

Degrees

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The University of Regina Magazine

Our man @ Twitter

Max Schmeiser BA(Hons)'03



University
of Regina



Lionel Peyachew's bison sculptures appear to trot across the prairie in this photo by University photographer Trevor Hopkin. Peyachew is an associate professor of Fine Art at First Nations University of Canada. The photo is part of a series that appears in the U of R's Printing Services 2021 calendar.

Photo by Trevor Hopkin, University of Regina Photography Department.

Welcome to the fall/winter 2020 edition of *Degrees*. Well, this is a first. In the 15 years that I have been the editor of this magazine, I have never overseen the entire production of *Degrees* from my dining room table. I did manage to sneak out on a few occasions to lend a helping hand with photos but other than that, I have hardly set foot on the U of R campus in the past several months. Working from home has been just one more in a long list of inconveniences that COVID-19 has wreaked upon us. Whether you're working from home or are one of our essential employees still in the workplace, I trust you'll enjoy getting to know the interesting individuals featured in this issue of *Degrees*.

Larissa Bezo earned her bachelor's and master's of arts degrees from the University some 20 years ago. Now the alumna heads up the Ottawa-based Canadian Bureau for International Education. The not-for-profit, non-governmental membership organization is dedicated exclusively to international education. It's our country's most important agency for attracting international students to Canadian institutions and providing domestic students with worldwide study opportunities—something COVID-19 has greatly impacted. You can read Bezo's story beginning on page 8.

Max Schmeiser has quite the resume. He's been an economics professor at a U.S. university, worked for

the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C., held senior positions at Amazon, and is now head of data science for Twitter. Not bad for the serious kid who grew up in Regina knowing exactly what career path he wanted to follow. Our profile on Schmeiser begins on page 14.

Fifth-year business student Salmaan Moolla was the driving force behind a push to get financial literacy curriculum into Saskatchewan high school classrooms. Along with some fellow U of R students and alumni, he's also developing some financial technology that just may help Canadians reach financial empowerment. Read Moolla's story starting on page 24.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of what has become the University's Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science. It began in 1945 when returning WW II veterans were flocking to the University of Saskatchewan's engineering program, almost doubling enrolment. To alleviate the overcrowding, the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus began offering first-year engineering courses. The rest, as they say, is history. The story, "Celebrating a Diamond Jubilee," begins on page 30.

Like me, Sean O'Shea is a graduate of the U of R's School of Journalism and has been a respected consumer reporter with Global News in Toronto for decades. Earlier this year for his continued contributions, O'Shea received a prestigious Lifetime

Achievement Award from the Radio Television Digital News Association. O'Shea reflects on his career, the state of journalism, and his career beginnings at the University of Regina. Read O'Shea's essay starting on page 38.

You'll find the work of another J-School graduate beginning on page 16. When he's not serving as the department head or teaching a course in the School of Journalism, Mark Taylor can be found out on photography assignments for Canada's leading print magazines and newspapers. Take a look at some of Taylor's most memorable published photos beginning on page 16.

Also sprinkled throughout this issue is a peek at this year's Alumni Crowning Achievement Award recipients. As usual, this year's award winners represent the best and brightest of our more than 75,000 alumni. We can all take pride in their accomplishments and their contributions to the communities in which we live and work.

I would remind you that *Degrees* magazine is online. It's a great way to consume *Degrees* content and you'll find some bonus features on our website that don't make it into the printed magazine. Please take some time to consider how you would prefer to receive *Degrees*. Let us know by going to the *Degrees* website at www.degreesmagazine.ca.

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As always, if you have story ideas, feedback or just want to say hello, my contact information can be found on the facing page.

Stay safe!

Greg Campbell BFA'85, BJ'95
Editor (working from home)

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On the cover: U of R economics graduate Max Schmeiser has worked for some of the globe's largest companies. He left a job with Amazon to take the position of head of data science at Twitter. Schmeiser is photographed near Seattle's Pacific Science Center. Its trademark arches can be seen in the background. The Center was designed by Minoru Yamasaki, who also designed the Dr. John Archer Library, Classroom Building and Laboratory Building, and was the architect of New York's World Trade Center. (Photo by Josh Huston)



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Meet University of Regina alumna Larissa Bezo who heads up the Canadian Bureau for International Education.

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Max Schmeiser earned an undergraduate degree in economics in 2003 from the University of Regina. Now he's working for one of the tech world's largest players—Twitter.

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University of Regina business student Salmaan Moolla realized his dream of getting important financial literacy curriculum into Saskatchewan high school classrooms.

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In 1945, as a junior college, the U of S Regina Campus began offering first-year engineering courses. After three quarters of a century of growth, the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science has really come of age.

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President's Note

As University of Regina alumni, many of us look forward to three events that take place at this time of year: the Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards (ACAA) gala, the Alumni Association annual general meeting, and Fall Convocation. The pandemic has led us to change our plans for these in-person events, and it is a credit to many University staff that we continue to find creative ways to work around these and other challenges.

The ACAA gala celebrates the talents and accomplishments of some of our most distinguished alumni, and the 16th annual event was slated to take place in early October. We are now planning to celebrate the recipients virtually early in the new year. Further information will be forthcoming shortly, but I would like to take a moment to introduce and congratulate the 2020 recipients.

This year's recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award is Shauna Argue BASc'87, a distinguished member of Saskatchewan's engineering community and a tireless volunteer in our community.

Jacq Brasseur CSW'13, BSW'15 is being recognized with the Humanitarian and Community Service Award. Jacq has had a significant impact on the University of Regina as a student, student union representative, and now as executive director of the UR Pride Centre for Sexuality and Gender Diversity.

Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth MEd'01, the recipient of the Professional Achievement Award, has been a leader in education for 30 years and an advocate for Indigenous language and culture.

Robert Jamont BPAS'89,

the recipient of the Dr Robert and Norma Ferguson Award for Service to the University, has been a passionate volunteer and supporter of Cougars men's hockey for nearly three decades.

And Christine Selinger BEd'11, BSc'11, a dedicated advocate, athlete, and volunteer, is the Outstanding Young Alumni award recipient.

These worthy recipients make important contributions in our communities, and are a source of pride for the University. You can read more about them throughout this issue of Degrees magazine.

In mid-September, we moved the Alumni Association annual general meeting to a virtual Zoom format. It worked remarkably well, in particular because it allowed alumni to participate regardless of geographic location.

In addition to a presentation by 2017 ACAA recipient and former Alumni Association Board of Directors member Dr Margaret Dagenais PhD'11 on the importance of volunteerism, the AGM also featured the election of some new Board members. The Association's new executive includes president Christine Niemczyk CPR'88, vice-president Scott Carson BSc'04, and second vice-president Roxanne Olynik BBA'13. I would especially like to thank past-president Monica Deters BHJ'04, MPA'09 and all the volunteer directors and ex-officio members who contribute so greatly to the Association.

Just as Spring Convocation in June was a virtual event, so too was our 47th annual Fall Convocation. I want to thank the many staff members, including those in the University Secretariat, the Registrar's Office, and University Advancement & Communications, for organizing

the Convocation celebration. And congratulations to our more than 700 Fall 2020 graduates. We are proud of your achievements as University of Regina students, and look forward to your future accomplishments as University of Regina alumni.

Faculty and current students have also adapted to pandemic-related changes to our academic operations over the past several months. You will recall that the University completed both the Winter 2020 and Spring/Summer 2020 terms entirely through remote teaching and learning. Course delivery is primarily remote during the current Fall 2020 term, with approximately 600 students participating in low-density in-person course components such as labs and studios on the main campus only. If circumstances permit, in Winter 2021 approximately 1,500 students will participate in low-density in-person coursework. The majority of courses will be delivered remotely, however, as we take a cautious approach in the interest of our community's health and safety.

Also in the interest of health and safety in these unprecedented times, many University of Regina researchers are directly addressing challenges posed by the pandemic. Here are a few notable examples.

Dr Gordon Asmundson, a psychology professor and Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, is studying and reporting on the adverse psychological effects of COVID-19.

Dr Shelagh Campbell, a member of the Faculty of Business Administration, has been working with international colleagues on a study examining the impact of COVID-19 work-

from-home requirements on university employees.

Social scientist Dr Amber Fletcher BA'06, MA'14 has created a special research project aimed at reducing social isolation and increasing socialization through the arts for older adults who are living alone at this time.

Dr Mohan Babu, an associate professor of biochemistry, is part of a team of scientists who are developing peptide therapeutics and point-of-care diagnostics to effectively and rapidly contain COVID-19.

Microbial geneticist Dr Andrew Cameron is part of a team that is working to develop virus testing based on genome capture. This technique enriches DNA and RNA from pathogens, giving researchers the ability to test for all viral groups.

And one of our most distinguished alumni, Dr Nevan Krogan BSc'97, MSc'99, is leading a team of researchers who are focused on understanding the mysteries of diseases like COVID-19 and HIV. Their findings will ultimately help identify ways to develop new drugs and treat diseases. You can read more about Dr Krogan on page 34.

In closing, I am inspired by the ways in which our University community has responded to the pandemic. Our students, faculty, and staff in particular continue to demonstrate incredible creativity and resolve – both as individuals and as a collective. They are a credit to our University, and you can read about some of them in this issue of Degrees.

Sincerely,

Dr Thomas Chase
Interim President and
Vice-Chancellor



Left: Interim vice-president (Academic) and provost, David Gregory.

Centre: Kathy McNutt, vice-president (Research).

Right: Harold Riemer, dean of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies.



Coming and goings

David Gregory has been appointed interim vice-president (Academic) and provost until June 30, 2022. Gregory joined the University in 2011 as the first dean of the Faculty of Nursing. A graduate of the University of Ottawa and the University of Manitoba, he holds a PhD in nursing from the University of Arizona. He was accorded the title dean emeritus from the University of Manitoba and holds an honorary diploma from the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (now Saskatchewan Polytechnic).

Kathleen McNutt BA'00, a professor of public policy in the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, has been appointed vice-president (Research). The five-year appointment was effective July 1, 2020. She is the first woman vice-president (Research) in the University's history. McNutt holds a BA from the University of Regina, a master's from the University of Alberta and a PhD from Simon Fraser University. She maintains an active research agenda and has over 30 peer-reviewed scholarly publications and a variety of academic chapters and public reports. She has also presented her research across Canada and Europe. Her current focus is on mainstreaming equity, diversity and inclusion

across complex institutional structures.

Harold Riemer has been appointed to a second five-year term as dean of the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies effective July 1, 2020. Riemer is an alumnus of the University of Alberta and Eastern Washington University. He earned his PhD from the Ohio State University in 1995. Riemer spent time as a faculty member at Bowling Green State University in Ohio and the University of Texas at Austin prior to accepting a faculty position at the University of Regina in 1999.

Christopher Yost has been appointed associate vice-president (Research) for a five-year term effective September 1, 2020. A member of the Department of Biology for 17 years, Yost received his PhD from the University of Calgary in 1998, and has experience as a research scientist with Agriculture and Agri-food Canada (Lacombe Research and Development Centre, Alberta) and as a research associate at the Aarhus University in Denmark. Former Tier II Canada Research Chair in Microbial Ecology and Food Safety, Yost is the co-director of the Institute for Microbial Systems and Society. His research interests focus on environmental microbiology, with a specific focus on agricultural microbiology.

