

# SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC

MAGAZINE

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A new global attitude comes with designation

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Donors help build a stronger workforce

## A WINNING RECIPE

ELYSIA VANDENHURK: FROM THE DRAGONS' DEN TO BUSINESS SUCCESS





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in the making.



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DR. LARRY ROSIA, PRESIDENT AND CEO

## WELCOME

**W**elcome to the inaugural issue of *Saskatchewan Polytechnic Magazine* — a new magazine for a new kind of educational organization.

Saskatchewan Polytechnic launched across the province this fall, building on the foundation established by the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIASST). For more than a quarter century, SIASST has played a key role. It served 26,000 students across the province last year alone, in four campus cities, through distance education and through arrangements with regional colleges, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies and Dumont Technical Institute.

SIASST's work has resulted in consistently high rates of grad employment and employer satisfaction. Saskatchewan Polytechnic will build on that tradition as a new kind of post-secondary enterprise:

- One that's employer driven in support of economic growth;
- One that specializes in applied learning aligned with market needs, and seeks solutions to real-world problems; and

- One that helps put our province on the national and global map.

Our vision: By 2020, our expertise in responsive applied education and research that meet student and market needs will make us globally recognized as the first-choice polytechnic in Canada.

We'll explore new programming opportunities, whether a four-year degree in an applied field, an apprenticeship program, a one-year certificate or a two-year diploma.

We will also escalate our applied research partnership efforts. Read about one of those partnerships on page 7 of this magazine.

We'll keep working to increase the success rate of our more than 3,000 Aboriginal students. We want to create more stories like that of Terry Bird (page 8), and help more people like Tahnee Dubois (page 27) realize dreams through education.

And we're also expanding recruitment of international students (page 26).

The name Saskatchewan Polytechnic reflects who we are. It will help establish our national and global reputation in support of growth at home in Saskatchewan.

**“Saskatchewan Polytechnic will build on (SIASST's) tradition...”**

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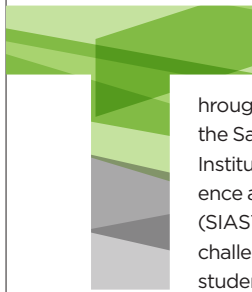
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# POLYTECHNIC STATUS A LEAP FORWARD

## DESIGNATION SIGNIFIES A NEW ERA OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

BY ALEX FRAZER-HARRISON



Throughout its history, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) has risen to the challenge of preparing students for future careers in a changing employment world. Now, it's taking a leap forward by launching a new identity as Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

"What inspired the decision to reposition SIAST as a polytechnic is our focus on applied learning and research, and our ability to provide our students with marketable skills that prepare them to contribute from Day 1 on the job," says Sask Polytech President and CEO Dr. Larry Rosia.

This is more than just a name game. By rebranding as a polytechnic, the school aims to increase awareness among current and future students and industry partners of the breadth of programming it offers.

This means boosting awareness of the school's reputation for applied learning, repositioning Sask Polytech as a contemporary, world-class polytechnic that prepares students to work in every sector of the economy,

while building the prestige of having a polytechnic education and supporting Saskatchewan's Plan for Growth.

Polytechnics, Dr. Rosia explains, are seen as international in scope, with emphasis on applied learning and research, industry responsiveness and range of programming.

Before it was reborn in September 2014 as Sask Polytech, SIAST joined Polytechnics Canada and launched a degree program. "Our first degree was a Bachelor of Psychiatric Nursing," Dr. Rosia says. "Next, we're proposing a Bachelor of Science in Construction Management."

For students, Sask Polytech will continue to offer the same level of instruction and individual attention that has made it a school of choice for so many, he says.

"We'll continue to offer personalized hands-on learning, while increasing our emphasis on applied research to further meet the needs of employers," Dr. Rosia says.

"Our curricula are developed in consultation with industry, and the applied research part of what we do allows employers to access funding to find solutions to real-world problems.

"We remain industry driven and student focused."

The metamorphosis of SIAST into Sask Polytech is part of the ongoing evolution of post-secondary education in Saskatchewan. The school's history dates to 1941 when the Canadian Vocational Training School opened in Saskatoon to help retrain Second World War veterans.

In 1958, the Saskatchewan Technical Institute opened a temporary facility in Regina, later relocating to Moose Jaw. SIAST came into being in 1988 via the merger of the Saskatchewan Technical Institute with the Kelsey Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences in Saskatoon, the Northern Institute of Technology in Prince Albert and the Wascana Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences in Regina.

Today, Sask Polytech has more than 26,000 students at campuses in Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert and through distance education, in programs from business and community services to technology and health sciences.

"Technical education has never been in higher demand, and we're able to offer students relevant opportunities because of the

**178**  
CREDIT  
PROGRAMS

**26,443**  
DISTINCT  
STUDENTS

**18.1%**  
ABORIGINAL  
STUDENTS

**94%**  
OF GRADS  
SURVEYED WERE  
EMPLOYED

**98%**  
OF EMPLOYERS  
SAID THEY'D HIRE  
ONE OF OUR  
GRADS AGAIN

close relationships we have with employers through our advisory committees," Dr. Rosia says. "These relationships were really central to our success as we know it today, and will be even more so going forward."

That success includes a consistently high graduate employment rate, he notes.

Becoming a polytechnic also has the potential to increase the school's reputation beyond Saskatchewan's borders. "The whole rebranding and renaming is all about attracting students, not only within this province, but from other provinces and even interna-

**“What inspired the decision to reposition SIAST as a polytechnic is our focus on ... our ability to provide our students with marketable skills.”**

tionally," Dr. Rosia says.

"We really want to let the world know about the quality of education we are able to provide."

He adds that this has the potential to grow Saskatchewan's economy, as students drawn to the province to attend Sask Polytech

find ongoing employment here.

"Saskatchewan is growing; we have more work here than we have people to fill the jobs."

Sask Polytech is a province-wide polytechnic, with campuses in each of the province's four largest cities. "Our campuses and

our continuing education program allow students to access education throughout the province, and we are able to provide consistency of programming," Dr. Rosia says.

"Our students want high-quality education and training, with a job waiting at the other end," he says.

"They're asking, 'If I'm going to invest my time, energy and resources, what am I going to get?' We want to help students build their careers, and that's why we offer programming from certificate to degree. Our goal is to build this institution's reputation as a post-secondary leader, nationally and internationally." ■

# A TEAM EFFORT

Gala event recognizes Sask Polytech's industry partners

BY ALEX FRAZER-HARRISON

Saskatchewan Polytechnic relies upon the on-going support of its many industry partners as it continues to provide state-of-the-art education and work experience opportunities to more than 26,000 students.

This year, a new award program was launched to pay tribute to corporations that have guided program curricula, provided students with work experience, and made programs and services possible through donations and sponsorships.

The first annual President's Partnership Awards were presented in April at the inaugural President's Gala in support of the Aboriginal Student Achievement Plan. The award categories are Program Partnership, Alumni Partnership and Industry Partnership.

"These awards are a way of really recognizing the great industry partners we have," says Sask Polytech President and CEO Dr. Larry Rosia. "We really owe our success to the partnerships we have with employers, industry, professional associations, and with our alumni as well.

