At SLAIS, Change Is the New Constant

BY EDIE RASMUSSEN, DIRECTOR

WELCOME TO OUR first edition of SLAIS Matters. Here you’ll find an update on SLAIS and the many changes that we’ve undergone in recent years. We hope that our alumni, friends and visitors are interested in hearing our news, and that in future editions we have news from you to share as well.

Probably our most visible change is in our space – we left SLAIS’ home since 1961, in the old North Wing of the Main Library, in June of 2003, as it was torn down to make way for the new Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (IKBLC). After almost five years in “temporary” space in the far reaches of campus (out by “B Lot” if that rings a bell for some of you), we returned last year to our magnificent new space in the IKBLC. In “Space Matters” on these pages you’ll read about the physical space, the vision of the Learning Centre, and some of the innovative ways that SLAIS students are involved in the activities of the Learning Centre.

There are many new faces at SLAIS – some “old SLAIS hands” have retired and some faculty have been lured away by other programs, and in the past few years we have hired eight new faculty, as well as four new staff members. You’ll find brief introductions to some of these new faces under “Faculty Matters”. And, with new faculty come fresh energy and enthusiasm, and new teaching and research interests. You’ll find a profile of SLAIS research interests in “Research Matters”.

Under “Student Matters” you’ll learn about the new courses SLAIS is developing for online instruction, and some comments from employers on our students, whom I believe are among the best in North America. Under “Alumni Matters” you’ll see a snapshot of our graduates, as well as our current student body. And a contribution from Adjunct Professor Debbie Millward – thanks, Debbie, and I hope your discussion of “Why I Teach at SLAIS” convinces others in the community to share their expertise with the next generation of SLAIS students.

One more change… this first issue of SLAIS Matters also marks my last month as Director. It has been a pleasure and privilege to serve in this role for the past six years. Terry Eastwood has generously agreed to emerge from a retirement filled with golf and curling, and the archival scholarship he never really left, in order to serve as Interim Director of SLAIS over the next year. We’re all grateful to Terry for taking on this role for the second time – he was Acting Director in 2002-2003 as well.

And speaking of Terry, we invite you to support a new award for students in the Archival Studies program, created in recognition of Terry’s pivotal role in founding and developing the program. See “Giving Matters” for details.

We hope you enjoy “SLAIS Matters”! And, thanks to our Student Services Coordinator, Michelle Mallette, for her design and editing work on our new newsletter.

PROFESSOR EDIE RASMUSSEN is stepping down as Director of the School of Library, Archival & Information Studies effective July 1, at which time she begins a 14-month sabbatical after which she returns to SLAIS as part of the faculty where she will take up her research and teaching activities.

Professor Terence “Terry” Eastwood has agreed to serve as Interim Director of SLAIS from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

Professor Eastwood not only chaired the Master of Archival Studies Program from 1981 to 2000 but served as Acting Director of SLAIS on two occasions: from January-June 1998 and July 2002 to June 2003. Although Professor Eastwood took early retirement in June 2007, he has stayed active at SLAIS by teaching on a part-time basis over the last two years.

SLAIS will begin its search for a new Director in the Fall of 2009.
Artwork Adds Elegance to Barber Centre

FROM THE DAY it opened, the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre has been a magnet for students – at almost any time of day or evening the space is filled with students, taking up virtually every available seat. This is not surprising, as the layout of the building is ideal for a student looking for a place to work on a paper, engage in project groupwork, or even just socialize. Adding to the stunning appeal of the building’s architecture are several pieces of art created by Vancouver artists. They include glass artist Kevin Dubois, as well as glass blowers John Nutter and Jeff Burnette. Both Nutter and Burnette specialize in creating large-scale art from glass, and were individually commissioned by Irving “Ike” and Jean Barber to create art specifically for installation in the Barber Centre. The Barbers then donated the art to the Learning Centre.

The first installation that greets visitors is inside the main entrance off of East Mall. Glass Bookcases is a creation of Vancouver artist Kevin Dubois, and crafted of fired and cast glass.

