

Shastri News - February 2009

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Shastri Grant and Award Winners Announced

Grant to Promote Instruction in an Indian Language

Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Ranbir Johal, Department of Modern Languages, has been awarded \$8,000 to develop a course in Punjabi (Punjabi 3301) through which students will be able to study literature written by Canadian Punjabi writers.

York University

Ian Smith, Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics, has been awarded \$8,000 to develop a course on Tamil Language and Culture.

Grant to Develop a Canada/India Joint Course

Athabasca University (Alberta) and the University of Madras (Tamil Nadu)

Drs Evelyn Ellerman and Bharathi Harishankar have been awarded \$8,000 to collaborate on the development of a senior level comparative course in Indian and Canadian film.

McMaster University (Ontario) and the University of Jammu (Jammu and Kashmir)

Drs Rama Singh and Posh Charak have been awarded \$8,000 to collaborate on the development of a course on "Mahila Shanti Sena: A constructive peace movement led by women" which will be made available in Canada and India in alternate years.

Lal Bahadur Shastri Student Awards for Outstanding Essays and Papers on India



Meera Varghese received this year's graduate prize for her paper on: "Becoming the Goddess: Dance and Embodiment of Feminine Identity in the Indo-Canadian Diaspora." Meera Varghese is a graduate of the MA Ethnomusicology program at the University of Alberta and is a Bharatanatyam performer and teacher.

Backstage at the Frederic Wood Theatre in Vancouver, Vidya Kotamraju sits facing her reflection in the dressing room mirror. Her Bharatanatyam guru, Jai Govinda, has meticulously laid out her silk dance costume, temple jewellery, make-up, and garlands of orange and white flowers. With a playful smile, he makes a grand gesture

towards Vidya and declares: "At 7:00, I'm going to change this into a Goddess..." ([PDF full text](#))



Gurdeeshpal Randhawa received this year's undergraduate prize for his paper on: "Implications of Partition and Colonial British Policy for Modern India."

The departure of the British Raj was not just a triumph for Indian nationalism but also a testament to a centuries-long defiance by Indian society against Colonial Britain's Manifest Destiny. Every August 15th, in the midst of India's monsoon season her skies are littered with kites and flags and her streets reverberate with patriotic songs as she celebrates her independence. However, while India

annually pays tribute to her acquisition of autonomy, she often fails to recognize and remember the bloodshed that characterized her first few months of independence...([PDF full text](#))

More Student Excellence Award Profiles

Adam Malloy

After living in Darjeeling, India for four years, where he worked with rural communities to improve education for marginalized children, Adam Malloy returned to Canada to complete his own education. As an undergraduate student of Social Justice and Peace Studies at King's University College, Adam has devoted much of his studies to social, political and economic issues in India. He will be using the Shastri award to further his research on Gandhian nonviolence, specifically as it is employed in the struggle for an independent Gorkhaland, and other current and active social resistance movements in India.



Karen Rideout

Karen Rideout is a PhD Candidate in Integrated Studies in Land and Food Systems at The University of British Columbia. This program allows her to combine her background in nutrition and environmental and public health with her love of food, farming, and other cultures. Karen's dissertation Growing communities: (Re) embedding people in the food system in India and Canada examines ways to shorten the physical and



conceptual distance between producers and consumers of food as a route to counteract some of the social, ecological, and health problems of modern diets. She is examining how visionaries and activists are working to preserve traditional foods, ways of production, and the place of food in local culture. “I am very thankful to receive this Student Excellence Award, which will help finance one of the most important phases of my PhD dissertation research – follow-up and feedback – in late 2009. I plan to bring my preliminary results back to the people with whom I worked, to share the outcomes of the research and to ensure that I represent them accurately in my final thesis.”

IASL McGill Helps Initiate India’s First Air and Space Law Centre

McGill University’s Institute of Air and Space Law (IASL) in Montreal is helping to establish India’s first Air and Space Law Centre at the Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia National Law University (RMLNLU) in Lucknow. The centre, which is currently being established, will admit about 50 students for a proposed six-month undergraduate certificate and two-year LLM degree programme. This degree will qualify students to become legal experts for national and international airlines, space-related enterprises, or for organizations like the Indian Space Research Organization.



