

THE OPEN STANDARD

The Newsletter of the Open Learning Division of Thompson Rivers University
August 2008 Issue 1 Volume 2

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THE OPEN STANDARD

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THOMPSON RIVERS
UNIVERSITY
OPEN LEARNING

A Greener Way of Learning

The nature of Open Learning offers eco friendly solutions

Education is the keystone of Thompson Rivers University (TRU) and learning is our livelihood but learning is not only expected of our students and our livelihood is not only measured by enrolments. Our costs exceed the business of education to include the cost of minimizing the impact our operation may have on the environment.

As more and more is understood about the potential impact we as an institution can have on the environment, the more TRU is learning ways to reduce potential waste, pollution, emissions and energy use. Our ability to practise and promote environmental responsibility and contribute to the sustainability of our environment is essential to the livelihood of the University, our students and society in general.


By its very nature, the Open Learning division of TRU supports the ethic of environmental sustainability. A research study conducted by the Open University of the United Kingdom entitled *Towards Sustainable Higher Education: Environmental Impacts* (Roy et al, 2005), suggests that distance learning course delivery reduces our environmental impact as it minimizes energy expenditure and produces fewer carbon dioxide emissions on a larger scale.

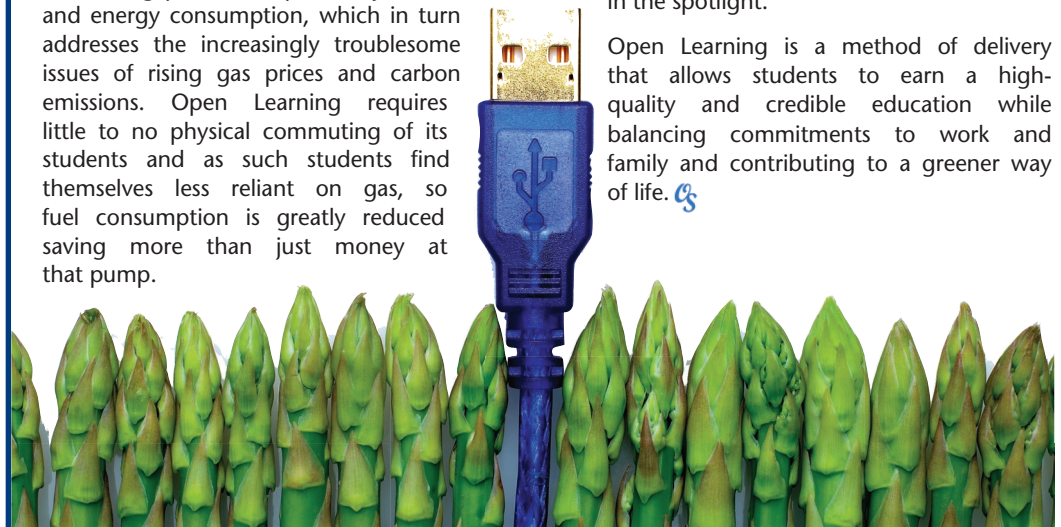
The report also indicates that distance learning reduces student's environmental impact by minimizing personal dependency on fuel and energy consumption, which in turn addresses the increasingly troublesome issues of rising gas prices and carbon emissions. Open Learning requires little to no physical commuting of its students and as such students find themselves less reliant on gas, so fuel consumption is greatly reduced saving more than just money at that pump.

In line with TRU's recognition of both the environmental challenges faced by current and future generations and the importance of a sustainable future, Open Learning is becoming increasingly aware of green solutions.

In addition to promoting the environmentally friendly possibilities inherent with online and distance learning on its website and promotional materials, TRU-OL is also making efforts to support environmental sustainability by using Forest Stewardship Council-certified paper products for its marketing and communications materials. The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)'s mission is to continuously improve environmental practices and the responsible management of the world's forests. By using FSC-certified paper products, TRU-OL is encouraging the eradication of negative impacts associated to logging such as habitat destruction, water pollution and displacement of indigenous people. In order to support the protection and management of forests globally, Open Learning not only uses FSC-certified products but also promotes the FSC by using its logo on related TRU-OL print materials.

While Open Learning offers an untraditional method of learning, concerns such as rising gas prices, the need to reduce carbon emissions and environmental sustainability are beginning to place this alternative approach to education in the spotlight.

Open Learning is a method of delivery that allows students to earn a high-quality and credible education while balancing commitments to work and family and contributing to a greener way of life. 