Jeff Burnette was eager to discuss his work Belle Verre, the glass bowl installation in the Barber Centre’s southeast stairwell that beckons to pedestrians walking by with its bright and changing colours. The art measures nearly 20 metres from top to bottom, and took three days to complete the actual installation.

Over the main stairwell of the Barber Centre hangs a chandelier-like series of glass panels, designed and created by another Vancouver artist, John Nutter. It is simply and appropriately named Atrium. A close examination of this installation reveals text and runes from notable documents throughout history on 57 panels of glass. Another art piece by Nutter, The Magic of Discovery, hangs in the Ridington Room in the Barber Centre’s northern wing of the building. The room has become a preferred place for study for those seeking simply to sit in the presence of this impressive glass suspension designed to inspire thoughts of the Northern Lights.

Each of the Barber Centre’s unique artworks complements the building’s fusion of style and function. Students are always seeking a place to study – the art makes this building a lovely choice.

For more information on the artwork in the Barber Learning Centre, please visit http://www.ikebarberlearningcentre.ubc.ca/about/art.html.

SLAIS opened its stunning new facilities to students in February, 2008, after four and a half long years in temporary quarters at the south end of the UBC Campus. The new space is spectacular, providing outstanding study and learning areas for students, wireless access throughout, and the best views on campus. Visit us on the 4th floor of the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre anytime during regular office hours. Call 604-822-2404 or email slais@interchange.ubc.ca.
AFTER CLASSES, assigned readings and homework, the few remaining hours of the day often seem best spent sleeping. Thankfully, however, many SLAIS students take time out of their hectic lives to help with various side projects. For the students being helped, these projects can mean the difference between academic success and struggle.

In a collaboration between SLAIS and the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre’s Chapman Learning Commons, SLAIS students have helped undergraduates with term papers, prepare for exams and take full advantage of Web 2.0 technology in their education as well as the rest of their activities.

Several SLAIS students volunteer for the Reference Squad. Throughout the winter term, they make themselves available primarily to undergraduate students to help with researching papers and projects. Either in the Learning Commons or residence halls, they take up position and welcome all comers. This peer-to-peer service is of particular value for undergraduate students who may be hesitant to go to the UBC Writing Centre, or even turn to library staff, for help with their assignments.

Thanks to support from UBC’s Teaching & Learning Enhancement Fund, SLAIS developed a Digital Media Internship program for the 2008-09 academic year. Four SLAIS students were hired for this project, which introduces students at all levels to Web 2.0 technology, such as wikis, blogs, Google Docs, and other collaborative techniques. Naturally, the Digital Media Interns set up their own blog to connect with participants and there one user thanks the group for showing her more ways to connect, organize, and network in terms of her academic and professional life.

For more information on the Digital Media Interns, visit http://ubcdigitalmediaproject.wordpress.com/.

The Barber Learning Centre: A Vision Realized

SOME 60 YEARS before the Irving K. Barber Centre opened its doors, its benefactor walked the halls and trails of the University of British Columbia as a student of forestry. In 1950, Irving K. “Ike” Barber graduated from UBC with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry. He went on to work as a professional forester, and founded his own company in 1978. He led the company for 25 years, before retiring in 2002 as Chairman of that company.

Mr. Barber felt what he calls an “emotional responsibility” to the various towns of British Columbia, in and around which he had found his success. Also at this time, Mr. Barber was having an ongoing conversation with then UBC president Dr. Martha Piper and then University Librarian Catherine Quinlan. Their discussions centred around the idea of an architectural update to the Main Library at UBC – what would become the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre.

Variations on the concept of a ‘Learning Centre’ are frequently talked about at universities and colleges today. This, however, was not the case more than seven years ago when Mr. Barber, Dr. Piper and Ms. Quinlan began planning the Barber Learning Centre, and today Mr. Barber remains deeply proud of their creation and its origins. The Learning Centre, explains Mr. Barber, is intended to draw students in, to be so attractive that students want to use it to its full potential. Contributing to this inviting feeling are the Learning Commons, the soaring windows on every floor, the emphasis on glass in the building’s artwork, the comfortable and functional furnishings, computer stations and more. And as the building’s study spaces fill to capacity almost every day, Mr. Barber is proud to see his vision is realized.