Shannon Dea has been appointed dean of the Faculty of Arts and a professor of philosophy. The appointment was effective September 1, 2020. A former director of women's studies at the University of Waterloo, she earned her BA in philosophy and Russian language and literature from the University of Waterloo, her master's degree in philosophy from Queen's University, and her PhD in philosophy from Western University. She is a recipient of the Ontario Women's Directorate Leading Women, Leading Girls, Building Communities Award and the University of Waterloo's Distinguished Teacher Award.

Brett Waytuck has been appointed to a second five-year term as university librarian effective July 1, 2021. Since being named university librarian in July 2016, Waytuck has taken a lead role in establishing the strategic and operational direction of the Dr. John Archer Library and Archives. Prior to joining the University of Regina, Waytuck worked in academic libraries in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario. Most recently, he was the provincial librarian, working with the public library systems of Saskatchewan to support and extend services across the province. He earned his bachelor of music from the University of Calgary, and his master's of library science

degree from the University of Toronto.

Robin Evans has been appointed the interim dean of the Faculty of Nursing. Evans has served as associate dean (Undergraduate) of the Faculty of Nursing since January 2012. As associate dean, Evans, in collaboration with Saskatchewan Polytechnic, is responsible for policy development and overseeing the undergraduate programs. Prior to coming to the University of Regina, Evans spent 10 years in the College of Nursing at the University of Saskatchewan. She received her PhD from the University of Regina with dissertation research centering on nurses' practice with adolescent mothers.

Christie Schultz has been appointed director of the Centre for Continuing Education for a five-year term effective June 30, 2020. Since 2014, Schultz has served as the assistant dean (Academic) at the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension. In this role, she has led the faculty's continuing education portfolio, as well as its Learning Engagement Office — a team of eLearning specialists and instructional designers. She holds a master's degree in English and an MBA in public policy and management, and is nearing the completion of a PhD in educational policy studies from the University

of Alberta. Her scholarly interests include experiences and practices of leadership in higher education, care ethics in leadership, and qualitative research methodologies, especially narrative inquiry.

Mel Hart of the Department of Biology has been appointed associate dean (Student Experience and Engagement) of the Faculty of Science for a five-year term ending June 30, 2025. Hart joined the University in 2015 and established a reputation for innovative laboratory teaching and student mentorship. She has been at the forefront of incorporating Indigenous knowledge into the science curriculum, working collaboratively with colleagues on making meaningful contributions to Indigenization.

Haroon Chaudhry MBA'09 has been appointed acting associate vice-president (International) and chief international officer effective May 1, 2020. An alumnus of both John Jay College of Criminal Justice in the City University of New York and the University of Regina, Chaudhry's association with the University spans 13 years.

The Faculty of Education's **Alec Couros** has been appointed the director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning effective September 1, 2020. Couros is a professor of educational technology and media in the Faculty of Education. He serves as the director of the Centre for Educational Research, Collaboration and Development — the Faculty of Education's research unit. His research focuses on the areas of connected/networked/open learning, digital citizenship, social media in education,

scholarship of teaching and learning, and media/digital literacy. Couros is an internationally recognized expert in his field and has presented hundreds of keynote addresses and workshops around the world to academics, educators, parents and students.

Brad Farquhar began his term as the inaugural executive in residence in agribusiness at the Hill and Levene Schools of Business on September 1, 2020. He will serve in the role for the next two years and will provide a valuable resource for students and faculty. Farquhar is one of Canada's leaders in agribusiness and finance. He is the co-founder, executive vice-president and chief financial officer of Input Capital Corp. The inventive TSX trading company is the world's first agriculture streaming company, allowing farmers to borrow needed capital and service their loans by delivering physical crops rather than cash.

Accolades

R. Nicholas Carleton has been honoured for his work as a leader in Canadian health sciences with one of the highest accolades granted to scholars in Canada. He has been accepted as a 2020 Fellow in the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS), an association of Canada's top-ranked scientists and scholars in health sciences. CAHS Fellows play a vital role in developing actionable solutions to the urgent health concerns of Canadians by providing independent, objective, strategic and evidence-based analyses to inform public policy development. Carleton's acceptance into the CAHS follows closely his induction into the Royal Society of Canada's

College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists. Unprecedented at the time, Carleton's research was cited as evidence in the 2018 Canadian federal budget to support a \$30M investment made by the federal government to create the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) consortium. The consortium provides national and international mental wellness leadership in public safety personnel. Carleton serves as the scientific director of CIPSRT.

At the virtual Fall 2020 Convocation, **Ryan Hamilton BAdmin'20** was awarded the President's Medal, the highest recognition for an undergraduate student in their first degree based on their outstanding leadership and academic contributions. Hamilton graduated from the Hill School of Business with distinction with a Bachelor of Business Administration, majoring in accounting. Throughout his four years at the University, Hamilton volunteered his time for numerous community and University organizations, including the Hill Business Students' Society, Enactus Regina, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, and the Canadian Cancer Society — all while maintaining a grade point average of 83.3 and working three jobs to pay for school. In addition to receiving the President's Medal, Hamilton was awarded the Dean's Medal from the Faculty of Business Administration. The Dean's Medal recognizes a student who has not only achieved academic excellence, but also demonstrates exceptional leadership throughout their time at the Hill School of Business. In his personal life, Hamilton has experienced great adversity.

He has battled cancer in the past and, earlier this year, his mother passed away. Hamilton is now embarking part-time on a master's degree in business administration with a focus on not-for-profit accounting and ethical decision making.

Jennifer Shelly Keturakis, or Jen SK as she's known in art circles, has added another honour to the long list of awards and accomplishments she's amassed during her artistic career. Keturakis, a master's student in the Faculty of Media, Art and Performance (MAP), is the recipient of a 2020 Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award from the International Sculpture Center in New Jersey for her work, Free Hugs 2.0. The installation was one of the pieces in her graduating exhibition, Functional Limitations, which was on display at the Fifth Parallel Gallery earlier this year.

Usman Munawar, a master's of electronic systems engineering student in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Sciences, has been recognized as one of the world's best electronic engineering students by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Power & Energy Society (PES), earning a 2020 IEEE PES Outstanding Student Scholarship. From a global pool of more than 10,000 student members, Munawar was one of the five recipients of the scholarship and the only student from Canada. Originally from Pakistan, Munawar completed his Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from COMSATS University Islamabad, Lahore Campus, and worked as a senior research officer/adjunct lecturer at the KICS University of Engineering and Technology, also in Lahore.

Gordon Pennycook, an assistant professor of behavioural science in the University of Regina's Hill and Levene Schools of Business, has been named a Member of the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists. The College was established in 2014 to recognize individuals demonstrating leading scholarly, research or artistic excellence within 15 years of having completed their post-doctoral program or its equivalent. Members of the College are elected for a seven-year period. Pennycook, a leading researcher in the psychology of disinformation, reasoning and decision-making, held a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship at Yale University. He has published extensively on topics that pertain to how people form their beliefs, and the role thinking and reasoning have on forming those beliefs. In this area, he's published on topics as diverse as religious belief, morality, creativity, smartphone use, health beliefs, sleep paralysis, language use among climate change deniers and political ideology.

Research

Mohan Babu, an associate professor of biochemistry, has received \$937,950 in federal funding through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) to tackle head on the therapeutic and diagnostic gaps associated with the COVID-19 coronavirus. The funding is an important step toward helping a team of dedicated scientists to develop peptide therapeutics and point-of-care diagnostics to effectively and rapidly contain the COVID-19 outbreak. Babu's team includes researchers from the University of Saskatchewan,

including its VIDO-InterVac (Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-International Vaccine Centre), Carleton University, the University of Toronto, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the University of Manitoba, and Western University.

Elizabeth Cooper, an assistant professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, is bringing together Indigenous men between the ages of 18 and 34 to explore mental wellness and healthy behaviours in a supportive environment and work toward meaningful changes in their communities. In July, Cooper received \$119,911 in provincial funding for the project. Now, with an additional \$673,200 in funding from CIHR, she is able to expand the project to include more participants. The research project will run for two years, during which time Cooper will work with researchers from Lakehead University, McGill University, McMaster University, the University of Manitoba and the University of Saskatchewan.

Two University of Regina researchers have been awarded a total of \$408,000 through the federal government's Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF). This fund supports scholars with the research infrastructure required to conduct leading-edge research. **Nicole Hansmeier**, assistant professor of biology at Luther College and the Faculty of Science at the University of Regina, was awarded \$315,000 for much-needed equipment for cannabis research. The requested instruments will be integrated into the CFI-funded Institute for Environmental Change and Society (IECS) at the University

of Regina and will boost research in the Prairies. Wu Peng, assistant professor in the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, received \$93,000 to develop solutions for infrastructure impacted by ice, snow and cold weather.

Briefly

For the first time in its history, the University of Regina released its Strategic Plan across a virtual platform. The U of R's **2020-2025 Strategic Plan kahkiyaw kiw hkom k ninawak**, All Our Relations in Cree, was launched via Zoom to more than 260 faculty, staff, alumni, Board members and friends from the University community across Saskatchewan in mid-June. The launch was held remotely in keeping with COVID-19 health restrictions. Informed by an extensive consultation process that drew feedback and recommendations from more than 1,300 people and 45-plus internal and external councils, government bodies, and informal working groups, the plan sets an ambitious but achievable agenda for the next five years for the University community.

The University of Regina's Centre for Continuing Education has developed a new **Business Essentials Program** specifically designed for Saskatchewan businesses impacted by the pandemic. The program, delivered by industry experts, provides employees with immediately applicable skills to enhance customer experience while keeping safety and mental well-being top of mind. The program will provide business owners and employees with insights on how to identify and handle stressful situations, as well as how to navigate difficult conversations. The program

ran remotely this fall over six half-day modules. The winter program will begin January 18. Registration is now open for the winter 2021 offering. Check the Centre for Continuing Education website for more information.

More than 25 per cent of post-secondary students have been diagnosed or treated for one or more mental health conditions in the past 12 months, according to the Canadian National College Health Assessment. The University of Regina recognizes the importance of having mental health supports available for students, faculty and staff. Launched in late September, the University's **Mental Wellness Hub** is a one-stop digital resource for mental wellness support. The Mental Wellness Hub is one part of the University's overarching mental health strategy and is designed to educate, inform and foster collaboration between mental well-being initiatives, services and resources. For more information, visit www.uregina.ca/mental-wellness.

Recipient of a 2016 Alumni Crowning Achievement Award for lifetime achievement, **Geoffrey Taylor BSc'74** passed away July 17, 2020 peacefully at home after a brief illness. After graduating with a medical degree from the University of Saskatchewan in 1977, he began a four-decade career that included pioneering work in the treatment of HIV/AIDS, control and prevention of infectious diseases, and teaching and mentoring students and medical colleagues. He served as a visiting lecturer at the Fiji School of Medicine, trainer for the AIDS training program and visiting professor in Uganda, visiting expert for Singapore's Health Manpower Development plan, and visiting professor in New Zealand and Hong Kong.



