It is indeed a bittersweet moment to draft my final introductory comments for the newsletter as I prepare to step down from the Dean’s office after completing my ten year term. As preparation for this, I went back and reviewed our archived news stories and newsletters from the early years. It was a stark reminder of how far this Faculty has come from very humble origins.

In 2007 we were two years old with a handful of faculty and staff, a brand new Masters program in population health and the beginnings of an undergraduate curriculum, a blueprint for a building, and a lot of work ahead of us. We were a collection of faculty with almost no experience and a steep learning curve as we adjusted to the SFU policy and governance environment and worked together to craft a unique identity and set of practices as the foundation for a new Faculty. Given the extraordinary expectations of the University for immediate success, our process was not like building a house step by step, but rather like building an airplane while flying it. Our experience was not without challenges, and there were definite missteps. Due to the collective dedication of a committed group of faculty and staff willing to support each other and take on far more than the usual “university service”, we are now a vibrant and internationally recognized Faculty, attractive to students at all levels, and remarkably successful in attracting both research and philanthropic resources. This success is well documented in our 10th Anniversary Report “Celebrating a Decade of Engagement”.

Instead I would like to reflect briefly on what this experience has taught me, as an anthropologist, about organizational growth and development in a university environment. Universities are extraordinarily complex organizations to manage, and to a large degree they rely on organizational culture as the foundation for governance. Leadership in a university is largely reliant on a peer model and indeed most university leaders are first and foremost teachers and researchers with very limited management training or experience. Leaders generally rely on the cultural norms and history of the organization as the foundation for governance and decision-making practices. As any anthropologist will tell you, cultures are extraordinarily resistant, or perhaps more accurately resilient, to change and this reality in part accounts for why universities are also resistant to change in policies and practices.

In FHS, unlike established units with vibrant and coherent cultural histories, we were a collection of newcomers with vastly different experiences of university practices across the globe. Although one might think all universities are more or less the same, this is profoundly not the case. At the highest level perhaps, universities share common goals, but everyday practices are vastly different. In FHS we were like a colony of immigrants from different countries, faced with the complex challenge of “evolving” a culture in an unknown societal context. For the most part, we understood this challenge and our collective response was generous and supportive. But inevitably, conflicts arose that challenged our collective need for collegial governance.

But we survived these challenges and ten years later we are now a vibrant and confident community with a shared vision for the future. Leadership is emerging all over the Faculty at all levels and there is an obvious collective will to move the Faculty forward in all areas to improve the experience for our students and to respond to the pressing research problems of our complex world.

This is an ideal time to transition to a new Dean. We are very fortunate to have attracted Dr. Tania Bubela to this role. Someone with an extraordinarily complex interdisciplinary background, a commitment to responding to the population health challenges that face us, and by all appearances, a willingness to work tirelessly to support the continued “evolution” of an outstanding collective who have the potential to be global leaders.

Although I am stepping down, I am not stepping away. I will be re-vitalizing my research interests with First Nations and in Southeast Asia, and I will be preparing for a new teaching role in the Faculty. I very much look forward to a continuing role as a faculty member in the ongoing challenge of realizing the extraordinary potential that this Faculty offers to our students and the communities around us.

- John O’Neil
FHS welcomes the following:

Evelyn Forrest as Manager, Budget & Financial Analysis. She began her appointment on February 14, 2017.

Dr. Arun Garg as Adjunct Professor. He began his appointment on April 1, 2017.

Dr. Cari Miller as Adjunct Professor. She began her appointment on January 1, 2017.

Kellie Smith as Manager, Graduate Programs. She began her appointment on April 5, 2017.

The AYAZAZI Research Study welcomes:

MPH practicum students Tatiana Pakhomova and Ashley Henry. They joined the AYAZAZI research team in Soweto and Durban in South Africa.

Au Revoir:

Amisha Choksey, Administrator with Education Programs. She ended her appointment on April 12, 2017.

Faculty Awards

Recipients of the SFU Health Sciences Child Health Faculty Award (supported by the Dr. Djavad Mowafaghian Foundation Endowment Fund):

- Dr. Ryan Allen
- Dr. Zabrina Brumme
- Dr. Angela Kaida
- Dr. Pablo Nepomnaschy

Recipients of the SFU Health Sciences Graduate Student Research Associate Award to support a graduate student trainee:

- Dr. Nicole Berry
- Dr. Shira Goldenberg
- Dr. Frank Lee

Paola Ardiles received the 2017 Surrey Board of Trade Social Trailblazer award on March 9, 2017.

Postdoc & Student Awards

MSc graduate (2015) and current research staff Jordan Brubacher won the Best Poster Award at the Annual Symposium on Environmental, Occupational and Public Health in January 2017.

Undergraduate student Sandali Chandrarathna received the SFU Health Sciences Award for Extraordinary Achievement.