Irving K. “Ike” and Jean Barber with BC Premier Gordon Campbell at the official opening of the Barber Centre.
New Faculty Add to SLAIS Research Areas

SLAIS RECENTLY WELCOMED three faculty members who bring a variety of backgrounds, skills, and interests. Luanne Freund, Victoria Lemieux, and Heather O’Brien answered some questions about how they came to teach at UBC, and what drew them in to the Library/Archival/Information field in the first place.

LUANNE FREUND, PH.D.
Professor Freund comes to Vancouver from Toronto, but says she is not a big city person. This makes UBC’s location ideal for her, as the “natural setting of the university campus” helps keep the city out, and “the collegiality of SLAIS” in. Information science is a topic for which Professor Freund cares deeply, and her research area focuses on users’ retrieval of and interaction with information. When asked about her advice to students entering the program, she encourages them to embrace the dynamic nature of the information landscape, and utilize the time spent here at SLAIS to “explore, try different things, and stretch your minds.”

VICTORIA LEMIEUX, PH.D.
In Professor Lemieux, we have one of our own, as she holds a Master of Archival Studies from SLAIS which she completed in 1987. Since then, she has lived and worked in Canada, Jamaica, and the United Kingdom. While in the UK, she worked as records and technology risk manager. At SLAIS, she is continuing her work in this area with the Centre for the Investigation of Financial Electronic Records, or CiFER. Asked about her work experience in multiple countries, she expresses a fascination for and pleasure at having a “wide-ranging and stimulating” career. Professor Lemieux appreciates the new location on campus of SLAIS, and enjoys the Learning Centre being a hub of learning and discourse on campus.

HEATHER O’BRIEN, PH.D.
Until her move to the West Coast, Professor O’Brien lived her entire life in Nova Scotia. Here, she enjoys both Vancouver’s familiar and its unfamiliar features. While she appreciates Vancouver winters (or lack thereof!), she also welcomes the surrounding water, as it reminds her of the Bay of Fundy. Now, having completed her first full academic year at SLAIS, Professor O’Brien has found common ground with several other faculty members. Her research interests lie in the realm of Human-Computer Interaction, and she is already exploring some collaborative projects after finding others who share that interest. To new students, Professor O’Brien encourages the development of friendships with classmates, as the network developed at this stage can last throughout one’s career.

With each new professor, SLAIS acquires new fields of expertise and interest. The current scope of educational opportunity testifies to the academic integrity of SLAIS, and the broadening of an already diverse faculty provides an even better education to the students, both present and future.

NEW FACULTY

SLAIS has hired three new faculty members as a result of its faculty search in early 2009. Eric Meyers and Lisa Nathan will join the faculty in July 2009 and Aaron Loehrlein will arrive in January 2010.

Aaron Loehrlein is completing a joint Ph.D. in Information Science and Cognitive Science at Indiana University in Bloomington. His dissertation research is an exploration of the ways in which a person’s conceptual structures influence information-seeking behaviour.

Eric Meyers is completing a PhD in Information Science at the University of Washington, with the dissertation, “The Nature and Impact of Group Information Problem Solving.” His research interests include youth information behaviour, information literacy, and virtual worlds.

Lisa Nathan is completing her doctoral dissertation on “Adaptation and Information Technology: An Ethnography of Values, Choice, and Tension in Two Ecovillages” in the Information School at the University of Washington. She is serving as Co-Principal Investigator on the Voices from the Rwanda Tribunal Project.
SLAIS IS HOME to a community of researchers actively engaged in the investigation of questions of vital importance to society in the age of information. At the broadest level, we are concerned with the recorded artifacts of human experience: their creation, collection, organization, preservation, and use. Increasingly, these artifacts—books, documents, images, data, etc.—are created and/or preserved in digital formats that can be widely disseminated and used. Our collective work aims to ensure that this legacy of human experience, housed in both traditional and newer digital forms, is preserved, shared and explored, so that individuals and communities can continue to draw upon it to deepen their understanding of themselves and their communities and make new discoveries about our world.