"Many of our alumni go on to great things, while stakeholder groups engage with us in a multitude of ways — from advising on curriculum through all our advisory committees, to hiring our graduates, to contributing to

capital needs and sponsorships. So we launched these President's Partnership Awards as a way to say thank you."

The inaugural recipients were the Saskatchewan Mining Association (Program Partnership Award); SaskPower (Industry Partnership Award); and the owners of Magna Electric Corporation, Kerwin Boser, Curtis Brandt, Kerry Heid and Jarret Solberg, all grads of the Electrical Engineering Technology program (Alumni Partnership Award).

Each category has its own set of nomination criteria. For Industry Partnership, nominees were chosen based on their level

of advocacy for programs, and for providing monetary support, work placement and practicum opportunities, or other program support such as co-operative education or participating on program advisory committees.

For Program Partnership, nominees must play a significant role in helping develop or enhance new or existing curricula, take part in program advisory committees or instructors to the school, and provide mentoring or other education-based assistance to students.

Alumni Partnerships also call upon nominees to provide support

by way of advocacy and providing mentoring or other learning opportunities, plus donations or other in-kind support, as well as involvement in alumni activities.

"This whole post-secondary business is about partnerships, about industry, government and education working together," Dr. Rosia says.

"In fact, we do not offer programs where there isn't an industry connection. These partnerships need to be recognized in some fashion, and these awards are one way that we can do that, by recognizing those leaders of industry and showing them how much we really value and recognize their contributions."

Dr. Rosia says he hopes the President's Partnership Awards continue on as one of the highlights of each year at Sask Polytech, and he adds that the number of award categories may be expanded in the future. ■



Clockwise from top left: Saskatchewan Mining Association Executive Director Pam Schwann and Board of Directors President Trevor Berg, Program Partnership Award recipients; the Industry Partnership Award awarded to SaskPower; Magna Electric Corporation owners Kerry Heid and Jarret Solberg, Alumni Partnership Award recipients.

**“ We really owe our success to the partnerships we have with employers, industry, professional associations, and with our alumni as well. These awards (are) a way to say thank you. ”**

Students and faculty working on the brownfield remediation applied research project set up an experiment to look at how microbes interact with soil in groundwater at the remediation site.

All companies that sell motor fuel face the challenge: how to make the land safe after a gas station closes. Today, students from Saskatchewan Polytechnic's BioScience Technology program are helping the industry address this real-world problem.

"It's called brownfield remediation," says BioScience Technology program head Blaine Chartrand. "Companies are required by law to remove all the contaminated soil around a closed gas station. But it's hard to remove three to five metres of soil without disruption."

Students from Sask Polytech in Saskatoon have teamed up with Federated Co-operatives Ltd. and researchers from the University of Saskatchewan to examine environmentally friendly ways of cleaning up brownfield soil. The goal of the three-year project: to see if bacteria can be used to break down the hydrocarbons left behind by diesel and gasoline products.

Applied research, an important aspect of a polytechnic's mandate, develops not only potential career skills and opportunities for students, but also partnerships with industry, says Sask Polytech president and CEO Dr. Larry Rosia.

"Through applied research, we look to partner with employers seeking solutions to practical issues," Dr. Rosia says. "Students become totally engaged, working on real-world industry problems."

These programs are overseen by the Office of Applied Research and Innovation (OARI), where staffers like Terry Peckham help programs apply for funding. For example, the Digital Integration Research Group (DIREG) needed new equipment,

and Peckham's work resulted in a \$213,600 grant from Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Sask Polytech has two centres dedicated to applied research. The BioScience Applied Research Centre supports businesses in such areas as plant tissue and cell cultures, analytical instrumentation, microbiology, molecular biology, research analysis and documentation, and analysis of DNA, RNA and protein.

Meanwhile, the Computer Systems Technology Applied Research Centre works with industry partners to develop solutions including software development, training

systems, networking and hardware support, tracking technology, and tools to crunch raw data into reports or graphs. Sask Polytech also does applied research in fields such as natural resources and energy.

Says Dr. Rosia: "I was talking to a student who was nervous about having the skills needed when she got out into the industry. But being able to work on a real-world problem, she told me, 'I have confidence now that I can handle it when I get out there.'"

Trevor Carlson, environmental affairs director with Federated Co-operatives, says brownfield research by Sask Polytech students could benefit the whole industry.

"We do hire a lot of environmental consultants, and some of these students will have a leg up," Carlson says. ■



## BRIGHT IDEAS, REAL SOLUTIONS

Applied research programs deliver student **success** and industry results

BY ALEX FRAZER-HARRISON

### PROBLEMS SOLVED

Some recent Sask Polytech applied research projects:

**1 COMPUTER SYSTEMS TECHNOLOGY** students helped develop a mobile app for the Canadian Ski Patrol to provide first aid information to volunteer patrollers.

**2 NATURAL RESOURCES** students helped identify dragonflies and damselflies as part of the Boreal Watershed Initiative to see if the insects could serve as "ecological markers" in wetland habitat.

**3 ARCHITECTURAL TECHNOLOGIES** students helped Regina company Check-It Solutions research how the physical features of a building affect its energy use.

**4 BIOSCIENCE TECHNOLOGY** students have been researching the infection-fighting potential of certain materials in dental compounds.

“Students become totally engaged, working on real-world problems.”

Some kids cut their entrepreneurial teeth by selling lemonade. But Terry Bird cut his by flogging parking spots.

It was the 1980s, and money was tight growing up with a single mom and four brothers and sisters. The family rented a house near Regina's Taylor Field, home of the Saskatchewan Roughriders. "We had some room in our backyard, and our mother would let us park cars," says Bird, who would hail game-goers with a cardboard sign promoting the \$3 spots, trying to fill the yard.

Fast forward three decades and Bird, 42, is now channelling that resourcefulness and enterprising spirit into his career. As First Nation and Métis business and human resources coordinator at K+S Potash Canada in Saskatoon, he develops and implements strategies that engage Aboriginal communities and businesses in the firm's activities.

Since Bird joined the company in 2012, he has focused on its Legacy Project, a potash mine and production facility being built near Moose Jaw on traditional First Nations hunting lands. "It's an opportunity (for Aboriginal suppliers) to be a part of something that's going to be around for the next 100 years," says Bird, who is a member of the George Gordon First Nation.

Serving as a liaison in this way is particularly gratifying for Bird,

**“(The Legacy Project is) an opportunity (for Aboriginal suppliers) to be a part of something that’s going to be around for the next 100 years.”**



PHOTO BY BILL STEVENSON

# DRIVING FOR A BETTER FUTURE

From parking cars to leadership building: **Terry Bird** is focused on the success of Aboriginal businesses

BY SARA BEDAL

who was previously manager of Aboriginal affairs in SaskTel's human resources department and now sits on the board of the Interprovincial Association on Native Employment. "I like to see outcomes," he says, which not only include the creation of local jobs and representative workforces,

but often the chance for Aboriginal businesses to bid for lucrative contracts and crack established supply chains.

