

# Faculty of Information and Media Studies

FALL 1998

EDITOR: JENNIFER PERRIER



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MANJUNATH PENDAKUR  
DEAN, FACULTY OF INFORMATION AND  
MEDIA STUDIES

### *Dean's Message: A New Faculty and New Horizons*

**G**reetings! I have just come on board as the founding Dean of this exciting new entity and there are many thanks to be given for the work that has already been done by the faculty, staff and students. My report will cover their accomplishments last year as well as what lays ahead of us.

The year 1997 was a significant one for this faculty as the merged units (the Graduate School of Library and Information Science and the Graduate School of Journalism) came together under one roof at Elborn College. Journalism students and faculty moved to their temporary home where they were warmly accommodated by their new colleagues of the Library and Information Science program. While the two groups of faculty and students worked on ways in which they could collaborate and learn about each other, Middlesex College went through a major renovation. Thanks to a Government of Ontario grant, not only did the faculty get new offices, seminar rooms and classrooms, and an elegant study space for doctoral students but also more suitable space for a TV studio, two digital radio recording studios, a resource centre which includes a library and three new computer labs with up-to-date technology. Furthermore, the whole building is air conditioned, thus making the summer classes a much more pleasant experience! To cap the activities of the year, the faculty was renamed the Faculty of Information and Media Studies to more accurately reflect the academic enterprise.

In our initial year as a newly constituted faculty, the first group of undergraduates majoring in the Media, Information & Technoculture program – the hot new program on our campus – completed their studies successfully and had their convocation in June. The

program is highly sought after by students for its innovative course offerings which deal with various aspects of technology and culture in our fast-changing world.

The Journalism program has revamped its entire curriculum to conjoin it with the research and professional concerns of the Information Age. It has retained its intellectual breadth, while further emphasizing the tools that are needed to function as a journalist in the ever-changing media industry. The current crop of students who are enrolled in this program will be the beneficiaries of this important change, and faculty and staff are working hard to ensure its success.

In this difficult merger process, what has been preserved is the strong program in Library and Information Science. Both its more professionally-oriented masters program, as well as the research-oriented doctoral program, will continue to be fully supported. All of the existing degree programs are going to be further strengthened when the faculty searches that are now underway are completed. Five joint appointments with the disciplines of music, sociology, computer science, education and visual arts have been approved by the University. We also

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### *Stay in Touch!*

We'd love to hear from you! To get in touch with us, phone (519) 661-3542, fax (519) 661-3506 or visit our web site at <http://www.fims.uwo.ca>.

P.S. We are always looking for information on UWO Journalism and Library and Information Science grads for inclusion in the next newsletter!

## Intersections in Cyberspace

### The Undergraduate Program in Media, Information & Technoculture (MIT)



**PROFESSOR GLORIA LECKIE**  
WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THE  
CREATION OF THE MIT  
PROGRAM

The new programs in MIT began in the fall of 1997. Currently, there are three programs available: i) the three-year Bachelor of Arts with an MIT Area of Concentration, ii) a four-year Honors Bachelor of Arts in MIT (new in the fall 1998), and iii) four year Combined Honors Bachelor of Arts, which allows an area of strength in both MIT and another discipline.

The programs in Media, Information and Technoculture are intended for students who want an opportunity to engage critically with questions that arise at the intersection of information, media, culture, and learning technologies. For example, how are the new information technologies being imagined and theorized? If cyberspace is an electronic frontier, who are the colonizers of this frontier and what cultural baggage do they bring along with them? How are identities and communities being constructed in the new virtual spaces of the Internet? How can issues be addressed of privacy, intellectual property and

freedom of expression and other ethical concerns in the unregulated, global environment of cyberspace? With distinctions blurring between telephones, televisions, and computers, there are battles shaping up between telephone companies, cable companies, newspapers, broadcasters and the computer industry - what is the public interest and what role should governments take?

Students in the MIT three- and four-year programs are expected to examine information/communications technologies in a variety of theoretical and historical contexts and engage in a critique around issues of information and media. They are also expected to demonstrate in practice a set of competencies and literacies (oral, written, informational, and technological) that are needed in the emerging information and communication environment. To this end, students are expected to take a set of core courses that have been designed to allow students to examine issues and problems from a theoretical perspective, as well as having first-hand exposure to the use of the technologies being examined. As well, a range of electives and cross-listed courses allow students to pursue particular avenues of interest to them. Examples include digital sound, multimedia production, theory and design of web sites, feminist perspectives on online communications, human-computer interaction and the automobile in North American culture.