The Prescription for Success

A Spoonful of Open Learning helps the graduate get in

With an impressive resumé that includes coordinator for the Canadian Cancer Society, high school sports instructor as well as volunteer work at a Kenyan medical clinic, a South African wildlife reserve, as a ski patrol medic with the Canadian Ski Patrol System and the coordinator of a youth leadership program for Rotary International in Northern BC, one would expect the world to be your oyster. However, in the world of higher education where the acceptance rate for medical school is below 15%, even Morgan Evans' shining CV required, believe it or not, further improvement.

Evans, a Bachelor of Science Honours graduate from Queen's University, commenced his Open Learning career with Thompson Rivers University (TRU)

in order to boost his competitiveness for entrance into medical school. "The non-paced nature of the Open Learning courses allowed me the freedom to study around my other commitments such as work, travel and volunteering opportunities," Evans said, describing the multitude of endeavours outside of formal education, he engaged in to supplement his CV for medical school.

"I've had to strive to improve myself in all areas," Evans said. "TRU has helped me improve my academic competitiveness and the open learning format has taught me independence in study techniques, time management and dedication."

These skills however, were not always in Evans, repertoire. When he first enrolled

in the Bachelor of Arts, Psychology (BA, Psych) program, Evans jumped into his coursework only to find the independent nature quite difficult. While procrastination initially hindered Evans' progress, the course format and tutor support helped him become quickly acquainted with the open learning method of learning. "The method of course delivery is great," Evans said. "Everything you need arrives in a small, neat package and there's no standing in line for books, or to see instructors."

While Evans completed many courses in less than a month, others required him to take the full amount of time allotted for course completion. Expedience was however of less significance to Evans who was able to gain two years of credits towards his TRU-OL BA, Psych, meaning he could complete his degree in half the time expected.

"My goal when I began with TRU, Open Learning was the completion of my Bachelor of Arts in psychology and admission into medical school," Evans recalls. "I'm happy to say that I will have accomplished both of those goals by the end of August 2008 when I enter the medical program at UBC (the University of British Columbia)."

Evans credits his Open Learning tutor in psychology for writing an academic reference letter to UBC that helped "immensely" in his receipt of admittance to the program of his dreams. ☺



Morgan Evans

"The non-paced nature of the Open Learning courses allowed me the freedom to study around my other commitments such as work, travel and volunteering opportunities."

- Morgan Evans, TRU-OL Student

Monitoring Education

Open Learning goes live on the big screen

by Cameron Beddome

By now, most staff and visitors of the BC Centre for Open Learning have likely seen the video monitors on the third and fourth floors. If you are one of the few who has not noticed our flat screen purveyors of informational entertainment, I encourage you to take a look at the messages appearing daily. For the last few months, the monitors have been showcasing on-campus messaging but today and moving forward, the screens will tell the tales of interesting and valuable Open Learning information.

The messaging displayed on the monitors informs you about past, current and future Open Learning activities and initiatives; anything that involves Open Learning will likely be found on the savvy screens. A few topics displayed include: project highlights; new partnerships; new course launches; enrolment numbers; exam completions; student graduations; visitors; marketing initiatives; and the list goes on. In the beginning of August, images showcasing current marketing campaigns began to be displayed on the monitors.


While the monitors are increasingly displaying more TRU, Open Learning



information, campus information will continue to be included.

More material is lined up to be released at an almost daily rate but if you think we have missed anything or have a subject or event that you would like to see displayed, please email the

Administrative Assistant in the area of focus.

The information is captivating and will continue to cycle throughout the day, this way you do not have to worry about missing something. 

Blackboard Update

OL introduces Blackboard to clean the Learning Management System slate

This summer and early fall, TRU's IT Services, the Instructional Development and Research Group (IDRG) and Delivery, are helping Open Learning instructors migrate courses previously taught on WebCT Version 4 to Blackboard (CE). The move supports TRU's goal to discontinue use of the older version 4 of WebCT by May 1, 2009. To learn more about TRU's Learning Management Systems visit www.tru.ca/its/lms.html.

Blackboard, which purchased WebCt in 2006, produces online learning and course management software which focuses on student assessment capabilities and interactive features as well as interoperability with other course management systems, including free, open-source systems like Moodle. With the latest versions of Blackboard, sharing information between systems is much easier allowing for improved services to students and greater efficiencies for TRU staff.

