

## NEW AND NEWSWORTHY IN DISABILITY STUDIES AT RYERSON

### FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Fall 2011

Another academic year has begun at Ryerson University. Welcome back! I returned from sabbatical just in time to take up a new role as director of Disability Studies starting July 1, 2011. My thanks to all those who sent messages of welcome and encouragement. I appreciate the vote of confidence and will do my very best for the School over my five year term. It has been a fast start – rolling into the annual Summer Institute -- and things have not slowed down much since then! The School is going through some major transitions – responding to the positive stresses of growth and growing complexity. You are reading the first of two Program Updates that I will produce in the coming year. I will use them to keep you current with new initiatives and changing circumstances. Stay with us!

*Kathryn*

#### FULL-TIME FACULTY

As most of you know, **Catherine Frazee** has retired from the School. After a fabulously warm winter in Arizona, she and Patricia are settled into their Nova Scotia home. We are pleased that Catherine remains with us as Professor Emerita. We celebrate her most recent honor to be given by Independent Living Canada at its 25th anniversary celebration in November 2011. She is among several individuals to be recognized for contributing significantly to the history and movement of independent living in Canada.

Having reached the end of her term as director, **Melanie Panitch** is on sabbatical. In this year away, she is pursuing several projects, among them new iterations for the exhibit, “Out from Under” Disability, History and Things to Remember”. During the 2011 Summer Institute, we celebrated Melanie’s achievements and contributions with an alumni-led event called “Leadership to Remember”.

Esther Ignagni is now, finally and formally, **Dr. Esther Ignagni**. We celebrate with her the completion and successful defense of her doctoral thesis in the School of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto. It is titled “Disabled young people, support and the dialogical work of accomplishing citizenship.” Live long and publish, Esther.

#### New Faces

As of September 2011, the School of Disability Studies has a new tenured professor in the person of **Dr. Jennifer Mactavish**. Jennifer was recently appointed Dean of Graduate Studies at Ryerson, with a cross-appointment to our School. “Ryerson Today” reports that *Jennifer is a*

*prolific writer and distinguished researcher who has local to international impact. She has nearly 100 scholarly papers, book chapters and technical reports to her credit, and has delivered more than 60 presentations and workshops. Among her many research grants and awards are a number of SSHRC grants, and most recently, she was awarded a Manitoba Health Research Council grant as a co-investigator to explore the sport psychology of athletes with intellectual disabilities. As a member of the International Paralympic Committee's sport science group, Jennifer was the lone social scientist involved in promoting international disability sport and classification research.*

In 2010, the School of Disability Studies received a \$500,000 gift from the **Ethel Louise Armstrong Foundation (ELA)**. The gift was a testament to Lucille Owen and her friendship with Margaret Stanton, founder and president of the ELA Foundation based in Santa Barbara, California. In keeping with Lucille's wishes, the funds will support a female scholar with a disability through a post-doctoral fellowship that contributes an interdisciplinary perspective to the field of Disability Studies. Ryerson University has agreed to match this gift through its own post doctoral fellowship program. This award is the university's first privately funded and endowed postdoctoral fellowship. It drew ten strong applications from scholars in Canada, the US and Europe. The appointments committee selected **Kirsty Liddiard**, a young woman who is completing research on disability and sexuality for her doctorate in sociology at the University of Warwick in England. Kirsty will join us in January 2012; her term runs to the end of December 2014. She is excited about starting her career in Canada.

## **PART-TIME INSTRUCTORS**

Officially, the School of Disability Studies now has 4 full-time permanent positions: 3 tenured; one tenure-track. (Dr. Mactavish will teach in the School but not in her first term as Dean.) Like many departments in the university, we rely as well on part-time instructors to deliver our program. Below is the Fall/Winter "line-up", most of whom are familiar – but there are some new faces here, too.

DST500 History of Madness: David Reville has stepped back from being the primary instructor in this course. Thank you, David, for all that you brought to establishing and animating this course – university-wide -- over the past several years. As a Liberal Arts offering and a model of interdisciplinary education, "A History of Madness" has grown to 3 sections per semester with 50-60 students per section. The instructors for 2011-12 are Jim Ward, Erick Fabris, and Jijian Voronka. Jijian and Erick are both mad-identified doctoral candidates in Sociology and Equity Studies at OISE/University of Toronto.

CDST 504 Mad People's History: Fans of this on-line course know that its creator and instructor, **David Reville**, working with the Chang School of Continuing Education, wrote and produced three webdocs as course materials which are now also in wide circulation via You Tube. This spring, the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE) presented David and team with the award for **best on-line course in Canada**. Congratulations! Only weeks early,

the webdoc titled “Self-labelling and Identity” was selected for the National Screen Institute's online film festival.

SOC 525 Media and Images of Inequality: We have been fortunate to secure **Eli Clare**, a well-known poet, writer and thinker, to teach this course. Last winter, on-line, he took it to a new level, as participants will attest. Disability Studies has now reclaimed SOC 525 for our program. It is in transit through a temporary listing this winter as DST 503 (Special Topics) and will reappear in the Spring as DST 525 Rethinking Images of Embodied Difference. The description we have sent to the undergraduate calendar is: *This course critically examines representations of embodied difference in mainstream and other media. With particular attention to disability, it queries images that appear in the news, on television, film and the Web as embedded in systems of ableist power, privilege and marginalization. To study these images is to reveal their ideological underpinnings, and their intrinsic connection to other categories of identity including class, race, gender, and sexual orientation.* Watch your email for further information about these developments.