It's Bird's focus and drive that also characterized his experience at Saskatchewan Polytechnic (then SIAST). After giving some serious thought to his future (and toughing it out as a roofer for a stint), he enrolled in Business Administration at age 23. It was an intensive, but engaging, program for the aspiring businessman, who earned an award for his leadership, professionalism and dedication.

Bird believes strongly that this kind of public acknowledgement of success can go a long way in building the leaders of tomorrow.

That's why he co-chairs the SaskTel Aboriginal Youth Awards of Excellence, which recognizes the achievements of teens aged 14 to 18.

"We didn't get that recognition growing up," he says. "It's nice to have a role model who's the same age as you. Personally, I love seeing the excitement and anticipation in the eyes and smiles of the nominees." ■





## BETTER BALANCE

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*Amber*

Alumni, Medical Radiologic Technology

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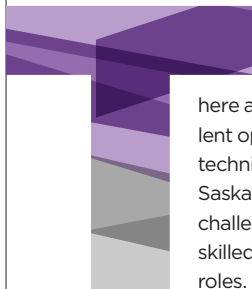
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# POSITIONS OF POWER

## SASKPOWER COURTS A NEW GENERATION OF SKILLED WORKERS FROM SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC

BY JULIA WILLIAMS



here are many excellent opportunities for technical careers in Saskatchewan — the challenge is finding skilled people to fill the roles. It's a challenge

SaskPower is committed to meet.

With 40 per cent of its workforce eligible to retire over the next decade, Saskatchewan's primary electrical utility — one of the province's major employers — is seeking its next generation of employees. SaskPower Sourcing Consultant Christine Gauthier says Saskatchewan Polytechnic produces graduates whose skills are extraordinarily valuable to her organization. "Power engineers are our backbone. When a company operates a power plant over a certain size, as we do, by law they must have power engineers on

shift at all times. If we didn't have power engineers, we'd actually have to shut down the plant."

Graduates from the Power Engineering Technology and Electrical Engineering Technology programs are in high demand, and the need for these skills will only grow in the future, both in Saskatchewan and beyond. Power Engineering Technology program graduates typically go on to work as power engineers and process operators in a range of industries and facilities, from utilities and refineries to hospitals and paper mills. Their counterparts in the Electrical Engineering Technology program take roles in electrical power genera-

tion utilities, consulting engineering firms and the petroleum sector, to name a few.

Gauthier says SaskPower attracts recent graduates by offering great benefits and an exceptional work-life balance. After all, recruitment is a long game. "We hire candidates with a view to keeping them for the rest of their careers, developing them and taking them as far as they want to go. We invest in all of our employees, and we value the students at Saskatchewan Polytechnic."

Gauthier says SaskPower provides plenty of opportunities for internal advancement, which helps explain why many employees have

**“ We invest in all of our employees, and we value the students at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. ”**

PHOTO BY LINDSEY LONGSTAFF



Yupeng Zhu is a Sask Polytech Electrical Engineering Technology student employed in a co-op position at SaskPower System Test North.

spent 30 years or more with the organization. While it's a challenge to replace these experienced people as they retire, Gauthier says it's all part of moving the organization into the future. "It's interesting to see the culture shift in a positive way, getting younger and more diverse."

Gauthier's team cultivates a relationship with Saskatchewan Polytechnic to make sure students are aware of the opportunities

available at SaskPower. "I do a lot of proactive recruitment. I speak to first-year students and build a rapport with them. I keep in touch with them via email or LinkedIn."

David Gwilliam, director of learning at SaskPower, says the utility has many Saskatchewan Polytechnic alumni working at head office, in the field and at power plants across the province. Most of these employees begin as entry-level operators and prog-

ress to process operator or shift supervisor roles, gradually taking on increasing levels of responsibility for operating plant turbines, generators, boilers and other equipment. "Power Engineering Technology grads work in our power plants in Estevan, Coronach and Saskatoon," he says. "Electrical Engineering Technology grads have a number of career options with us throughout the province." New graduates typically perform a

## SASKPOWER

### 1929

Originally the Saskatchewan Power Commission, SaskPower has been in operation since 1929.

### 100s

The organization contributes to its communities through the United Way and an Employee Volunteerism program. It also provides fundraising and donations to hundreds of community-based projects each year.

### Power

With seven hydroelectric, three coal-fired, six natural gas and two wind generation facilities, SaskPower's operations span Saskatchewan from Lake Athabasca to Estevan.

### 1m tonnes

SaskPower's Boundary Dam Power Station is part of a groundbreaking carbon capture and storage project to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### Zero

In 2007, SaskPower became the first utility in the world to complete a workable design for a large-scale, near-zero-emissions coal plant.

### 150,000

The organization operates more than 150,000 km of power lines across the province — enough to wrap around the earth more than three times.

variety of office, on-site and project assignments that contribute to the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of SaskPower's facilities.

With a service area covering almost all of Saskatchewan, it makes sense for SaskPower to cultivate a relationship with the institution educating its future workforce. "With the Saskatchewan economy booming, there's a need for people with critical technical skills." ■

# DRAWN TO DESIGN

Sask Polytech was the springboard for **Karrin Saliger's** creative career

BY ALEX FRAZER-HARRISON



**K**arrin Saliger's passions for homebuilding and design have become the building blocks for her career, thanks to Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

After graduating in 2010 with a diploma in Architectural and Interior Technology, Saliger started her own drafting and design company. She also does consulting work with a local interior designer and

co-writes "Designer Confessions," a blog for the Moose Jaw Times Herald newspaper.

"I've always been interested in residential design," Saliger says.

"I like to be creative, and my dad was building houses before I was born, so I've been immersed in it my whole life. I like the things you can do with the inside or outside of a house and floor plan. I find with commercial or industrial design, it's all very regulated and you don't get to do anything different. That's what drew me to residential design."

Born and raised in Moose Jaw, Saliger was in British Columbia when she found herself with a choice: attending Saskatchewan Polytechnic (then SIAST) in Moose Jaw or SAIT Polytechnic in Calgary.

She says Sask Polytech won out because of its work terms.

"I wanted to get experience through work," Saliger says. "At SIAST, we did five semesters and

three work terms. I did everything I possibly could — I went to a structural engineering firm, and then I went to a residential firm, too. I went to Regina and Saskatoon."

While at school, Saliger worked with Jillian Bilawchuk at Jillian's Design Elements. She still works with Bilawchuk both at the store and on the Designer Confessions blog, and last January started her own division of the company, JDE Design & Drafting.

"I'm finding myself doing more renovations as opposed to new-house plans," says Saliger. "I like character homes — bringing them up to date while keeping the character of the house."

When asked to recall her time at Sask Polytech, Saliger says without hesitation, "I think it was the best years of my life.

"I'm still incredibly close to everyone I met there. In fact, I got an email from one of my teachers just the other day. It's been four years

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since graduation, and I still have a relationship with my teachers.”

Saliger says the school was just the right size for her. “Bigger schools, they don’t know who you are, and you’re just a number,” she says. “I felt they (the instructors) were there when I needed them, not just reciting things.”

The same goes for her classmates, as well as the networking connections she made during her work terms. “I still have friends everywhere I worked,” Saliger says.

