Welcome once again to our Faculty newsletter. I began this academic year with the sense that we had received strong messages about following through with the theme of Indigenization, and about responding to the Truth and Reconciliation’s (TRC) Calls for Action. I also heard that we needed action. We had spent several meetings during the last academic year trying to understand what Indigenization meant, and what this meant for the Faculty. At the end of the academic year (June 2016), several other events reaffirmed the importance of the need for action.

Several of us attended the annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences which took place at the beginning of June. The Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE) hosts its annual conference as part of the Congress events. CASWE also hosts an Annual General Meeting. Student delegates continued to challenge Schools and Faculties of Social Work to follow through on ensuring there was strong Indigenous content within our curriculum.

The second event that occurred in June was our annual Faculty retreat. We focused the retreat on the theme of Indigenization. We discussed how our curriculum and Faculty could evolve to respond to the TRC’s report. We ended our retreat knowing there were many other deeper issues that needed to be addressed: racism being one of the deeper, more complex issues facing our Faculty, province, and country.

There were other events occurring this past summer. One was the Syrian Refugee Children and Youth project which the Faculty hosted as a Spring/Summer practicum opportunity. The second was a presentation from students who completed their practicum placement in Rwanda. Together, all of these activities/events highlight that we are being called to action within an environment that is characterized by growing diversity and complexities.

We are committed to continuing on this journey responding to the Calls to Action included in the TRC report. This will continue to remain a key focus. We are also aware of the needs and concerns of the diverse populations within our province. We hope the articles about our research, teaching, and community work continue to inform you about how we are responding to the TRC report and also to the growing diversity and complexities.

Judy White, Dean

Our Mission

"The social work program of education, research and community service is designed to prepare students for critical generalist social work practice with diverse peoples. Informed by the principles of indigenization, sustainability and social justice, the social work program encourages students to identify the needs of the disadvantaged, marginalized and oppressed. It supports students in developing the commitment, knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills required to confront structural inequalities, and to empower individuals, families, and communities to realize their full potential."
Travelling to Rwanda in May, 2016 for an international social work practicum was an amazing experience. We were a small group comprised of 5 undergraduate social work students, a recent BSW graduate, Pauline Nzaramba, and our faculty supervisors, Drs. Randy Johner and Donalda Halabuza. Looking back, it is hard to believe how big of an impact it had on our lives in such a short period of time. One of the major changes involved the overall outlook on life. This experience made us both change personally and professionally in many ways.

“From this trip I learned much more about my privilege and how I have the responsibility to educate others. Ever since we have returned I have felt so much more comfortable in speaking out for others, as well as learning more about different cultures. I now notice far more frequently where my privilege helps me, and how to make sure others are not hindered in the same area.”
-Paige Breland

“It made me reevaluate my priorities. I met so many people living in poverty – genocide victims living alongside people that had harmed or murdered their loved ones – and they were happy. If they could be happy, what was I doing wrong? How could I often feel stressed when I had a home to live in, a warm bed, clean running water, clothes, food, healthy children, a career, and the opportunity to pursue my social work degree? Clearly, it was time to critically evaluate my life. It was time to determine what brought me happiness and weed out that which didn’t. I was ready to make a major purge and streamline my efforts into simplicity.”
-Shelley Bunni

From this experience it became easier for us to relate to people, more specifically immigrants and refugees. We often hear the term “culture shock” used in social work, and we have now had the first-hand experience in this. For us, it was an opportunity because we were able to return home and use this experience to broaden our understanding. Now we know what it feels like to not be able to understand the language everyone speaks, to not be able to eat food we are familiar with, to be unable to participate in activities we enjoy, and to be separated from loved ones. The main difference for us, however, is that we knew we were going back home, that it was just temporary. For many refugees, this is their everyday reality but they don’t know if or when they will ever be able to return home. We now have a small glimpse into how this would feel; and because of our experiences in Rwanda, we are able to work with much more sensitivity and empathy at helping refugees, as well as other newcomers, feel welcome in our country.

A two week international practicum experience in Rwanda brought more clarity and insightfulness into our personal and professional lives than we ever could have imagined possible. We remain consistently thankful for the amazing experience, and the many new friends gained.

(Submitted by Paige Breland and Shelley Bunni, BSW students)
The Social Work Faculty at the University of Regina is the first Social Work Faculty in Canada with an artist-in-residence. We are very pleased to introduce our Michele Sereda Residency in Socially Engaged Practice Artist-in-Residence (2016-2017), Katherine Bird who was born and raised in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Katherine is fascinated with the complexities of people and nature. Her art reflects a myriad of moments, drawing attention to the energies and synergies of inner and outer experiences. Her subject matter reveals her propensity for people watching - particularly those she glimpses in passing. While capturing the details of physical appearance and conveying rich hidden narrative, her portraits express individuality and character. In these images, Bird reveals the relationship of individuals to a particular environment, through the physicality of their interactions as well as the nuances of expression and gesture that speak volumes about the attitude that each brings to the world. Her pieces are currently owned by individuals and companies throughout North America and Europe.

