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MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY



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THE *STRENGTH* OF MOUNT
ROYAL UNIVERSITY'S FIRST
CENTURY IS OUR *FOCUS* IN THE
NEXT: TEACHING AND LEARNING
INFORMED BY SCHOLARSHIP.



*New president David Docherty
is meeting the University's most
important people: its students.*

AN INSIDER'S TAKE ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

When **David Docherty, PhD**, became Mount Royal University's ninth president earlier this year, he knew all about Mount Royal's century-long track record of excellence in post-secondary education.

Now that he's on campus, he's coming face to face with the University's most important people: its students. Like **Emily Gajda**, who met up with David for coffee just three weeks into his new role.

"I think an effective university president is approachable and shows an interest in what students are doing — a friendly face that everyone can relate to," Emily says.

And, based on her conversation with him, Emily thinks David is off to a strong start.

"He took me seriously and was interested in what I had to say. He seems to care about Mount Royal and wants to make it a good institution for students."

For David, meeting with Emily was a meeting of like minds: she is a third-year Policy Studies student; he is a recognized expert on Canadian parliamentary democracy and an

award-winning professor who taught Political Science at Wilfrid Laurier University for more than 15 years.

"I know many professors who teach in Mount Royal's Policy Studies program by dint of their reputation," David says. "I know what they publish, and what struck me is that Emily knows as much about their work as I do.

"That demonstrates Emily's strengths as a student, and Mount Royal's strengths as an undergraduate university where small class sizes encourage interaction between students and faculty."

He was also struck by Emily's enthusiasm and her strong intellectual curiosity. "We want students at Mount Royal who are intellectually hungry, and we want to feed that curiosity," David says. "We want to create an appetite for learning that lasts a lifetime."

At the risk of pushing a metaphor, Mount Royal is constantly expanding its menu, introducing two new bachelor's degree programs to its diverse mix of programs

in 2011 — one in Elementary Education and one in Midwifery — and updating the Academic Plan to foster more opportunities for undergraduates to work alongside faculty members on research.

"Mount Royal's integrated approach to teaching and learning helps students become thoughtful critical thinkers with a true understanding of community and citizenship," David says.

In fact, David recently hired Emily as a research assistant.

"I have a couple of projects I could use some help on from a student perspective," he says. "There may be opportunities to write a paper together and present at a conference next year."

That's just one example of the student experience at Mount Royal University. Many more are showcased in the following pages, and on mtroyal.ca/focus.



Callaway has discovered her own future: she wants to focus on military psychology in graduate school to one day be able to treat those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, depression and other conditions.

MILITARY LIVES INSPIRE LIFE-CHANGING STUDY

Karis Callaway didn't expect military families to change her life — but they have.

"My original mindset was that research was a necessary evil, but I was able to bring together the very military with the very academic to do a project that was very much my own," says the graduate of Mount Royal University's Bachelor of Arts (Psychology — Athabasca University at Mount Royal) program.*

"It has helped me find something I want to do for the rest of my life. While it's true that Canada's participation in war may be coming to an end, we still need to deal with the aftermath. I just can't imagine myself not helping."

Callaway has no military background, but during her second year as a student, she began volunteering with the Calgary Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) and its Keep in Touch (KIT) program, which helps families of deployed personnel stay connected. In her

final year of her Mount Royal program — and building her resume for graduate school — she decided to focus on the KIT program as a research project for a Directed Readings course. She had already developed strong bonds with the MFRC and with one of her professors, **Evelyn Field, PhD**, so Callaway asked both to be part of her research into the effectiveness of the KIT program for parents and spouses.

"Evelyn was a master at guiding me, but not doing it for me," Callaway says. Field and other Mount Royal professors helped clear the project through the University's Human Ethics Board, but Callaway herself developed the online survey, gathered responses, crunched numbers, evaluated results and wrote and submitted the final report. In early June, she presented her findings in a poster session at the Connecting Minds 2011 North American Undergraduate Psychology Research Conference at Kwantlen University in B.C.

