SFU PROFESSOR FINDS PARANORMAL INVESTIGATORS ARE JUST LIKE US

Over the last few years, SFU professor Paul Kingsbury has attended UFO conferences and interviewed alien abductees as a part of his research on paranormal investigators. Not trying to prove or disprove the existence of paranormal occurrences, the cultural geographer is interested in discovering what motivates investigators to continue their work. So far his research has found that investigators are just like anyone else in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, education levels and psychological well-being. Most of them, however, have had profound experiences and simply strive to learn more.

STUDY REVEALS 31 PER CENT CONCUSSION DROP WITH SHIELD-X DECAL USE

Shield-X, a helmet decal membrane designed to reduce sharp twisting during impact, was developed in SFU’s Head Injury Prevention Lab. In 2016, a pilot study tracking more than 300 young football players from eight teams across Canada and the U.S. using Shield-X found a 31 per cent reduction in the number of concussions reported. This study follows seven years of rigorous testing in the SFU lab and independent labs in the U.S.

SFU MOVES AHEAD WITH SURREY CAMPUS EXPANSION

A $126 million infrastructure investment positions SFU’s Surrey campus to lead in the clean tech and sustainable energy sector. The five-story, 15,000 square-meter building will house an interdisciplinary Sustainable Energy Engineering program – the first of its kind in Western Canada and second only in Canada. Federal and provincial governments have committed $90 million in funding with the remainder coming from SFU and private donors.
TROTTIER OBSERVATORY BRINGS PLANET TO LIGHT

Using a new spectrometer, a tool that measures light from distant stars, the Trottier Observatory detected its first planet outside of Earth’s solar system. The exoplanet, Tau Boötes Ab, is approximately 51 light years away and was initially discovered in 1996. Although easier to find because of its sheer size, even just ten years ago this method of detection was not available at most university teaching observatories until recently.

SEA STAR DEATH TRIGGERS ECOLOGICAL DOMINO EFFECT

In summer 2013, millions of sea stars along North America’s west coast contracted a wasting disease and died in one of the largest wildlife mass mortality events ever recorded. In B.C., the sunflower star was among the most affected. Comparative underwater surveys found that green sea urchins, the sunflower stars’ prey, quadrupled, while kelp, the sea urchins’ preferred food, decreased by 80 per cent. A new study by SFU marine ecologists Jessica Schultz, Ryan Cloutier and Isabelle Côté reveals that the sea star loss has led to an ecological domino effect triggered by changes at the end of a food chain.

BEEDIE IS A TOP 50 BUSINESS SCHOOL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

SFU’s Beedie School of Business secured a spot in the Top 50 Environmental Sustainability Programs ranking in Net Impact’s 2016 Guide to Business Schools for Social and Environmental Impact report. Beedie is the only Canadian school listed in the top 50, which features leading programs from global institutions such as Copenhagen Business School and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
ALUMNUS REACHES OUT TO TROUBLED INDIGENOUS YOUTH WITH MESSAGES OF HOPE

SFU alumnus and First Nations filmmaker Kelvin Redvers and his sister Tunchai both grew up in the Northwest Territories. They are the combined force behind WE MATTER, a national video campaign that shares encouraging messages with troubled Indigenous youth. Based on the successful U.S. video-messaging project “It Gets Better,” which targeted LGBTQ teens, Kelvin and Tunchai want to encourage Indigenous role models and other prominent Canadians to submit short messages of strength and positivity to help break the cycle of depression and suicide among Indigenous youth.

wemattercampaign.org

ALUMNA’S DEDICATION AND INSPIRATION WINS INDSPIRE AWARD

Educator Denise Augustine, who holds an SFU master of education, is the director of aboriginal education and learner engagement with the Cowichan School District. During the past eight years, she has implemented ambitious improvements to cultural knowledge and curriculum, resulting in aboriginal graduation rates that have nearly doubled from 30 per cent to 58 per cent. Her achievements were recognized in November when she won an Indigenous Educator Award for leadership from Indspire, an Indigenous-led charity that invests in the education of Indigenous people.