“The stuff I learned carried over into everything. I’ve made some really good contacts and they helped me learn so much,” she says. “Two of my good friends from school have started their own businesses. We’ve kept really close, and we ask each other what needs to be done.”

Read the Designer Confessions blog at [jilliandesignelementsblog.mjtimes.sk.ca](http://jilliandesignelementsblog.mjtimes.sk.ca). Learn more about JDE Drafting & Design at [facebook.com/jdedrafting](https://facebook.com/jdedrafting). ■

PHOTOS BY TOM BARTLETT



## DECOR TIPS

As the co-writer of the Moose Jaw Times Herald’s “Designer Confessions” blog, Saskatchewan Polytechnic alumna Karrin Saliger often contributes decorating and design tips. Here are two examples:

### Renovating Your Home

“Try to map out everything that needs to be done by putting things in the ‘need’ and ‘want’ categories....

Try not to get carried away and use every last penny of your budget on ‘wants,’ though, as it’s almost a guarantee there will be some unexpected complications.”

### Colour Trends

Gold is up and coming. “Depending on how brave you want to be, the sky is the limit with ways you can spice up your space with a little shimmer. If you’re not confident in making more permanent changes, the easiest way is to add toss cushions in different tones and finishes of gold to a room.”

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# CREATING OPPORTUNITY

## HUSKY ENERGY'S DONATION TO THE POWER ENGINEERING PROGRAM MEANS FAR MORE THAN IMPROVED FACILITIES

BY JULIA WILLIAMS



It's a testament to Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Power Engineering program: major corporations take an interest in its students before they've even graduated.

At the end of 2013, Husky Energy announced a donation to the program that reflects the value it provides to the energy industry.

The donation of \$1.125 million will upgrade the Power Engineering Technology lab and create scholarships for students working toward third-class power engineering certification.

Wayne Ormond, manager for HR Talent and Diversity at Husky, says the company has long held the Power Engineering program in high regard. "Saskatchewan Polytechnic provides solid training. A partnership to support upgrades and provide scholarships made sense."

In the program, students work toward a two-year Power Engineering Technology diploma. Hands-on training covers technical processes as well as essential skills such as

environmental management, safety and communications. Students receive training in labs, through computer simulations and from work experience placements. On graduating, they fill vital roles in energy, mining, utilities, manufacturing and power generation.

Ormond says the program provides solid preparation for the workforce.

One of Canada's largest and most established integrated energy companies, Husky has a long history of support for educational programs and institutions.

The donation is already improving facilities in the Power Engineering program. Previously, the program's training lab closed during summer, when there was no outlet for the energy generated by its boilers. "Our donation helped to renovate the lab and alleviate that issue," Ormond says.

The capacity of the lab will also increase by 25 per cent, to more than 200 students a year.

The scholarships created by the Husky donation will give dozens of

students financial support for their studies. Matched by the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Scholarship Program offered by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, the Husky donation provides funds for 10 students a year for five years.

Ormond says scholarship recipients may be offered employment opportunities with Husky after graduation. Husky employs Power Engineering program grads in its thermal facilities and at its upgrader and asphalt refinery in Lloydminster. "These employees have an opportunity to work toward senior positions such as trainer, coordinator and supervisor."

Husky considers its gift to Saskatchewan Polytechnic an investment in the skilled workforce necessary for continued growth.

"Developing skilled trades capacity in Canada is critical. Our partnership with Saskatchewan Polytechnic will help meet the need for skilled workers, which helps us, the workers and the community." ■



## WHAT HUSKY POWER ENGINEERING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS SAY

"This scholarship definitely helps monetarily, and also boosts my confidence knowing that Husky notices my potential. I have always had the desire and determination to be a power engineer. I am pleased with all I have accomplished since I came to Canada as a refugee, and I'm looking forward to what I have yet to conquer. I am honoured by this opportunity."

**Carlos Elizondo Sigala**

"This scholarship shows the promise Husky sees in me as a student and future employee, helping to further motivate me to reach my academic and professional aspirations. I see this award as a crucial stepping stone toward a successful career with Husky Energy as a proud Saskatchewan Polytechnic alumnus."

**Casey Barker**

"It's exciting to know that I will be working for one of Canada's largest and most successful oil companies. The future looks very bright."

**Matthew Leshchshyn**

"I am truly grateful that Husky has chosen to help my colleagues and me in Saskatoon with such zeal, and I'm excited to work with a company that shows such attention and care for future power engineers."

**Mark Messmer**

"Going back to school is very difficult physically, mentally and especially financially. Being granted this scholarship means a lot to me and my wife. I no longer have to work after school half time. I can focus more on studying."

**Randolph Pagaddu**

### 70

Husky has operated in Western Canada for almost 70 years.

### 5,000

The company employs more than 5,000 people.

### Global

Husky operates in Western and Atlantic Canada, the United States and the Asia-Pacific region with upstream and downstream business segments.

### Responsible

The company is committed to responsible corporate citizenship and supporting organizations that promote education, health and community initiatives.

# SEEDS OF SUCCESS

NEW FOOD PRODUCT LEADS SASKATCHEWAN POLYTECHNIC GRAD INTO THE **DRAGONS' DEN**

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND SMITH

**A** journey that began at Saskatchewan Polytechnic took Elysia Vandenhurk from some of the world's top kitchens to the Pyrenees Mountains, through the Dragons' Den and back to the family farm.

When a twist of fate — a torn ligament — dashed Vandenhurk's dreams of a college volleyball career, she found herself in need of a new life plan.

"If my future wasn't going to be in sports, I knew I needed to do something creative," she says. "Cooking school seemed ideal because of my interest in healthy eating. We always had a big garden growing up, and we even ground our own wheat. I also knew cooking would give me the opportunity to travel and learn about other cultures."

Vandenhurk, now a certified Red Seal chef and one of the entrepre-

neurs behind the successful Three Farmers brand, did indeed spend time travelling the world after graduating from the cooking program at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

She spent several months "Wwoofing" (farming through World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms), which involves working with a loose network of national organizations that help place volunteers on organic farms.

"I spent time Wwoofing in the Pyrenees Mountains, which was a tremendous experience," Vandenhurk says. "My family is from Holland, so I spent time there as well."

Her first job as a student at Sask Polytech (then SIAST) was catering for the president of the University of Saskatchewan.

"I had the chance to create menus, do food costing and just generally be creative," Vandenhurk says. She went to work under the Riverside Golf and Country Club's then executive chef, Peter Phillips,

before moving to Toronto to work under celebrity chef Susur Lee.

After then volunteering in South Africa and working in a bakery, Vandenhurk and her sister Natasha, who has a degree in economics, got an interesting offer from their dad and two neighbours, second- and third-generation farmers.

The three were launching a new farm products company, and asked the sisters to run it — Elysia as COO and chef and Natasha as CEO. The business, called Three Farmers, provides natural, sustainable and traceable products. Its signature offering, Three Farmers Camelina Oil, is based on an oil seed new to the North American market.

"The camelina oil seed, which was being used in northern Europe, actually tastes like asparagus and makes a great finishing oil for salads and such," Vandenhurk says. "But what I needed to know was, how high was the smoke point? Could chefs cook with it?"