"I'm a neuroscientist by training, but I couldn't say no to Karis's energy and drive," says Field. "At Mount Royal, we tell students we'll help them with whatever they want to do — and projects like this make me a better instructor because I also learn and gain a new perspective."

For Callaway, the connection with Field has been crucial. "I chose to attend Mount Royal because I needed to know my professors and I needed to have them know me," she says. "I needed the personal connection."

And because her research project has a real-world application, Callaway has discovered her own future: she wants to focus on military psychology in graduate school to one day be able to treat those who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, depression and other conditions.

* Mount Royal has offered its own four-year Bachelor of Arts degree since 2008. Prior to 2008, Mount Royal offered a four-year BA in collaboration with Athabasca University.



Kalinga Jagoda's students presented papers at major international conferences — something usually reserved for master's and PhD students.

OUTSTANDING UNDERGRADS STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Every year, Mount Royal assistant professor **Kalinga Jagoda, PhD**, invites his Bachelor of Business Administration students to take their learning to a higher level.

Last summer, ten of his students did just that, by presenting papers at major international conferences — something usually reserved for master's and PhD students.

"It was a little intimidating," confesses **Josh Raddis**, a Marketing Major. "But it's not every day an undergraduate gets chosen by a professor to develop a paper, so I jumped at the opportunity."

Fellow student **Nathaniel Johnson**, a General Management major, says presenting was great practice for moving forward academically and in his career.

"It was an excellent opportunity to build my skills and my repertoire of what I can bring to the table," he says. "Research is a great opportunity to showcase our school, our staff, our students, our research — what we're capable of."

Jagoda teaches an Operations Management course where fourth-year BBA students investigate a problem, an issue or a new trend within the community. Jagoda acts as a mentor, sharing his expertise and encouraging students to submit select papers to appropriate conferences.

"These conferences have a blind review process, so they evaluate each paper based on its quality and how it's going to fit into the conference proceedings," Jagoda says. "Each conference is very competitive and undergraduates rarely go to them."

Raddis presented a paper on the implementation of a cost-effective scheduling system at the Annual Conference of the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada in Montreal in July. Johnson presented his research paper on a new framework for sustainable development of the oilsands at the Annual Conference of the Production and Operations Management Society in Reno, Nev., in April, and at the International Annual European Operations Management Conference in Cambridge, U.K., in July.

"When students write at a high intellectual level, they develop the capacity to look beyond accepted norms," Jagoda says. "Their thinking processes are expanded when they increase the knowledge base of an area of study."

"These are not just academic papers," Jagoda emphasizes. "These are students' openings, whether it's for a job or for further education. There's no better example of what you can do than presenting in front of an international audience and defending your idea among the best in the world."

Since Jagoda began teaching at the Bissett School of Business in 2008, the number of his students to present at conferences has grown steadily, and he has inspired at least two to apply for graduate school.

"I'm in this profession to train the next generation of business leaders," Jagoda says. "It's our responsibility as academics to develop highly qualified professionals and prepare them for the challenges of the future."



The Assessment Seminar is a university-wide initiative grounded in hearing first-hand from students and responding to what they say.

STUDENTS SHAPING CHANGE

A mosaic of Post-it notes. A blank slate. A group of students, faculty and staff working together to reach shared goals. These are the makings of the Mount Royal University Assessment Seminar.

“Post-it notes, recipe cards, coloured markers, technology — we used them all!” says **Jim Zimmer, PhD**, dean of the Faculty of Teaching and Learning. “These tools were part of our process to interpret and make meaning of the vast quantities of data the Assessment Seminar has generated.”

The Assessment Seminar is a university-wide initiative grounded in hearing first-hand from students — in depth and in their own words — about aspects of their undergraduate experience, everything from teaching and learning to campus life. Most importantly, it’s about responding to what they say.

