Dean’s Corner

As a new dean, let me first take this opportunity to introduce myself. My career so far has been non-linear, interdisciplinary, and collaborative. I am originally Australian with a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in zoology and genetics from the Australian National University in Canberra and a PhD in biological sciences from the University of Sydney. I moved to Canada in 1994 and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Toronto. This is where I had my first experiences teaching large undergraduate classes as a sessional, eventually landing a faculty position at the Mississauga campus. My years there were largely focused on teaching genetics-related courses and curricular development that included skills-based learning.

After four years in Toronto, our family moved to Edmonton in 1999, where I went back to law school. My transition to law was not planned and serves as an example for students that tackling new challenges can lead to interesting and expanded opportunities. While in law school, I was lucky to meet supportive mentors, with whom I continue to collaborate. Through them I had the opportunity to blend my science training with my new focus in law. I graduated as the Gold Medalist in 2003 and then had the privilege of clerking for The Honourable Justice Louise Arbour at the Supreme Court of Canada in Ottawa.

In 2004, I was called to the Bar in Alberta and hired as an Assistant Professor at the University of Alberta’s business school. I moved my position to the newly created School of Public Health in 2008 and served as Associate Dean for Research from 2014-2016. My well-funded research program in intellectual property and health law focuses on large collaborative science networks in genomics, gene therapy, and stem cell biology. It addresses the barriers to the effective translation of new technologies from university research to the clinic for the benefit of patients. These are varied and include ethical issues, effective communication of risks and benefits among stakeholder groups, commercialization and regulation.

Last summer, I moved here to the glorious West Coast where I am looking forward to skiing, climbing, hiking, mountaineering and a new sport for me, sea kayaking. As I took over my position, the most common metaphor, stated gently and with great sympathy, was “drinking from a fire hose”. The water pressure has gently abated over the past five months thanks to the help and guidance of a highly competent, patient and supportive staff combined with a collegial faculty. I am looking forward to sharing in their successes and have started to meet with each faculty member to learn about their aspirations for research and teaching. Indeed, these conversations have been the highlight of my work in FHS, so far.

There are many highlights for 2017. FHS faculty received $8.3M in research funding from diverse sources, including $4.8M in Tri-Council awards and $1.1M from US funding sources; and FHS raised $1.3M in major gifts. Dr. Robert Hogg was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada for his advancements in HIV/AIDS research, notably for his contributions toward understanding the impact of socio-demographic factors on marginalized populations living with the condition. Dr. Kanna Hayashi received a Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Scholar Award; Dr. Angela Kaida was re-appointed as a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Global Perspectives on HIV and Sexual and Reproductive Health; FHS lecturer, Paola Ardiles, was honoured with a 2017 Surrey Board of Trade Women in Business award for her role as a community “social trailblazer” and recognized as one of TD Bank’s 10 most influential Hispanic Canadians. As for our students, PhD student, Milad Parpouchi was awarded a prestigious national Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation scholarship.

Closer to home, Dr Will Small was appointed Director of the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction (CARMHA); and Dr. David Whitehurst was appointed as co-lead of the BC Support Unit’s Methods Cluster focused on Health Economics and Simulation Modelling. Meghan Winters was the 2017 recipient of the FHS award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching and Mentorship and Kate Carty was the 2017 recipient of the FHS award for Outstanding Staff Service for her work on CEPH accreditation and support for the MPH program and its students. In addition Elliot Goldner was posthumously awarded the Michael Hayes Senior Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, Research and Service.

I arrived at very busy time for the university. We immediately launched into crafting FHS contributions to the SFU 2018-2023 Academic Plan. This enables us to consolidate our strengths and to develop an integrated strategic plan for research, teaching, and community engagement, the three pillars of SFU. My goal for the upcoming year is to move forward with the FHS response to the SFU Aboriginal Reconciliation Council report, advance undergraduate and graduate curricular reform, build opportunities for experiential learning, improve the student experience on our three campuses, and strengthen interdisciplinary research clusters that address socially relevant health challenges, accounting for social inequities and improving population health. I am encouraged by the support from the FHS community as we move forward with our strategic planning and initiatives and look forward to 2018.

- Tania Bubela
Research Updates:

We are pleased to announce that 10 of our researchers have been awarded grants totalling over $6.4M from July 2017 to December 2017.

Our researchers have reported 41 new works published from July 2017 to December 2017.

Research Updates:

Dr. Tania Bubela was appointed Dean of Health Sciences. She began her appointment on September 1, 2017.

Dr. Ian Tietjen was appointed Assistant Professor. He began his appointment on July 1, 2017. He extends the following message: “My research focuses on mechanisms of viral pathogenesis and antiviral discovery and development. In particular, our lab is researching mechanisms of HIV latency and will also investigate replication of flaviviruses such as yellow fever and zika. We also want to look for and document new antiviral sources from natural products and traditional medicines from Southern Africa, British Columbia, and elsewhere. I’m very excited to be joining such a diverse and dynamic group at FHS and truly look forward to working together and hopefully starting some new collaborations!”

Dr. Will Small was appointed continuing Associate Professor in Addictions Research. He was also appointed Director of CARMHA effective September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2020.

Dr. Tim Beischlag was promoted to Professor effective September 1, 2017.