GRADUATING ENTREPRENEUR DEVELOPS ALGORITHM TO MITIGATE RISK

Three years ago, Jasneet Sabharwal flew more than 11,000 kilometers from his home in New Delhi, India to study at SFU. Today, he is the founder of Text IQ Labs Canada, a venture launched in 2016 that develops artificial intelligence software. The software relies on a big-data-based algorithm that helps enterprises reduce the risk of losing major lawsuits by minimizing the probability of missing a key piece of evidence during the document review process.
MBA GRAD WITH KNACK WINS B.C. SOCIAL INNOVATION YOUTH AWARD

SFU alumna Anna Migicovsky addresses complex social issues through her work as chief operations officer (COO) at Knack. Through the Potluck Café Society, Migicovsky helped establish and launch Knack, which is an employment program and app for people living in the Downtown Eastside. Migicovsky’s was one of only 12 people to receive a British Columbia Social Innovation Youth Award – a joint partnership between the B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation and RADIUS SFU.

SFU ALUMNA PLACES THIRD IN GRUELING HISTORY CHANNEL DOCUMENTARY, “ALONE”

Work experience in both polar regions and survival of multiple encounters with grizzly bears, black bears and cougars wasn’t harrowing enough for SFU alumna Megan Hanacek. She decided to take it up a notch by participating in the History Channel’s survival documentary series, “Alone.” Hanacek – a professional forester, biologist and mother of two – was the only Canadian woman selected from more than 50,000 applicants to live in the cold, isolated region of Patagonia, Argentina. Equipped with limited gear, her wilderness experience and 80 pounds of camera supplies to self-document her adventure, Hanacek lasted 78 days, placing her third among the 10 competitors.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR PIONEERING FORENSIC ENTOMOLOGIST

SFU professor and alumna, Gail Anderson, is a forerunner in the field of forensic entomology. Named among TIME Magazine’s top five global innovators in the criminal justice field in 2001, her contributions to baseline data have been used worldwide by police and forensic teams. In addition, she has shared her knowledge with members of the local SPCA and has played critical roles in some high-profile animal cases, leading to convictions or confessions, such as the case involving the slaughter of sled dogs near Whistler, B.C. For her nearly 25 years of research, Anderson was recently recognized internationally with the Achievement Award in Forensic Life Sciences from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.
CHARLES CHANG’S ENTREPRENEURIAL INSTINCT

Charles Chang, founder of leading plant-based natural health and performance product Vega and SFU alumnus, made a definitive statement about the importance of entrepreneurial talent in today’s shifting business landscape by donating $10 million to SFU. Chang’s significant contribution establishes the Charles Chang Institute for Entrepreneurship within the Beedie School of Business; the multidisciplinary institute will help students discover, evaluate and actualize opportunities that positively impact their communities.

A HELPING HAND FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

In 1967, Sylvia Clarke was a young mother with no formal education. With the goal of becoming a school teacher, she started night classes. Upon completing her high school diploma and college coursework, she entered SFU’s teaching program. After seven years of incredible determination, Sylvia began teaching primary school in the Burnaby School District; where she continued until her retirement in 1999. Sylvia strongly believes that higher education opens doors to life’s exciting opportunities. With foresight and generosity, she established the Sylvia Clarke Endowment Fund with a gift in her will, which funds an undergraduate bursary for students in SFU’s Faculty of Education.
DONORS SEND SFU RESEARCHERS TO CYBORG OLYMPICS

After losing his hand in a workplace accident, Danny Letain dreamed of one day moving his fingers again. With this goal in mind, SFU researchers known as M.A.S.S. Impact (Muscle Activity Sensor Strip) worked with Letain to design a new control system for one of the world’s most advanced bionic hands. The team then launched a crowdfunding campaign to attend the inaugural Cybathlon 2016 in Zurich, Switzerland. Known as the cyborg Olympics, the competition is for people with disabilities who use robotic technology. With support from SFU alumni and friends, M.A.S.S. Impact travelled to Cybathlon – the only Canadian team to compete – and managed to garner international attention for this life-changing technology.