Canadian Bureau for International Education

Bureau canadien de l'éducation internationale

Paving a global path for international study

University of Regina alumna Larissa Bezo BA'96, MA'02 heads up the Canadian Bureau for International Education, our country's most important agency for attracting international students to Canadian institutions and providing domestic students with worldwide study opportunities.

By Sheldon Gordon

Photos by Gregory Abraszko and courtesy of Larissa Bezo unless otherwise noted.

A few years ago, two graduate students—one from Malawi, the other from South Sudan—arrived in Ottawa for an orientation session en route to the University of Regina's Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy. The young scholars were beneficiaries of the African Leaders of Tomorrow scholarship program administered by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE). They needed support in finding a place to live and getting settled in Regina.

University of Regina alumna Larissa Bezo, president and CEO of CBIE, reached out from Ottawa to her friends in Regina, asking them to meet the incoming Africans at the Regina

airport and help out. Within days, an entire support network was mobilized to greet the new arrivals. "They soon had a home, fully set up through the generous contributions of the Regina community," says Bezo. "This was a living example of Saskatchewan community warmth."

The post-script: both young men thrived as master's of public policy scholars and have since returned to Africa to take on leadership roles in their communities. "The friendships and people-to-people ties between Saskatchewan and Africa remain," says Bezo.

Such personal intervention may not be part of her job description, but it's in keeping with the Ottawa-based non-

profit's role of facilitating both inbound and outbound student movements between Canada and overseas countries.

CBIE's mandate is "promoting Canada's global engagement through education," says Bezo. The organization's 150 members comprise colleges, universities, school boards, educational organizations, government agencies and businesses.

This mission has many different dimensions. Since 1966, CBIE has engaged in capacity-building partnerships in the Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and the Americas. Its areas of expertise include scholarship management, governance, education institutional design and management, and education sector capacity building. Since 2005, CBIE has organized over 80 training courses or study tours across Canada for international delegations of students, faculty, school administrators and foreign government officials.

Advocating for Canadian and international student mobility has become an especially urgent challenge for Bezo and CBIE in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic and closed international borders, which threaten to undo some of the organization's valuable work in promoting Canada as a learning destination.

In the 2010s, Canada had rolled out the welcome mat for international students. Ottawa recognized that they were an increasingly important part of the economy, contributing \$22 billion to Canada's gross domestic product in 2018 through tuition, accommodation and other spending. "As a sector, it's more significant in economic terms than even softwood lumber," says Bezo.

Moreover, international students, far from curbing domestic student enrolment, actually increase it. According to a 2017 study by Kevin Shih in the *Journal of Public Economics*, the higher tuition paid by international students subsidizes additional spaces for domestic students.

From 2010 to 2019, international students in Canada increased by 185 per cent. The total number of international students at all levels of study was nearly 700,000—75 per cent of whom were post-secondary students. (Canada had already surpassed its target of attracting 450,000 international students by 2022.)

With China and India leading the way as source countries, Canada appeared set to attract a million international students over the next decade simply by maintaining its share of that growing market.

In fact, Canada figured to boost its market share, as competing nations such as the U.S. and the U.K. were becoming less attractive destinations. Enrolment of new international students in American universities was already in decline, owing to stricter conditions imposed by the Trump administration. And international student enrolment plateaued in Britain after its government imposed new rules limiting a student's right to work after graduation.

In contrast, Canadian immigration policy was very accepting. Rule changes by both the Harper and Trudeau governments meant international students could work part-time while studying, automatically qualify for a work permit of up to three years upon graduating, and receive preferential status if they apply to become permanent residents. As a result, 40 per cent of all economic-class immigrants accepted by Canada were international students who graduated and wished to stay in this country. Some 60 per cent of all international students surveyed in Canada said they planned to seek permanent resident (PR) status.

Then COVID-19 struck, upending international student enrolment and playing havoc with the planning of education administrators. According to Immigration, Refugees and

U of R political science graduate Larissa Bezo.
(Photo by Gregory Abraszko)

Citizenship Canada data, the number of study visas issued in the first six months of 2020 was down 25 per cent from the same period in pre-COVID-19 2019. This probably understates the overall impact. Only those students with study permits issued by March 18 were eligible to travel to Canada. “We’ve been advocating for a greater opening up beyond that mid-March timeline,” says Bezo. “That’s going to be one of the significant variables in international student mobility going forward.”

The decline in international students, especially new ones, has been a major blow to the universities’ revenues. “Our university has seen its international student population drop from one-third to one-quarter of overall enrolment,” says Robert Summerby-Murray, chair of CBIE’s Board of Directors and president of Saint Mary’s University in Halifax. “Still, the COVID-19 impact has not been as large as we thought it would be because of the ability to keep pressure on the federal government,” he says.

International student enrolment at the University of Regina has experienced a similar decline. Since the onset of the pandemic, UR International, the unit that coordinates international study, has been doing everything in its power to engage both enrolled and prospective international students during COVID-19.

“We are taking many measures to ensure that our international students feel a sense of belonging and connection to the University of Regina,” says Haroon Chaudhry, interim director of UR International.

Among those measures are continual and ongoing communication with students, individual and group advising sessions held over Zoom at unique hours for different time zones, a virtual international peer advisor program, and virtual social engagement activities.

“We are continuously monitoring changes occurring due to COVID-19,” says Chaudhry. “We are constantly adapting our services to the ever-changing needs of international students both inside and outside of Canada. International students’ mental well-being, physical well-being and academic success has always been, and continues to be, the number one priority of UR International.”

The movement to online course delivery has meant that many international students continue to study for Canadian university degrees, albeit from their home countries. Federal immigration policy has been altered, under lobbying by CBIE, to enable those students to apply for a study permit and count the time toward their post-graduate work permit. “Those are changes we have worked so hard on with the federal government to put in place,” says Summerby-Murray.

However, even a short-term shift to online learning by international students has its drawbacks. Canada loses their presence as renters and consumers. Furthermore, international students expressing or studying controversial ideas online are more vulnerable to monitoring and repression by their homeland authorities. “Online learning is wonderful and creates the possibility of a greater pathway into Canada, but with it comes some pretty significant risks as well,” says Bezo.

Despite the pandemic, international students continue to rate Canada very favourably as a learning destination, according to recent surveys. “The intent is still there,” says Bezo. “The issue becomes much more one of execution.” Do they begin their Canadian studies online? Do they defer their studies for a year and then come when it’s safe to do so? “How long a waiting game is this going to be?” she asks. “We’re not likely to recover—in six months—the loss of growth as a



University of Regina Politics and International Studies professor emeritus, Howard Leeson. (Photo by Trevor Hopkin)

learning destination. That’s probably going to take the next three to five years.”

Bezo’s mission is helping to reclaim that depleted cohort. Born in Toronto to a Ukrainian-Canadian family, Bezo (née Lozowchuk) grew up in Regina and is fluent in English, French, Ukrainian and Russian. She completed a bachelor’s and master’s in political science at the U of R, while working in the Saskatchewan civil service. She recalls the U of R’s politics department as having a faculty rich in public sector experience and adept at reconciling academic theory with bureaucratic practice.

One such academic was Howard Leeson, a former provincial deputy minister who co-supervised her master’s program and is still an adjunct professor. “When you have the privilege of taking classes with influential and thoughtful leaders like that, it certainly has an impact,” says Bezo.

Leeson’s admiration for Bezo is equally flattering. “Over the years, I have taught and supervised a large number of students, but Larissa stood out for me in a couple of ways,” he says. “First, she was extremely dedicated and determined. It is difficult enough to do a program without having to work as well. Throughout, she was bright, attentive and always eager to participate. Second, and perhaps I recognize myself in her career, she married the practical and the theoretical as well as anyone that I supervised. I am sure this was because of her work in the public sector, but also because of an intuitive grasp of issues and how to manage them. It was a treat to work with her.”

Bezo’s initiation into the Saskatchewan civil service was a summer student job at Executive Council. “I gained an understanding there of how decisions are made,” she says. She then worked as a researcher for the deputy minister to the Premier’s office and later in the cabinet planning unit.

She devoted 18 months as senior advisor to the federal Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada. The commission, headed by Roy Romanow, recommended sweeping changes to ensure the long-term sustainability of the health care system. “I contributed to the public consultations and helped to shape the report. The Commission was led by Mr. Romanow and the rest of the team played in a highly collaborative and supportive capacity, myself included,” Bezo recalls.



Left: Haroon Chaudhry, interim director of UR International Right: Bezo (back row, third from right) and her CBIE colleagues from Kyiv, Ukraine during a retreat to build the country’s institution of legal aid. The photo was taken on International Vyshyvanka Day (Ukrainian International Embroidery Day). (Photo courtesy of Larissa Bezo)



Michel Amar, who was communications director of the commission, was impressed by Bezo’s poise and tact. “To have someone of her ability to listen carefully, mediate issues and find common ground among all those very smart people with very big egos was absolutely remarkable.”

Bezo then returned to the provincial civil service as deputy clerk. At 29, she was the youngest person ever to hold that position. “My role was making sure the process of decision-making and implementation was working, that the priorities of the day were being addressed,” she says.

She eventually left the civil service to pursue her long-time interest in international development, doing consulting assignments for the Canadian government, the World Bank and the International Center for Policy Studies in Ukraine (she had earlier done a youth internship with the Kyiv think tank.) Later, she returned to spend seven years in Ukraine, during which World Bank projects also took her to the South Caucasus region: Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

“I had always wanted to make a difference, not just at home in Canada, but being able to contribute to my own country’s role globally,” she says. In the early 1990s, Bezo led a Canadian technical assistance project to professionalize Ukraine’s civil service—a challenge in a country trying to shake off the vestiges of the authoritarian Soviet regime. “What that meant was trying to create an actual separation between administrative and political functions and to build up the leadership capacity at the senior bureaucratic level.”

Her consulting work brought her increasingly into the orbit of CBIE (which, over the past 24 years, has delivered 18 projects in Ukraine). When Bezo decided it was time to put down roots, she returned to Canada, going in-house at CBIE as director of international development programs.

Soon she was leading a five-year CBIE project to improve the accessibility of Ukraine’s emerging legal aid services. Bezo launched the project in 2014 by enlisting local lawyers to aid demonstrators arrested during the Maidan Revolution that ousted Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich. Michel Amar, who was then also working for CBIE, says, “Larissa was the

right person at the right time to be working with those folks. It was an incredible legacy that she left that system.”

The legal aid service has since helped over 2 million people in Ukraine, says Bezo.

She did four missions over 12 months to Vietnam, advising its Ministry of Home Affairs on how to professionalize the state’s civil service leadership. She drew on her experience in Ukraine, where many of the senior Vietnamese bureaucrats had done their graduate studies. She was promoted to CBIE vice-president in 2016 and interim president and CEO in 2018, then was confirmed in both posts in early 2019.

The CBIE board has identified four priorities: increasing the profile of the organization, cost containment and revenue generation, an expanded advocacy role—making connections in Ottawa—and bringing greater value to the membership, says Robert Summerby-Murray. “Larissa has really moved each of those forward quite dramatically in 18 months’ time.”

Bezo continues to travel widely for CBIE and has visited 27 countries on the organization’s behalf. “It’s made for a very rich life experience,” she says.