DST 503 Special Topics: Inter-professional Narratives of Health and Social Care: This course ran as 3-weekend intensives in May and June, 2011. As an exemplar of inter-professional teaching and learning, it was developed and taught by faculty from the Schools of Nutrition (**Jacqui Gingras**), Nursing (**Jasna Schwind, Jennifer Lapum**) and Disability Studies (**Esther Ignagni, Kathryn Church**) teaching alongside community representatives from Springtide Resources (**Fran Odette**) and the Centre for Digital Story-telling (**Emmy Pantin**). Students came from these same departments (8 from DST) as well as Early Childhood Education and Social Work. We explored stories as a way of knowing and critiqued how they are used in practice settings. We believe the course enhanced students’ readiness for inter/professional practice. Evaluations were positive, and we are looking for next steps.

Other Regular Offerings: The following core courses are currently running under the direction of instructors who are experienced and well known in the program. Each of these courses is becoming increasingly important as the School collaborates more extensively with the Chang School of Continuing education in the delivery of certificate programming.

- DST 502 Disability and the State – Cam Crawford
- DST 614 Access and Technology – Charles Silverman

## **NEW CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

This Fall, in collaboration with the Chang School of Continuing Education, Disability Studies launched the **Certificate in Advancing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005: Principles and Practices of Accessibility**. This six course certificate combines theory and skills to teach students how to make policy and enact organizational change in the context of the implementation of the AODA. Already, many of you have registered. The academic lead is Cam Crawford, known to many already as instructor for DST 502 Disability and the State; and the “Numbers that Count” module in DST 88 Research Methods. Cam is also the instructor for

the Certificate's introductory course (DST 506) which is in progress as 3 weekend on-sites, and will run this winter on-line. Also of relevance is the **Certificate in Community Engagement, Leadership and Development**. Peter Clutterbuck is the academic lead; he did a brown bag lunch for us during the summer institute. Anyone interested in either of these Certificates should be in touch with Paris (m2paris@ryerson.ca)

## ACTIVE PROJECTS

Disability Studies has many active projects involving faculty, instructors, students and alumni. In this note, I want to reference the ongoing development of our museum exhibit, **Out from Under: Disability, History and Things to Remember**. A couple of further developments of this work are currently underway. First, the exhibit is in transition to the Human Rights Museum of Canada which is under construction in Winnipeg. Second, and more speedily, the exhibit is moving to a virtual learning environment thanks in part to a grant from the Learning and Teaching office at Ryerson. Once again, from "Ryerson Today," here is the news:

*This is a truly 'Made-at-Ryerson' project that continues to evolve," said **Melanie Panitch**. "Transforming the exhibit into a digital, interactive form will advance research into virtual learning environments and provide students with training in the use of virtual reality tools." Creating the exhibit in a virtual learning environment will be a collaborative effort. Panitch, and her colleagues and co-curators from the school, Kathryn Church and Catherine Frazee, are working with Early Childhood Education Professor, and Experiential Design and Gaming Environments (EDGE) Lab Director Jason Nolan to bring the exhibit into the virtual world known as 'Second Life.' Nolan and his team, whose EDGE Lab is based in Ryerson's Digital Media Zone (DMZ), will recreate the exhibit in a three-dimensional, interactive form and will integrate much of the digital archival footage of the exhibit - such as short interviews and time lapsed recordings taken by Image Arts Professor Garrick Filewod. In the Second Life environment, students will be able to engage with the exhibit content in a way that is not currently possible with either the actual physical exhibit or through the exhibit's website.*

### From the Faculty of Community Services Newsletter

Disability Studies makes a point of being visible in the Faculty of Community Services. One mechanism is its periodic newsletter. Here are a few people and events noted in the Fall issue.

- The creative and innovative scholarship of "The 7024<sup>th</sup> Patient" arts-informed research exhibit, led by Dr. Jennifer Lapum, School of Nursing (**Kathryn Church** is a member of the research/curatorial team);
- DST student **Helen Henderson's** TEDxRyersonU lecture (google it and see!);
- DST student **Megan Stuart** selected for Undergraduate Research Opportunities award (Kathryn Church and David Reville, supervisors) for a project titled "One of Many: consumer-led creative initiatives in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood"; Megan also received an RBC Community Services Award for exemplary leadership;

- DST students **Sandra Burns** and **Paula Streeter** named as recipients of the Dennis Mock Student Leadership Program Award in 2011;
- Artwork by students in the course “A History of Madness” was featured in Ryerson’s exhibit “This Is Madness”. I note the key curatorial role played here by **Danielle Landry**. Danielle is much relied upon as staff with the School in multiple roles pertaining to both research and teaching;
- **Jenn Paterson’s** work with the School in terms of student engagement and success. Jenn also plays a key role in the school’s inter-professional education project creating a cross-cultural curriculum for the “Out from Under” exhibit as it moves to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

(Google FCS website for complete copy.)

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Finally, I want to highlight a few ways in which the School has supported community groups and projects over the summer.

- Disability Studies was pleased to arrange space for the event titled **Recovering Our Stories: In Whose Interests? How psychiatric survivors can use our stories to change the world**. This event featured Eli Clare as special speaker. It gathered a fabulous crowd of about 150 people in Jorgenson Hall just before Pride Week in June. David Reville, Danielle Landry and I were happy to be part of the organizing committee.
- Disability Studies was pleased to work with the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) and its research partners through Safe Engaged Environments Disability (SEED) to release a participatory action study titled **A Safer City for All** (July 28, 2011). Please contact John Mossa, CILT for more information on the SEED project (ilskills@cilt.ca)
- Disability Studies is happy to be host to the **Mad Students Society** for its regular meetings. Anyone interested should contact Danielle Landry (dlandry@ryerson.ca).