Open Learning Partners Up

OL's Strategic Partnerships help define TRU as the University of Choice

Building alliances is an integral part of the Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning's Strategic Plan for 2007-2012. From January 31 through April 11, 2008, a series of Strategic Planning consultations identified nine strategic areas within Open Learning that would contribute to the recognition of Thompson Rivers University (TRU) as The University of Choice.

The benefits of developing strategic partnerships for TRU, the partner organization and most importantly the individual learner, are integral in the development of TRU and the Open Learning division as a University of Choice.

To date, TRU-OL has finalized approximately 14 strategic partnerships of various sizes and types including: program development; credit bank; articulation; articulation/Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR); and promotion agreements. Partners include both private and public post-secondary institutions, industry and professional associations, as well as various forms of municipal government.

Program Development Partnership Agreement

Currently OL is involved in a program development partnership with the BC Onsite Sewage Association (BCOSSA). BCOSSA represents over 900 BC wastewater treatment practitioners and companies. Their mission is to "ensure best management practices and good stewardship of onsite wastewater treatment systems, safeguard public health, enhance the environment, protect fresh water resources and to provide a permanent sustainable infrastructure for land use planning and development." (www.bcoffa.com)

This partnership helps address industry's need for professional development through education required by BCOSSA. Through this partnership BCOSSA's members will be able to access relevant post-secondary education, which will also be recognized as required education credits mandated by the association. While TRU-OL's Water Treatment Technology program will be marketed to associate members, BCOSSA also plans to develop with TRU-OL, a Soil-Based Wastewater Treatment

Certificate program. This partnership will officially be finalized in late August when the BC Minister of Environment, Barry Penner, witnesses the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between BCOSSA and TRU-OL.

Articulation Partnership Agreements

Building alliances with other post-secondary institutions is a major and fundamental TRU-OL initiative which has most recently culminated into the development of three articulation agreements with Algonquin College, SAIT Polytechnic and Sheridan College.

For graduates of each of these post-secondary partners, TRU-OL offers a number of degree completion paths in such areas as Business, Health, the Arts and General Studies. The specific degree completion paths are:

- Algonquin College: Bachelor of Commerce
- SAIT Polytechnic: Bachelor of Trades and Technology Leadership, Bachelor of General Studies, Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Health Sciences
- Sheridan College: Bachelor of Arts, all streams and Bachelor of General Studies

Articulation/Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Partnership Agreements

TRU-OL has also fostered partnerships with private post-secondary institutions that are similar to those found with public post-secondary institutions. However, while the purpose of these agreements is the same, providing degree completion pathways, the mechanisms of recognition differ. Students graduating from a private training institution are able to obtain suitable recognition through TRU-OL's PLAR process, which essentially gives credit for the knowledge and skill sets obtained through the private training program. Currently, TRU-OL is in partnership with the Canadian College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine regarding the Bachelor of Health Sciences (BHSc) program and the Canadian Therapeutic College, also for the BHSc.




Credit Bank Partnership Agreement

TRU-OL recently partnered in a credit bank agreement with one of North America's largest food and drug retailers, Safeway Canada Inc. Through this partnership TRU-OL will evaluate and assess the viability of recognizing Safeway's internal management training program for academic credit that can be put towards TRU-OL's Bachelor of Commerce degree. Safeway offers its employees access to their Professional and Career Education (PACE) program which combines classroom education with work experience for various entry-level management positions.

Promotion Partnership Agreements


Cross promotion enhances market visibility and provides a sense of legitimacy for the participating partners. TRU-OL is forming strategic associations with a number of organizations which will allow Open Learning to break into highly visible and desirable markets. Currently, TRU-OL has established promotion-based partnerships with: NRI Distribution Inc, the Canadian Homebuilders Association; Finning Canada; the City of Kelowna; the Water Supply Association of BC; and the City of Whitehorse. For these organizations, their association with TRU expresses their firm commitment to education and the development of their employees. In addition to introducing employees and members to educational opportunities, partners have agreed to represent each other through methods such as logo placement, promotional vehicles including web presence and information sessions.

Currently, Open Learning's promotion-based partnerships are publicizing the Bachelor of Trades and Technology Leadership program and the Water Treatment Technology program.

Past and present partnerships emphasize real value for Open Learning, its various partners and students alike. 