## RECIPE

### ELYSIA VANDENHURK'S MAPLE BOURBON PORK CHOPS

Maple Bourbon Pork Chops  
with Grilled Pineapple  
Kebobs. Serves 4-6.

#### Pork Chops

4-6 boneless centre-cut  
pork chops  
1/2 cup bourbon or amaretto  
1/2 cup organic maple syrup  
1/2 cup mustard  
3 tbsp Three Farmers  
camelina oil

#### Kebobs

1 tbsp Three Farmers  
camelina oil  
1 pineapple, cleaned and  
cored, cut into one-inch cubes  
4 bell peppers, each cut  
into 8 two-inch pieces  
2 red onions, cut into  
two-inch pieces

#### Directions

Whisk together the bourbon  
or amaretto, honey, mustard  
and camelina oil. Pour half  
of the mixture over the pork  
and let marinate for up to  
two hours. Skewer the cubed  
pineapple, peppers and onion  
alternately onto skewers.

Pre-heat the grill, clean, and  
oil with camelina oil. Remove  
pork from the marinade and  
put directly on the grill. Cook  
for about 10 minutes on each  
side (depending on thickness),  
brushing the chops with the  
remaining glaze mixture every  
six minutes. For the last 10  
minutes of the cooking peri-  
od, add the kebobs to the grill.  
Cook pork and kebobs to  
desired doneness and serve.

“Sask Polytech opened so many doors for me, and I learned so much about the industry – from nutrition and profit margins to catering and recipe development.”

“When I discovered it had a very high smoke point and it was high in omega-3 (fatty acids), I was all in.”

The product captured the attention of an investor on the hit CBC TV show *Dragons’ Den* and is now sold in 950 locations.

Three Farmers has also just launched a new snack food product – Three Farmers Roasted Chickpeas. In 2013, Saskatchewan produced more 99 per cent of Canada’s chickpeas, which are known for great crunch and flavour, and for health benefits. Vandenhurk says that with minimal processing, chickpeas – also known as garbanzo beans – could easily be the next rock star of the snack-food industry.

Vandenhurk has been busy developing the flavours and recipes for the product, launched this fall.

“Saskatchewan Polytechnic taught me everything I know about cooking,” says Vandenhurk. “I had absolutely no experience when I started school and I grew up eating meat and potatoes like most farm families. Sask Polytech opened so many doors for me, and I learned so much about the industry – from nutrition and profit margins to catering and recipe development.”

“I still keep in touch with many of the people I went to school with, including my instructors. It has been so interesting to see what everyone has achieved. My time there started me down a path I could never have imagined, and I’m grateful.”

Vandenhurk will speak at the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Business and Industry Dinner, Nov. 20 in Saskatoon. ■



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## Belief in the future of Saskatchewan motivates **Colleen and Wally Mah**

BY JULIA WILLIAMS

**C**olleen Mah and her husband Wally are Saskatchewanian through and through. “We’re great believers in this province and its future, and we believe in education. That’s how kids are going to prosper here.”

The couple is prominent in Saskatchewan’s housing industry, Wally as the founder of North Ridge Development Corp., and Colleen as a broker for North Ridge Realty and a director of the Saskatchewan Housing Corp. Through the Mah Family Trust, the couple recently provided a gift of \$100,000 to create awards for Saskatchewan Polytechnic students learning trades related to the housing industry.

In the past, the Mah family has directed its personal and corporate philanthropic resources toward education, low-income housing, poverty relief and health care. Colleen Mah says this seemed like the right time to support trades training in the housing industry.

“Home construction has been good to our family. We want to support the industry that supported us.” The North Ridge Development Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity Awards are intended for students in apprentice or certificate programs in refrigeration and air conditioning, carpentry, electrical and plumbing. Six awards of \$2,000 each will be

provided annually starting this fall, and in 2016 one \$2,000 award will be provided each year to the new Saskatchewan Polytechnic Bachelor of Construction Management degree program.

The awards are matched through the Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity program, which was part of the Mahs’ plan. “By choosing these trades, we were able to tie in with the scholarships that the province provides as well,” Colleen Mah says.

It was important to both her and

Wally that the awards give preference to applicants age 26 and up, as well as women in non-traditional trades.

She says supporting these applicants is vital. “I’ve worked with women in trades who are raising one or two children. You have to move around when you’re apprenticing and you need child care — you need that extra support that a scholarship could provide.”

The gift reflects the Mahs’ belief in the value of education, as well as their love for Saskatchewan. “My

parents talked about how grateful they were to raise their kids here, and we feel the same way.”

Mah is particularly proud that her two adult sons were able to make their careers in Saskatchewan. She believes the gift she and Wally have made to Sask Polytech will help other young people build careers in the province. “When I graduated from university, all my friends moved out of the province. When my sons graduated, all their friends stayed here. There’s so much opportunity here right now.” ■



PHOTO BY DAVID STOBBE

# BUILDING FOR FUTURE GROWTH

# PASSION FOR SOCIAL GOOD

Hard work and the right training pay off for **Michelle Neufeld**

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND SMITH

**M**ichelle Neufeld's passion for people and social justice have taken her from fairy godmother and working mom to political intern and professional social worker. And it all started with Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

"When I began my course at (then) SIAST, I had a vision that I would take one year of education and then be done school forever," says Neufeld, who now works as a tenant services program coordi-

nator with the Saskatoon Housing Authority. "I thought I would get a nice job and support myself and my son, and I never really planned beyond that. I was certainly determined, but I had no idea that the road ahead would be so full of challenges and rewards."

She says learning hard work truly does pay off has given her a much more positive outlook on life.

"When I was in school, it was really hard to know if all the stress was really worth it," Neufeld says.

"Now that I've pushed through it and reached some of my goals, I'm really glad I saw it through."

Neufeld earned her Youth Care Worker certificate in 2008 and went on to receive a bachelor of arts in sociology from the University of Saskatchewan.

"I wanted to work with youth, because I felt that I had something to offer and that I could make a difference," says Neufeld. "It was during my Youth Care Worker course that I was introduced to sociology."

While completing her certificate, she worked with young females at the Salvation Army

Bethany Home, and she also worked at the Canadian Deafblind Association, helping disadvantaged individuals learn routines to optimize their independence.

Neufeld also volunteered as the coordinator of the Fairy Godmother program for the Princess Shop in Saskatoon.

The mentorship program matches young females with established women who serve as role models.

She then went on to work as a legislative intern at the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Her current role with the Saskatoon Housing Authority

**“I wanted to work with youth, because I felt that I had something to offer and that I could make a difference. It was during my Youth Care Worker course that I was introduced to sociology.”**



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gives her the opportunity to act as a resource for the tenants who organize social activities and programming focused on recreation and wellness.

"I also act as a representative of Saskatoon Housing Authority for tenants who have questions regarding what they can or cannot do within their tenant groups," Neufeld says.

Today, her focus is on re-establishing her priorities and excelling at her new roles. "I spent a long time taking on more than one part-time job, along with school, volunteer work and home responsibilities, so I am currently taking a breather," she says. "I will likely get involved more as I settle into my life as a new employee, new wife and new stepmother."