## Theory and Reality: The MLIS Co-op Program

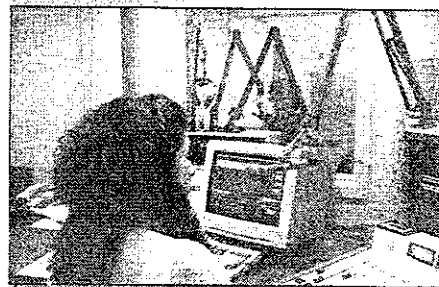
The year 1979 witnessed the emergence of The University of Western Ontario's first co-op program from what was then the School of Library and Information Science. Today, in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the Master of Library and Information Science's (MLIS) Co-operative Work/Study Program is stronger than ever, remaining the only library and information science co-op program in North America and one of the few graduate level co-op programs in Canada.

The integration of theory and practice, competitively paid work experience, and the opportunity for networking all form part of

the MLIS co-op experience. Year after year, co-op is cited by incoming MLIS students as one of the leading reasons for choosing Western. We would like to build on this strength by offering our students an even wider variety of placements reflecting the diverse opportunities available in organizations across Canada. As an alum who may have participated in co-op, you know the value of such a program to students and employers alike. If you know of a placement opportunity, or would like more information on the MLIS Co-operative Work/Study Program, please call our Co-op Program Assistant at: (519) 679-2111, ext. 8495.

## Information Revolution

### The Master of Arts in Journalism Program



**JOURNALISM STUDENTS RICHELE BLACK (LEFT) AND CHRISTINE DIRKS** IN THE NEW RADIO STUDIO FACILITIES.

This past year marked a major turning point in the history of journalism education at Western which saw us come full turn as an active and needed member in the new Faculty of Information and Media Studies. The field of communication and media studies is experiencing considerable growth on both sides of the border, due to a significant degree to the information revolution that is going on around us. Thankfully, journalists and journalism are at the forefront of the changes to our society brought about by the growth of information resources.

To meet the challenges before us, we have launched an on-line newspaper and an on-line radio service. To complement these new directions, we are now offering courses in new media and, for the first time, have succeeded in placing students in companies working in new media. It is our belief that those things which make journalism strong, such as good writing, good research and dogged persistence combined with a sense of curiosity and investigation, are also the core values being seen in new media.

In a traditional media context, the prospect of a new and competitive national newspaper is quite exciting for Canadians. As well, CTV launched its new News One service this year, and CHUM/CITY opened CP24 in southern Ontario. Radio, for the first time in at least half a decade, reported profits. As a result, the job market for our MA in Journalism graduates continues to expand.

In all, the future for Journalism at Western is solid. Together with our partners in LIS and MIT, we are well-positioned at the heart of a thriving area in post-secondary education.

## Changing Demands

### The Master of Library and Information Science Program

Western's Master of Library and Information Science program continues to be one of the strongest in North America, offering an effective mix of enduring core skills and innovative new proficiencies. Not only are new courses constantly being developed and offered as regular electives (such as Managing Internet Information Services), but older courses are being remodeled to reflect the changing demands of the profession.



CO-ORDINATOR MARTIE GROF-IANNELLI WITH MLIS STUDENT BARBARA GRAY IN THE NEW GRADUATE LIBRARY.

Recent experiments with remote delivery of courses through computer conferencing and the Internet will open new learning opportunities for both degree students and professionals in the field seeking to upgrade their skills. This year, Dr. Lynne McKechnie taught Library Services for Children and Young Adults (598) and Literature for Children and Young Adults (566) using both in-class and remote delivery options. Both local and remote students participated in computer conference discussions, with the remote students engaging in activities such as interviews and field studies as a replacement for in-class time. Dr. McKechnie will continue to offer remote delivery for both courses and it is hoped that other courses will follow suit.

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies has a new commitment to promoting its programs. The MLIS program has recently benefitted from this commitment with the faculty's development of a range of promotional materials geared specifically to the MLIS program, including a sophisticated information booklet and a double-sided poster. The distribution of these materials has allowed us not only to forge new relationships with potential students and the public at large, but has also provided us an excellent opportunity to reintroduce ourselves to our alumni, academic institutions across North America, and the library and information science profession. These materials have the added benefit of serving as a strong starting point for similar efforts anticipated for the faculty's other graduate programs.

We are looking forward to the coming year and we hope you share our anticipation. If you would like to find out more about the MLIS program please contact the faculty at the information provided on the back page of this newsletter, or send us an e-mail at [mlisinfo@julian.uwo.ca](mailto:mlisinfo@julian.uwo.ca).

## A Reputation for Excellence

### The PhD in Library and Information Science Program

Students in the Faculty of Information and Media Studies' PhD program in Library and Information Science continue to enhance their reputation for excellence both nationally and internationally. Currently, these students are delving into a broad spectrum of qualitative and quantitative research issues in the areas of information systems, information needs and uses, and information policy.

