

## THE SENIOR COLLEGE MESSENGER

Issue 1: November, 2021

*This Senior College publication will replace the Bulletin. Our intention is to come out with a briefer publication that will appear monthly. It will serve as an organ for members of Senior College to submit short articles that share news, opinions, reactions to the program and anything that they feel will be of general interest. Its regular appearance will allow for an exchange of opinion of topics of interest to the members.*

*There have been many changes at the University of Toronto during the years that we have been its members. We invite you to reminisce and reflect on these and share your observations.*

*Please submit contributions to the editor, Ed Barbeau at [barbeau@math.utoronto.ca](mailto:barbeau@math.utoronto.ca)*

### REPORT FROM THE PRINCIPAL: PROVOSTIAL REVIEW

**Michael Hutcheon**

Like the cycles of nature — the seasons, night and day — the Provost’s Office at the University of Toronto undertakes a cyclical review of each of the entities that it supports. And so, in June 2021, it was the turn of Senior College. Senior College in its current form was created out of what had been RALUT, RALUT Centre and the academic programs that had developed for retired faculty, librarians and senior staff at U of T in 2014.

The Reviewers, Professor Ann Tourangeau from the Faculty of Nursing, Professor Ben Alarie from the Faculty of Law and Mr. Horatio Bot, Executive Director Budget, Planning & Finance, Faculty of Arts & Science held two days of consultations on June 8 and 9, 2021. They met with the Senior College Administrator, current officers and chairs, former Principals and 25 members of the College, both Fellows and non-Fellows. They were also recipients of a written submission containing the details of Senior College: members, programs, finances and challenges. We are making available an extract of this document and the relevant appendices on our website. While lengthy, it provides a particularly detailed “snapshot” of the College, as of May, 2021, that may be of interest.

The Terms of Reference addressed the impact of Senior College, the appropriateness and effectiveness of its programming and initiatives, the financial organization, and the administrative structure.

In their report, we were pleased to see that the reviewers recognized the excellence and value to the university of the College’s activities:

“Senior College members have a strong and effective record of providing service both within and external to the University.”

“Without exception, all members engaged in the two-day meetings expressed genuine respect and commitment for the experiences they have gained through their participation in Senior College programming. There is clear evidence of the high quality of the programming that is characterized as interdisciplinary, engaging, intellectually stimulating, vibrant, and collegial. Our interviewees repeatedly emphasized the outstanding quality and wide scope of the programming.”

The reviewers offered a series of recommendations for Senior College, two of which I will address here.

First, they recommend that we examine our relationship with the Faculty Club. This Club has just reopened after a 19-month closure. After consultation with Fellows through focus groups and e-mail solicitation, we have taken several decisions. We will not return to in-person lectures and other events until 2022. Our preference would be a return to the Faculty Club, which many see as a “home” for Senior College. However, we would wish to transition to a hybrid format with on-line and in-person possibilities. We have begun discussion with the new management of the Faculty Club. We have also been exploring other potential venues.

The second recommendation that seems to be useful to consider is that of simplifying the administrative structure of the College. We now have several years experience with our current organization and it is apparent that there are areas of redundancy and unclear distinctions among several parts of our governance structure. Jim Gurd is leading a small committee to review structures and report to the College Council.

## **SENIOR COLLEGE: A RETROSPECTIVE**

**Germaine Warkentin**

*Senior College is celebrating ten years of existence. Its activities have enriched our intellectual lives immeasurably. Germain Warkentin, professor emeritus of English, one of its prime movers, reminisces on its foundation.*

As I recall, Senior College developed in part from an initiative we took very early in the life of its predecessor, RALUT (Retired Academics and Librarians of the University of Toronto). RALUT began chiefly as a protest against the university’s pension policy, and was led by Peter Russell, to his very great credit. But after we got going, I realized that RALUT was doing nothing for another goal of many U of T pensioners, which was to continue their academic work in some appropriate form. So we instituted a Senior Scholars Committee, which met regularly and addressed itself to a number of issues raised by the members, with two chief aims. The first was to ensure complete library access for retirees who needed it. This was by no means a guaranteed right at the universities we studied across Canada and in the US, and we believed it should be available to all retirees at U of T. Thanks to the good work of Joan Winearls and other librarian members of RALUT, we achieved this. The second goal was to set up a way of reporting what retirees were doing academically – books and papers published, conferences organized, public service, awards and honours – to the administration and the university at large. So within

a year or so we issued our first collection, which to our delight caused some surprise at Simcoe Hall. The publication continued yearly in one form or another.