Outstanding Achievement Awards

I scream, you scream we all scream for  achievements

 On July 7, 2008, Vice President of Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) Judith Murray welcomed OL staff, faculty and associated university personnel to an Open Learning Ice Cream party to celebrate the second set of OL Outstanding Staff/Faculty Achievement Awards.

Staff and faculty gathered in the first floor reception area of the BC Centre for Open Learning to congratulate the winners of Open Learning's three Achievement Awards, which are handed out on a quarterly basis. The July Awards ceremony introduced Open Learning's first Outstanding Service Award for OL Tutors.


The second-ever Open Learning Staff/Faculty Award went to Sarah Langlois, who was recently promoted to the new position of Associate Director of Program Delivery. In her past role as the Supervisor of Tutor Support for Program Delivery, Langlois was nominated by Jim Barmby, the Director of Program Delivery.

A glowing recount of the devoted work Langlois has contributed to Open Learning was provided by Barmby. "Sarah has demonstrated innovation in a great many ways, from identifying cost savings in tutor stationary supplies, to a system for tracking student concerns, to playing a leading role with members of other departments in developing new ways to launch new versions of courses, to working with student records to identifying student transcript problems and ensuring accuracy and timeliness in exceptional circumstances," Barmby enthusiastically announced at the award ceremony. "Her concern for the students, her coworkers, and the success of OL at TRU has been an example to all. She has excelled in building a spirit of collaboration with her counterparts in other departments."

Business Intelligence's Lee Joy nominated Gwynne Peller for the Peer-to-Peer Award pronouncing that Peller deserves to receive a "Get out of Work Free for One Day" award. Joy described Peller as a dutiful worker who continuously went above and beyond to ensure the Business Intelligence team was running efficiently. "She is always helpful, good spirited and a solid contributor to our bi-weekly team meetings," Joy said.

The July Awards ceremony, and Ice Cream extravaganza, provided the perfect platform to integrate and recognize Open Learning's tutors. Due to lack of tutors physical presence from the BCCOL, tutors can be absent from OL activities. In order to encourage tutor recognition and inclusion in OL operations, the Tutor Outstanding Service Award was introduced.

The first recipient of this important award is Dr. John Marasigan, OL tutor of Statistics in the Social Sciences. Marasigan received a heartfelt nomination from OL student Lucinda Lorraine Edith Friberg. Through an email nomination, Friberg described Marasigan as an "outstanding tutor" who encourages her success and will tirelessly explain course content to her. "If I didn't understand what he said the first time I could easily ask him again without him minding," Friberg writes. "On every assignment he told me to carry on... Here's to you Dr. Marasigan - Thank you for caring that I win."

For those who could not attend, the celebration was recorded by the Media Team in the Instructional Development and Research Group and is posted for viewing on the Open Learning website at http://barabus.tru.ca/bccol_awards/july2008/. 



Sarah Langlois



Gwynne Peller



Dr. John Marasigan

Life in Open Learning

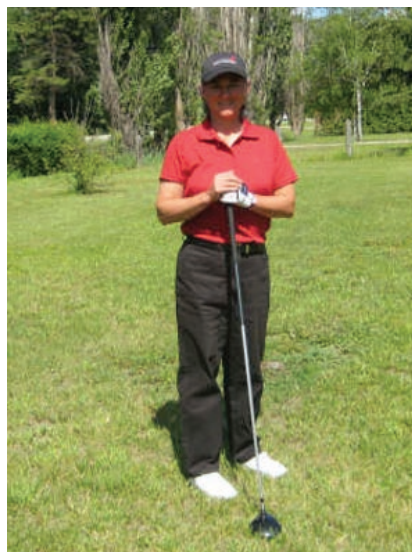
Welcome Richard Baldelli



Wading through a quintessential ocean of collegial acronyms, Richard Baldelli joins the Open Learning Marketing and Communications team as the new Web Manager. With a degree in Business and Finance from the Manchester Metropolitan University and a background in e-marketing strategies at companies such as Learning and Skills Council, Oxford Brookes University, the University of Worcester, as well as Jaguar and Land Rover, this is likely not the first time Baldelli has been greeted by “1,001 new acronyms” associated to higher education.

Prior to changing careers, moving countries and ultimately personifying the Open Learning motto “Do something different,” Baldelli worked in the United Kingdom on the client and supplier side of web technology delivery. But things changed after moving to Kamloops in search of a lifestyle change that included, it seems, an area with a sunnier disposition than that of the UK. “Kamloops ticked all the boxes in terms of geography, climate and economic opportunities that my wife and I were looking for,” Baldelli explains. Now, as a Kamloopsian, Baldelli has spent the last three years running his own equestrian business.