RMLNLU is seeking help from McGill’s IASL (the world’s oldest and the leading air and space law educational institution) to train their faculty members in this new field. In addition, RMLNLU’s two-year LLM degree programme will include four months at McGill University where students will obtain IASL’s Graduate Certificate in Air and Space Law before continuing their studies in Lucknow. Prof. Balraj Chauban, Director of RMLNLU would like to begin the programme as soon as possible and expects all the required formalities to be completed by April of this year. The IASL is also helping RMLNLU in the organisation of an international air and space law conference in December 2009 in Lucknow.

Professor Ram Jakhu of IASL at McGill visited RMLNLU in January and is optimistic about the potential for collaboration on this initiative. He spoke on the global emergence of the field of Air and Space Law to an audience of faculty, students and administrative staff. He also carried out a study on “The Case for Enhanced India-Canada Space Cooperation” with funding from the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (APF). His final report is available on [APF’s website](#) and will also be published in the first issue of Space Policy 2009.

Research Opportunities in Udaipur

After a constructive visit to Udaipur last January, Dr. Madhumita Bhattacharya is eager to explore further research and development opportunities with her associates at the Vidya Bhavan Society, an organization that seeks to provide quality education to underprivileged sections of society. Dr. Bhattacharya, from the Centre for Distance Education at Athabasca University in Alberta, was invited by the Society to conduct workshops with their teachers, principals, and researchers on the topic of

diversity amongst learners of the 21st century. She was encouraged by their keenness to learn and integrate new ideas. During her trip Dr. Bhattacharya also visited some of the local schools and was impressed with their implementation of strategies to teach practical skills and self sufficiency. She was able to discuss new teaching prospects with many of the teachers she met.



Some of the research areas that Dr. Bhattacharya identified during her visits include gender equity in education, introduction of technology in education in rural India, bringing classroom learning to the community, and creating a self-sustainable system of education. Dr. Bhattacharya has currently proposed a research project on gender equity. She plans to assess the language and content of classroom textbooks and teacher/community attitudes towards male and female students in primary schools in Udaipur to determine their impact on the sustainability of female education.

In another research project she plans to use mobile technologies to deliver learning materials to children from low socio-economic backgrounds to assess their learning outcomes. She has communicated with Nokia India in this regard, and is currently exploring the possibilities of funding from other organizations. Dr. Bhattacharya is interested to hear from possible research collaborators, sponsors and research students both from Canada and India who would like to be involved in these endeavors. She can be contacted by email at mitab@athabascau.ca .

Shastri Institute Canadian Studies Library Launches Union Catalogue

We are pleased to announce the launch of our much-anticipated [online catalogue](#) to promote resource sharing among Canadian Studies libraries throughout India. The catalogue, which is now accessible through the homepage of our website, currently contains an extensive database of books. We are working to build on this foundation by incorporating periodical articles, theses and dissertations, CDs, videos, and a database of Indian specialists on Canadian Studies.

The development of this catalogue has required much time and effort from Reshma Rana, In-charge of the Canadian Studies Library in Delhi. We would like to also recognize the three Canadian interns, Tara Mawhinney, Fiona Harbour, and Ariel Lebowitz who contributed to the collection of data and to the Directors of Area Studies Centres at Delhi University, SNDT, Kerala University and MS Baroda University who facilitated the interns and the librarian during their data collection visits. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Canada has provided funding for this initiative.





As a Canadian Studies library intern in 2005-06, I had the opportunity to travel to eight Canadian Studies centres across India to catalogue their books, which are now included in Shastri Institute's online union catalogue. The experience was very enriching both personally and professionally. I learnt a lot, met many great people and was able to share my interest in Canadian Studies and librarianship with others pursuing similar scholarly work. My time in India provided the essential work experience I needed to become a librarian at McGill University, instilled

in me a life-long love of travel, and left me with lots of wonderful memories! ~ Tara Mawhinney, Intern 2005-2006

Guelph University Succeeds with its Semester in India

Study-in-India programmes provide invaluable opportunities for Canadian undergraduate students, but they are also challenging for most universities to oversee. They require extensive administration, committed faculty, strong connections in India, and a pool of informed and interested students. After almost two decades of running its semester abroad in India, Guelph University has managed to develop a strong and healthy programme. Guelph's secret: catering to a broad student base by offering a variety of courses, a full semester of credits, and an opportunity to explore India from north to south.

