

Combined and Collaborative Programs:

Two perspectives are better than one in today's complex world

Collaborative programs

The University of Toronto offers more than 35 collaborative, interdisciplinary graduate programs.

In addition to degree programs, graduate departments, centres and institutes at U of T also offer unique, non-degree granting collaborative programs.

These innovative programs emerge from co-operation between two or more graduate units and provide students with a broader base from which to explore a novel interdisciplinary area.

Students must be admitted to and enrolled in a home department — one of the collaborating units participating in the specified collaborative program — and must apply to both units to participate.

Students must fulfil all the requirements for the degree in their home unit, which usually includes a core course that all students take regardless of their home department.

On successful completion of requirements for the collaborative program, a notation is added to the student's transcript.

COMPILED BY TAMMY THORNE

Combined programs

Involve two existing degree programs of different types. The combination may comprise two graduate programs or a graduate and an undergraduate program.

The graduate program(s) must have been approved by Ontario Council on Graduate Studies.

Students normally pursue one degree program at a time and if two qualifications are required, the degree programs are best pursued consecutively. However, there are cases where the combination of two programs may be advantageous from a student's point of view.

The combination of the two degrees usually involves an overlap of studies such that a set of requirements (usually about one session's work) counts towards both degrees, thereby reducing the overall time required to complete both degrees.

COMPILED BY ANJUM NAYYAR

Combined program tailored to information age

BY ANJUM NAYYAR

In an age where information is king and laws regarding online legalities are being created, U of T offers the only program in Ontario that combines the two fields.

The JD/MI combined program, which has been in place since 2004, allows a student to complete two degree programs within four years. A student receives both a law degree and the master of information degree which, if taken separately, would require five years of study. The program is offered jointly by the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Information and is one of only two such programs in Canada.

"Most law schools have a combined program, for example, with an MBA but U of T also provides something much more unusual in Canada by offering this program," said Alexis Archbold, acting assistant dean (students) at the

Faculty of Law. "It's convenient for the students because they can do the program in one year less than if they did these programs separately."

Judy Dunn, assistant dean (academic and program) at the Faculty of Information, said the program appeals to students who enjoy doing research. "The legal profession has always had a great respect for information, with the focus on case studies and searching for precedents. Graduates have many opportunities — Internet law, copyright law, information policy, legal research, knowledge management and of course legal librarianship. And there are many emerging career opportunities, for example, in the areas of privacy, security and surveillance."

Students applying to the JD/MI program must be admitted to both the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Information.

"We have an annual intake of about

200 new students in the master of information program. In terms of the JD/MI, we may only get one student a year. The combined program requires a substantial investment in time and money and students may not be aware of the outstanding return on investment," said Dunn.

In the first year of the program students complete courses in the Faculty of Information and in second year they focus on the law. In the third and fourth years of the combined program, students complete courses in both law and information.

"Both faculties offer great courses that interrelate and build on each other — this is what makes the program so valuable," Dunn said. "This is the perfect program for forward-thinking students who want to merge their interests in these two exciting fields."

For more information visit: www.ischool.utoronto.ca/content/blogcategory/105/116/.



Judy Dunn, assistant dean (academic and program) at the Faculty of Information, says the combined JD/MI degree is perfect for the information age.

Environmental engineering draws on many disciplines

BY TAMMY THORNE

Each year thousands of students from all disciplines at U of T study and research new ways to wipe out smog, reduce waste, fight climate change and more.

A few hundred of those students are budding engineers enrolled in the popular collaborative environmental engineering program (EEP) or in its related undergraduate minors. The program was born out of a collegial collaboration within the various departments of the Faculty of Applied Sciences and Engineering and with input from the Centre for Environment. The overall goal is to teach and inspire engineering students to build more sustainable systems.

The engineering curriculum at U of T is more focused on lifecycles these days — a systemic approach, said EEP chair Bryan Karney. "One of the things we didn't want to create was another environmental engineering program that

simply focuses on how to clean up other people's waste. You've got to stop making waste in the first place, which means thinking differently about the way you originally build and eventually demolish pipe systems, roadways and buildings. You have to think about lifecycle. You have to think more holistically."

Embodying that holistic thinking, engineering students can enrol in the program via one of four degree-granting graduate programs: chemical engineering and applied chemistry, civil engineering, mechanical and industrial engineering or material science engineering. Both master's and PhD degree programs are available. There are currently 90 graduate students in the program who carry out advanced, supervised research in a wide range of environmental engineering topics, including alternative fuels, hydrogeology, materials recycling, transportation, energy and air pollution and urban infrastructure development

and rehabilitation.

Karney himself has been teaching environmental issues in civil engineering for more than 20 years at U of T and about 15 years ago, the Division of Environmental Engineering was created to house both graduate and undergraduate programs in environmental engineering. It was renamed the Division of Environmental Engineering and Energy Systems about two years ago to reflect the idea that energy is now as big, important, and interdisciplinary a topic as the environment.

Karney said the collaborative program reflects the fact that environmental concerns are mainstream today, not simply another specialty subject.

"The whole way we approach knowledge, the way we've understood expertise, is a specialist one. We tend to think narrowly. It sort of gives us the comfort of becoming master of our own domain," he said. "In our faculty now there is a very strong sense that you need the overall picture for things to work well."

Karney cites Thomas Schelling's *The Ecology of Micromotives* as a driving influence on the faculty. "One of the things Schelling says beautifully well is, 'Sometimes small scale rationality results in large scale irrationality.'"

