

Community-based research unit formed

The Faculty of Arts has formally established a unit that will co-ordinate community-based research between organizations and its faculty and students.

One of the first initiatives the Community Research Unit (CRU) will take on is a pilot project with the North Central Community Association (NCCA). The project will assess the state of housing in North Central and inventory the community's assets.

It is hoped that by doing this the NCCA will be able to determine if a housing facilitator position is needed, an individual who would serve as a point person for the community's housing issues. If that is the case, the research could be presented to the government to help the NCCA secure funding for the position.

"The problem is there has been housing data all over the place," explains Rob Deglau, NCCA community co-ordinator. "You had silos of people doing data and research on inner-city housing. There is no

one single place where you can find all of this information so her role (student researcher Danielle Goulden) is to bring all that information into one single focus."

"I'm very excited and optimistic about this because it's a new way for the community and University to work together."

CRU projects begin with an idea in the community, which can range from requests for information to a desire for a new program. From there, Yolanda Hansen, the research unit co-ordinator, works with the community group, discusses the idea and tries to match the group with the appropriate University expertise.

Faculty participation is voluntary and funding for projects is secured by the organizations seeking assistance.

"If the organization has some funds, we can work with that, or we could apply together for research funds somewhere," explains Hansen. "Being a part of something with the University often helps



(L to R) Yolanda Hansen, U of R Community Research Unit co-ordinator, Rob Deglau, North Central Community Association community co-ordinator, and student researcher Danielle Goulden are working together to help address housing issues in North Central Regina.

them leverage funds because they can say 'the University will give us credible, rigorous research.'"

In addition to facilitating research, the CRU also makes it a priority to create community-based student learning opportunities.

One such initiative is Arts CARES – Community Action in Regina for Educational Service – a community service learning program.

From February 17 to 20, students will work for a number of local community-based organizations that deal with issues of food, women's health and the environment.

In the mornings, they will volunteer and in the afternoons students will get together for interactive workshops and reflection. This is to give them a chance to process their volunteer experiences and how the day's events apply to

the content of their respective classes.

A few of the classes that are involved are Geography 491AF, Human Justice 355, Women's Studies 301, Political Science 361 and Luther College's Interdisciplinary Studies 101.

For more information about CRU, contact Yolanda Hansen at 585-4084 or email Yolanda.Hansen@uregina.ca

Francophone units celebrate new space

The University's francophone environment became more cohesive with the co-location of three units – the Institut français, the Department of French and the Bac en éducation française – to the second floor of the Language Institute.

The co-location project was proposed and facilitated by the Institut français, the Faculty of Arts and the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise (ACF), a province-wide organization that works to protect and promote the French language and cultural rights of Saskatchewan residents. The required renovations were funded in part by both the federal and provincial governments who supported the project by providing one-time special funding.

Three years after the idea for the project surfaced, partners celebrated their success with the official opening Oct. 16 of the offices of the Department of French in its new location, along with the newly developed Centre

de services aux étudiants.

The Centre is operated by the Institut français and offers students educational assistance, tutoring, bursaries, student exchanges, employment services, access to mentoring, professional counselling services and a database of potential employers.

"Whether a student needs support to continue his studies in French or chooses to be served in French, this is the place to come," says Francine Proulx-Kenzle, manager of the Centre.

The grand opening marks the end of a long transition process.

"I think that everybody is relieved and pleased to be in this new space" says Bruce Plouffe, acting head of the Department of French. "There was obviously some minimal disruption, but everything was well organized."

The location is anticipated to complement the variety of courses offered by the Department of French, from beginner level French to trans-



Proud partners cut the ribbon opening the Centre de services aux étudiants and new location of the French department. (L to R) Reg Urbanowski, Assistant Deputy Minister, Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour; Francine Proulx-Kenzle, Centre manager; Paul-Émile L'Heureux, Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise representative; Bruce Plouffe, acting head of the Department of French, and Thomas Chase, Dean of Arts.

lation and also literature and special topic courses.

"The proximity of these three francophone entities in this building will permit us to work more effectively together and, quoting the new president of the university, Vianne Timmons, we will become stronger with the community at our side," says Plouffe.

Paul-Émile L'Heureux, ACF representative (Education post-secondary), feels having a cohesive francophone space will help French speakers maintain their language skills.

"It's so easy to lose your ability to speak," says L'Heureux. "It's always easy to understand. But when it comes to saying things, you need to

use it once a day. This is a good opportunity for people, if they are serious about (maintaining their language skills), for those kids that went to immersion schools or French schools. They can come here, socialize, meet people and keep their skills up. It makes a stronger community in the end, I hope."