

## Volunteerism Spirit Integral to Success

**F**or outstanding former student-athlete Chris Morrison, giving back to the community was a crucial part of his time and success at Saint Mary's. While pursuing his BA degree with academic distinction in Criminology (major) and Psychology (minor), and also accumulating numerous athletic awards playing varsity hockey, Morrison volunteered with a Meals on Wheels program and coached hockey.

"I think that no matter who you are, it is extremely important to give back to the community in any way you can. I think I was in a very fortunate position to be able to receive a quality post-secondary education and play a varsity sport at the time. To me, having this sort of privileged existence makes it more important to be involved helping others."

After graduation, he continued giving back to the community. In May 2010, Morrison travelled to Tabiro, Uganda where he worked on several community projects, including building a school, helping with a day camp for children, and helping to build a home for a mother of four who is dying from AIDS.

"It was definitely a life-changing experience and an eye-opener to see how the people live," Morrison says. "Once you are there, you realize that while they don't have material wealth, they have community and spiritual wealth."

Morrison would eventually like to pursue law or a master's degree. Starting in September, however, he will be using his criminology degree while still giving back to the community, this time as a full-member of the York Regional Police Force.

"In Africa, you realize that small things make a huge difference for people. And as a police officer you also have a big impact on people's lives."

"I think that no matter who you are, it is extremely important to give back to the community..."

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## Welcome to Arts LEAP

### A Learning Community for Freshmen

**N**atalie 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 Gatien 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."



[www.smu.ca/leap/welcome.html](http://www.smu.ca/leap/welcome.html)

## Students' Association Chooses **Dr. Gene Barrett** for Teaching Excellence Award

Everyone 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.

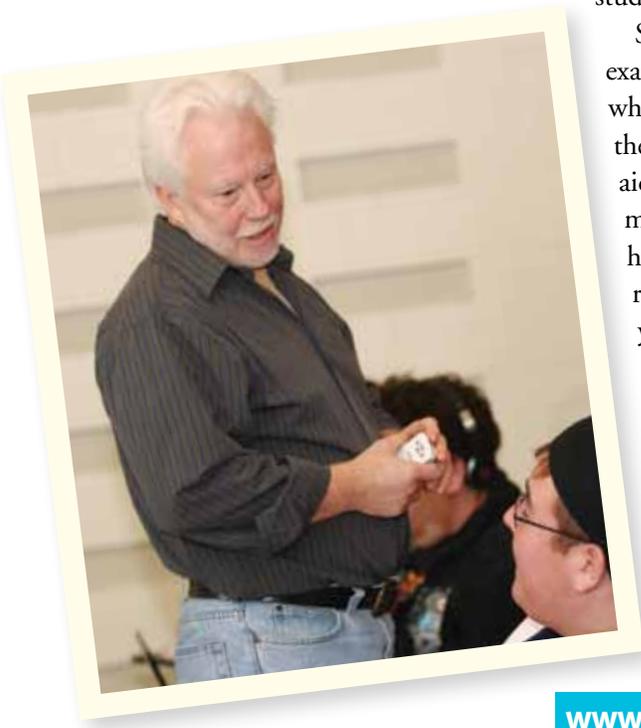
The students who chose Dr. Barrett for the award said he motivates them, encourages them to think outside the box, and even incorporates a bit of fun in the classroom. Dr. Barrett says he modifies his teaching style according to class size and topic.

"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 auditory aides to enhance the learning materials. He said that clickers have added "a significant reflexive dimension in recent years."

Dr. Barrett said he had favourite professors of his own, including Dr. Jim Stolzman 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..."



## Energy Production Affects Nova Scotia's Coastal Ecosystems

### How?

**D**r. Danika van Proosdij, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at Saint Mary'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 (OEEER) 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 Mary'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 Mary's Maritime Provinces Spatial Analysis Research center in the Department of Geography 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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## Go Global with Arts Language and Cultural Studies in Ireland

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 six 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.

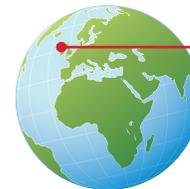
"I would recommend the program wholeheartedly because I had such a good time and learned so much. I cried on the last day because I didn't want to leave! It was an amazing experience and allowed me not only to travel to Ireland, but to learn about language and culture first hand in a Gaeltacht (Irish 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 practise 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 Ó 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



IRELAND



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

Sailí Ní Dhroighneáin of 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.

# Connecting with South America

## Through International Development Studies

There is one program at Saint Mary's University that truly represents education without borders. In 2004 a group of researchers and academics at Saint Mary's University and the Autonomous University of Zacatecas (UAZ) in Mexico 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 years later, this group created the Critical Development Studies (CDS) network, whose goal is to share knowledge, perspectives, and resources on the topic of development.