Big problems cannot be solved by simply dividing them up and giving each specialist a piece, he said. "We think of environmental needs as the responsibility of every engineer."

Director of the Centre for Environment, Ingrid Stefanovic, agrees. "The challenge for the University of Toronto is to continue to develop strong, interdisciplinary environmental programs for students from a variety of departments and disciplines in order to advance sustainable behaviour and attitudes."

The Division of Environmental Engineering and Energy Systems and the Centre for Environment are sponsoring the Sustainable Energy Fair April 3 at Sidney Smith Hall, showcasing the work of many EEP students.

For more information about the EEP see: http://www.energy.engineering.utoronto.ca/Graduate_Programs.html.

New PhD program: Dynamics of Global Change



Jeff Myers, a Dynamics of Global Change PhD student.

BY TAMMY THORNE

Globalization is one of the central phenomena of our times. But what is globalization exactly? Does it play out in the same way across fields of study? Are the challenges of global health comparable to the global challenges facing education?

Professor Robert Vipond is helping PhD candidates at U of T to answer those questions. Vipond is chair of the new Dynamics of Global Change (DGC) collaborative PhD program, housed at the Munk Centre for International Studies.

Launched in 2008, the program brings together senior graduate students and scholars in a rich multidisciplinary setting. "The program offers the best of all doctoral worlds: rigorous training in a single discipline leavened by unparalleled multidisciplinary breadth. This combination of depth and breadth is what makes this program distinctive," Vipond said.

From one of nine home departments,

spread over five faculties, students take up questions from their own disciplines and explore them through the kaleidoscopic perspective created by DGC. Within the faculties of arts and science, education, law, management and medicine, the program has nine participating PhD programs: adult education and community development, anthropology, economics, educational administration, geography, health services research, management and political science; a doctor of juridical science (SJD) is available from law.

Understanding the dynamic processes of global change has become a major source of scholarly energy the world over, said Vipond. "In a rapidly evolving, complex and loosely structured global system, it is essential to understand the sources, structure and pace — in short, the dynamics — of change."

Jeff Myers, one of the program's nine inaugural students, agreed, "Globalization is not just one thing — it's about everything. It's a post-postmodern condition. So it just makes sense to have many departments thinking about it."

Myers' research examines the Canadian national narrative. "I was attracted to the idea of being able to bump up ideas against people from all other kinds of disciplines and when I saw the roster of disciplines in this program I got really excited about that," he said.

As with all collaborative programs, students must take the core course. University Professor Janice Gross Stein, Belzberg Professor of Conflict Management and director of the Munk Centre for International Studies, convened the core course and invited other scholars to lead sessions.

Myers said it was "brilliant," with a host of accomplished scholars and "at least one Nobel Prize winner."

"We talked about secularism, law and justice, climate change, epidemiology. It was what I imagined university would be when I first came but never was," Myers said. "I feel so fortunate to be able to hear from professors from all over the world. My supervisor is from Argentina, the next intensive course is taught by a professor from South Africa and then another from Israel," he said. "Coming from OISE we are often critical of power and knowledge constructions so I've sought out professors from other parts of the world."

For more information visit: www.utoronto.ca/mcis/dgc/application_process/index.html.

Grooming nursing leadership

BY ANJUM NAYYAR

For Melissa Skinner, a master of nursing/master of health sciences graduate working at the Hospital for Sick Children, the combined program opened doors that she would never have dreamed she'd walk through. The first and only program in Canada to combine graduate education in both nursing and health services management, it has been in place for three years.

After graduating from the University of Western Ontario with a BScN, Skinner decided to take the MN/MHSc program to help her explore other options in her nursing career.

"The program prepares students to take on senior management and executive positions," she said. "It has helped me to expand my current position in management and I am looking forward to exploring more senior opportunities in the near future."

Building on the strengths of both the nursing and health administration programs, the MN/MHSc combined degree prepares graduates to provide nursing leadership in today's complex and interdisciplinary environments. It can be completed in 2.5 years of full-time study.

"If you look right now a lot of the senior leadership positions are going to nurses. The individuals going into those positions require a broad systems perspective, along with the nursing perspective, and this program allows students to get that perspective," said Tina Smith of health policy, management and evaluation at the Faculty of Medicine. "Our goal is to develop the really top leaders in the health system so they have both the underpinning of nursing science but also the very broad view of nursing leadership."

Faculty teaching in the program are leading researchers who incorporate the latest nursing and health services research into their lessons. The multidis-

ciplinary curriculum provides graduates with a foundation in key leadership competencies, including organizational behaviour and change management, healthcare trends, strategic planning and health policy and economics.

"Students do a practicum at the end of the program in which they are often closely aligned with a health service leader, such as a chief executive officer or someone in a senior administrative role they might aspire to," said Professor Linda McGillis Hall, the program's director at the Lawrence S. Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing.

For Skinner the program has made all the difference.

"I believed that the combination of the two programs enabled me to establish a foundation in nursing administration that would translate well into the broader MHSc program," she said. "The MHSc provided a more diverse and intensive perspective on broader healthcare issues."

"The reality is that in the workplace these days people are functioning in interdisciplinary teams. They're not just focusing on one discipline alone, so this provides students that are interested in leadership an opportunity to work towards that goal," McGillis Hall said.



Nursing graduate Melissa Skinner.