Finally, a new development arose out of a session we had with all our medical and scientific members. Led by John Dirks, we began to hold a yearly symposium, at first on a very small scale but eventually growing into the major project it is today. It was at this point that John and Peter began to think seriously about the possibility of a Senior College, and after a year or so of work and cogitation, the college was established. Ken Rea was an enormous help at this time. His work in helping the RALUT executive start CURAC, a national association of university pensioners, had provided us with a rich knowledge of what was going on at other universities, and helped serve as groundwork for Senior College.

After ten years, what are the results? As I look back, I am amazed and delighted by the success of Senior College under its three principals, Peter Russell, Harold Atwood and Michael Hutcheon, in providing for its members the stunning range of opportunities it offers today: a regular schedule of well-attended academic presentations, a regular smaller colloquium, frequent shorter talks, a major yearly symposium, special trips to places of cultural interest, the chance to work with volunteers from University in the Community, and contacts with academic retiree groups all across the country through connections first made via RALUT. At Senior College there is always something worth attending. Interestingly, this busy schedule has been much expanded by the current CoVID pandemic, which has led to a flood of online activities, open to all members. It is an incredible record of activity, and one the university should be very proud of.

### IN MEMORIAM

William C. Berman (d. December 7, 2020) age 88  
Professor of History

Charles Elswood Chaffey (January 22, 1941 - October 15, 2021)  
Professor of Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry

Rashmi C. Desai (November 21, 1938 - June 1, 2020)  
Professor of Physics

Margrit Elisabeth Gertrud Eichler (September 28, 1942 - July 8, 2021)  
Professor, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; Women's Studies

Robert (Bob) Farquharson (d. April 10, 2021) age 98  
Professor of German Literature, Victoria College

Jeffrey Fawcett (July 6, 1936 - March 12, 2021)  
Professor of Geology

John Gilbert (d. April 22, 2021)  
Professor of French, New College

Judith Knelman (d. October 9, 2020) age 81

Professor of Information and Media Studies, Western University

Mariam Campbell Aitchison Packham (December 13, 1927 - September 20, 2020)  
University Professor of Biochemistry

John Powell (April 3, 1943 - June 24, 2021)  
Professor of Chemistry

Betty Ida Roots (October 21, 1927 - October 24, 2020)  
Professor of Zoology

John Christopher Rucklidge (January 15, 1938 - May 7, 2021)  
Professor of Earth Sciences

H. Bruce Schroeder (d. July 28, 2020) age 87  
Professor of Archaeology, Scarborough College

Philip Seeman (1934 - January 9, 2021)  
Professor of Pharmacology

Louis Siminovitch (May 1, 1920 - April 6, 2021)  
Professor of Molecular Genetics  
Founding director: Linefeld-Tenenbaum Research Institute

George (Ron) Williams (1928 - 2020)  
Professor of Biochemistry, Institute of Environmental Studies  
Sixth Principal of Scarborough College

### Calendar of Coming Events

All events are currently held online using Zoom. Unless indicated otherwise, Wednesday speakers are from the University of Toronto. Events marked with **F** are for fellows and external fellows. Registration a few days ahead is necessary for each event. This can be done in response to a weekly email from Senior College to its members that describes the events or by going on line at [www.seniorcollege.utoronto.ca](http://www.seniorcollege.utoronto.ca).

#### *Weekly Talks: Wednesdays, 2-4 pm*

November 3: **Candace Kruttschnitt** (Sociology and Criminology)  
A different approach to examining prisoner re-entry: life as film

November 10: **Janet Rossant** (Molecular genetics)  
Stem cells and gene editing: the science and the ethical debates

November 17: **Trevor Levere** (History & Philosophy of Science & Technology)  
The Royal Navy's final Arctic exploration and the naturalist on *HMS Alert*

November 24: **Sali Tagliamonte** (Linguistics)  
Soakers, slims and other expressions: including Ontario dialect in OED

*Colloquium: Thursdays, 2-4 pm (F)*

November 18: Chair - Maggie Redekop

Is the biology of reproduction an insurmountable barrier to sexual equality?

December 9: Chair - Charles Maurer

What does transgender mean and how does the transgender phenomenon affect society?

*Book Club: Mondays, 2-4 pm (F)*

November 1

An Odyssey: A Father, A Son, and an Epic (by Daniel Mendelsohn)

December 6

Young Trudeau, 1919-1944: Son of Quebec, Father of Canada (by Max & Monique Nemni)

*Coffee hours*

Thursdays, November 11 and 25, 2 pm