She lives in Ottawa with her husband of 13 years (also from Saskatchewan), her nine-year-old daughter and her seven-year-old son. “My family and I enjoy the beautiful trails and green spaces. We also enjoy venturing into neighbouring communities in the Ottawa Valley to explore local sites, tastes and sounds.”

Saskatchewan is often in her thoughts. She misses her extended family, and the skies, vast open fields and expanses of land. “You just breathe a bit deeper and there’s a skip in your step,” she says. She also misses the province’s “friendly and generous people”, and the sense of community and volunteerism. She will tap into that ethos again to welcome eager students from faraway lands. **D**

Sheldon Gordon is a freelance writer based in Toronto. Originally from Winnipeg, he has worked as a parliamentary reporter for the Toronto Star, an editorial writer for The Globe and Mail, and a producer with CBC-TV. He holds a master’s in International Affairs from Carleton University.

ALUMNI CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



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On July 10, **Hitesh Sharma DIPBA'15** reached the top of the BBC Asian Music Top 40 Chart with *Young Shahrukh*, his hit song that has been viewed more than 5 million times on YouTube. Sharma, who performs under the moniker Teshar, has been releasing music since he was in high school. While attending the U of R, he made the dean's list each semester of his program, received the prestigious Hill-Ivey Scholarship, and subsequently completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario's Ivey Business School. Drawing inspiration from the traditional Indian music he grew up on, Sharma has built a worldwide online following with his unique fusion of genres such as Bollywood, bhangra, and western pop and hip hop.

D How did you first get involved in music?

It was always around the house when I was growing up. My dad bought a PC when I was in kindergarten and by the first grade, I was using the Sound Recorder application on Windows 98 to speed up and slow down songs. I guess you could call those my first remixes!

D How would you describe your musical philosophy?

Everything is centred around energy for me. It doesn't matter how complex or simple a song is, or what it's about, it has to transport you somewhere and give you some sort of euphoric feeling. I really want my audience to have a unique experience when they hear my music, and so I try my best to work towards that goal.

D Why combine traditional Indian music and rap?

Fusing genres can lead to amazing new sounds and it attracts a wider demographic of people to the music. As for why I do it—I see it as the most accurate way to reflect who I am through music. Growing up in an Indian household while listening to hip hop directly influenced my sound and musical tastes.

D To what extent has your social media savviness played in your success?

Social media has been an extremely significant tool that I've used since day one. Leveraging social media to its full extent can push your music to millions of people from the comfort of your bedroom for free. It can level the playing field between an amateur musician and a major label artist. Social media is key.

D What was the best aspect of your experience at the U of R?

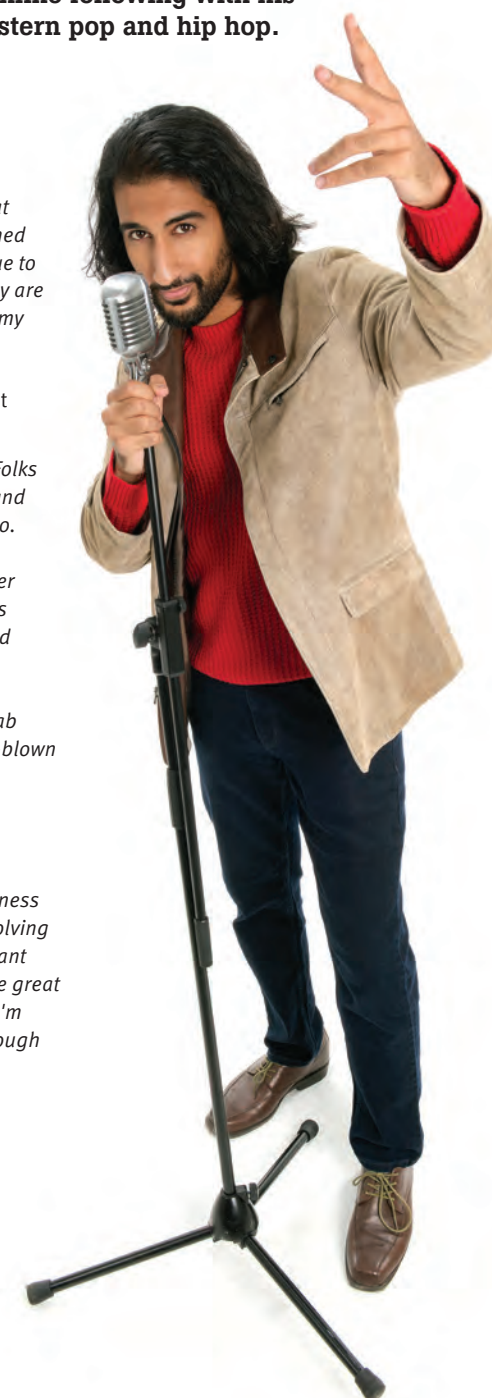
The people! The friendships and connections I made during my time at the University of Regina have sustained over time and I'm sure they'll continue to last. Some of my closest friends today are people that I grew close with during my time at the U of R.

D What are the things you miss most about Regina living in Toronto?

Again, it's undoubtedly the people. Folks from Regina are just built different, and I'm proud to rep the city wherever I go. A close second, however, would be the pizza. Regina-style pizza—whether it's Western or Trifon's or Houston—is unbelievably good and an underrated highlight of the city. Any time I've had visitors from out-of-town ask for suggestions, I always tell them to grab some pizza and they're always mind-blown at how good it is!

D Where do you envision yourself in ten years?

In music for sure, but I know my business side won't let me stay away from involving myself in other exciting ventures. I want to push the culture forward and make great art and experiences for people, and I'm confident I'll find ways to do that through music, business and everything in between.



Crumchiving Numbers



Seattle-based Max Schmeiser BA(Hons)'03 is head of data science for the social media giant Twitter.

In a crucial role at Twitter, economist Max Schmeiser BA(Hons)'03 is an evangelist for the power of data.

By Haley Shapley

Photos by Joshua Huston.

Max Schmeiser has always been in a hurry. From zipping across hockey rinks in his youth, to racing through his education at the University of Regina, he is always chasing his goals.

Growing up in Regina, he was a serious kid who knew exactly what he wanted to be—an economics professor. It was, after all, the perfect melding of his parents' occupations: an agricultural economist (his dad) and a schoolteacher (his mom). He sped through his undergraduate career at the University of Regina in three years, not because he wasn't enjoying what he was learning, but because he only knows one speed—fast.

Multiple degrees followed—a Master of Arts in Economics from McMaster University, and both a Master of Science and PhD in Policy Analysis and Management from Cornell University—and just like that, he realized his dream. Schmeiser became an assistant professor in the Department of Consumer Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, teaching classes on topics such as family economics and risk management.

He was still in his 20s and had accomplished everything he set out to do. Young Max was right: being a professor was a wonderful job. But it turned out there were other careers beyond the dreams of even the most ambitious child interested in economics. Little did he know back then, as a kid running around the wide-open spaces of Saskatchewan, that he would one day live in a much hillier city, playing an instrumental role in the success of one of the world's biggest social media platforms.

Long before Schmeiser became the head of data science for Twitter, he was a student at the University of Regina, taking every economics class he could pack into his schedule. "It was a small program, and I appreciate the connection I had with the professors," he says. "I had the good fortune to get a research assistantship position with Dr. Marion Jones, and I got to be a teaching assistant as well while I was there, which really helped set me up for grad school."

From the beginning, he knew his long-planned major was the perfect fit. Even behind a mask—the default accessory these days in Schmeiser's current home base, Seattle—his face lights up when he talks about economics. He finds it offers a way to view the world, a lens that filters out the chaos and puts the spotlight squarely on the facts. Schmeiser loves how it explains so much about our lives, from how many children we have to whom we choose to date. "Everything just made sense to me as I took the economics courses, and I knew this was the right field for me," he says.

Schmeiser became a professor just before the global financial crisis wiped out many of the jobs in academia. Still, budget cuts



According to recent statistics, Twitter, the company that U of R graduate Max Schmeiser works for, has about 1.3 billion account holders and 330 million monthly active users.

were leaving holes at the university where he was teaching. When a colleague let him know about an opening at the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C., Schmeiser was ready to leap at the offer. There, he could continue his research on financial literacy, mortgage defaults and foreclosure, now adding a regulatory component to the mix.

As a principal economist in the Microeconomic Surveys section and a senior economist in the Consumer Research section, he worked on consumer and housing finance research and regulation. He was responsible for launching two recurring surveys on consumer financial well-being: one on mobile financial services, the other on household economics and decision-making.

Although it's not a transition he anticipated making, he thrived in an environment where everything he did had practical applications for people's daily lives.

"I like seeing a direct impact, and that was slower to do as a professor," he says. "You would get government contracts or do consulting work or do research that would eventually get picked up and inform policy, but there were several steps in between. This was getting a little closer to having a direct impact on the world in the sense that I was creating regulations and my research got more prominence."

Five years later, Schmeiser's next career move to the Seattle-based behemoth, Amazon, continued that trajectory of making a difference—and fast. "At the Federal Reserve, I could affect Americans through policies I helped to inform, but at Amazon I could make changes and the next day be affecting hundreds of millions of customers or hundreds of thousands of businesses, so the scale and the immediacy of the impact I really appreciated," he says.

At Amazon, he found a great fit with the culture, which emphasizes data-driven decision-making, impact-oriented solutions, and making reversible decisions quickly and irreversible decisions with considerable thought (and knowing how to distinguish the two). "I can't imagine there's anywhere you'll learn as much in a short period of time as you will at Amazon," he says.

After holding multiple data science leadership roles there, including head of research, analytics and machine learning in Amazon Connections and chief economist and head of

data science for Amazon Lending, Schmeiser joined trucking logistics startup Convoy just as it was primed for rapid growth after a Series C fundraising round. He'd always wanted to work at a startup, and he relished the challenge to not only leverage data science to optimize the freight industry, but to have a hand in creating the company culture and structuring teams. In the nearly two years he spent at Convoy, he grew the data science group from eight employees to more than 80. In working at one of the fastest-growing startups in the U.S., with the chance to inform product direction and strategy, Schmeiser had every box ticked on his job wish list.

Then, Twitter came calling in early 2020. Schmeiser thought about the potential impact he could have, particularly during an election year and in the COVID-19 era, and felt it was too good of an opportunity to pass up. With more than 300 million active users, Twitter is a worldwide watercooler for the exchange of ideas and information. As entrepreneur and author Charlene Li put it, "Twitter is not a technology. It's a conversation. And it's happening with or without you."

Schmeiser wanted it to happen with him. Of course, starting a new job during a pandemic is not without its challenges. He's only virtually met the 60 members of the team he manages, and the transition to a new company was somewhat anticlimactic in comparison to pre-coronavirus days. "I just exchanged laptops and different people showed up on my screen," he says, laughing.

The work he gets to do, though, is exactly what he hoped. As head of data science, Schmeiser leads a team that performs analyses and runs experiments to better understand the impact of product launches on the public conversation happening on Twitter. They use a full set of tools under the data science umbrella to accomplish their goals, from developing metrics and success measurements to A/B testing and offline evaluation to prototyping and forecasting.

