

Message from the Co-Editors:

Hi everyone! April has just flown by and you wouldn't believe it, but spring is definitely on the way despite a little snow.



Wednesday, April 27



Thursday, April 28

This newsletter will be short and sweet! We have a guest writer, Lili Liu, and two calls for graduate student presentations and posters. Exciting! If you want to contribute, email gsa@upei.ca



Brittany Jakubiec is 1st year PhD Student (Educational Studies)



Mary MacPhee is in the 4th year of a PhD in Educational Studies



Denise Happ is in her second year of her MSc in Biomedical Sciences



Help us keep the air we share healthy and fragrance-free! It is therefore the **University's policy for everyone to avoid the use of scented personal care products.** For more information on UPEI's Scent-Free Initiative, visit <http://www.upei.ca/policy/files/policy/Scent-Free%20Initiative.pdf>.

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Kudos to all grad students working hard to complete their thesis and coursework. Congratulations to Mark Currie who passed his Master's defense. Mark has been accepted into the PhD in Education program at the University of Ottawa. Congrats, Mark, we'll be sad to see you go!

UPEI GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Brittany Jakubiec (President), Frédéric Chatigny (VP Finance), Mary MacPhee (VP Academic & Administration) Logan MacIntyre & Dylan Michaud (AVC Reps), Teresa Zhang & Elliot Roellchen-Pfohl (Education Rep), Rosemarie Dale & Bsmah Thabet (Science Rep), Leon Libang (International Reps), Lynda Walker (Business Rep), Ravinder Sappal (Post-Doc Rep)

CALL FOR PAPERS & POSTERS

2nd ANNUAL UMGRC

The second annual graduate research conference will be held August 11 to August 13, 2016 at the University of Prince Edward Island. Students in a graduate program across Canada are invited to submit a presentation abstract by May 18th, 2016. Proposals received after this date will not be considered. This year there will also be an opportunity for a limited number of students to present remotely (via skype) for those who are unable to attend in person. August 11th will be a day of workshops, and August 12-13th will be the conference. There will be an opportunity to publish in the conference proceedings.

Call for presentations: http://files.upei.ca/research/gsa/umgrc_call_for_presentations_2016.pdf

Please submit your proposal by email to gsa@upei.ca

GRADUATE RESEARCH RECOGNITION DAY

On June 14th, 2016, the Office of Graduate Studies will be presenting the Seventh Annual Graduate Research Recognition Day, a celebration of graduate research across campus.

This event will include oral presentations and a poster session. Refreshments will also be served. I encourage all graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to set aside this date and attend this event and celebration, which will take place from 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm in MacDougall Hall.

This is an **open call** to all graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, to present your research work at the poster session at this event. If you are interested in presenting a poster, then send your name, Department/Faculty, graduate degree program, poster title and abstract to Colleen Gallant (cgallant@upei.ca) in the Office of Graduate Studies by no later than Monday, May 23rd. Note that posters will be set up on science-fair style backboards on tables, **the maximum size for posters is thus 3 ft high x 4 ft wide**. This year the poster session will be held from **3pm until 4pm**.

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BRIDGING PROGRAM FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

BY LILI LIU

I am from Luoyang city, which is located in the north of China. I have been in Canada almost two years and the first year was in Toronto, and the second one was living on PEI. I came to Toronto because I received an offer by my agency, which allowed me to join the organization called the International Centre of English Academic Preparation in Toronto. The goal of the bridging program that I joined is to prepare abilities to read, write, speak and listen to English well enough to succeed in university, especially for international students. More importantly, I learned not only the basic skills but I have also developed a skill called critical thinking. I had received a test before the class so the school could determine which level I should go into. At that time, I was in level 5 (the length is in level one to level six), which meant I needed to prepare my language for four months. The worst part is that students needed to pass all the exams to get to the next level, otherwise, they need to take it again. After I successfully completed four months of the language training, I went to join the pre- M.Ed. Program, which is for the students who are going into the Masters of Education Program at UPEI.

Some students would argue the bridging program offered by their going aboard agency is not important because it wastes money and time. However, if I did not have the chance to take the bridging program, my life in Canada would not be as smooth as it was. Being an international student, I experienced the transition of different cultures between China and Canada for ten months (language training four months and Pre-M.Ed. training four months) in Toronto. I am very grateful for these months because it gave me many new experiences in Canada. Every experience has been new for me whether it is through communicating with others or getting used to the local culture.

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The UPEI GSA is happy to share the conference proceeding from the 2015 UPEI Multidisciplinary Graduate Research Conference: http://files.upei.ca/research/gsa/umgrc_2015_proceeding.pdf

Huge congratulations are in order for those graduate students who took the time to write and publish in this proceeding. Several UPEI graduate students are published in this proceeding; **please join me in celebrating Hannah Gehrels, Hsiao Yu Liu, Mary MacPhee, Selvi Roy, and Yan Yan on their publications.** It is important to celebrate graduate students and their achievements!

UPCOMING EVENTS!

→ The Faculty of Education offers a variety of **Winter Workshops** that are open to the public (check out <https://upeied.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/2016-calendar-of-education-events-jan-june.pdf>).

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BY LILI LIU

(continued from page 2)

When I arrived in Canada, everything was different from what I learned from the textbook and what I actually felt in the real Canada. I did get used to the varieties of food and became modest enough to consult the people who sell the food. However, I had suffered in the academic field for a long time. I could not fit in a Canadian writing style because the instructor could not understand what I wrote. I still remember I had to rewrite my essay five times, but still my instructor told me that she still found it hard to get my point from the essay. After that, I almost started crying because I thought I could not write what the Canadian instructor wanted. I started to think about what the differences were between the Canadian and Chinese writing. Finally, I found the gap was in the structure of the essay because of the diverse logic in differing cultural contexts. Therefore, this was a big gap in preparedness for academic writing in English for me as an international student.

During the training of the bridging course, there were many benefits that I attained over 10 months. First of all, I had a great experience in interacting with my instructors and classmates. In the transitional program, it usually has a small-scale setting of classroom, which is good for peer-supporting and interaction with teachers. Moreover, the instructor in a bridging course developed my writing skill for finding resources and information in Canadian websites. Basically, in China, we do not have access to get into Google, Facebook, or Twitter etc. Thus, choosing the website to find references for my academic paper was very hard for me at that time because I would never use English to research the English websites. But now, I not only know how I can use that, I can teach other international students how to find the resources for their writing. Furthermore, gaining confidence for my communication skill with Canadians is an essential benefit I got. Because I was a new student with a different cultural background here, I did not want to talk with the locals. I always believed my speaking skill was the worst in my classroom. However, based on the encouraging inspiration and training from my instructor, I became increasingly confident in front of Canadians, and I even had several public speeches for the new students, which talked about the experience both for living and studying in Canada. Therefore, taking a bridging program does have a great influence on the academic performance of students' development in the academic area, and even in mental aspect.

No matter what program the students choose it will be, it should be trustworthy in Canada because international students should ask for the detailed information about the organization in order to have a meaningful beginning in an academic journal.

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