While our overarching research agenda is broad, research at SLAIS is clustered around three core areas of inquiry:

1. **Management and Curation of Digital Records**
   - Records—documents made or received and set aside in the course of a practical activity—have played a central role in human society for thousands of years. A major ongoing research area at SLAIS is the management and curation of permanent authentic records in electronic systems. Research carried out in the framework of the three phases of the InterPARES project has made fundamental contributions to theory and practice in this field. This work is complemented by emerging research at SLAIS on digital records forensics and records-related risks in financial institutions, fostering collaborations with international researchers in diverse fields such as business, law and computer science.

2. **Creation and use of cultural materials**
   - Library, archives and museum professionals are major players in the collective and interdisciplinary effort to promote and preserve cultural materials and make them available over time to diverse populations. The stewardship of archives and collections of works of literature, art images, recorded performances, etc. and the study of their creation and use is an important and dynamic research area. SLAIS plays a major part in this effort as a centre for the study of Canadian and international children’s literature, book publishing and illustration. Faculty research in this area is strengthened by outstanding student work carried out in the context of the Master of Arts in Children’s Literature program. Other cultural materials research at SLAIS includes work on multimedia digital libraries, the organization and retrieval of art images, and the documentation and preservation of art and theatre performances. As the museum, archives and library fields continue to expand and move towards greater convergence, we look forward to increased activity and new collaborations in this area.

3. **Digital Information Systems and Interaction**
   - Digital information flows from person to person through systems in a rich and complex process of representation, interpretation and interaction. Understanding how this process occurs, including the cognitive, affective, physical, technological and situational variables that play a role, is essential to finding means to better support information flow and use in society. A major research focus at SLAIS is on the closely intertwined areas of human information interaction and digital information systems. We aim to extend current models of information interaction to include a greater focus on engagement with, and use of digital information as it relates to real world tasks and activities. In parallel, we are actively seeking new paradigms, techniques and algorithms to improve the systems and tools that facilitate information interaction. As information science researchers in the area, we draw upon theories and methods from many disciplines: human-computer interaction, psychology, sociology, education, computer science, information retrieval and design and actively collaborate with colleagues from these fields.

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**Research questions on Digital Records:**

- What constitutes a digital record?
- How can the authenticity of digital records be determined once they are removed from the original system?
- How can digital records be maintained and preserved such that their authenticity will not be questioned?
- How can records-related risks to financial institutions such as data-leakage, legal discovery challenges, compliance, etc. be reduced?
- What methods, standards and practices are effective for the management of digital record?

**Research questions on Cultural Materials:**

- What role can information professionals and information institutions play in making cultural materials accessible?
- What is different about recording and making accessible information and materials produced in the context of the arts from other types of materials?
- How do we record and make accessible more fluent and dynamic forms of artistic expression, such as storytelling, dance and theatre?
- How do we maintain the richness and diversity of localized artistic expression in the face of the global economy?
- What contributions does children’s literature make to individuals, communities and to society as a whole?

**Research questions on Information Interaction:**

- What are the effects of different contexts, situations and tasks on digital information interaction?
- How can systems better expose the ideas and intents embedded within information objects so that people can engage with them more directly and more deeply?
- How can systems be designed to support the emotional and experiential aspects of information interaction?
- How do we support users in environments that are complex, nonlinear and multimodal?
- How can existing meta-data and indexing structures be better utilized to increase retrieval effectiveness?
- How do we document and evaluate information interaction and use?
IN 2009, SLAIS is adding two new courses to its already extensive course list. Both new courses are to be presented online. LIBR 548F – History of the Book, is being taught by Ross Harvey. This class ran as a face-to-face course in 2008, also taught by Professor Harvey, and he has now reworked the course into an online format. The second course is LIBR 559M – Social Media for Information Professionals, being taught by Dean Giustini.