If not galloping about on his horses, Baldelli was likely boating, swinging a tennis racket, skiing the slopes of Sunpeaks or simply exploring BC. So one might ask, why leave such a life? “The opportunity to be involved in the growth and development of TRU-OL intrigued me, and I missed the ever changing world of online technologies,” Baldelli explains. ☺



Bocce Babes

On May 15, 2008, Catherine Guiguet, Exams Clerk (left); Janet Maskell, Assistant to Associate Vice President (second from left); Rachel Champagne, Enrolment Services Officer (second from right); and Toni Faulkner, Exams Clerk (far right), reinvented themselves as the Open Learning Bocce Babes. The foursome competed in the Bocce Ball tournament held May 15, during the summer student welcome Beach Party. ☺

Welcome Michelle Russell

Open Learning welcomes Michelle Russell back to her Open Learning position as Program Advisor of Health Sciences and Technology and gives thanks to Kathy Gilroy who temporarily filled the role as Program Advisor. ☺

Congratulations to Wilma deJong

Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning’s very own Wilma deJong took the title of low net runner up with a 144 at the BCGA Zone 2 Ladies’ Amateur Championship 2008 held at Rivershore Estates and Golf Links. DeJong, tutor support – arts, was one of 54 entries to compete in the event held June 8 and 9. This was the first Zone 2 amateur competition deJong has entered upon moving to Kamloops about a year ago. *The Daily News, Kamloops* reports that deJong is “a two-time club champion and three-time runner-up at Fort Langley Golf Course in New Westminster.” ☺


More Life in Open Learning

Welcome Marie McGivern




Open Learning doesn't need to worry about problems clogging up the area of Tutor Support as Marie McGivern has joined the Program Delivery team as a new Tutor Support Assistant.

McGivern offers a wide range of business and technical skills garnered from: her work in the wholesale plumbing business as a Supervisor of showroom consultants; her tact as the owner of a successful home-based manufacturing


business; and her institutional experience as the Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Council of the City of Kamloops. This impressive roster of work experience is further bolstered by her educational background including a Business and Management Diploma from Sprott-Shaw Community College as well as her volunteer experience in the BC 4-H program, which helps children and youth develop community awareness, leadership abilities and new skills. 

Congratulations Leena Niemela

Leena Niemela has taken over the position of Manager of Admissions and Advising upon the resignation of Diana Thomson. The gap that this left in Niemela's past Open Learning position as an Enrolment Services Advisor has been filled by both Rachel Champagne, who has left her position as Enrolment Services Officer, and Scott Walker, who has left his position as Enrolments Services and Advising Assistant. Champagne and Walker join Margaret West and Jennifer Callow in their work on new student admission advising, transfer credit articulation and other recruitment plans. With the new additions, Enrolment Services Advisors will be welcoming minor changes to the program distributions managed. 

Welcome


Open Learning's Admissions and Records Assistants welcome two new team members. **Deborah Van Den Hoogen** has left her post as Open Learning Division Secretary to begin working in the Records area of Open Learning.

In addition, **Mary Ann Peressini**, currently working at the School of Social Work and Human Services, will be joining the OL Admissions and Records team to work in Admissions by the end of August. 


Congratulations Sarah Langlois

Taking on a tough new task is nothing new for Sarah Langlois who recently took on the new position of Associate Director of Program Delivery, Open Learning. In 2002, Langlois dove into the new realm of distance education when she accepted a job with UK eUniversities Worldwide Ltd., a joint venture between all UK universities, colleges and the private sector to provide an e-learning platform to deliver education to a global market.

Langlois entered the distance learning market offering an impressive roster of educational experience beyond her post-graduate certificate in marketing, her Master of Science degree in Information Management from Sheffield University and her Honours Bachelor of Arts, Business Studies degree from Sheffield Hallam University. In addition to her strong post-secondary education, Langlois also offered experience in an array of supervisory and administrative roles at Sheffield Hallam University and taught Activity-Based Cost Accounting courses and seminars both in the UK and internationally.

As Associate Director of Program Delivery Langlois will bring her "enthusiasm supporting tutors and students in the teaching and learning process" to the table as she takes on the new and challenging task of directing Open Learning's program delivery and most notably, supervising tutors. 