This year Guelph University received an overwhelming 80 applications for its 2010 Semester in India programme. From this pool they will select around 25 students to travel with two faculty members for 14 weeks living and studying as a group in India. Guelph offers the programme every other year and has yet to have difficulty recruiting students to participate.

"We always offer the course during the winter semester," explains Dr. Gauri Mittal, current Programme Chair, "because the climate in India is more accommodating at that time. We start in the south, in January and February and move northward in later months to take advantage of the best possible weather." Simple details like these go a long way in ensuring that students have good experiences. Along with courses on development, religion, history, language and the arts, Guelph offers at least one hard science course each term so that science majors can participate and return to Canada with credits applicable to their majors. This has certainly added to the success of the programme since around 30 per cent of the applications they receive come from students outside the social sciences and humanities. The programme also provides students opportunities to integrate into host families and visit a wide variety of local charities and historical sites.

Guelph deals with its biggest programme challenges – health and safety – by informing students of the risks and encouraging male coordinators to bring their wives to India to provide support and care to the predominantly female student participants. Guelph also tries to ensure that finances do not hinder students from applying by making the programme affordable and putting costs in perspective. The student expenses for the programme totals around \$7000, but if students consider

how much they spend during a typical semester on tuition, rent, food, and other living expenses, they usually find that the cost is quite reasonable.

Thomas Able, a participant from 2008, claims that his time in India contributed to “the best year of [his] life.” He found that the programme offered a more dynamic and culturally interactive approach to learning and, as an International Development major; he felt that the trip “reaffirmed [his] interest in the Global South.”

UVic and PRIA find Strength in Collaboration

A delegation from the University of Victoria (UVic) is meeting with the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) this February to discuss current and potential collaborative initiatives. Since 2004, UVic has been sending student interns to PRIA under a programme funded by the Canadian International Development Agency. This programme led to a reciprocal internship for PRIA staff at UVic and to a Memorandum of Understanding in 2007. As they build on that milestone, these institutions plan to continue exchanging interns, conducting joint research and implementing joint courses. They are currently working on an online course to provide training and development to people working in civil society all over the world.

Collaborating with PRIA has proven to be an effective way for UVic to add new levels to its research and teaching capabilities. Heather McRae, Programme Director at UVic, explains that, “the University of Victoria and PRIA build on each others’ skills and learn throughout the process. PRIA brings to the partnership its years of experience supporting democracy and social change through its work with community groups, government agencies and individuals at the grass roots level.” The University of Victoria has the academic experience and administrative capabilities to help train PRIA staff and manage online courses with an international scope. “For UVic, this is an opportunity to work with a well-respected and recognized NGO, connecting theory with practice in the development of community-based research, knowledge mobilization and in facilitating the student experience through research internships and exchanges,” says McRae.

The current UVic delegation follows an ongoing flow of exchanges that they deem necessary to the maintenance of a healthy and lasting relationship. Participants in the delegation include Dr. Budd Hall, Director, Office of Community-based Research; Dr. Darlene Clover, Professor, Faculty of Education; Dr. Maureen McDonald, Dean of Continuing Studies and Dr. Evert Lindquist, Director, School of Public Administration.

India-Canada Collaborations in Cancer Care Set Sail

PORT, a national Psychosocial Oncology Research Training programme in Canada is developing exciting new collaborations with oncology centres in Bangalore, India. Dr. Carmen G. Loiselle, PORT Programme Leader, recently initiated academic exchanges with Indian colleagues at NIMHANS (National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences) and at the Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology in Bangalore. PORT expects these exchanges to foster the development of new research and clinical practices by bringing together individuals from various disciplines who are

committed to improving cancer care. The projects they have commenced will shed new insight into gender issues and health service utilization as they examine ways to provide optimal cancer care for young and old. Ultimately, PORT would like to develop tailored psychosocial oncology interventions that positively affect the experiences of cancer patients and their families.