As the dynamics of an online course are quite different from those held in a conventional classroom, designing a curriculum can be a tricky endeavour. Professor Harvey answered a few questions about the course, and talked about some of those differences—from the instructor’s perspective—between face-to-face courses and web-based courses.

Professor Harvey taught for ten years at Charles Sturt University in Australia, where the entire library studies curriculum is delivered online. With online courses in Australia, students can be living in several different time zones. In this situation, synchronous activity would be impossible, so courses are typically presented as asynchronous, meaning students are not all online at the same time. This, and the general nature of an online course, requires the professor to prepare in advance to an even greater extent than for courses held in a classroom.

Prof. Harvey sees as one of his primary objectives in LIBR 548F to provide students with “overview of the history of the book as a material object.” This seems to be somewhat ironic, given that the course is online. Professor Harvey agrees that he has thought about this as well, but points out that the novel, a book by today’s standards, began as a serial in newspapers. In this sense, he argues, “the book as a material object” is still able to coexist with other media.

Dean Giustini will be presenting the other new course offering at SLAIS. Social Media for Information Professionals encompasses blogs, wikis, social networking, tagging, Second Life, and more. Unlike History of the Book, this course will be using the Web to talk about the Web. Specifically, the discussion will focus on both use and interaction with Library 2.0 technologies in information-based organizations. Students will become comfortable with the use of a wide range of social media tools, and be able to apply that knowledge to challenges that otherwise bar the delivery of a service.

Even online classes require collaboration: MLIS student Roseanne Himmueller (centre) checks out classmate Dan Slessor’s work while Jessie London (right) looks on.

“[Kerry] has been an absolute asset to our organization and has engaged with a rather complex audio visual archival system and has managed to offer very valuable advice and solutions around problem areas. Her work ethic and interest in the field is fantastic and all I can say is it has been an absolute pleasure to have had her work with us for this time.”

Renate Meyer, Deputy Director, Centre for Popular Memory UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

“Eileen was the star intern of the year! Those who worked closely with her described her as smart, motivated, fast, technically accomplished, and a pleasure to have on the staff— even for a short time.”

Kevin Winkler, Assistant Director THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS New York, NY

“These are some very very fine SLAIS students coming to SFU.”

Eric L. Swanick, Head, Special Collections/Gifts Librarian W.A.C. BENNETT LIBRARY, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY, Burnaby, BC

“We are very impressed with the qualities of the students SLAIS is turning out and they are an important part of our success.”

Ralph Stanton, Head, Rare Books and Special Collections UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, Vancouver BC
SLAIS by the Numbers – The Fascinating Story

COMPILED BY MICHELLE MALLETTE

SLAIS HAS GRADUATED, in all programs, 2,848 individual students including the Class of May 2009. Collectively they hold 2,896 degrees from SLAIS (some hold more than one!).

Since its inception in 1961, with the first graduating class for the one-year baccalaureate in 1962, SLAIS has conferred:

- 635 Bachelors of Library Science
- 1155 Masters of Library Science
- 749 Masters of Library & Information Studies
- 260 Masters of Archival Studies
- 37 Masters of Art in Children’s Literature
- 60 joint MAS/MLIS

The total number of students who were registered in any program at SLAIS in Winter 2008/09: 261

**Gender @ SLAIS**

- 211 (81%)
- 50 (19%)

Those statistics hold in the MLIS, Joint MAS/MLIS and PhD programs. In the MAS program, men are still the minority but represent a higher percentage (33%) of the cohort.

In the MACL program, women comprise 95% of the cohort.

The average age of SLAIS students, all programs, based on Winter 2008/09 statistics, was 31.6 years. Average age by program:

- MACL: 25.9 years
- MAS: 33.3 years
- MSLIS: 29 years
- MLIS: 31.3 years
- PhD: 41.9 years

The SLAIS student body is a diverse one. More than a quarter of the 261 students (71 or 27%) at SLAIS last winter held citizenship other than Canadian. Of those, the majority (50) are American; others hail from China, Ghana, India, Israel, Italy, Korea, Kuwait, Pakistan, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

The SLAIS Lounge serves as a gathering place for students, encouraging scholarship and friendships that last long after the degrees are conferred.