The heart of the Assessment Seminar is the method used to collect student feedback: in-depth, one-on-one interviews, face to face, with 20 to 30 structured, probing questions.

Student involvement is extensive, because students are not only interviewed, they also conduct the interviews, help analyze the data and contribute to the Assessment committee.

The originator of the Assessment Seminar, Richard Light, PhD, developed this approach at Harvard University — and it’s an idea that’s sticking. Mount Royal and Harvard are among the few universities using it to plan and hone the way they teach, engage and serve students.

At Mount Royal, the Assessment Seminar is led by the Faculty of Teaching and Learning, guided by a steering committee and mobilized by a cross-institutional committee of more than 50 students, faculty and staff.

To date, two rounds of the Assessment Seminar have been completed.

In the first, 97 students in their first year of a Mount Royal degree were interviewed, resulting in 1,300 pages of interview transcripts. Working groups were struck to analyze the findings, to identify insights

and trends and to develop concrete recommendations in response. These reports are now informing planning and decision-making in areas across campus.

The second round involved 54 third-year degree students, and Mount Royal is about to embark on its third Assessment Seminar, this time focused on students in the final year of their baccalaureate program.

According to **Kaylene McTavish**, a third-year Bachelor of Communication — Public Relations student, “Being one of the students interviewed, and now on the committee, it is inspiring to know that my voice is being listened to. I am one of the many students helping to shape change on campus.”



“Gathering water samples for analysis was a great experience for me. Learning from a textbook or being in an office wouldn’t have been the same.”

SOAKING UP LEARNING IN THE FIELD

Calgary has some of the best water in the world. **Mclean Eubank** would like to help keep it that way — and he spent his summer learning how by getting slightly muddy and thoroughly soaked on the front line of water quality monitoring for the City of Calgary.

“I’m passionate about water,” says the third-year student in Mount Royal’s Bachelor of Applied Science (Environmental Science) program. “Untreated storm water is a major issue and I want to contribute to making it better — to do more about the quality of storm water before it goes back into the river system.”

During his field studies assignment from May to August, Eubank learned by working in the field and on the equipment he’s likely to use in his future career. “Gathering water samples for analysis was a great experience for me. Learning from a textbook or being in an office wouldn’t have been the same.”

He’s confident the experience will be valuable when he graduates and give him a leg up with prospective employers who will

be able to see proof of his ability to work with industry equipment.

Phil Jerome, Team Lead of the City’s Water Quality Monitoring Group, concurs. “Summer is our busy season, so hiring summer students aligns with our business needs,” he says. “And it also builds good rapport with potential future employees. With this experience, students gain background and key knowledge, and they’ll be ‘tried and tested’ if they want to work with us in the future.”

In class, Eubank got the general overview and baseline theory to step into his summer assignment. On the job, he learned as he went along, picking up inside knowledge from Jerome. Wearing hip waders, coveralls, work boots, a lifejacket and other safety gear, he was part of a five-member team gathering samples to test surface water quality around the city, and to watch the quality of the water leaving the city.

His duties included downloading data from sondes (water quality sensors) in the Bow River and taking “grab samples” from the

river. He spent a lot of time at the Coventry Hills Storm Water Pond following rain events, where he also conducted confined-space entries into the storm sewers to maintain them.

Eubank says he was lucky to have had this opportunity to work on a variety of projects, hone his trouble-shooting skills and build experience in an area of interest — water quality.

“Cities can do better,” he says. “And I want to be part of it.”



*Gen Ed introduces intellectual possibilities
and exposes students to the fullness of the
university environment.*

OPENING MINDS TO BROADER PERSPECTIVES

If knowledge is the currency of the information economy, Gen Ed is an investment in student learning that yields significant intellectual dividends for Mount Royal bachelor's degree and diploma students.

"General Education is the perfect way to approach higher education," explains **Roberta Lexier, PhD**, assistant professor in the Department of General Education. "We're teaching students how to learn and giving them a broader knowledge base so they can approach the world from various perspectives and be active members of society."