While data remains at the heart of what Schmeiser does, many of his responsibilities involve managing more than numbers. As he's progressed in his career, he now has people to manage too. "Maybe this comes from where I grew up, but I really care about my team members individually and their well-being," he says. "I'm looking out for them, I care for them, I want to support them, and I have their best interests at heart. People don't necessarily always get that sense from their bosses and their boss's bosses."

He also finds ways to bolster people beyond just those he works with directly. In January 2020, he began volunteering with Co.Labs as a mentor for early-stage tech startup founders in Saskatchewan. Given the challenges that the province's economy has been facing the past several years, he felt his experience and insights could be of help in fostering a robust tech community and assisting companies as they scale their data science teams.

Although Schmeiser isn't sure whether he'll one day move back to his hometown—that would depend on the needs and desires of his family, including wife Maria and their 3-year-old daughter and 1-year-old son—he does fondly remember the big sky, the never-ending horizon, and the summer sun that stretched long into the night. Scraping the windshield in 30°C temperatures is something he admits he's forgotten how to properly gear up for.

In gratitude for the strong foundation he received as a student at the University of Regina, he recently created a scholarship for the domestic student with the highest GPA in the Honours program within the Department of Economics.

He hopes others will get just as much out of the degree as he has. "A degree in economics is a wonderful basis for a whole range of careers," he says. "It offers a good framework for thinking about the world and business and policies. This is why you see economists everywhere, in government, academia, tech and consulting roles. It's a wonderful education to help you be very effective in a number of circumstances."

Even though a future career at Twitter certainly wasn't on Schmeiser's mind as an undergrad—the social network was still a twinkle in the founders' eyes back then—the beauty of studying economics is that it can be applied to a wide range of situations. "Once you have those basic tools and know how to think through business problems, it doesn't matter what the business problem is," he says. "The tools are the same; it's just a matter of changing what you're analyzing."

The frenzied pace that Schmeiser favored in his youth may have slowed a bit, but that laser focus on efficiency is still there. "When it comes to work, I have a sense of wanting to get things done quickly, while balancing speed with appropriate levels of rigour, and wanting to see accomplishment and progress relatively quickly," he says.

To do that, Schmeiser is decisive in his choices. That doesn't mean he isn't willing to reverse course if the data supports it, but he has a good sense for what he wants to do and how he wants to do it.

For someone who had his life mapped out when he first stepped onto the University of Regina campus, he's amazed that once his vision was fulfilled, another one came along to supplement it. He is a textbook case of loving what you do and doing it well. When you excel, others can't help but notice, and that will always open doors. "It's surprising that a lot of what I've done is in no way directed," he says. "Whatever I'm doing at

the time, I do the best I possibly can at it. I'm never looking for the next thing; it just seems to happen and make sense."

Tech, as it turns out, is an ideal fit. It's just as hurried as Schmeiser tends to be, with real-world results that fulfill his overarching career mission: to have a positive impact on the greatest number of people possible. Plus, he gets to geek out all day long on those things he loves the most, including ensuring that every decision is informed by accurate data and rigorous empirical analysis, separating out correlation from causation, and using statistical and empirical techniques to solve business problems. He brings this same approach to his personal life. He jokes that he annoys his wife by talking about opportunity cost, allocating resources to their most efficient use and time value, like when he points out the time she spends returning something costs her X dollars in time, and is ultimately not worth it.

The only downside to working in tech is that it doesn't leave much time for Schmeiser's first love, teaching, but he plans to return to the classroom one day. There, he will continue sparking that same joy in others that he first felt when he realized he can use economics to answer so many questions that apply to the real world, such as figuring out what incentives people respond to or pinpointing when someone will get married.

Maybe you can't hurry love, but as Schmeiser knows well, you absolutely can hurry the statistical analysis that predicts it—and that carries an excitement, maybe even a romantic notion, all of its own. **D**

Haley Shapley is a Seattle-based freelance writer and the author of Strong Like Her: A Celebration of Rule Breakers, History Makers, and Unstoppable Athletes.



Max Schmeiser photographed near Seattle's Pacific Science Center. Its trademark arches can be seen in the background. The Center was designed by Minoru Yamasaki, who also designed the Dr. John Archer Library, Classroom Building, and Laboratory Building, and was the architect of New York's World Trade Center.

ALUMNI CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



Rosalie Tsannie-Burseth
MEd'01

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Achievement Award

For her 30 years of leadership
in education and her resolute
advocacy for Indigenous
language and culture.

For the full story on this amazing alumnus,
visit www.degreesmagazine.ca



Nevan J. Krogan BSc'97, MSc'99 is a man on a mission. Not only is the molecular biologist a professor in the Department of Cellular and Molecular Pharmacology at the University of California, San Francisco, he's also a senior investigator at the Gladstone Institutes, the director of the HARC Center and the director of the Quantitative Biosciences Institute (QBI). The research focus at QBI is to understand the mysteries of diseases like COVID-19 and HIV at the molecular, cellular and biomedical levels with a view to finding innovative treatments. Krogan also supports scientific scholarship in other ways. He has established two student awards: the Jack and June Krogan Women in Science Scholarship (named for his parents) and the Alec and Joelle Fabius Award, which generously supports Haitian students wishing to study at the U of R.

D In layperson's terms, how would you describe your research?

In my lab, we build what I call disease-agnostic maps of the cell. That teaches us the fundamental biology of cells and also allows us to study many different diseases that change the human cell through mutations or due to an infection (for example with the coronavirus). Cell maps ultimately help us find new ways to treat diseases and develop new drugs.

D What attracted you to science in the first place?

I remember very vividly watching Frankenstein. Seeing a scientist at work turned out to have a huge influence on me—the freedom to pursue research, explore your curiosity, dive deeply into a question that interests you and work hard on this question until it's solved fascinated and enticed me to become a scientist myself!

D How would you characterize the time you spent at the University of Regina?

I loved it! It's the place where I started my research career. I will never forget the great mentors I had, who taught me how to do great science.

D What do you miss most about Regina?

The people and their generosity—not that people in San Francisco aren't nice and generous. One thing I don't miss about Regina is the weather. But then there is hockey. And Canadian beer—my favourite is Molson Dry!

D Are we on the cusp of an effective COVID-19 vaccine?

I am very hopeful that we will have a number of good options for treatments and vaccines by 2021, thanks to the joint efforts of so many great minds. The speed of discovery has been so incredibly fast. Just take the work of the QBI Coronavirus Research Group that I lead—we were able to complete studies that usually take us years in a matter of months.

D During the course of your career (15 years), how far has science progressed as far as cellular and molecular pharmacology goes?

It's mind-boggling how many advances have been made during this time, and how many opportunities this has opened up.

D What is your motivation to support women in science?

My family instilled the value and importance of equality in me. I grew up in a big family of five, with three older sisters, and my parents always supported all of our education equally. My dad taught me that girls can do anything boys can, and I saw it every day in learning from my older sisters and my mom.

D Are you confident that we will someday have such a complete understanding of our cellular makeup that we will have the ability to cure such diseases as cancer and Parkinson's?

Yes. As a scientist, I am an optimist—it's the possibility of positive change that drives me. Especially now that we see how fast science can and does move when we collaborate and explore new ways to approach our world's problems, I believe anything is possible.

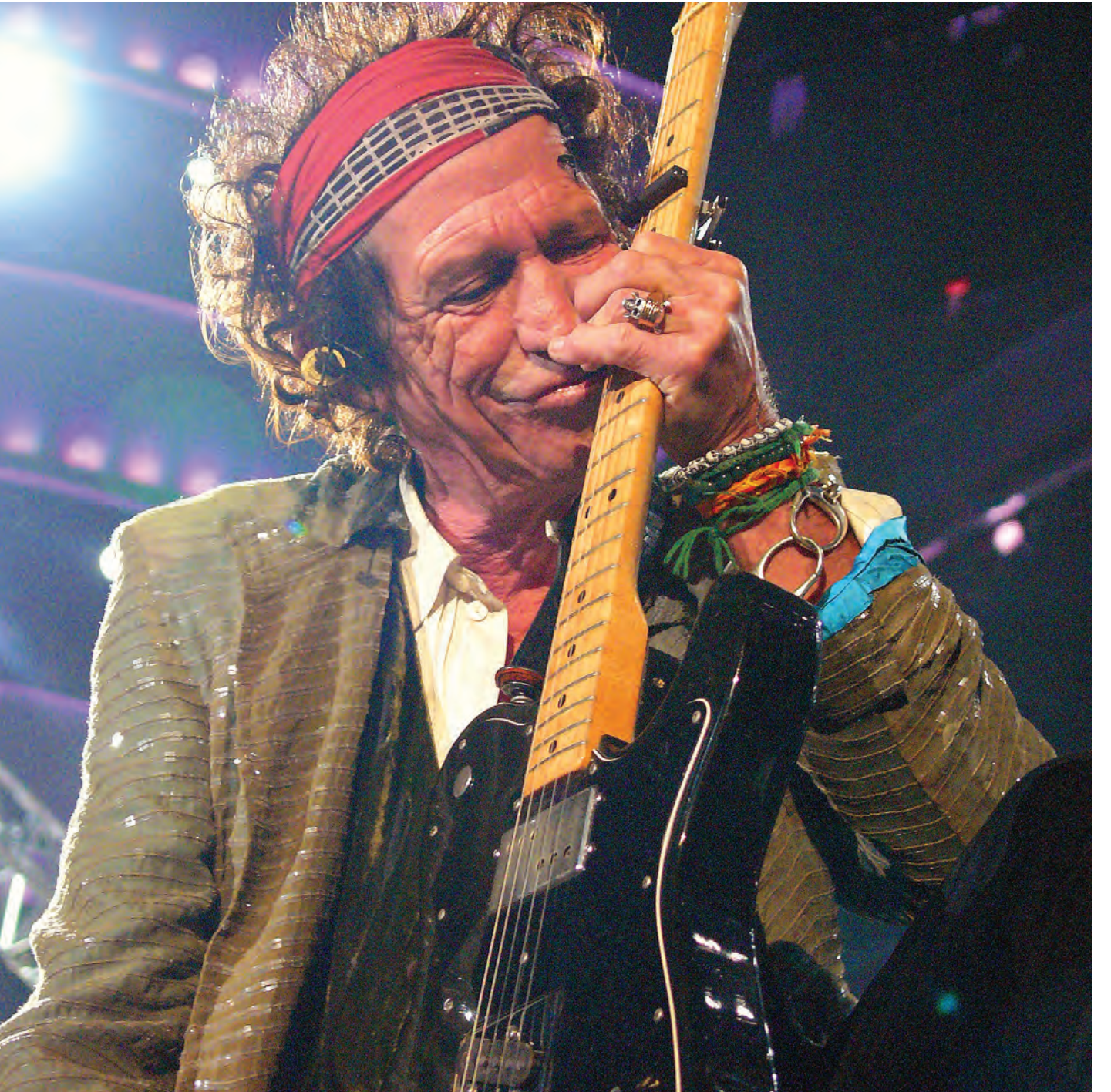




Mark Taylor BA'00, BJ'04 has put his University of Regina degrees to good use over the past 20 years as a reporter, photojournalist and educator. Since July 2019, Taylor has served as the department head at the School of Journalism. He also serves as the school's internship coordinator, social media editor, design director of The Crow magazine, and print lab instructor.