Undergraduate student Katie Copeland received the SFU Health Sciences Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement/ Highest CGPA (BA).

Undergraduate student Donya Naz Divsalar received the Vicky Bach Memorial Book Prize.

Undergraduate student Nikkia Jones received the SFU Health Sciences Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement/ Highest CGPA (BSc).

Undergraduate student Cassandra Mah received a Social Science and Humanities Undergraduate Student Research Award (full-time) in summer 2016. She is supervised by Dr. Meghan Winters.
An Innovative Approach to Increasing Course Evaluations
Dr. Tun Myint achieved a response rate of over 80 percent for online course evaluations in HSCI 221, an undergraduate class with 219 students that he taught this past spring. Read more about his unique approach that encouraged his students to complete their Student Evaluation of Teaching and Courses (SETC) forms.

Health Sciences 449: Community and Health Service
This course was offered in Surrey for the first time in Spring 2017. The course focused on social innovation and health was taught by Paola Ardiles, who worked in partnership with the City of Surrey and Fraser Health.

The SFU Health Sciences Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGSC) Retreat
The UGSC held a retreat at the Alexandra Retreat & Events Centre in Crescent Beach on June 22, 2017. The retreat was focused on curriculum mapping and delineating the goals of the program. The UGSC committee approved the 120 unit honours option for SFU health sciences students, decreasing the minimum requirement from 132 units. The committee also approved the addition of the HSCI 460 CODE course "Population and Public Health Advocacy". These changes will be in effect for the Fall 2017 semester.

Teaching & Programs Update

MSc student Lief Pagalan received the David B. Bates Scholarship from the BC Ministry of Environment, the Fraser Basin Council, and the BC Clean Air Research Fund in March 2017. Pagalan also won Best Poster Presentation at the Semiahmoo Symposium on Environmental, Occupational and Public Health in January 2017. He is supervised by Drs. Meghan Winters and Bruce Lanphear.

PhD student Sopie Patterson received the Governor General’s Gold Medal at the Spring 2017 SFU Convocation Ceremony.

Undergraduate student Robert Payer received the Dean’s Undergraduate Convocation Medal at the Spring 2017 SFU Convocation Ceremony.

Undergraduate student Tomas Rapaport received the SFU Health Sciences Award for Citizenship and Exemplary Academic Performance.

PhD student Stefanie Rezansoff received the Dean’s Convocation Medal for her doctoral research at the Spring 2017 SFU Convocation Ceremony. She also received a Dean’s Convocation Medal for her Master’s degree in 2012, making her the first student at SFU to win the medal twice.

Undergraduate student Amanda Rowlands received a Social Science and Humanities Undergraduate Student Research Award (part-time) in summer 2017. She is supervised by Dr. Meghan Winters.

PhD student Stephanie Sersli received a Canada Graduate Scholarship doctoral award from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (3 years).

Undergraduate student Sandy Shergill was a student convocation speaker at the Spring 2017 SFU Convocation Ceremony.

Undergraduate student Sandy Shergill and Savannah Swann received the SFU Health Sciences Award for Outstanding Community.

PhD student Cecilia Sierra won the Best Oral Presentation award at the Annual Semiahmoo Symposium on Environmental, Occupational and Public Health in January 2017.

Undergraduate student Savannah Swann received the Patrick D. Morawski Award for Ethical Engagement.

Undergraduate student Marco Zenone received the SFU Health Sciences Award for Outstanding Service to the Faculty of Health Sciences.
The SFU Health Sciences Social Committee organized an enjoyable outing for faculty and staff to Yellow Dog Brewing in Port Moody on June 2, 2017.

The SFU Health Sciences Peer Mentoships Program hosted a successful career panel on March 10, 2017. Over 40 students attended the event, which featured established and recent health sciences graduates, and current students.

FHS in the Community

Health Sciences 891: Experiential Global Health Learning
Dr. Angela Kaida taught the second successful intensive global health experiential learning field school in Durban, South Africa in May 2017. A total of 20 students participated in the field school, including 12 from SFU and 8 from African universities, including Botswana, South Africa, and Kenya. Participating students learned from leading global HIV researchers, clinicians, advocates, and policy makers. The course prepared students for global public health research and practice by providing a unique, hands-on experience for students to adapt and apply key global health practices and principles within a socially and culturally diverse setting that is at the epicentre of the global HIV pandemic. Highlights included engaging with sex workers and sex worker rights advocates, learning from sangomas providing HIV counselling and care in rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal, a hands on ‘HIV in the Lab day’ at the HIV labs at the Africa Health Research Institute, learning about safer conception, PrEP, female condoms, and sexual and reproductive rights from adolescents and innovators in Durban CBD, and engaging with UNAIDS representatives in Pretoria to ask about how adolescent health is being centred in efforts to meet the 90-90-90 to end AIDS by 2030.