Congratulations Cheryl Zawaduk

A big congratulation goes out to Cheryl Zawaduk, past Acting Academic Director of Nursing, Open Learning, for her promotion this August to the position of Interim Dean for TRU's School of Nursing. Zawaduk joined TRU, previously the Cariboo College, in 1985 and served in positions including Chair of the Department of Nursing, coordinator positions and Acting Academic Director for Nursing, Open Learning. 

Strategic Planning

Various forms of communication help OL turn ideas into action

by Jim Barmby

The Open Learning (OL) division of Thompson Rivers University (TRU) is a relatively new organization which provides OL with the opportunity to develop a strong and effective foundational culture. Strategic planning is a method that, if conducted carefully and with commitment, has proven to develop a culture within the institution while concurrently helping our students to succeed. Aristotle had his own work for strategic planning – praxis; turning ideas into action.

A great many ideas have been generated in Open Learning's consultations with tutors, staff, administrators and campus faculty. A summary of these consultations, which began in late January 2008, were compiled and shared with all OL members in May 2008. Soon after the consultation summary was disseminated, an ad hoc committee of Senate including representatives from a broad cross section of the TRU community was formed. The ad hoc committee was tasked with translating ideas into actions in support of the TRU Strategic Plan. In order to commence plan into action, the ad hoc committee

prioritized the ideas proposed in the summary document and began the task of assigning desired outcomes, accountabilities and timelines for each action. The Open Learning Executive Committee completed this review by: combining actions to increase efficiency; determining resources required; and ensuring the viability of the overall plan.

The Open Learning implementation plan has been submitted to the Provost and Deans. Upon receipt and review of the plan, the Provost and Deans will incorporate it into a TRU-wide comprehensive implementation



plan which shortly thereafter, will be submitted to the University Senate for approval.

Once the implementation plan is approved by Senate it will be circulated to all members of the Open Learning Division.

Further planning initiatives in Open Learning include combining the OL implementation plan with OL's recently developed academic plan and adding external consultations to form a business plan for OL. The business plan will take into account OL's provincial responsibilities and its role as the British Columbia Centre for Open Learning. The business plan will include consultations with OL's consortium partners, Ministry officials in Advanced Education and other Ministries, BCcampus, BCCAT and other agencies, the Commonwealth of Learning, Industry Representatives, Professional Associations, and sister institutions. The business plan will set the direction and guide decision making for the future development of OL. It will also establish various milestones which Open Learning will strive to achieve over the coming years. ☞

Student Feedback System

And now, a word from Open Learning students

Student feedback is a fundamental method that Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) is utilizing as a way to strategically enhance student services and operations. In order to procure student feedback, TRU-OL has developed and launched an Online Student Feedback System.

The system encompasses messaging which is intended to solicit feedback from OL students regarding the

programs and courses they would like to see offered at TRU-OL.

To kick start the student feedback campaign, a mass email was sent on May 26, 2008 to all Open Learning students requesting their input be sent to the newly dedicated address olfeedback@tru.ca. The email also prompted recipients to visit the What's New page on the Open Learning website (www.truopen.ca), where the Comment and Feedback project is currently promoted.

In order to increase project visibility and boost student response, the Comment and Feedback promotion is also currently placed as a static feature on the **MyTRU** portal as well as a link on the Open Learning homepage.

Feedback received from students is intended to provide the basis for the improvement of course delivery and content as well as the marketability of Open Learning's course and program offerings. ☞

Open Learning Announcements



At TRU, Open Learning, we are working hard to offer you even more programs and courses. To ensure that students have a say, we are asking what you would like to see offered through Open Learning.

So tell us, what new programs and courses do you think should be offered through Open Learning?

Email us at olfeedback@tru.ca or visit <http://www.tru.ca/distance/about/whatsnew.html>

Thank you for your input!

Open Learning Speaker Series 2008 Schedule

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
(date TBD)	October 9, 2008	(date TBD)
Speaker: Sandy Beveridge	Speaker: Terry Power	Speaker: Ann Pollock
<p>Title: Applications of Chemistry to the Investigation of Crimes and Civil Disputes</p>	<p>Title: Canada opposes the United Nations Declaration of 2007 recognizing the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Is Canada's strident opposition an anomaly or a symptom of a troubling transformational shift in Canadian values?</p>	<p>Title: To be determined however, the general topic will be art. The focus may include the series of arts-related projects and books Ann Pollock has curated over the years.</p>

OL Facts & Figures