Above: Darian Durant waves to the crowd after the last ever CFL game at Mosaic Stadium (and what turned out to be Durant's last game as a Saskatchewan Roughrider). Five generations of my family watched sporting events in that stadium. My first job was selling peanuts and popcorn there. During games, I remember watching the photographers, not the players, and thinking that's what I want to do. And that's what I ended up doing, mostly for The Canadian Press, who I've covered Rider games for since 2010. It was an emotional farewell for many in attendance that night. I like to think this photo sums up the attachment many of us had to the place.

Right: Richard Wolfe sits at his kitchen table in Fort Qu'Appelle, Sask. Wolfe and his late brother Daniel (in picture) founded the Indian Posse street gang. Daniel was murdered in a prison brawl in 2010. This was shot on assignment for The Globe and Mail in 2011 shortly after Richard completed a 15-year sentence for attempted murder. He told me all about it – how he chased a guy down a street and shot him over an unpaid debt. I also remember when I arrived at Richard's house, a serviceman was installing a security system. Richard told me young gangsters could really make a name for themselves by killing him. Richard ended up going back to jail, where in his lifetime he spent a total of 640 days in solitary confinement. He died in the Prince Albert Penitentiary in 2016 at the age of 40.



Above: Keith Richards takes the stage for the first of two sold-out Rolling Stones concerts in Regina in October, 2006. I'm a huge Stones fan so when the shows were announced I immediately began inquiring about a press pass. Turns out the greatest rock and roll band on earth doesn't need the Moose Jaw Times-Herald (where I was working at the time) for publicity. But I kept calling and after a few weeks, the promoter got back and said, "If I get you a press pass, will you stop calling me?" Deal. Before the show, everyone with a press pass had to gather in a special area behind the stage. When the lights finally dimmed, we were escorted out towards our spots. Seeing our silhouettes approaching the stage, the crowd briefly thought we were the Stones and let out a massive roar. Keith himself has said that feeling is better than any drug he's ever tried. Getting to experience that feeling myself, if only for a second, and this moment when Keith came so close I could smell him, has been the highlight of my career so far.



Above: Ralph Crawford works his way down an aisle in his bookshop in Perdue, Sask., population 334. I've always loved driving Saskatchewan's back roads and finding places like this. Exploring Saskatchewan is even more enjoyable when a magazine is picking up the tab, which Macleans did for this week-long assignment in 2018 for a story about rural Canada.



Above: Second Lieutenant Leah Scott climbs into the cockpit of a Harvard aircraft before a flight at 15 Wing Moose Jaw. Shot for The Globe and Mail in December 2006, this was my first ever freelance assignment. I remember being so nervous about screwing up not just my big break but an important story. At the time, many women (including Scott) were being rejected by the Canadian air force because of outdated admission standards dating back to the 1960s. Research that reassessed those standards gave Scott a second chance and she and five other women were accepted. My goal is always to recognize and capture significant moments. I like to think I did that here.



Left: My eldest son was diagnosed with autism in 2011. So when the provincial government announced in 2012 it was closing Valley View Centre, an aging institution near Moose Jaw for people with intellectual disabilities, I decided to document Scott Lister's final days there. Lister, left, is non-verbal and was one of the first people to move into Valley View when it opened in 1955. Here he is 62 years later on the day he moved out, thanking his sister as he settles into his new room in downtown Moose Jaw. I like this photo because it shows that people like Scott, and people like my son, know more than many give them credit for.

A portrait of Salmaan Moolla, a man with a beard and dark hair, smiling. He is wearing a blue t-shirt with the 'fifO' logo and a dark blue blazer. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with trees and a building.

The changemaker

Salmaan Moolla has already made an important difference in the community by spearheading the push to get financial literacy curriculum into Saskatchewan high school classrooms. Now, as the fifth-year business student and the company he runs with other U of R students and alumni prepare to expand their influence, there's only one question that comes to mind. Just how bright is his future?

By Elsa Johnston

Photos by Trevor Hopkin, University Photography and courtesy of Salmaan Moolla unless otherwise noted.

Fifth-year business student and entrepreneur Salmaan Moolla.

Salmaan Moolla is a changemaker who, over the past seven years, has worked steadily and passionately toward his goal of empowering people—high school students and adults alike—with the knowledge and tools they need to lead financially healthy lives.

Currently a fifth-year student in the University of Regina's Hill and Levene Schools of Business, Sal—as he is commonly known—has already dedicated years as a high school student, university student and young entrepreneur to understanding and learning how to bring together his two biggest passions in life: financial literacy and socially conscious business.

“Personal finance is one of the most stressful things in a person's life,” says Moolla. “I want to make financial literacy accessible for everyone, whether you live in Regina, Toronto or Vancouver, or in a small town like Yorkton or on a First Nation. I want to give people the ability to build a stronger financial outlook for their lives.”

Step by step with each initiative he has undertaken—from helping to develop curriculum for high school financial literacy classes across Saskatchewan to creating digital financial education tools and now innovating financial technology applications to improve Canadians' ability to make sound financial decisions—Moolla has been laying a solid foundation for his concept of finding business solutions to meet community needs.

“There's never been an easier time for a person to learn about financial literacy,” explains Moolla, whose student-led financial technology or fintech company, FiFo Technologies, is an emerging leader in Western Canada.

FiFo is developing personal financial management software that financial institutions can offer to their customers in order to help them understand their finances in a wholistic manner—from budgeting, investing and goal setting to understanding what investment and saving strategies best suit their individual needs.

“We want to give the confidence and power back to the

individual so that when they go to speak with a financial advisor, they will know what they want,” Moolla adds. “It's a whole new way for people to interact and engage with their banks. A lack of financial education is affecting banks negatively with soured loans, but if you can educate the customers, you'll see a stronger customer-bank relationship and the positive effects of a financially stable consumer bringing more money into a financial institution. It's a win-win for everyone if you just put people first.”

In October, Moolla and his colleagues at FiFo, who are all students and alumni from the University of Regina, were accepted into one of Canada's leading fintech accelerator programs, Cooperathon, run by Desjardins.

“Only the top 30 fintech startups in the country are accepted into the program,” explains Moolla. “One of the 12 challenges they are running this fall focuses on how companies can help Canadians become more financially literate. It was the perfect thing for our concept and idea.”

FiFo is the first Saskatchewan company to ever apply and make it into the accelerator program. Accelerator programs like the Cooperathon provide young startup companies with an immersive, hands-on experience in a short timeframe to develop their business concepts with the support of industry experts and specialized training. FiFo is also the only company competing from the Prairies.

“I am so happy for Sal and the FiFo team for all the success they're having,” says Eric Dillon, CEO of Conexus and a long-time mentor to Moolla. “To have Sal be recognized by a financial cooperative like Desjardins as being one of the top 30 most promising fintechs—and the only one that's been accepted into their program ever from Saskatchewan—obviously confirms that his idea has merit and he's onto something.”

The importance of support from industry experts, academics, and private and public companies cannot be overstated. Their role in providing mentorship, time, money and expertise helps students with ambition and dreams achieve their goals and make a positive impact on their local, national and global communities.

For students like Moolla, being able to develop strong connections with and gain support from business and community leaders, such as Dillon, can make a huge impact on their ability to realize their career and personal goals.

At the annual Achieving Business Excellence (ABEX) Awards in Saskatchewan, Conexus and the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce regularly host members of the Saskatchewan Business Teachers' Association and their high school students studying business. Moolla was one of the students from Campbell Collegiate chosen to attend in 2013, and he vividly recalls his first meeting with Eric Dillon.

“I was just talking with Eric about my idea to bring financial literacy into the high school curriculum in Saskatchewan, and he challenged me to do something to address financial literacy,” Moolla reminisces.

“Financial literacy is a real challenge in Saskatchewan and across Canada,” says Dillon. “I told Sal, the best businesses are created when there are real life experiences that are solved with startup magic. You're onto a real, lived problem. If you can find a way to solve that, it would be very powerful.”

As a high school student at the time, Moolla was already prominently involved in the Business Club at Campbell Collegiate, and was named as one of CBC's Future 40 young leaders for his youth leadership and community involvement. In his role as an executive member of the Campbell Business



Above: Moolla poses with his FiFo teammates. (left to right) Preet Morning Pancholi BSc18, MSc'20, Talha Babar, Robyn Ham BAdmin'20, Moolla, Jana Ham BAdmin'20, and Shez Ratnani. (Photo courtesy of Salmaan Moolla)

Club, Moolla learned first-hand the importance of networking with members of the local business community and developed an understanding of the business climate in the province. He also had the chance to participate as a self-described guinea pig in his school's locally-developed pilot program on financial literacy in Grade 12.

"The minute you graduate from high school, financial independence becomes a core concept in your life that you're never really taught in your high school setting, such as budgeting, student loans, and good and bad credit," says Moolla.

Dillon's challenge to improve financial literacy for individuals always hovered in the back of Moolla's mind after he entered the Hill and Levene Schools of Business at the University of Regina in 2014. New opportunities to become involved in University clubs, such as the Hill Business Students' Society and Enactus Regina, an entrepreneurship and social innovation student club, as well as engagement with key professors at the University, helped him to push the concept of financial literacy from a focus on creating educational programming to financial technology applications.

During the first several years of his university experience, Moolla volunteered countless hours to support the development of financial literacy programs for both individuals and high school students. In partnership with the Regina Open Door

Society and with the support of his personal finance course with professor Jim McKenzie, Moolla and his fellow students applied their university education to developing and teaching a financial literacy course for new Canadians.

"The participants were from countries such as Syria, Ethiopia, Somalia, Pakistan and India, and many were used to a cash system," explains Moolla. "They didn't understand digital financial systems. We helped them transition to their Canadian lifestyle and to educate them, because they were being targeted by scams and providers of high-interest loans and credit cards."

Inspired by this experience, Moolla participated in developing and bringing financial literacy programming to local high school students. The success of that initiative was the impetus for the provincial government to incorporate financial literacy programming in all high school curricula. Students and teachers are seeing the benefits.

"Learning the skills necessary to be financially literate before I navigate the post-high school world allows me to be proactive and confident about my financial decisions," says Sarah Weimer, a Grade 12 student at Campbell Collegiate. She took Financial Literacy 30 last year. "Having an understanding of fundamental topics such as credit and budgeting will be key as I soon begin to build my credit history. I may even think twice before buying an expensive coffee!"

For Jill Labas, who has been teaching business at Campbell Collegiate for four years now and is a close friend of Moolla's, the mentorship role that high school graduates like Moolla can play for students is invaluable.

"People like Sal are leading by example and they help our students set their own goals," says Labas. She has watched Moolla's ideas for addressing the problem of financial illiteracy develop and change over the years. "Sal's a local guy creating his own fintech company, and it's a huge asset to students when he shares his time and insight about being an entrepreneur and what you need to know about money to develop a business."

Being a mentor to students is important to him.

"Not in the sense of telling them what they should be doing, but I try to encourage an open mindset," says Moolla, who is extremely grateful for all the mentorship and support he is receiving on his journey as a social business entrepreneur. "I'm always down for a coffee."