Gen Ed is the suite of general education course requirements built into Mount Royal bachelor's degree and diploma programs. Unique in Canada and rare across North America, Gen Ed gives students a broad multidisciplinary base in four key areas: numeracy and scientific literacy; values, beliefs and identity; community and society; and communication.

"The questions and problems we're facing in the world are not easily solved through one approach," says Lexier, who teaches

community and society courses. "Too often we look for easy answers to complex issues, but we can and should approach different problems in different ways.

"Part of my job as an instructor in Gen Ed is to examine that complexity, get students to think about the world around them, how they fit into it and how it works for them."

"Gen Ed expanded my horizons, my interests and my options," says **Matthew Ironside**, a second-year Bachelor of Business Administration (Marketing) student. "It gave me a lot of flexibility. I know about more than my discipline and, having that breadth of perspective, I can be more of an asset to my future employer."

Students often arrive at university with a set idea of the field they want to study or the career they want to pursue. Opening their minds can lead to new ways of looking at and understanding the world — and their place in it — as students and throughout their lives.

Karim Dharamsi, PhD, chair of the Department of General Education, says

Gen Ed introduces intellectual possibilities and exposes students to the fullness of the university environment. He likens Gen Ed to exploring a vast city.

"From a distance, you can see what it looks like, but until you explore and navigate the alleyways and the buildings, you don't really see it. Being at university is like exploring a rich city. The more you see, the more that's disclosed. The less you see, the more you think you've seen it all."

Ironside, for one, likes what he sees. "Everyone says you need to broaden your horizons. Gen Ed does that."



*Mount Royal students helped develop S4,
a K-Grade 6 program now being piloted in
15 Calgary schools.*

GAINING STRENGTH TO CHANGE BEHAVIOUR

School work doesn't get any more real than this.

Start Smart Stay Safe (S4) is currently being piloted in the Kindergarten – Grade 6 health and wellness curriculum at 15 Calgary schools. Students from Mount Royal University's Bachelor of Applied Child Studies program and **Dawne Clark, PhD**, director of the Centre for Child Well-Being, were instrumental in the innovative program's launch. Now they're on the vanguard of evolution in child studies.

Last year, 12 Mount Royal students took part in developing S4, which builds children's resilience in four areas — success, significance, self-awareness and service — to give them the strength to resist crime, bullying, gangs, addictions and other negative behaviours.

"This is a paradigm shift for our entire profession," Clark says. "Rather than looking for problems to fix, S4 takes an approach that builds on the strengths of families and communities to promote resilience."

"We can talk all we want as professors, and students can read all they want as students, but it isn't until you live it, do it and experience it that you really understand a strength-based approach," Clark says.

Fourth-year students Laura Ellis and Elaine Weekse were involved in the project, working as research assistants during a three-month summer assignment in the field.

"We'd heard about strength-based practice and resilience all the way through our degree program," Ellis says. "Now it all makes sense and I truly understand what it is. It just clicked."

She believes she's personally become more strength-based as a result, and has a new sense of confidence.

"This helped me grow as a person," Weekse adds. "The project not only spoke to my courses and grades, but spoke to me personally in a deep way. I am more able to make sure the opinions I'm forming are well supported, and it has opened me to new possibilities."

"If our students have this strength-based approach when they graduate, they'll be in a stronger position themselves to work around the deficit perspective in the field, and change what people do," Clark says. "This is how our students become the change in the community — and how we support them to be that change."

The original idea for S4 came from Calgary's Police Chief Rick Hanson, who hopes that greater resilience will result in fewer children and youth engaging in criminal activities. He invited Mount Royal and the two Calgary school boards to collaborate with the Calgary Police Service on the three-year project, which has received funding from the Government of Alberta Safe Communities Innovation Fund.



*David Taras, PhD: Holder of Mount Royal's
Ralph Klein Chair in Media Studies.
Political commentator. Author.
Great teacher.*

THE MESSAGE IS CLEAR: GREAT LEARNING MATTERS

The formula for great learning is relatively straightforward: one part great teaching combined with one part great students.

