

## Shastri News - January 2010

### **Meet our latest Student Excellence Award winners**

This year the Shastri Institute has presented five outstanding students with Student Excellence Awards, for their work on India-related topics. These students have demonstrated great initiative in pursuing studies or carriers related to India and they will be using their awards to help achieve those goals. Thank you to all of the excellent students who applied. Here are our 2009-2010 winners:

Nastassia Williams knew the preparation would not be easy, when she decided to become a student of the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University for one semester. As a student in Applied Politics at l'Université de Sherbrooke, Nastassia was searching for a challenging way to access specific knowledge on India and International Development.

It was in Mali, while Nastassia was participating in an internship on capacity building in rural communities, that she realized India would be an ideal place to reinforce her expertise on democracy- building progress and South-South cooperation. She had always been fascinated by India; its impressive economic and social development, its significant participation in the 20th century stakes, and the vigorous aspects of its civil society. It was a perfect fit for an International Relations student.

Receiving a Student Excellence Award from the Shastri Institute is an incredible support to the success of Nastassia's semester in Delhi, which will afford her the opportunity to build bridges between India and Quebec, and will bring awareness to Sherbrooke's Applied Politics students regarding India.



### **Gabriel Jones, Ottawa, ON**

Gabriel Jones was first introduced to the artistic and religious vitality of India while preparing artifacts for an exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, where he is currently employed as an exhibitions coordinator. His background in museology has also served him well as a research associate with the University of Ottawa's InterCulture Center, where he is engaged in developing museological training curricula for Asian indigenous and ethnic minority communities.

It was this interdisciplinary background, coupled with personal interests in ecology and animal welfare, which led to Gabriel's current thesis project.

Gabriel is an MA candidate in the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, with a specialization in South Asian religions. His primary research field, falling within the field of the Anthropology of Religion, focuses on the religious and cultural traditions of Jainism and Buddhism within India, with particular attention to how these have been informed by indigenous environmental and cultural imperatives as



demonstrated in art, narrative and ritual performance. Gabriel looks at the use of animals in religious thought and practice. His thesis, under the supervision of Professor Anne Vallely, examines Jain devotional representation of the sacred snake.

In addition to pursuing religious studies academically, Gabriel is engaged in studio arts, both as an artist and teacher in the local community.

The Shastri Student Excellence Award enables Gabriel to travel to India for an extended directed study under renowned professors at Banares Hindu University and the University of Mumbai, who have agreed to assist in refining Gabriel's thesis through directed readings, coordinated site visits, and interviews with devotees.

### **Bradley Boileau, Ottawa, ON**

As a 23-year old graduate student in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa, Bradley Boileau has a wide range of academic interests, which span several topics and themes. His primary focus is exploration of the relationship between religious ideology, ascetic discipline, and martial culture in India. Bradley hopes to investigate the intersections between asceticism and the warrior ethos of the Jain tradition as evident in Rajasthani folklore.



In 2007, Bradley participated in a five-week program, organized in conjunction with the International Summer School for Jain Studies (ISSJS). The program focused on the intensive study of Jainism.

Having been generously granted the Shastri Institute's Student Excellence Award, Bradley will be returning to India this summer for two months to pursue part of his thesis research, study Sanskrit and Prakrit, gather resources, and to further build relationships with members of the Jain community.

### **Other winners:**

**Stephen Gucciardi, Toronto, ON**

**Chad Walasek, Toronto, ON**

### **Some feedback from last year's winners:**

Having committed most of my undergraduate career to the study of India's cultures, politics, economy, environment, and social realities, the Shastri Student Excellence Award gave me the opportunity to maintain my focus on the improvement of livelihoods for those who are marginalized in a rapidly changing society, and the preservation of beautiful and endangered indigenous cultures. I have been able to use the Shastri award in such a way that the focal point of both my academic and professional careers is now the study issues relating to India's place in a global society. ~ **Adam Malloy**

This has been an incredible year of personal and academic growth. At the time of receiving this award I had returned from Kerala, where I conducted field research, and was working to complete my MA thesis in Anthropology and International Development from the University of Guelph. This award, without a doubt contributed greatly to the completion of this project, and allowed me the time to construct what I feel is a very fine study. My final defence took place at the end of April, marking an extremely important milestone in my life. My thesis, entitled "Caste, Class and Gulf Migration from Kerala, India", was well received by my committee and my department, and earned a nomination for the O.P. Dwivedi Thesis Award at the University of Guelph. ~ **Ashley McClelland**

My three months in India were among the most challenging and enriching of my life, enhanced by the opportunity to visit different states to conduct expert interviews. This experience has contributed to my ability to adapt to new circumstances and meet personal challenges. The complexity of the task and the independence with which I executed it has provided me with an important achievement on which I can draw while pursuing further Indian and international research opportunities. ~ **Kieran Findlater**

### **Remembering Professor Nanda Kumar Choudhry**



It is with sadness but with many fond memories that we say goodbye to our friend and past President, Professor N. K. Choudhry, who passed away peacefully on December 30, 2009. Dr. Choudhry's involvement with the Institute includes a year as the Director of the Delhi office from 1977-78, two years as the Institute's President from 1982-84 and many years as a researcher engaged in multiple projects.