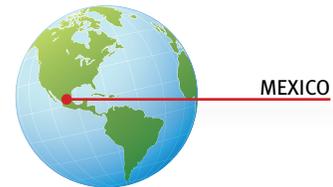
The network also hosts an annual summer school where students from Saint Mary's University study at UAZ. The SMU-UAZ academic alliance has been recognized by the governments of Canada and Mexico as a model of north-south partnership in the field of higher education.

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

Veltmeyer, professor of International Development Studies and Sociology, and co-chair of the CDS network.

"A lot of the knowledge about development here doesn't take into account the knowledge of development in the south. We're helping to develop a dialogue between teachers and students. The idea is to generate more forums of knowledge."

In 2010, a group of Saint Mary's University students headed to UAZ on a file research/directed research course and to attend the Pathways Out of Poverty workshop. Planning is in the works for the summer school session for 2011. The network receives funding from the International Research Development Centre (IRDC) Canada, which also awards scholarships to students studying at UAZ.



But the connections between Saint Mary's University and the Autonomous University of Zacatecas don't stop once the students graduate. Two graduates of Saint Mary's IDS program, Edgar Zayago Lau and Darcy Tetreault, are now on staff at UAZ. In October, Dr. Veltmeyer's latest book, *The Critical Development Studies Handbook*, was published by Halifax-based Fernwood Publishing.

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# Kathleen O'Brien

## Takes Aim at Big Goals

**W**hen 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, too.

The 18-year-old is a member of the Huskies women's hockey team and studying Political Science and International Development Studies. She's been playing hockey since she was eight, but this past summer she had a chance to see how the game of politics is played out in real life. She attended the G8 and G20 meetings in Toronto as one of thirteen high school students working as youth delegates for the conference. Together the group discussed maternal health, nuclear proliferation, climate change, and food security – all the same issues discussed by the world leaders in attendance. O'Brien says she learned firsthand how negotiation and compromise, and working toward a common goal can make a difference, just like they do on the ice.

"It was amazing to work with people my own age from around the world," O'Brien says. "There were a lot of different perspectives around the table, but we negotiated a common position and put together some great ideas, which were passed along to the leaders."

And as in hockey, she knows politics involves the occasional hit.

"The protests that got ugly really distracted from their potential effectiveness. People were talking about what they did, not what they stood for. They also diminished the peaceful and legitimate efforts of other protestors. That message disappeared behind the wall of sirens, images of cruisers burning, and police in riot gear."

Besides playing hockey and studying, O'Brien also plans on embracing student politics during her time at Saint Mary's. She wants to work as a local representative for the World Food Program or as a member of the Atlantic Chapter of World Vision. As for the long term, O'Brien says she hopes to join the Canadian Foreign Service or work with the United Nations.

She was eight when she first met her current coach, Lisa Jordan, who says she has always known Kathleen has the skills to play for the Huskies.

"She's not a flashy, offensive-minded player, but plays the game with the passion and attitude I love to see," Jordan says. "She will bring many intangible qualities to the hockey program, and will become a key person in setting the right example for others to follow."

It's that skill set, passion, and attitude that will serve her well as a student at Saint Mary's and as a player in the political arena.



"It was amazing to work with people my own age from around the world."

## Building Careers On A BA Foundation

**S**uccess depends upon the best laid plans. That's certainly true for Trevor Hume and Stephanie Norman. Both are Saint Mary's BA graduates who majored in Geography and now work with Halifax-based Environmental Design and Management Ltd. (EDM). The company's portfolio includes projects such as the Dartmouth Crossing retail complex, and King's Wharf, a residential, retail, and commercial development on the Dartmouth waterfront.

Hume says he knew in high school that he would study geography. "I wanted to work somewhere I could apply the knowledge I acquired, doing something that is real and tangible. And this is as real and tangible as it gets."



**Questions about your BA,  
or for more information, please contact:**

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After completing his degree in 1994, Hume attended the College of Geographic Sciences (currently the Nova Scotia Community College) and received his diploma in Geographic Information Systems/Remote Sensing (GIS/RS) in 1996. He joined EDM in 1998 and is now a senior manager.

Stephanie Norman started out studying marketing, but changed her mind in her third year after taking a course with Dr. Hugh Millward on planning in Nova Scotia. Norman says learning about the geography of each of the province's counties was a highlight and a turning point in her university career.

"I am from Nova Scotia and proud to be from here, so it was interesting to get to know details about all of the areas of the province," says Norman, who graduated from Saint Mary's in 2008. She went on to the College of Geographic Sciences where she completed the Planning: Land Information Technology program. She joined the team at EDM in September 2009 as a junior planner.



NOVA SCOTIA

Hume says Saint Mary's Department of Geography has a great reputation in Atlantic Canada, and he enjoyed the small, close-knit community among professors and students. He also enjoyed having the freedom and flexibility to pursue a variety of interest areas alongside geography within the arts program.

"Saint Mary's gave me the opportunity to explore what's out there. Geographers are generalists anyway. We're curious about everything."

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