Dr. Julian Somers was promoted to Professor effective September 1, 2017.

Dr. Meghan Winters was promoted to Associate Professor effective September 1, 2017.

Tim Michel was appointed Project Coordinator and Research Associate. He is part of a CIHR-funded project on commercial tobacco control in partnership with the First Nations Health Authority.

Dr. Julian Somers was promoted to Professor effective September 1, 2017.

Dr. Tun Myint’s appointment as lecturer has been renewed for two years, from 2018 to 2019.

Isabel Lee was appointed as Data Research Assistant for the BC Healthy Connections Project at the Children’s Health Policy Centre.

Dr. Ann Pederson was appointed Adjunct Professor effective July 1, 2017.

Dr. Kimberly Miller was appointed Adjunct Professor effective September 1, 2017.

Dr. Malcolm King was appointed Adjunct Professor effective October 1, 2017.

Dr. Alexandra King was appointed Adjunct Professor effective October 1, 2017.

Joanne Park was appointed Budget Clerk. She began her appointment in a temporary capacity on July 25, 2017. She continued her appointment in a permanent capacity in October 2017.

Joe Chen started working as an FHS IT co-op student in September 2017.
Au Revoir:

Dr. Michel Joffres retired as Professor and was appointed Emeritus on September 1, 2017.
Dr. Kimberly Miller left her position as Assistant Professor on September 15, 2017.
Dr. Malcolm King left his position as Professor on October 12, 2017
Joanna Tong left her position as Director of Advancement on November 27, 2017.
Bobbi Nieuweboer left her position as Budget Clerk on July 2017.

Kudos (Awards & Recognition)

Dr. Robert Hogg was inducted as a member of the Order of Canada for his extensive contributions to HIV/AIDS research.

Dr. Stuart Peacock received an award for one of Canadian Cancer Society’s Top 10 research stories of 2017 (with Dr. Sonya Cressman) for his project: Determining the cost-effectiveness of screening people at high risk for lung cancer can help inform the design of an efficient lung cancer screening program in Canada.

Dr. Meghan Winters received the FHS Graduate Teaching/ Mentorship Excellence Award.

Dr. Elliot Goldner received the FHS Michael Hayes Senior Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching, Research and Service posthumously.

Kate Carty received the FHS Staff Award for Outstanding Service.

Postdoc & Student Awards

Postdoctoral fellow Kiffer Card was awarded the 2017-2018 Engage/University Without Walls Fellowship.

MSc student Kate Hosford received a KEY Graduate Scholarship to incorporate big data approaches into her research on the public bike share system. She is working on this with undergraduate student Sana Eftekhar Javaheri, who has been awarded a Social Science and Humanities Undergraduate Student Research Award (part time) for Fall 2017. Both are part of Dr. Meghan Winters’ Cities, Health and Active Transportation Research (CHATR) lab.

Sandra Hwang received the Women’s Health Research Foundation of Canada Graduate Scholarship and the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute Student Excellence Award.

The following students received the CIHR James Rossiter Practicum Award:

- Jessalyn Almond
- Tamar Austin
- Sara Bhatti
- Chenoa Cassidy-Matthews
- Lauryn Garrett
- Erica Kilius
- Sally Maguet
- Arpreet Singh
- Sierra Williams
- Adrienne Yeung
- Karthika Yogaratnam
Teaching & Programs Update

Health Sciences 891/488: Experiential Global Health Learning
Dr. Shira Goldenberg is delighted to announce the launch of ’Experiential Global Health Learning: Migrant Health’ (HSCI 891/488)’ at the Mexico-U.S. border this Spring, which will be hosted by FHS in partnership with the University of California, San Diego. During this 10-day intensive course, students will learn about health inequities and culturally appropriate strategies for preventing disease and promoting health amongst im/migrant populations through seminars at the University of California, San Diego and excursions to community-based and clinical sites in San Diego, CA and Tijuana, Mexico.

Improving Health Sciences Student Services
Health Sciences Information Technology (IT) Team of Darrin Grund, Jasper Stoodley and Ted Seto have been expanding the technology support for Graduate Programs. They are redesigning the current in-house graduate student management database, which involves reviewing current business practices and streamlining the current number of information systems used to manage our graduate students.

HSCI Co-op Numbers

Total Work Terms
SFU HSCI Co-op program began in 2007 for undergraduate students. Since inceptio, there have been 946 co-op work terms up to and including the Fall 2017 semester. For the last fiscal year (summer 2016 – spring 2017), there were 145 HSCI co-op work terms. We are presently working with approximately 400 HSCI Co-op students.

International Co-op Work Terms
Since Fall 2011, there have been 72 international co-op work terms. International students participation within Health Sciences Co-op is approximately 8%, with resources estimated at 3 to 1 for each VISA student. This number is growing each term.

Indigenous Students
We are aware of three indigenous students who have participated in co-op since the new HSCI administrative structure has been implemented.

Average Hourly Wage
HSCI Co-op students earn an average of $15.00/hour while on a co-op work term.

Participation Rate
At time of graduation the HSCI Co-op participation rate averages 34.8%. The average across all SFU Co-op programs is approximately 23%.

BA vs BSc
HSCI Co-op participation numbers mirrors FHS enrollment distribution with respect to BA & BSc undergraduate students.