His support for, and contribution to, the Institute and its mandate has been unfailing over the decades. In The Globe and Mail he has been recognized as "a distinguished builder of intellectual bridges of understanding between Canada and India since 1948." Dr. Choudhry helped establish the Canadian Association of South Asian Studies at York University in the early 1970s and has pioneered quantitative studies of trade links between Canada and India during his time as a Professor of Economics in Canada.

In honour of Dr Choudhry and his contribution to the India-Canada relationship, the Shastri Institute will be holding a special Student Excellence Award competition in his name this year. The recipient of the N.K. Choudhry Student Excellence Award will be a Canadian student in the field of Economics or Political Economy who demonstrates excellence in his/her work and show great initiative in pursuing further studies or a career related to India.

Anyone interested in contributing to this award in honour of Dr. Choudhry is welcome to contact our

office in Canada at:

[sici@ucalgary.ca](mailto:sici@ucalgary.ca)

403-220-7467.

Or



<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/shastri-indo-canadian-institute/>

### **Sneak-peak at our vision for 2010-2015**

At the end of 2009, the Shastri Institute's Executive Council approved a new five year vision for the Institute. This vision document will be presented to the Members Councils to be ratified in June. For a preview of some of the initiatives you can plan to see developing, please [click here](#).

In its 40 year history, the Shastri Institute has witnessed significant progress in the engagement between academic institutions in Canada and India. We have been privileged to take part in these developments on many levels over the years. Today there are many new stakeholders, more variety in our membership and more opportunity for engagement than ever before.

Our vision for the future is to both broaden and focus our services so that we can meet the needs of our members and our nations and enable them to build greater linkages in the years to come.

### **Access to Indian News in Canada**

Are you satisfied with the quality and quantity of India-related news that is currently available in Canada? How important is it to you to have access to India-related news? The Shastri Institute is considering providing a service in Canada to make it easier for Canadians to access quality news on India. If you are currently living in Canada, please click on the link below to access a brief questionnaire that will help us determine how Canadians feel about this topic. If there is a need that we can fill, your input will also help us determine exactly what kind of service we should be providing to meet that need.

[Questionnaire on Indian news in Canada](#)

Want to know more about this initiative? [Listen to an interview with our President, Dr. Sheila Embleton on CBC Radio's Masala Canada with Wojtek Gwiazda](#)

**AUCC releases "good practices" guidebook on recruiting Indian students**

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada recently released a guidebook for Canadian institutions on Indian student recruitment. The guidebook provides numerous recommendations on how to effectively plan and navigate through the recruitment process. Case studies of five Canadian universities constitute the main component of AUCC's research. The good practices in this guidebook are informed by the overarching reality that Canadian institutions are generally not well known in India. Institutions need to be prepared to invest a considerable amount of resources at all levels of recruitment to be successful. [AUCC's guidebook is available free of charge and can be downloaded here.](#)

### **Goodbye to another good friend**



The Shastri Institute wishes to express our deepest sympathies to the family, friends, colleagues and students of the late Jeanne Wolfe.

Jeanne, a former Director and Professor Emeritus of the School of Urban Planning at McGill University, passed away on December 20, 2009, after a battle with cancer.

Jeanne's exceptional contributions to Urban Planning are visible in Canada and around the world.

One of Jeanne's many accomplishments was acting as co-editor of a book on solid waste management in Indian cities. This was preceded by a 4-year research project on urban governance and environmental management in India, which focused on public health and awareness issues surrounding waste management. This project, funded by a Shastri Institute Applied Research grant (SHARP), is one of many policy-shaping projects Jeanne has lead throughout her academic career.

Jeanne was actively involved with the Canadian International Development Agency as a founding member of the Groupe interuniversitaire de Montréal. Her humanitarian vision for urban planning, and her exceptional leadership and mentoring skills also earned Jeanne an induction into the Order of Canada in May 2009.