The overall goal for this Michele Sereda Residency in Socially Engaged Practice Artist-in-Residence (2016-2017) is to build connection and compassion between ‘marginalized’ individuals, social work students, faculty and the general public. This goal will be reached through a series of objectives, culminating in three public presentations comprised of paintings, sketches, collages, and creatively altered photos accompanied by written ‘stories’ about the artwork participants – diverse individuals labeled as ‘marginalized’, why they are marginalized, and how they are impacted. During this residency, a small group of interested social work students will have the opportunity to work with Katherine during her artist-in-residency. For more information, please contact Randy Johner (randy.johner@uregina.ca)

Submitted by Randy Johner (Faculty of Social Work), Katherine Bird (Artist-in-Residence), & Kathleen Irwin (Associate Dean Graduate Studies and Research, MAP, University of Regina)
As a pilot project this summer and a way to express our solidarity with the Syrian people, the Faculty of Social Work successfully delivered a settlement program for refugee children and youth from Regina's Arabic-speaking community. This initiative was developed by Social Work faculty and staff in collaboration with the Regina Open Door Society as a means of addressing a gap in service provision, particularly for children in the 6-12 age range. Four social work students played an active role in the implementation of the program’s vision of providing a safe space where refugee children and youth could play, interact and simply be themselves. The program also benefitted from the work of volunteers, many of whom were students from the University of Regina. The goal of this social work initiative was to provide a fun environment, to help ease the stress of resettlement that many refugee children experience. At the same time, the initiative was an opportunity for social work students to complete their mini-practicum.

The program ran every Saturday during a 6-week spring session, and a 7-week summer session. Many children attended both the spring and summer sessions. On average, there were about 27-30 children who participated in the program.

Activities for children and youth included arts and crafts, movies, reading and literacy, computer games and technology, music, dance and water play. All activities were organized by social work practicum students under the supervision of a field instructor and faculty members. Academically, this program provided the opportunity for four students in our Bachelor of Social Work program to gain practical experience in community work with refugee populations, and settlement program development and implementation. The knowledge and skills gained through this initiative was foundational to the students’ experiences of working with vulnerable populations in the future.

The impact of the volunteers who participated in the program must not be understated. The Faculty of Social Work Refugee Settlement Program relied heavily on its more than fifty volunteers. We were particularly fortunate to have a significant number of Arabic-speaking volunteers participate, most of whom are international students at the University of Regina. These volunteers brought diverse strengths to the program, and they helped
tremendously with overcoming language barriers, understanding cultural norms, and facilitating activities. This initiative received great support from the larger University community, as many faculty, staff and students contacted us to express interest in participating. In particular, we are thankful for the support we received from the Faculty of Education.

One of the challenges that limited participation in the early weeks of the program was transportation. Fortunately, we were able to secure funding and provided door-to-door bus service to participants. This really helped facilitate access to the program for a lot of the families, many of whom lived quite far from the University, and did not own vehicles. As in any activity, the challenges faced provided lessons that going forward will be considered to ensure a greater success for such an important program. Our goal is to deliver the program again in summer 2017, and we are considering the possibility of delivery in both Regina and Saskatoon. We are also considering ways to structure the program to incorporate a final practicum option for students in their last semester of the social work program.

Submitted by: Daniel Kikulwe, Amanda Noubarian, Miguel Sanchez
FSW Research Centre undergoing renewal

An initiative to renew the faculty’s research centre has moved from planning to action with a new director, associate director and staff members. The appointment of Prince Albert based Dr. Bonnie Jeffery as director reflects the faculty’s provincial presence and the centre’s location in all three FSW campuses (Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert).

In consultation with faculty members, Dr. Jeffery and Regina based Associate Director Dr. Garson Hunter will work together to adapt the centre to reflect faculty research expertise and focus. The centre will remain committed to the principles of social justice and equity research with a focus on the experiences of marginalized, vulnerable and oppressed people. It is anticipated that over the two-year renewal period clusters of research strength will emerge, including such areas as child and youth welfare, income inequality and poverty and issues experienced by newcomers, immigrants and refugees. Our community-engaged research will utilize both Indigenous and Western approaches to inform policy, practice and education.

Two part-time research staff will support the centre during the renewal period. Halftime Research Coordinator Britney Duncan will identify research opportunities and communicate those with faculty in order to facilitate funding submissions. She will also provide continued support throughout the span of successfully funded projects, and communicate activities through the updated research centre website and other external reporting activities. Administrative Coordinator Colleen Hamilton will work with research faculty as they prepare grant proposal budgets and recruit and hire project staff. She will also provide workshops on budget development, funds management and data management.

Britney Duncan
Research Coordinator

Colleen Hamilton
Administrative Coordinator
Changes to Staff, Saskatoon Campus

Vivian Haskins began her career with the University of Regina in 1993, at what was then referred to as the Saskatoon Community Education Centre (CEC). Vivian recently accepted a position as one of our Academic Program Advisors at the Saskatoon Campus.

Jaime Speed joined us in May, 2016 as the Administrative Assistant to the Faculty of Social Work and Faculty of Nursing at the Saskatoon Campus. In August, 2016 she moved into a new position where her primary focus is course and class scheduling administration.

Brittany Ng joined the University of Regina as the Administrative Assistant to the Faculty of Social Work and Faculty of Nursing at the Saskatoon Campus in August, 2016.
How can we serve you?

The Faculty of Social Work is striving to find opportunities to serve our community and partners better. If you have ideas or suggestions to help us, please forward them to the Dean's Office by emailing Ina.Kurtz@uregina.ca

For more information on the Faculty of Social Work, please visit us at:

www.uregina.ca/socialwork/

Changes to Staff, Regina Campus

Jo Hollock joined the Faculty of Social Work, Regina Campus in August 2016 and her area of focus is administrative support.

Brandi Srochenski came to our Faculty earlier this year and is one of our Program Advisors for BSW students at the Regina Campus

Faculty Term Position Search

The Faculty of Social Work has begun searches for two faculty term positions to be based at the Regina Campus. The postings close Oct. 31, 2016 or when suitable candidates are identified. The terms will run from January 1 to December 31, 2017. To apply please go to: www.uregina.ca/hr and click on careers, career opportunities, academic positions.