As a student himself, Moolla has taken the financial literacy projects he has created in university and tested them out in competition after competition. He tirelessly pitches his and his teammates' ideas to peers and industry experts to revise, build upon, and evolve their solutions and business concepts for advancing financial literacy and now financial technology.

"Sal has certainly successfully applied business-related content from inside the classroom to build his financial literacy acumen and aid his startup journey," says Lisa Watson, Enactus Regina faculty advisor and associate dean (Research and Graduate Programs) in the Hill and Levene Schools of Business. "In the Hill and Levene Schools, we really focus on helping our students to grow personally and in business, and develop their peer networks. The relationships that he has built with professors, business community members and fellow students through the University, and his involvement in experiential learning activities we offer outside of the classroom, have really taken him to the next level."

Moolla's involvement in the Enactus club at the University of Regina is one example. Over the years, his teams have won several regional and national competitions with their financial literacy projects. He has also participated in key business development incubators, such as Cultivator in Saskatchewan. These hands-on activities have been key to the successful transition of his business concepts for financial literacy.

"It's easy to look at founders like Skip the Dishes," says Dillon. "Yes, some founders get rich, but what people don't see are the founders like Sal who have been at this for years and are deeply committed to making the world a better place through their business. They have to grind it out over long hours with lots of setbacks, pivots and speed bumps."

The idea of experiencing setbacks doesn't phase Moolla; rather, it motivates him to alter his course and continue on.

"I want to be a part of growing financial literacy," he says. "I know failures will come along—you even want failures to come along—but it's how you adapt to those failures and grow from them that makes something a success."

Ultimately, Moolla plans to use his financial successes to support social benefit.

"Someday, I want to be able to utilize revenue generated from our company to fund an education-specific aspect of FiFo that would then provide this technology to schools throughout the province for free," stresses Moolla. "High school students could utilize our fintech applications to the max and continue to apply them as they make financial decisions as adults."

"I applaud Sal and his cofounders for their continued level of enthusiasm and commitment," says Dillon. "They know financial literacy is a big problem, and they're working their butts off to help solve it and make the world a better place—what's more noble than that?" 📌

Elsa Johnston is a communications strategist at the University of Regina, with a passion for storytelling. She enjoys delving into the complexities of science and learning something new every day.



Left: Eric Dillon, CEO of Conexus has been a long-time mentor and supporter of Moolla. (Photo courtesy of Conexus) Centre: Lisa Watson, Enactus Regina faculty advisor and associate dean (Research and Graduate Studies in the Hill and Levene Schools of Business). Right: Jill Labas BAdmin'01, BEd'05 has been teaching business at Regina's Campbell Collegiate for four years and is a close friend of Moolla's. (Photo courtesy of Jill Labas)

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Celebrating a diamond jubilee

In 1945, returning veterans at the end of World War II caused enrolment to almost double at the University of Saskatchewan. As a junior college, the U of S Regina Campus began offering first-year engineering courses to help alleviate overcrowding at the northern institution. This year marks the 75th anniversary of what is now known as the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science.

By Bill Armstrong

Photos by Trevor Hopkin, University of Regina Photography and courtesy of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science unless otherwise noted.

An uncanny quiet descended over the globe in mid-March of this year, as governments and public health agencies everywhere issued stay-at-home orders in response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Activities on the usually bustling campus of the University of Regina came to an abrupt halt, disrupting the familiar rhythms of the school year. The sudden and unexpected end to in-person classes and the transition to online course delivery came as the U of R's Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science was marking its 75th anniversary.

"Within a week everything changed," is how Nicole Rodgers, a fourth-year Environmental Systems Engineering student and president of the Regina Engineering Students' Society (RESS), sums it up. The story of the lockdown and the ensuing transition to online learning will become another memorable milestone in the history of the engineering program in Regina at some future date. In the immediate aftermath of the lockdown, however, the focus for students and academic staff members was on adapting to teaching and learning in

new ways. Rodgers and her fellow students shared many uncertainties: how courses and labs would be delivered; how assignments would be completed; and the status of the classes they were currently completing. "I was wondering what all of that would look like," she says.

Esam Hussein, dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, faced those same questions. He and fellow faculty members held a series of online meetings to discuss how to adjust best practices in teaching, assessing, examining and monitoring attendance using platforms like Zoom. The Faculty's Academic Assembly, now conducted online, regularly discusses methods of course delivery and lab work. "We learned how better to prepare exams and quizzes, and how to design projects for our students," Hussein notes.

After organizing a quick pivot to online course delivery, David deMontigny BSc'96, MASC'98, PhD'04, the associate dean (Academic), led an online town hall with students to explain how their courses would be delivered and to answer their questions.

One of the immediate decisions he had to make, Hussein explains, was either to cancel Project Day—an important event for fourth-year students, and their family and friends—or offer it in a modified form. Project Day is usually a one-day public event where students present their final-year design projects, known as capstone projects, in concurrent sessions. Hussein decided to cancel the face-to-face event and asked each of the five program chairs to devise a way to hold Project Day at a program level. This year, student presentations were hosted online and spread over several days, with practicing engineers helping evaluate the projects. "The program chairs handled it very well," Hussein says. "We will likely handle Project Day that way until it is safe to return to face-to-face."

One of the questions faced by people everywhere, of course, is what happens when you don't have that face-to-face interaction with people outside your immediate circle? The Faculty is doing whatever it can to build community by encouraging meaningful interactions between students and staff, and among students, Hussein says. Rodgers admits she misses being around her classmates and having informal chats with her professors after class. As RESS president, she has led the efforts to move events online to promote the social aspect

of university life. "It is important, especially for first-year students, to make those connections," she says.

Despite the pandemic, the Regina Engineering Students' Society continued to organize activities, including the September Engineering 1-4 event, where practicing engineers provided students with information about their work experiences and advice on job hunting.

The pandemic is by far the greatest challenge the Faculty has faced in its history, but certainly not the only one. Growing up in the shadow of the larger program in Saskatoon, the U of R Engineering program has had to work hard to build its own identity. The U of R traces its origins to Regina College, which was established in 1911 as a residential high school. In 1934, Regina College affiliated with the U of S and was renamed University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus. It was in this role as a junior college that it began offering first-year engineering courses in 1945-46 to help alleviate overcrowding at the University of Saskatchewan. The influx of returning veterans at the end of World War II had caused enrolment to double almost overnight. Under this arrangement, students in Regina still had to move to Saskatoon to complete their degree from the University of Saskatchewan.

The next major advance occurred in 1966, when Regina Campus began offering second-year courses under the aegis of the newly-created College of Engineering (re-named later as the Faculty of Engineering). Included with this move was a promise that third and fourth-year courses would be added at some indeterminate future date when an engineering building was built. At the time, classes were held on what is now the College Avenue Campus, which consisted of the original College Building and a few other buildings added later.

Harald Berwald began working in what was called the Science Building on the original campus in 1971. He was a tool and die maker, responsible for designing, building and creating devices or apparatus needed by professors, researchers or lab instructors to explain concepts or develop projects. The shop was so under-equipped at first that Berwald brought his own tools from home. He retired 43 years later, having witnessed decades of changes in the Faculty and the University. "It was interesting work with interesting people," Berwald says, "although sometimes what I had to work with—literally—was a sketch on a napkin."



Opposite page: A 1950 photo from one of the early drafting classes that was offered in a forerunner to the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science at the University of Regina. Left: Nicole Rodgers, a fourth-year Environmental Systems Engineering student and president of the Regina Engineering Students' Society. Right: Dean Esam Hussein the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science.



Above: Alumna like Margaret Anne Hodges (left) and Engineering and Applied Science faculty member Denise Stilling (right) are just two of the individuals who are leading the charge to get more women to enrol in engineering. Here, the pair present Lois Arokoyo with a 30 by 30 APEGS Award for Women in Engineering certificate for academic achievement. The 30 by 30 initiative was launched by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan with an aim to increase the percentage of newly licensed women engineers to 30 per cent by 2030.

Elevating the status of the engineering school, even though only the first two years were offered in Regina, raised questions on the sensitive subject of having two engineering programs in one small province. The principal of Regina Campus, William Riddell, addressed the question by stating that the fields of specialization offered in Regina would complement—not duplicate—the programs offered in Saskatoon. In 1969, the first dean of the newly-created Faculty, John Mantle, and his colleague Cameron Blachford, further differentiated the program by founding a co-op program, where engineering students would spend one semester doing practical work in the engineering field for every two semesters spent in the classroom. Regina was among the first schools in North America to implement such a program, and the first in Western Canada. It has been an unqualified success.

Art Opseth, who began his distinguished teaching career in 1974 and served as the co-op coordinator for engineering

students, says he could tell which students had completed a work term. “They had a more realistic view of their studies and they tended to do better in the classroom,” he observes. Simi Falaye BASc’18, who received his degree in Software Systems Engineering in 2018 and participated in four work terms, credits the co-op program for improving his confidence in preparing for job interviews, practising his technical skills and interacting with other professionals.

The program (now called the Co-operative Education and Internships program) has evolved to become a stand-alone program available to U of R students in many faculties. The annual Mantle-Blachford Award, created to honour the co-founders, provides a scholarship to the co-operative education student of the year.

Despite the moves made to establish a distinctive program, the program suffered a setback in the 1970s. Instead of advancing toward offering four years of courses, cutbacks

in provincial funding cast doubts on the program’s very existence for a while. One consultant recommended it be shut down, but the Board of Governors rejected that idea. Another study recommended that Regina specialize in industrial and electronic systems engineering. Opseth, who currently sits on the University’s Board of Governors, strongly believed that the program should continue. “We had work study and systems engineering, and good, hardworking people in the Faculty,” he says. “With the systems approach, we had the broad, comprehensive aspects of engineering, while in Saskatoon they studied the depths of things. They did complement each other.”

Looking back, Hussein adds, the suggestion that the College adopt a systems concept was significant. “Adopting systems programming was very forward-looking. Events have shown that the systems approach is a very effective way of looking toward how the future of engineering is practised.”

Many graduates of the U of S, Regina Campus completed their degrees under the “two-plus-two” arrangement that continued until the 1980s. Carlyle Murray BASc’81 was what you might call a mature graduate, taking classes on a part-time basis while he worked as a civil engineering technologist for engineering firm R. J. Genereux and Associates. “There were projects where a recent graduate engineer and a technologist with practical field experience were on a construction site together,” Murray observes. “That gave me the financial incentive—along with support from my wife and my employer—to pursue a degree in engineering to advance my career and increase my earning power.”

Murray graduated in 1981 with a degree in Regional Systems Engineering, Transportation Option. In total, he worked for Genereux for 25 years. His next position was with the City of Regina. He is currently employed by Stantec Consulting.

Gary Bosgoed was another student who began his studies in Regina before transferring to Saskatoon, although he was happy to return to Regina to receive his degree in Industrial Systems Engineering in 1983. Bosgoed, who operates a consulting business and sits on the University’s Board of Governors, urges students not to race through to receive their degree, but to take multiple co-op work terms. “The work terms become foundational,” he states. “They are the best sweet spot of the learning curve. They are how you acquire a sense of how teams work.”