A group of cancer patients look at a photo of themselves with Dr. Carmen Loiselle at the Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology.

For the past five years, PORT trainees have conducted research primarily within a Canadian health setting. This partnership arrives at a critical point in PORT's development as its interests span internationally. Clinicians, trainees and mentors will now benefit from the cross-section of innovative and grassroots work being jointly conducted in Canada and India. Together, they will contribute to the growing body of literature in this important field.

As Dr. Loiselle underscores, "PORT's main mission has been to develop supportive interventions that are responsive to the psychosocial needs of patients and families who must cope with cancer and its aftermath. We have already learned a great deal from our Indian colleagues who are committed to providing culturally sensitive care to the much diversified population that they serve."

PORT is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the National Cancer Institute of Canada (NCIC). For more information, please

contact port@mcgill.ca or Carmen.loiselle1@mcgill.ca
<http://www.port.mcgill.ca>.

Dr. Rahul Mehrotra to speak at the Canadian Centre for Architecture

The Canadian Centre for Architecture will be hosting a lecture by Rahul Mehrotra entitled "Mumbai: Kinetic City" on Thursday April 9, 2009 as one of the last Shastri 40th anniversary celebration events. Dr. Rahul Mehrotra is principal of the firm RMA Architects of Mumbai, India and an Associate Professor at the School of Architecture and Planning at MIT, USA.

The lecture will present a reading of Mumbai through its emergent urban form and city culture in general. Today, Mumbai is comprised of two components occupying the same physical space. The first is the Static City, which is built of more permanent material such as concrete, steel and brick; it is comprehended as a two-dimensional entity on conventional city maps and is monumental in its presence. The second is the Kinetic City, which is incomprehensible as a two-dimensional entity, it is perceived as a city in motion – a three-dimensional construct of incremental development. In fact, the Kinetic City, bazaar-like in form, can be seen as the symbolic image of the emerging Indian urban condition. The processions, weddings, festivals, hawkers, street vendors and slum dwellers all create an ever-transforming streetscape – a city in constant motion where the very physical fabric is characterized by the kinetic.

The Static City, on the other hand, dependent on architecture; for its representation is no longer the single image by which the city is read. Thus architecture is not the 'spectacle' of the city nor does it even comprise the single dominant image of the city. In contrast, festivals such as Diwali, Dussera, Navrathri, Muhharam, Durga Puja, Ganesh Chaturthi and many more, have emerged as the spectacles of the Kinetic City. Their presence on the everyday landscape pervades and dominates the popular visual culture of Mumbai and other Indian cities. The Kinetic City presents a compelling vision that potentially allows us to better understand the blurred lines of contemporary urbanism and the changing roles of people and spaces in urban society. Here the idea of a city is an elastic urban condition, not a grand vision, but a 'grand adjustment'.

The lecture will take place in the Paul Desmarais Theatre at 7:00 p.m.

York University: Faculty at work in India

Professors Darryl Reed, Department of Social Science and Ananya Mukherjee Reed, Department of Political Science, are currently at the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) as visiting faculty. During their six-month stay from January through June 2009 they are participating as faculty in workshops and courses at the IIMB. They will be working on a SSHRC-funded research project on social economy and will also be collaborating on research projects with IIMB faculty, including Prof. Chiranjib Sen, former President of the Shastri Institute, and Professor N. Balasubramanyam, Chairman of the Center for Corporate Governance and Citizenship at IIMB.

Professor Ali Kazimi, Department of Film Studies, was recently honoured with a fourth retrospective showcasing of his work as a director, at the ViBGYOR International Film Festival, which ran February 4-8 in Thrissur, India. The festival screened six of Prof Kazimi's productions: *Narmada: A Valley Rises*(1994), *Shooting Indians: A Journey with Jeffrey Thomas* (1997), *Documenting Dissent* (2001) *Continuous Journey* (2004), *Runaway Grooms* (2005) and *Rex vs. Singh* (2008). Prof Kazimi himself was a guest at the event. *Continuous Journey* and *Rex vs. Singh* were also shown at the *Making Migrant: Dialogs Through Film Festival* in late January, organized by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust in New Delhi, India.