Neufeld says her time at Sask Polytech "acted as a springboard" to everything else she has accomplished. "This is where it started," she says. "It is where I developed a belief that I could do more." ■

PHOTO BY DAVID STOBBE



## Q&A

**Q | When you were in school trying to juggle life, what was your favourite thing to do to relax?**

**A |** Spending the time to prepare and enjoy a nice meal with family and friends. Is there anything better than that?

**Q | If you could spend a weekend anywhere in the world, where would you go and what would you do?**

**A |** I would take a crash course on winemaking in Italy.

**Q | Who inspires you?**

**A |** Oprah. She's pretty great.

**Q | What book have you read more than once?**

**A |** *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

**Q | What's one item left on your bucket list?**

**A |** Learning a second language. I tried German once, but it never stuck.

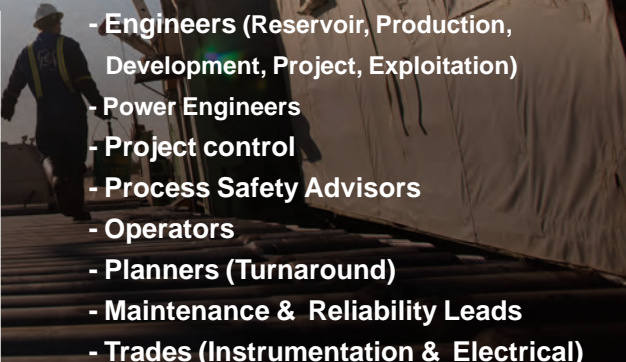


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  - Trades (Instrumentation & Electrical)

Paul McLellan knows a thing or two about power. Head of a company that's more than 100 years old and did \$134 million-plus in sales last year, McLellan believes there's nothing as powerful as education.

"Education was the key to helping me succeed," says McLellan, CEO of Alliance Energy.

An employee-owned company, Alliance provides electrical contracting and maintenance services throughout Saskatchewan and has been named one of Canada's best-managed companies.

"I was lucky. I had so many people in my corner. My parents and teachers were tremendously supportive. So I've tried to help others receive some of the opportunities I had. Contributing back to the educational institutions and organizations that gave me a chance is the least I can do."

McLellan earned his bachelor of administration degree from the University of Regina, then his electrician certificate from Wascana Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences (part of SIAST, now Saskatchewan Polytechnic) in 1982, eventually becoming a journeyman electrician. In 2009, he graduated from the University of Regina with an MBA and received an honorary diploma from SIAST.

He is past chair of the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission and a past member of the boards of both the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum and SIAST.

"I have a ton of respect for (Sask Polytech). I still keep in touch with instructors and colleagues," says McLellan. "It was very fulfilling to be on the board, and one of the highlights was being part of recruiting past president Bob McCulloch. He was the right leader at that time, just like Larry (Rosia) is the right leader now for Saskatchewan Polytechnic."

Polytechnics are distinguished by their responsiveness to business and industry, and McLellan says Saskatchewan Polytechnic has a solid record in this area.



# BOUNDLESS ENERGY

From electrician to the corner office, **Paul McLellan** says education has been the key to his career path

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND SMITH

“ Although I’ve had the opportunity to oversee some pretty exciting endeavours, I really have to share the credit. I don’t run the company by myself.... You cannot do it alone. ”

Responsiveness has also been an integral part of his own career success, he adds.

“In 2000, I was one of the first in the industry to predict we were going to be dealing with significant skills shortages. At the time, the overall response was, ‘Don’t worry. We’re good,’” McLellan says with a laugh. “Well, it didn’t take long to find out we were not ‘good’ at all. So after gathering information on the topic, I was asked to share that knowledge at various venues and events across the country.”

Leadership has always come naturally to McLellan, whether speaking on behalf of the industry to government or the media, toiling as vice-president of the 1995 Grey Cup committee or working with creative types as a board member of Regina’s famed Globe Theatre.

First and foremost, however, McLellan is a dedicated family man and a committed businessman.

“Although I’ve had the opportunity to oversee some pretty exciting endeavours, I really have to share the credit,” he says. “I don’t run the company by myself; there is an entire group of us that discuss all major decisions. You cannot do it alone.”

He says maintaining work-life balance has been a challenge, but he’s happy with his decisions. “To be as engaged as I have been in the industry can take time and energy. That is a real concern for all company leaders. My wife, Debbie, helped me keep perspective.”

McLellan is clearly proud of his family’s legacy. “I was exposed to the electrical trade growing up. My dad, Bud, was one of the owners of the company. When I went to SIAST, I had lots of experience in the electrical trade, but I really wanted to get my ticket, as we called it in those days.”

Alliance started out as Sun Electric 1913, and is 100 per cent

## Q&A

**Q | When you were in school trying to juggle responsibilities, what was your favourite thing to do to relax?**

**A |** I had bought a house and enjoyed fixing it up. Remodelling the kitchen was a big project.

**Q | What song transports you back to your SIAST days?**

**A |** We drove back and forth from Regina to Moose Jaw every day, and “Eye of the Tiger” by Survivor was the hit of the day and playing all the time.

**Q | If you could spend a weekend anywhere, where would you go?**

**A |** I would go to Paris with my wife Debbie and wander the streets.

**Q | Who inspires you?**

**A |** Debbie, my wife.

**Q | What book have you read more than once?**

**A |** I read all the time, but rarely read a book twice. My sister, Kirstie, co-wrote Theo Fleury’s book, *Playing with Fire* — I did read that one twice!

Saskatchewan owned and operated. It employs more than 900, and provides budgeting, quotations and electrical design-and-build services. Alliance has completed more than 1,000 projects over the past few years, including Mosaic Stadium and the iconic Hill Towers in Regina, City Hospital in Saskatoon, the Melville Communiplex and the Living Sky Casino in Swift Current.

“There’s no better feeling than going downtown in Regina and being able to say, ‘We built that,’” McLellan says.

McLellan will share more of his experience and insights in December at the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Business and Industry Dinner in Regina. ■

# CONNECT YOURSELF

## REGISTER AS ALUMNI

If you graduated from SIAST or any of the other previous institutions that make up the new Saskatchewan Polytechnic, you are a part of our alumni family.

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- Saskatchewan Technical Institute (STI)
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Register or update your contact information at [saskpolytech.ca/alumni](http://saskpolytech.ca/alumni).



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## FULL CIRCLE

Business graduate returns to  
the classroom as an **instructor**

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND SMITH

For Linda Goetz, moving from the head of the class to the head of her class took about 10 years.

The Saskatchewan Polytechnic Business Accountancy graduate is now an instructor in the same program from which she graduated a decade ago, and she says it's a thrill to be back in the Sask Polytech classrooms.

"It really is my dream job, and for me it was like coming home," says Goetz, who earned her diploma from Sask Polytech (then SIAST) as a mature full-time student raising four children with her husband.

"I have always loved the atmosphere here," she says.

"I love the lifestyle that teaching provides me with as an instructor, and there is nothing more fulfilling

than the transfer of knowledge."

She says she is particularly enjoying the diversity of the student body at the school.

"Teaching is never boring, because the students are all so different, and I really love teaching all the international students. This job brings together my two passions — numbers and people," she says.