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**Debbie Millward – Why I Teach At Slais**

**SINCE 2003**, I’ve taught a one-credit course three times and a three-credit course twice (currently doing it for a third time) at SLAIS. Why would I want to do that?

Because of these maybe trite-sounding truisms: it’s invigorating to see the library world through fresh eyes. I learn as much as I instruct. It pushes me out of my comfort zone. It’s another way to contribute to the profession and to SLAIS. It forces me to examine my day-to-day work from a broader perspective. It’s fun.

Here’s another good thing about being a SLAIS adjunct as a SLAIS alumnus: it brings you back. Yes, physically, to a great new space at good old UBC. But reflectively, too; it brings you back to whatever drew you all those years ago to this profession. Yes, much has changed and contin-

Debbie manages the news research library at Pacific Newspaper Group. She completed her MLIS at SLAIS.
A NAME SYNONYMOUS with the Master of Archival Studies program at SLAIS is now also the name of an award for students in that field. In 1981, Terry Eastwood became the first professor of the Master of Archival Studies program at SLAIS. He served as chair until 2000 and taught courses in all aspects of archival theory and principles – continuing to do so even after his retirement in 2006, the 25th anniversary of the launch of the MAS program. From this post, he helped students gain the skills necessary for careers as archivists and information professionals. Now, the eponymous award will do the same.

Professor Eastwood’s dedication to the archival field is evident both in SLAIS and beyond. Centred on the standardization of archival arrangement and description, archival management of electronic records, and archival theory in North America, Professor Eastwood’s career brought him recognition throughout British Columbia, Canada, and the United States. And while this reflects well on SLAIS, the true beneficiaries are those students who learned from Professor Eastwood.

In addition to this award, there are several others available to students at various points in their SLAIS careers. Nearly 40 awards are available, offering welcome financial assistance to students. Continuing one’s education is a large investment of time and money, and these awards are always appreciated by their recipients. The majority of awards are divided by program first, and then by various characteristics such as scholarly direction or concentration, occupational destination, or academic performance. There are SLAIS Alumni scholarships designated for students in each of the four master’s programs at SLAIS. The Gene Joseph First Nations Scholarship is solely for students of aboriginal descent, and the Anne and George Piternick award supports research by doctoral students. And graduating students are honoured for their academic achievements with the Roy Stokes Medal in Archival Studies and the Ruth Cameron Medal for Archival Studies.

The awards have a variety of origins, but almost all bear the name of a specific individual, honouring their contribution, dedication and passion for the field. Now, SLAIS thanks and honours Terry Eastwood’s career and contribution to Archival Studies Education with this new award, and welcomes donations from all SLAIS Alumni and friends to the fund.

**KEEPPING IN TOUCH!**

AT SLAIS, we want to stay in touch with our alumni, friends and past faculty, as well as the UBC Community and the information professions. SLAIS Matters is intended to keep you informed of our activities and research as we continue to prepare and educate professionals and researchers, contribute to the knowledge of our professions, and advocate for fairness and equity in the archival, library and information fields.

This newsletter will be issued twice a year. The summer edition will be published both in print and online. The winter edition will be online only. You’ll be able to read it as an online PDF from our website, or subscribe to the e-version that is delivered to your inbox.

If you have news, events or activities you’d like promoted to SLAIS friends and alumni, email submissions to Michelle Mallette, the SLAIS student services coordinator, at michelle.mallette@ubc.ca.

If you’d like to receive this newsletter as an electronic PDF instead of the print issue, or if you’d like to be added to our mailing list for a print copy, please send an email indicating your preference to: slaistik@interchange.ubc.ca.

**HOW TO CONTRIBUTE**

For monthly, annual or one-time donations, contact Maryn Ellis of UBC Annual Giving at 604-822-5345 or maryn.ellis@ubc.ca.

**SLAIS**

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