“You grow as a teacher because of your experience with students,” says **David Taras, PhD**, a Mount Royal University professor, well-known political analyst, prolific author and long-time student favourite who has received a number of awards for teaching excellence. “Teaching is transformative. As a teacher, you make a difference in a class and it to you.”

Bring it all together well and “the amount of brainpower, experience and thought in a Mount Royal classroom is extraordinary” — which is a good thing, because the holder of Mount Royal’s Ralph Klein Chair in Media Studies needs full-throttle brainpower to explore the impact of new media.

“Some of my students know at least as much as I do,” Taras acknowledges. Together, they’re exploring the cutting edge of a communication revolution. When Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are already yesterday’s news, what’s next in social and inter-connected media?

“This is kind of Star Trek stuff,” he says. “We’ve never travelled to this place before. It’s like we’re on a boat in the ocean and not seeing the storm. I’m a bit like a storm chaser, so I can and must learn from my students and also pass on my knowledge.”

That kind of give-and-take comes from the freedom that small-sized classes allow, where a professor can “look students in the eye and get to know them,” Taras explains. He knows the first name of each of his students, and asks about their interests, their hobbies and why they’re at Mount Royal — even asking for candid feedback on how he’s doing as a teacher.

It’s what makes Taras an exceptional prof.

In a state-of-the-art TV studio located on campus, Mount Royal University Broadcasting diploma students are on the air, reporting on local news, covering sporting events, and bringing insightful productions to viewers throughout the winter semester.

- » Starting in late January, Shaw TV in Calgary will air a half-hour news show twice a week featuring stories and reports by Mount Royal Broadcasting students.
- » CTV Two — formerly ACCESS Television — will broadcast half-hour news shows during the winter semester, each showcasing “best of” compilations by Mount Royal students.
- » The new TELUS Optik TV lets viewers watch Mount Royal student productions through their video on demand service.



David Bird, PhD, says, “By teaching, I am always trying to re-inform myself of the fundamentals of my field.”

LEARNING THE MOST WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT

Brittany Williamson spent the summer getting hands-on with mutants — unexpected, interesting, surprising, plant mutants.

“I feel like I’ve snagged an opportunity most undergraduate students don’t get,” says the third-year Bachelor of Science (Cellular and Molecular Biology) student, who has worked with Mount Royal University Biology professor **David Bird, PhD**, as a research assistant for the last two years.

“As a student, you get hands-on experience in labs, but with research, you also get to be insightful,” Williamson says.

Bird is a plant cell biologist who has devoted many years to investigating how plants form their waxy “skin.” Last year, he and Williamson shared an “aha!” moment during their research project, when they found mutant plants that don’t make either anthocyanin (the pigment that protects plants from ultraviolet light) or the wax that forms the skin necessary for a plant’s survival. They hit the lab again this year to find out why.

Williamson says the experience — and especially their discovery of what she describes as “our own little diamond in science” — has changed her.

“It’s amazing how much I’ve learned over the past two summers. My GPA went up, because I’m thinking like a scientist. I’m not just memorizing things, but understanding them. It feels like everything is coming together.”

The experience has also helped Williamson determine what she wants to do with her life. She plans to pursue a master’s degree and a PhD so she can find a career working in a lab.

Bird explains that understanding the research process is a central part of any university science degree. “The only way to understand the process and to make it clear is for students to do real science — which is different from doing a lab assignment where the outcome is already known.

“The fun thing about science is that very simple questions often have very complicated answers,” Bird says. “It’s 5 per cent ‘aha!’ and 95 per cent failure — but every once in awhile, you discover something new and interesting.”

Bird says making new discoveries is part of his role as a researcher at Mount Royal, but it’s also about teaching “the next generation of people who will be researchers, policy makers and general citizens to have an appreciation for research.”



Mount Royal University's Cougar athletes are making an impact — in Canadian varsity sports, and in their community.