After graduating, Goetz went on to earn her professional designation as a certified management accountant (CMA). She spent several years working in the industry before deciding to pursue a career as an educator.

"It was definitely difficult returning to school at the age of 42, but I am so glad I did," she says.

"I would love to spend the rest of my career here." ■



“My education gave me an eye for detail and high standards, and I really value that. And so do the people we work with, and work for, every day.”



## A WINNING START, TWO TIMES OVER

For **Andy Fusick**, perseverance and opportunity came together to build a long-term career he enjoys

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND SMITH

The year was 1983. McDonald's introduced the Chicken McNugget, Microsoft released Word — and Andy Fusick began studying electrical engineering technology.

Fusick thought his career needed a kickstart, so he embarked on a journey that would eventually turn him into a very successful entrepreneur, two times over.

“I grew up in a small community called Shell Lake, and at that time, we had a very small school with no real career counselling or extra classes,” Fusick says.

“I had no idea what to do with my life, and I had never even heard of calculus until I got to my first electrical engineering technology classes. Lots of the people I was going to school with had already been to university or had other training.”

Then a newlywed, Fusick faced a challenging first year commuting to school and keeping up with his classes.

“I made it though, and I graduated with a 3.5 (grade point average). I'm proud of that, because it was really tough. But I stuck with it after

almost flunking out initially, and the hard work paid off,” he says. “It wasn't easy, but it was worth it. I really grew from persevering.”

After almost a decade in the industry, Fusick decided to strike out on his own. He and his wife Joan started their own business in 1994, building it into a thriving enterprise, which they sold to General Electric in 2000.

A few years later, in 2003, Andy and Joan opened the doors of JA Tech Inc. in Saskatoon. The company provides specialized construction and field technical services for

almost any equipment that is part of an electrical power system.

The business installs, maintains, tests, commissions, analyzes and repairs equipment.

“Right now, we have 67 employees, which is more than we've ever had,” says Fusick. “We take pride in our work, and our integrity is very important to us, which is why I think we have been so successful.”

Fusick is grateful he has found a career he enjoys, even when he's out on service calls at 4 a.m. in the middle of a bitter prairie winter.

“I have never gotten up and

disliked what I do, and that is saying something when you have to get up in the middle of the night in January to go out and work,” he says.

“I have been very fortunate to enjoy my job.”

While he says his years as a student may have been some of his most challenging, his polytechnic education definitely helped shape him professionally.

“My education gave me an eye for detail and high standards, and I really value that,” Fusick says. “And so do the people we work with, and work for, every day.” ■



**M**ichelle Crawford is excelling in a career managing risk — and that’s no surprise, because not long ago, she decided to stake her future on a 4,000-km trip from Jamaica to Moose Jaw to attend Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

It turned out to be a pretty safe bet. The business student graduated near the top of her class, earning an Outstanding Citizenship Award from Saskatchewan Polytechnic as well as the International Students Saskatchewan Innovation and Opportunity scholarship.

“I just completed my business certificate, and it’s my intention to continue my education by obtaining a business insurance diploma and my qualification of chartered insurance professional (CIP),” Crawford says. “I had been working in the general insurance industry in Jamaica for a few years, and it was my desire to obtain my insurance designation — it’s a marketable field here in Canada.”

# GROWING DIVERSITY

Passion for learning and desire to excel draw **international students** to enrol at Saskatchewan Polytechnic

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND SMITH

While “stepping into the unknown” and leaving family, friends and fabulous Jamaican cuisine behind was difficult, she says she overcame those challenges through faith, strong friends and family support.

“I talk to my mother on Skype every night and enjoy endless phone calls from my friends and family,” she says. “Someone is

always checking on me. Plus, I believe God has strategically placed people in my path every step of my journey to make my weight a little lighter to carry. I have come across some amazing people — faculty and otherwise — while studying here. They have been supportive and encouraging, and this, I believe, heightened my drive to excel.”

Crawford was not only a top stu-

dent, but also an active volunteer with the school, as well as in the community, with the local food bank, the Partners Against Violence anti-bullying campaign and many other groups and initiatives.

“It is my dream to help others through philanthropic work, as I love volunteering and helping the indigent in society,” says Crawford. “So I may do life coaching — I believe I’m good at encouraging others to make it against the odds.”

She says one of her goals is “to be an inspiring immigrant.”

Saskatchewan Polytechnic is increasingly becoming a desirable destination for international students with a passion for learning and an aspiration to build lives and careers in Canada.

“Our high employment rate among our graduates (94 per cent) makes Saskatchewan Polytechnic attractive to international students, and we have made great strides in providing support for international students in recent years,” says

PHOTO BY TOM BARTLETT

“I have come across some amazing people while studying here. They have been supportive and encouraging, and this, I believe, heightened my drive to excel.”

Jason Mazzei, manager of international education at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. “We provide our international students with all kinds of resources, from helping them prepare for the winter to assisting them with financial planning.”

Saskatchewan Polytechnic expanded the language centre at its Regina campus last spring. The centre offers newcomers testing and training to meet requirements for post-secondary entrance and citizenship and immigration, along with personal and professional objectives. More than 4,300 test takers have used the centre’s services since its inception in April 2012.

Renovations are now underway for similar services at Sask Polytech’s Saskatoon campus.

This year, the institution is expecting to welcome more than 300 international students — an increase of about 1,000 per cent in less than five years.

Sarang More is a student from Mumbai who graduated with a

degree in business administration at a university in India. He says travelling to Saskatchewan to study let him indulge all his interests.

“I like learning new things, meeting and getting to know people, and am fond of paragliding, travelling and learning about new cultures,” More says. “My dad always told me the importance of connecting with people, and this developed a love for entrepreneurship in me. I am now updating my skills studying finance at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Learning is rewarding in itself, and the accelerated structure of the courses at Saskatchewan Polytechnic provides a better understanding of a profession in a short time.”

More is looking to continue on and earn a chartered professional accountant (CPA) designation.

“It’s great to see so many international students on our campuses,” says Mazzei. “And we’re just getting started. We would love to see more students from China, Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam.” ■

## FAST FACTS

# 266

Four years ago, there were 35 international students attending

Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Three years ago, there were 71;

two years ago, 194; and last year, there were 266 international students.

# 300+

For the 2014-15 school year, Saskatchewan Polytechnic will welcome between 300 and 335 international students.

# Global

More than half of the international students at Saskatchewan Polytechnic come from India, with Nigeria, China and Pakistan also well represented.



PHOTO BY BILL STEVENSON

## OPENING DOORS

Academic **upgrading** programs help students meet challenges head on

BY ALEX FRAZER-HARRISON

Tahnee Dubois has faced a number of challenges as a single mom of a special-needs child.

But thanks to the support of Saskatchewan Polytechnic’s School of Academic and Career Education, she’s meeting many of them head on.

Dubois left high school in Grade 10 but is now aiming to launch a career in psychiatric nursing. An important step in achieving this goal is picking up her missed studies — and that’s where the school’s academic upgrading courses come in. They let students take high school equivalent classes that open the door to further studies at Sask Polytech and elsewhere.

“Before you start, you have to take a test to figure out where you are educationally,” explains Dubois, who enrolled in March 2013.

