUSA honoured Dr. Gene Barrett, Professor of Sociology and Criminology with their Faculty of Arts Teaching Excellence Award.

Dr. Barrett said receiving this award was important because he was chosen by his students, and compared the honour to a critic's choice award.

This award means a great deal to me, as it is coming from the students who would have had, first-

hand experience with my work in the classroom,—said Dr. Barrett. He teaches introductory and senior-level courses covering such topics as crime in society, environmental sociology, rural sociology, and sustainable development.

The students who chose Dr. Barrett for the award said he motivates them, encourages them to think outside the box, and even incorporates a bit of fun in the classroom. Dr. Barrett says he modifies his teaching style according to class size and topic.

I have a strong interest in cooperative learning strategies in the classroom that focus on enhancing student confidence and success.—

Smaller seminar classes, for example, are learner-centered, while large lecture classes include the use of visual and audio aids to enhance the learning materials. He said that clickers have added a significant receptive dimension in recent years.—

Dr. Barrett said he had favourite professors of his own, including Dr. Jim Stoltman and Herb Gamberg at Dalhousie University. He says both shaped his current teaching style and had a lasting impact on his passion for undergraduate teaching, particularly introductory-level classes.—He also credits his two thesis supervisors, Dr. Leonard Kasdan at Dalhousie (MA), and Professor Tom Bottomore at the University of Sussex, for his interest in incorporating an interdisciplinary perspective into his own lectures.

This award means a great deal to me. —



Environmental Science and Engineering

Dr. Danika van Proosdij, Associate Professor in the Department of Geograph at Saint Mar's, and her team are working on a project studying how the production of tidal power will affect sedimentation patterns in the Bay of Fundy. The two-year, \$65,000 project is funded by the Offshore Energy Environmental Research (OEER) and Offshore Energy Technical Research (OETR) associations. The research is timely as companies, including Nova Scotia Power and Ireland-based Open Hydro, look to the Bay of Fundy's impressive tides to harness energy through turbines in the Minas Basin. The study will examine how naturally-produced tidal energy affects sedimentation patterns. Dr. van Proosdij says this research will help those companies determine how the turbines are affecting the intertidal environment.

If we start to see a change in that environment, then we need to know if it's caused by a natural response or an engineering response,—says Dr. van Proosdij.

The team will study the sedimentation patterns in the salt marshes and mudflats, and all intertidal environments in the Bay of Fundy. As a coastal geomorphologist, Dr. van Proosdij is an expert in studying the ecosystems in these environments. Her lab at Saint Mar's also houses the Inter-tidal Coastal Sediment Transport (InCoaST) research unit, which gives her access to tools such as acoustic current velocimeters, as well as optical backscatterance sensors to measure velocity and suspended sediment concentration.

Geographical information systems and global positioning systems from Saint Mar's Maritime Provinces Spatial Analysis Research center in the Department of Geograph also give her and the team a

more accurate picture of the intertidal system. The research will also help Dr. van Proosdij provide recommendations on how damage can be reduced with the use of tidal power projects.

The sedimentation study started in 2009 and will wrap up next summer.



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Global Leaders

For Saint Mary's student Gillian Head, taking Irish Studies is more than a chance to fulfill a language requirement for her degree. It has also given her the opportunity to be immersed in the language and culture, thanks to a scholarship she received to study at the Galway campus of the National University of Ireland. That scholarship was awarded to Gillian through the Ireland-Canada University Foundation, a unique program whose goal is to promote cross-cultural teaching and learning opportunities between Ireland and Canadian universities, including Saint Mary's. The other universities involved are Memorial University, University of Toronto, St. Thomas University, St. Francis Xavier University, and Concordia University. For Gillian, the immersion experience was more than she expected.

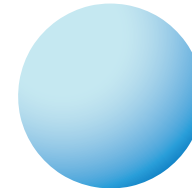
I would recommend the program wholeheartedly because I had such a good time and learned so much. I cried on the last day because I didn't want to leave! It was an amazing experience and allowed me not only to travel to Ireland, but to learn about language and culture, first hand in a Gaeltacht (Irish speaking) environment,— says Gillian, who adds that being part of the program made her appreciate being a Saint Mary's student even more, since the university is just one of a handful to offer the opportunity.

Besides the scholarship program, the Ireland-Canada University Foundation has two other components—an opportunity for an Irish-language teaching assistant from Ireland to practice at a university in Canada, and a chance for a senior scholar from Ireland to teach in Canada. The program is largely funded by the government of Ireland.

This has been one of the most progressive schemes funded by the Irish government,— says Dr. Pádraig Siadhail, a professor who holds the D'Arcy McGee Chair of Irish Studies at Saint Mary's. The university has a very strong track record in the teaching of the Irish language, so in that sense it was only natural we'd be chosen as one of the locations.—

Neasa Ní Chuaig worked as the language assistant with the Irish Studies program at Saint Mary's during the 2009–2010 academic year. She said her goal was to teach more than the Irish language.

There is more to the Irish language than just the language itself, such as folklore, songs, stories, riddles, and I wanted to expose my students to that. With the use of the Internet, I also wanted to make them aware of the living language. There is an Irish language television station, a couple of Irish language radio stations and many online newspapers, blogs and so on.— Neasa says she also gained a greater



understanding of Canadian culture, made new friends and enhanced her own teaching experiences.

Sailín Dhroighne from Connemara, Ireland is the Language Assistant for the 2010–2011 academic year. Dusty Keleher was the scholarship awardee for the 2009–2010 academic year. As for Gillian Head, she's continuing with Irish Studies at Saint Mary's this academic year, and has plans to return to Ireland next summer to go to the next level of her studies.

There is one program at Saint Mar 's Universit that trul represents education without borders. In 2004 a group of researchers and academics at Saint Mar 's Universit and the Autonomous Universit of Zacatecas (UAZ) in Me ico created a program in which students from both schools could pursue a doctoral degree. The focus would be on developing other forms of knowledge regarding international development. Two ears later, this group created the Critical Development Studies (CDS) network, whose goal is to share knowledge, perspectives, and resources on the topic of development.

The network also hosts an annual summer school where students from Saint Mar 's Universit stud at UAZ. The SMU-UAZ academic alliance has been recogni ed b the governments of Canada and Me ico as a model of north-south partnership in the, eld of higher education.

The International Development Studies (IDS) program's partnership and academic alliance with several universities in Latin America, especiall with UAZ, is designed to provide opportunities for our graduate and undergraduate students to stud and take courses overseas and to conduct supervised research,—sa s Dr. Henr



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When Kathleen O'Brien steps
into a hockey arena, she
knows the rules of the game.

Now the Yellowknife native is quickly
learning the rules in the political arena,

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