CHAMPIONS IN EVERY ARENA: THE COUGARS AT MOUNT ROYAL

He shoots! She scores! They win!

Such is the record and reputation of the Mount Royal Cougars — one of the most successful varsity athletic teams in Canada. Over the last four seasons of competition within the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC), the Cougars have won 38 medals in provincial and national championships.

Just last season, the Cougars were named ACAC champions in men's golf, women's golf, men's hockey and women's volleyball, and women's volleyball champions in the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA).

2011–2012 will be the team's last year as a member of ACAC and its first as a probationary member of the Canada West Universities Athletic Association (CWUAA). Once CWUAA membership is finalized, the Cougars would be able to compete with other western universities in basketball, hockey, soccer and volleyball, starting in fall 2012.

But competition is only part of the Cougars story.

According to Jean LaForest, coach of the Cougar Men's Hockey team, "Being good citizens — giving back to the community — is just as important. Our players are involved in mentoring young hockey players, working with the coaches and managers of local community leagues.

"And it's not just about showing off their skills — it's also about showing kids that a passion for sport can be a part of your life, right alongside your commitment to education."

It comes down to balance. Women's volleyball coach, Sandra Lamb, concurs. "We work with our athletes to ensure their academics stay on track while they pursue excellence in their sport."

With student input, Cougar Athletics has developed unique opportunities for athletes to make a difference in the community — opportunities like **C is for Cougar**, a

reading program for elementary schools, and **Cougars on the Court**, where Cougar athletes can participate and assist in teaching a physical education class.

The community is welcome to catch the action at every Mount Royal University Cougars game, or follow the teams on Facebook.

Check out the game schedule on the Cougars website — mtroyal.ca/cougars.

Your ticket to exceptional athletic competition is only \$6 each for adults (\$7 for playoff games), \$3 for seniors and alumni (\$4 for playoff games) and free for children under 12, Mount Royal students and Mount Royal staff.

You can also link to Cougars action from home because every Cougars home game is webcast. Just click the **Game Central** button on the Cougars website.

WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

“Gardeners know there are certain conditions under which (growth) happens. If the conditions aren’t right, nothing grows. If the conditions are good, everything grows. Great teachers know this. Their job is to create the conditions in which people will grow. And these conditions include understanding the nature of talent and motivation and the need to feed people’s spirit and energies.”

*Sir Ken Robinson –
Author, speaker, international advisor on education - 2010*

NO ARGUMENT.

At Mount Royal University, student success has been our passion for more than 100 years. In every program and through every service, we work to create the right conditions for students to thrive.

Through innovative class projects, thought-provoking Gen Ed courses, undergraduate research and work-study experiences, and as we guide students toward a fine balance between academic and co-curricular pursuits, we are engaged in our life’s work: teaching and learning.

OUR STUDENTS VALUE EXCEPTIONAL TEACHING...

“We are not taught merely by a textbook but also through real-life scenarios, and I believe that is why so many students have the ability to excel in the ‘real world’ after graduation from Mount Royal. We are given projects in which we can show our creative side and in which our newly gained knowledge is put to the test.”

*Casey Sandwell
Third-year student,
Bachelor of Business Administration
— Marketing*



SO WE DELIVER IT.

“It all comes back to students. How could they not be an energizing influence — they’re at the best point of their lives, whether they’re 18 or 48. I honestly believe I change lives.

“How many people can say that?”

*Bruce Ravelli, PhD
Associate Professor, Sociology*

For more student and faculty views on Mount Royal’s teaching and learning — in their own words — go to mtroyal.ca/focus



MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY
IS BUILDING ON MORE THAN
A CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE IN
TEACHING AND LEARNING. OUR
FOCUS IS CLEAR: *THE SUCCESS OF
OUR STUDENTS.*

Community input is vital to the work we do at Mount Royal University.
Please share your feedback on the stories in this publication: e-mail facetoface@mtroyal.ca



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