“It works out really well. I utilize the daycare provided here, and

there are tons of single mothers in this program. I’m on the board of the daycare, and I get to give them the perspective of being a single parent and going to school.”

Dubois says the community feel at Sask Polytech has encouraged her to excel and get involved. Besides the daycare board, she’s also on the school’s Aboriginal Student Achievement Plan steering committee.

So far, Dubois has found an affinity for her biology and English classes and says her instructors are second to none. “One of my favourite teachers says she prefers to teach adults because they know what they want, and they’re here for a reason,” Dubois says. She hopes to complete her academic upgrading in 2015.

“My advice is never give up ... keep striving for your goals. No matter what gets in your way, try to climb over every obstacle.” ■



“ I don’t think I ever really grew up and I’m not sure I ever want to, but I’m pretty proud of where we’ve been able to take our company. ”

**R**ob Harrison caters to the jet set and has prepared banquets for royalty.

He’s served supper to celebrities and governors, and spent thousands of hours in the kitchen perfecting recipes and polishing his skills — all while managing not to take himself too seriously.

“I don’t think I ever really grew up and I’m not sure I ever want to, but I’m pretty proud of where we’ve been able to take our catering company,” says Harrison, a Saskatchewan Polytechnic alumnus, Red Seal certified chef and the owner of Rushton’s Catering, which is WestJet Airlines’ exclusive Regina caterer for medium-haul flights.

Rushton’s is also a caterer of choice for many notable clients in Regina, including Government House, the Globe Theatre and the Wingate Hotel.

The company has prepared meals for Prince Charles, several provincial and territorial premiers, Governors General and lieutenant-governors, as well as many federal and provincial government ministers.

While Harrison briefly ventured down some varied career paths, ultimately, they always led back to a kitchen.

“I briefly thought about being a police officer when I was younger, but I have always been into cooking,” he says. “I was largely self-taught when I was young as both my parents worked, and so I cooked for the family.”

He was 40 when he finally went back to school to study cooking.

“I see now I probably wasn’t ready before that anyway,” he says.

# CATERER OF CHOICE

For red seal certified chef **Rob Harrison**, all paths led back to the kitchen

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND SMITH



## RECIPE

### ROB HARRISON'S BLACK LENTIL RISOTTO

"I had worked in the restaurant industry when I was younger, but after becoming frustrated that I couldn't find anyone to apprentice me, I went into retail management. I went back to cooking in 2002 and started working with Rushton's Catering, but I really wanted my Red Seal."

The Red Seal interprovincial program is a prestigious certification of apprenticeship in Canada, indicating an individual's skills, experience, creativity and professionalism.

"I was a very involved student and I wanted to get as much out of the program as I could," Harrison says. "I was the student representative for the cooking program. I participated in all kinds of student competitions and came out of the program with awards and scholarships as well as relationships that I maintain to this day.

"It was such a positive experience all the way around."

While Harrison admits there are days the business side drives him to distraction when all he really wants to do is cook, he says he is grateful for his business and where it has taken him and his family.

The WestJet contract was quite a coup, and his team prepares as many as 18,000 artisanal sandwiches annually for the airline.

"It has been a fulfilling career, and I look back at my time at Saskatchewan Polytechnic really fondly, because so many great relationships were formed there with students and instructors.

"I do what I can now to stay in touch and help out there when I can, and I look forward to doing more of that in the future. It's a great program." ■

"We serve this with a lemon and spiced chai tea marinated steelhead trout, but it can be served with any entrée."

1 cup organic black lentils  
4 cups chicken stock  
1/4 cup minced shallots  
1/4 cup minced carrot  
1/4 cup minced celery  
2 cloves of garlic, minced  
1 bay leaf  
1/2 cup grated Parmesan or asiago cheese

Salt and pepper  
2 tbsp butter

- 1 | Rinse and drain the black lentils.
- 2 | Heat the chicken stock.
- 3 | Melt the butter and add the onion, carrot, garlic, celery and bay leaf. Sauté until onion is translucent.
- 4 | Add the washed lentils and stir until coated with melted butter and lightly toasted.
- 5 | Add two cups of the hot stock and keep stirring.
- 6 | As stock is absorbed add more, 1/2 cup at a time, until lentils are al dente.
- 7 | Once most of the stock is absorbed stir in the cheese until it is melted and incorporated.
- 8 | Remove the bay leaf and finish with salt and pepper to taste.

# MINING A CAREER

Sask Polytech opened the doors to a bright future for **Megan Beres**

BY SHANNON SUTHERLAND SMITH

Megan Beres works for one of the largest potash producers in the world, in the middle of small-town Saskatchewan.

Beres is a document management administrator for Mosaic Potash, the world's leading producer and marketer of concentrated phosphate and potash, employing almost 9,000 people in eight countries.

She says her career would not have been possible without her technical education.

"I still keep in contact with many of my classmates and instructors as well as colleagues

ing class I took was probably one of my favourites, because we had to negotiate from the perspective of both sides. We truly learned to appreciate both angles. I appreciated the school's dedication to ensuring that we understood the material they were teaching us."

While working toward her diploma, she had a chance to participate in the cooperative program, and decided to "seize the chance" to apply newfound skills.

"Throughout the cooperative education process, I developed skills in formatting resumés, creating cover letters and participating in mock interviews," she says.

**"The collective bargaining class I took was probably one of my favourites, because we had to negotiate from the perspective of both sides."**

from my work term," says Beres, who graduated in 2010 from the Business Human Resources diploma program. "Sask Polytech truly sets students up with practical tools for success."

She says she initially chose Saskatchewan Polytechnic because her sister was enrolled there and raved about the small class sizes and the instructors.

"I did my first year in Yorkton and lived with my grandparents, and then I continued on to earn my diploma in Moose Jaw," Beres says. "The conversations I had with instructors and hearing their stories really helped me and inspired me. The collective bargain-

"Once interviews for the co-op terms began, I felt extremely prepared." Her dedication, and the commitment of the coordinators who helped her through the process, led to Beres being offered a six-month term with the Government of Saskatchewan's Public Service Commission.

"I believe that without the guidance and preparation of the coordinators, I may not have obtained that opportunity."

Today, Beres is enjoying a fulfilling career with a bright future. She's planning a wedding and looking forward to continuing her education while growing in her position at Mosaic. ■

# 2013 HOMECOMING

Alumni get together at the **Moose Jaw** campus

Attendees at the 2013 Alumni Homecoming event enjoyed mingling and entertainment at the Saskatchewan Polytechnic Moose Jaw Campus. The event, the second annual homecoming, was a success thanks to contributions from donors and sponsors, and lots of hard work by volunteers. ■



PHOTOS BY TOM BARTLETT

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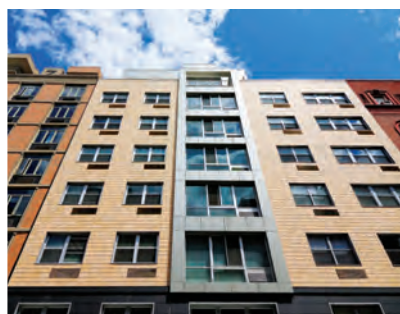
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