Bosgoed says being an Indigenous student in the 1970s wasn’t a topic, and that the University is doing a great job of Indigenization on campus, with more supports and programming. However, perhaps reflecting his entrepreneurial background, he would like to push the U of R further to build more relationships with Indigenous businesses and encourage more Indigenous graduates to be entrepreneurs and wealth creators.

The Faculty has also encouraged women to consider careers in engineering, including by supporting the 30 by 30 initiative launched by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan (APEGS). 30 by 30 aims to increase the representation of women within the engineering profession, specifically with a goal of raising the percentage of newly licensed engineers who are women to 30 per cent by 2030. Margaret Anne Hodges BASc’88, a graduate in Electronic Systems Engineering, was the third female president of APEGS and served for three years as a 30 by 30 champion, encouraging girls and young women to think about engineering as a career.

“We are past the days when girls were told they couldn’t be engineers,” Hodges says, “but we may not be past asking



Top: Art Opseth enjoyed a long and distinguished teaching career in the faculty beginning in 1974. He also served as acting dean and assistant dean and is currently a member of the U of R Board of Governors. (Photo by Don Hall) **Bottom:** Simi Falaye received his degree in Software Systems Engineering in 2018 and participated in four co-op work terms. (Photo by David Stobbe)

girls why they would want to be engineers. The profession and engineering programs need to communicate better to the public about the role engineers play in society.”

Over the past seven and a half decades, the Faculty has grown remarkably. Engineering and Applied Science students now number more than one thousand and come from every corner of the world. Also increased is the number of opportunities for students to apply their learning outside the classroom. Long-standing student groups such as Cougar Racing, Regina Engineering Concrete Toboggan Team, Engineers Without Borders, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and newer groups such as U of R Robotics, and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers are creating opportunities for students to engage in innovative collaborations that build connections and create memories that last a lifetime. And, the Faculty’s continued involvement in EYES (Educating Youth in Engineering and Science) summer camps ensures that new generations are excited to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Celebrating a 75th anniversary in strange times, which look to continue for a while, raises questions about what the future holds for the Faculty and its students. Gary Bosgoed and Art Opseth are upbeat, notwithstanding all of the uncertainties. Opseth looks forward to face-to-face learning returning, because that is one way that students learn from each other, especially when it comes to working as a team. Still, he thinks the current crop of grads will be all right. “They are resilient; they are going to be fine.” **D**

Bill Armstrong is a Regina freelance writer and amateur photographer with a strong interest in Saskatchewan history.



Above: The faculty has a long and rich history of student groups such as the Regina Engineering Concrete Toboggan Team. Other groups that have been bringing together students in fun and meaningful ways include Cougar Racing, Engineers Without Borders, the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and newer groups such as U of R Robotics, and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning.

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Reflections on 40 years of journalism

Sean O'Shea BA'84, a graduate of the University of Regina School of Journalism, is an award-winning investigative and consumer reporter for Global News in Toronto. O'Shea has spent four decades working tirelessly to tell stories that matter to viewers; he's exposed scam artists, shady contractors and organized crime figures. In recognition of his dedication and professionalism, this year he was awarded a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Radio Television Digital News Association.

By Sean O'Shea

Photos by Christopher Dew and courtesy of Sean O'Shea.

Sitting alone inside a satellite truck on a chilly December 2012 afternoon in Newtown, Connecticut, I noticed something unusual happening. Tears were rolling down my cheeks.

A couple of days earlier, I had flown from Toronto to join an 11-person Global News crew in the small New England community where twenty children and six teachers at the Sandy Hook Elementary School had been gunned down by a troubled young man who killed his mother before turning the gun on himself.

As I was watching my cameraperson's video of a community coming together to mourn the loss—strangers placing flowers and mementos on a makeshift memorial; locals paying respects at a funeral home—suddenly, I felt overwhelmed by the enormity of what had happened.

I had not viewed crime scene photographs of the horrific tragedy. We didn't knock on the doors of family members. No one in the international press tried to get those kinds of interviews. But we were immersed in the lives of the people in a tightly-knit village stricken by unspeakable grief. The

experience left its mark on me, as it likely did on all the journalists covering the story.

A few days later, as we packed up our temporary office, a man with his daughter stood on the sidewalk holding a sign that read: "Media GTFO." Media fatigue had set in and some people in the town just wanted to be left alone.

When I returned to Canada and went to buy a Christmas tree, it was not the usual uplifting experience. Covering the terrible deaths of those young children and their teachers had stolen the joy.

Unlike this particular assignment, covering the news for almost forty years has frequently been fun. I enjoyed reporting on two space shuttle liftoffs from Florida in the 80s and 90s, following the Challenger disaster. Election coverage has also been rewarding—from municipal, provincial and federal campaigns, to covering the U.S. race that ended in Washington with George H.W. Bush taking the White House, and the general election in Haiti following the murder of journalists and voters the previous year. Travelling to the Yukon when Jean Chrétien won his first term as prime minister was an adventure. And, reporting on the 1992 referendum, which could have triggered the breakup of Canada, was both exciting and terrifying.

My formal journalism career began after I arrived at the University of Regina in 1980. I had spent a year studying at a university in Ontario and then worked as a radio and television reporter in Lethbridge and Calgary, where I was born and raised.

I had caught wind of the U of R's grand plan to create a unique prairie journalism degree program that merged academics with skills like writing, editing and on-camera reporting. It wanted a corps of students to make a name for this new Saskatchewan idea. The program's first director, Ron Robbins, approved my application and I was among a small group of students with great hopes and dreams.

At the time, journalism jobs were plentiful and, unlike many students today, I never had to work without pay to learn the trade. I was assigned to a four-month internship at the Edmonton Journal. I was paid \$1,200 a month, which does not sound like much today, but it was enough to pay my rent and expenses while living downtown and getting experience in a big-market newsroom. I was rotated through general assignment as well as the crime and court beats. I also learned how to write obituaries. U of R's paid internship program is still unique in Canada.

Months before graduating, I was already working as a weekend television anchor at the CBC in Regina. Later, I was hired as a reporter in the TV newsroom of CBC Saskatoon. After almost three years, I relocated to Toronto where I've worked with Global News ever since. It's now been more than 33 years!

The journalism business has evolved dramatically over four decades. When I finished my degree, there were far more media properties and there was no such thing as online journalism. Today, many small-market stations and papers no longer exist. And, it is much more difficult for journalism graduates to find full-time employment quickly, if at all. At the same time, young graduates today are better educated. Many hold two degrees and often they've also earned a college diploma. I've had the pleasure of mentoring about 150 graduates, many of whom have gone on to careers in journalism all over the world.

Technology has driven many of the changes in the industry. Just before I graduated, television stations were still shooting stories on film. News crews frequently consisted of a team of three, with sometimes as many as four at the national level. Now, a crew can be just one person and the camera might just be a smart phone. As newsrooms shrink, television reporters are not only filing stories for the evening news, they're also producing radio and online reports—sometimes simultaneously. In spite of all the changes, some news



Opposite page: University of Regina School of Journalism alumnus Sean O'Shea was a 2020 recipient of a prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Radio Television Digital News Association in recognition of his dedication and professionalism. (Photo by Christopher Dew) Left: O'Shea's journalism career has spanned some 40 years. Shown here working at CJOC Radio in Lethbridge, Alberta in 1979. Right: O'Shea reports have been filed from around the world including Haiti, Beirut, Ghana, and El Salvador to name a few. O'Shea is shown here reporting from Washington D.C. in the early 1990s.

constants remain: figure out the story; write it without delay; and triple-check everything to avoid mistakes.

For me, part of the joy of journalism is seeing how a story can improve someone's life, at least a little. It's one of the reasons why much of my work in the last twenty years has focused on consumer reporting. I get hundreds of phone calls, emails and social media messages every year from viewers desperate to get a sticky problem resolved. The problems include everything from contractors who take large deposits, but do no work, to airlines that won't refund tickets even when flights have been cancelled.

In cases of fraud, many of the people who have contacted me got my name from a police officer who suggested that they might have better luck with me than the legal system.

Sometimes, an unco-operative business will be quick to issue a refund or an apology knowing that it's better than the negative media attention. But, typically, it's not that easy. Businesses that would take someone's money and not show up for work would prefer to keep the money and stay out of the spotlight. That's why I've spent hours in unmarked vehicles with camera crews waiting for these people to show up after they haven't responded to my phone calls. The unscheduled interview is a last resort and the outcome is unpredictable and sometimes ends in a chase.

Once, while trying to retrieve a vehicle from a body shop where a woman's car was being held illegally, I got blasted in the face with a chemical fire extinguisher. Thankfully, I wasn't injured. And, luckily, my cameraperson caught it all on video, which served as evidence for the judge who sent the tow truck driver to jail for assault. By the way, the woman got her car back.

Big companies don't use fire extinguishers to quash a negative story. Instead, they use lawyers. I could wallpaper an office with the letters I've received threatening defamation lawsuits. One was from the late legal legend, Edward Greenspan, who was representing a cosmetic surgeon who had left a patient permanently disfigured. In spite of the threats, we aired the story. The doctor and his lawyer never called again. That's not to say that I haven't been sued. It's happened twice. Neither lawsuit was successful.

I have been fortunate to work for a news organization prepared to defend journalism, frequently at great expense. Once, a company threatened to pull all of its advertising if I proceeded with a negative story. My news director asked me if I had all the facts. I was confident, so the story went to air and the company followed through with its threat. Even though the network lost several million dollars worth of advertising, it still supported me and our mission to inform the public.

Sometimes, as a reporter, you get an unexpected scoop. I was about to interview a lawyer representing a medical regulatory body when I discovered that he had been disbarred for wrongfully taking money from clients in his previous practice. His new employer was unaware because no one had done a reference check. I will never understand why he agreed to an interview. When I asked about his past, he ripped off his microphone and walked away. A few hours later, he was fired, and the story became the lead item on our evening news. I soon learned that the disbarred lawyer could pose a physical threat, so I temporarily had to relocate my wife and two daughters. It was the first time I was worried about my family's safety because of one of my stories.

Concern for reporters' safety and mental health is something that's also improved over four decades. More and more, news organizations are providing equipment and training to help



Top: O'Shea is an award-winning investigative and consumer reporter and is regarded as one of the most tenacious reporters in television. He's shown here anchoring Global News in 2015. Above: In his role as consumer reporter, O'Shea has exposed organized crime figures, scam artists, and unscrupulous contractors at frequent risk. He was once assaulted on-air by biker gang members who attacked him with a fire extinguisher. Shown here reporting from Toronto in 2020.

reduce risk. And, when journalists in the field face physical danger, they are allowed to make the final decision about whether to continue or back off. While in the war zones of Beirut and El Salvador, I felt I was on my own. Later in my career, while covering the Boston Marathon bombing and the fiery rail explosion at Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, where 47 people died, I got numerous phone calls from news executives asking how I was coping and if I needed help or counselling. This is an important improvement in how journalists are treated. It's especially relevant as reporters, producers and camera crews cover the coronavirus pandemic, where physical and mental health concerns are heightened.

From my experience and observations, journalists usually get so caught up in telling stories, we may overlook or underestimate how we are affected in the process. That's a fact I finally appreciate since reporting on the school shooting in Connecticut. Feeling sad as you rush to make a deadline doesn't mean you're weak. It means you still care.

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