The past year has witnessed the conferring of two more PhDs in Library and Information Science. In September of 1997, Dr. Heidi Julien defended her dissertation "How does information help? The search for career-related information by adolescents." Dr. Julien has accepted a faculty position at the School of Library and Information Studies at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Dr. Karen Pettigrew also defended her dissertation, "The role of community health nurses in providing information and referral to the elderly: a study based on social network theory," in December 1997. Dr. Pettigrew is currently doing post-doctoral work at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Three other doctoral students – Christine Brown, J. Stephen Downie, and Crystal Fulton – all expect to defend near the time of this newsletter's publication.

Doctoral students continue to maintain their strong presence at academic conferences. As in previous years, the LIS doctoral students distinguished themselves at the 1998 Annual Conference for ALISE (Association of Library and Information Science Education) in New Orleans, with Crystal Fulton receiving third prize at the doctoral student poster session. At the 26th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science, J. Stephen Downie was the winner of the best student submission prize.

One of the anticipated highlights of the year will be Connections 98, an international conference hosted at Western during October 23-25 which will showcase doctoral research in the field of library and information science. If you would like more information on Connections 98, e-mail [connect@julian.uwo.ca](mailto:connect@julian.uwo.ca), or visit the Doctoral Student Association web page at: <http://www.fims.uwo.ca/organizations/dsa/index.html>.



PHD STUDENT LISA GIVEN AT THE 1998 ALISE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## Message From the Dean

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

expect to hire one additional faculty member for the Journalism program. All of these are tenure track, full-time appointments. We will move forward this year to fill the Rogers Chair in Telecommunications. We will look worldwide for the best talent available to enrich our offerings.

I am personally keen on building relationships with high quality institutions around the world for research and teaching purposes for our faculty and international exchange opportunities for our students. In a shrinking world with realignments in the geopolitical relationships between nation states, research and learning opportunities will open up many exciting possibilities for both students and faculty alike, whether they are concerned with library science or media issues. I am also very interested in having an on-going dialogue with our alumni worldwide. Our students and faculty can benefit immensely from this alumni contact and gain from their rich,

worldly experience both in the industry and the academy.

On a personal note, the year behind us has been a very exciting and important one for me and my family. My wife and I spent nine glorious months in India, travelling and collecting data for a study dealing with global television and its impact on rural culture in that ancient land. This was made possible because of the co-operation and backing we received from Northwestern University in Illinois (my home institution at the time) and The University of Western Ontario. Not only did we have contact with our families and friends while we spent time in India but also some of Western's alumni. The most rewarding was a telephone call from a professor who was heading a research institute in Bangalore (the Silicon Valley of India). He recalled his good old days in London and paid tribute to his former professors – Jean Tague-Sutcliffe and Mike Nelson. At such moments, I cannot help but think how fortunate we are to be

teachers and to have the opportunity to contribute to training the leaders of tomorrow.

The University has made considerable financial commitments to enhancing the existing programs and building a new future for all of us. I am certainly optimistic about a bright future for FIMS and can see the renewed vigor among the faculty and staff to make our future plans a reality. I look forward to hearing from you either by regular mail or e-mail.

With warmest regards,

**Manjunath Pendakur, Ph.D.**  
Professor & Dean  
fims-dean@julian.uwo.ca

**Faculty of Information and Media Studies**  
Middlesex, College  
London, Ontario N6A 5B7

## Grants, Awards and Scholarships

Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada Research Grants:

- Jeffrey Hopkins (Geography), Gloria Leckie, 1998-2001.  
The Place of the Public Library: An Inquiry into Emergent Technologies, Ideologies and Communities, \$42,000.
- Judith Knelman.  
Florence Maybrick: Murderess or Martyr?, \$2,500.
- Lynne McKechnie, Catherine Ross.  
Becoming a Reader: A Qualitative Study of the Role of the Public Library in the Development of Children's Reading, \$33,000.
- Yuri Quintana, Patricia Dewdney, 1998-2001.  
Evaluating the Impact of Consumer Health Information on the Internet, \$93,000.

The American Library Association's Reference Service Press Award 1998 for best article published in RQ during previous year:

Patricia Dewdney, Gillian Michell. "Oranges and Peaches: Understanding Communication Accidents in the Reference Interview"



AWARD WINNERS  
PATRICIA DEWDNEY AND GILLIAN MICHELL

Ontario Graduate Scholarships, 1998-1999:  
Lisa Given and Stephen Joyce

## Homecoming '98

The Faculty of Information and Media Studies is making plans for Homecoming '98 on October 2, 3 and 4. Events will include an Information and Media Conference on the 2nd and 3rd featuring workshops and guest speakers, as well as the Andrew D. Osborne Lecture on the evening of Super Saturday. A

number of receptions, including a luncheon with the Dean, are also planned over the weekend. For ongoing updates of Homecoming '98 events, visit the Western Homecoming web page at [www.uwo.ca/alumni/alumweb/homecoming/](http://www.uwo.ca/alumni/alumweb/homecoming/) or check the Faculty of Information and Media Studies web site at [www.fims.uwo.ca](http://www.fims.uwo.ca).



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