GENEROSITY MAKES DREAMS COME TRUE

Mamadi Camara’s life started in Guinea. He came to Canada with his mother and sister when he was four years old and settled in Montreal. Finances were tight growing up, but Camara hoped to one day go to university and play professional soccer. Because of alumni donor support, Camara is now in his second year at SFU, competing at an elite level on Canada’s only National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) soccer team. He’s quickly developed into one of SFU’s star players following an outstanding first season with nine goals and six assists. The Vancouver Whitecaps are already keeping their eye on him.
**PHD STUDENT WORKING TO REVIVE ANCIENT ABORIGINAL CLAM GARDENING PRACTICES**

Skye Augustine is passionate about marine science. She's also from the Stz’uminus Nation on Vancouver Island and is interested in creating space for cultural protocols and First Nations’ worldviews alongside Western knowledge. Augustine works for Parks Canada as the Clam Garden Project Coordinator in the Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. She's now on temporary leave to pursue a PhD at SFU focused on reviving ancient clam gardens - previous SFU research revealed that these gardens, cultivated in rock-walled terraces, produce significantly better harvests. Through this project, she hopes to improve the health of beaches and generate opportunities for Coast Salish people to reconnect with important places and customary foods, such as clams.

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**“MUTATION RESEARCH” HOOKS BIOMEDICAL STUDENT**

Colin Peters started studying biomedical physiology in 2009 at SFU with a clear goal in mind. He wanted to become a doctor “just like everyone else.” Seven years later, Peters says he's no longer interested in becoming a clinician after falling in love with the “mutation research” he pursued during his time both as an undergraduate and now as a PhD student. Peters states, “we’re really good at finding mutations in DNA, but figuring out how different events trigger mutations to harm the patient – that’s where we have a lot of work to do.” After recently publishing his ninth paper, this time on Dravet syndrome – a rare disease that causes severe and sometimes fatal epileptic seizures in infants – he says it’s the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives that keeps him engaged as a scientist and motivates him to work hard.
MECHATRONICS STUDENT’S RESEARCH POISED TO REVOLUTIONIZE WHEELCHAIR DESIGN

Imagine if a manual wheelchair could be adjusted as easily as an office chair. This seemingly simple idea could have a radical impact on the future of wheelchair design – and SFU mechatronics student Louise Thomas’ research is key to making it a reality. For the last two years, Thomas has been working with SFU mechatronics professor Carolyn Sparrey and BCIT professor Jaimie Borisoff – a wheelchair user himself – to research the impact of an adjustable backrest and seat on wheelchair usability. By changing the backrest, uphill stability could be improved by more than 15 degrees, and when the user is on level ground, it makes it easier to wheel and reduces arm strain. The results are promising and could increase independence for wheelchair users. She believes this improvement has the potential to make a major difference in people’s lives.

TERRY FOX MEDAL WINNER GIVES BACK TO CANCER COMMUNITY

At age 11, Roohy Thandi was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer known as Burkitt’s lymphoma. After successfully completing the excruciating treatment that saved her life, she promised herself she’d give back to the people and organizations that helped her during her illness. Now a third-year student majoring in biological sciences at SFU, Thandi aspires to be a pediatric oncologist. Meanwhile, she donates countless hours and energy to charities such as Camp Goodtimes and SFU’s Club for the Cure. A recent Terry Fox Gold Medalist, she strives for a world free of cancer while sharing these words of wisdom: “The hardest and most refreshing lesson is that life has very little to do with you. You don’t always have the starring role. And you don’t always get the guarantee of having more time. Life is about people. It’s about touching lives and being part of something bigger than just you.”
Maclean’s, World University Rankings: SFU has once again topped the 2016 Maclean’s Magazine University rankings in the comprehensive universities category.

First Canadian research university to be U.S. accredited
The Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) granted SFU accreditation after a seven-year comprehensive and rigorous process. Accreditation gives the University added recognition for its commitment to excellence and for the quality of its programs.

Top Canadian Employer: For the tenth consecutive year, SFU has been named one of Canada’s best employers in the Canada’s Top 100 Employers competition.

The SFU Surrey–TD Community Engagement Centre (SFU Surrey CEC) is co-winner of a 2016 Silver Global Best Award from the International Partnership Network and the Conference Board of Canada for partnerships that build learning communities for North America.

Re$earch Infosource: SFU is ranked as the number one comprehensive university for the University Research Income Growth List. This means that over the past 15 years, SFU’s percentage of change/growth has increased an impressive 362 per cent.

Fair Trade Campus: SFU named Fair Trade Campus for fourth consecutive year.
There are more than 145,000 SFU alumni living in over 135 countries.