"[Jeanne fought her battle] with equanimity and her characteristic good humour. While her passing away is an irreparable loss, she will undoubtedly live on, in the work of the countless people she taught and inspired around the world." ~ Professor Madhav Badami, a friend and colleague

Donations to the "Jeanne M. Wolfe Fellowships in Urban Planning" can be mailed to Anabela Fernandes, Faculty of engineering, McGill University, 817 Sherbrooke Street |West, Room 378, Montreal, QC, H3A 2K6.

## **Schulich MBA in India begins inaugural year**

York University's Schulich School of Business, has launched an exciting new initiative that is giving MBA candidates the opportunity to earn their degree while studying both in Canada and India. The Schulich MBA in India program began its inaugural year just weeks ago with its first class of 25 Indian students.

From January to June, these students will be situated in Mumbai. Schulich has partnered with SP Jain institute of Management and Research in Mumbai who has provided space for this class. Students have a one-month break in July, then travel to Toronto, Canada, for an integrative module and the remainder of their program.

Charmaine Courtis, Executive Director of Student Services & International Relations at York University's Schulich School of Business, explained that the integration module is a critical component of the program. "The orientation provides the students with coaching on the City, how to do their banking and other practical details... It provides an opportunity to meet other students, so that you know someone else before you walk into the classroom." The orientation also provides students with valuable preparation for their second year strategy field study which is an intensive training period, gaining experience with a real company.

Approximately 40 percent of the Schulich student body is made up of international students and those currently on student visas from other countries. Courtis believes this ratio to be a perfect fit with Schulich's global approach to learning. "[The Schulich School of Business] has a long history of global exchanges, and a significant interest in global context for our students." The Schulich MBA in India programme is a natural evolution of that process.

The Schulich MBA in India program has been in the works for four years, and was recently approved by the Government of India. The students in the program's first class are enjoying the same curriculum and level of excellence while in Mumbai, as those students pursuing their MBA at Schulich's Toronto's campus.

While the current program is only available to Indian Nationals, Schulich has longer-term goals. These include setting up a full-services campus, for the full degree, open to students from around the globe.

The Schulich School of Business has enjoyed a great reputation over the past several years. According to Britain's The Economist magazine, the school is ranked in the top 15 MBA programs in the world, ranking ahead of MIT and right behind Harvard. "Schulich already has graduated students, who are working around the globe," says Courtis, "this is an opportunity to build our brand, and India is the perfect place for our school to make a difference."

Charmaine Courtis hopes that this program will help students and, on a broader scale, businesses from across Canada and India, “to gain a broad understanding of one another; and to provide more opportunities for direct business collaborations to develop.”

“Business is no longer tied to an office with four walls... we’re tied to each other.”

As for the MBA Mumbai graduating class of 2011, the world is, literally, at their fingertips.

For more information on Schulich’s MBA Mumbai program, go to <http://www.schulich.yorku.ca>.

### **Pilot project doubles acceptance rate for Indian students at Canadian colleges**

A new partnership programme between Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) has succeeded in doubling the acceptance rate for Indian Students at a group of twenty Canadian colleges this year. Launched in April 2009, the Student Partners Program met and surpassed all of its goals during its pilot phase and will likely expand to include more colleges in the future.

During the first nine months of the program, CIC’s visa offices in India received over 4,000 applications. The approval rate for the first group of students under the program coming to study this past September was more than double the approval rate for the same colleges the preceding year. Furthermore, 95 percent of the students remain in good standing at an ACCC college.

“International students bring with them new ideas and experiences and contribute both financially and culturally to the communities and institutions where they study,” says Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney. “This type of program benefits both our country and those who participate in it.”

The total number of international students in Canada has more than doubled since 1998 to 178,000 and their presence provided employment for over 83,000 Canadians last year.

For more details please see the [CIC news release dated January 28, 2010](#).

### **Questionnaire for Canadian Studies Scholars**

The International Council for Canadian Studies (ICCS) is disseminating a questionnaire to Canadian Studies Scholars around the world and they urgently need input from scholars in India. We encourage Indian scholars to complete the questionnaire. Please register by clicking on the first or second link below (second link is in French). Once you have registered and obtained log-in information, you can click on one of the next two links to access the questionnaire. If you have any questions please let us know.

Registration: [English](#) | [French](#)

Questionnaire: [English](#) | [French](#)

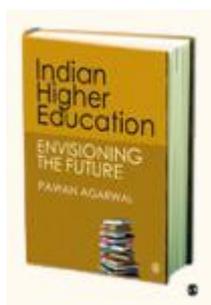
### **Changes at the Institute's Calgary office**

In January, the Shastri Institute bid a fond farewell to our Executive Director, James Liebenberg. James has moved on to pursue other interests and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

We would also like to officially welcome Sarah Hawkins as the Acting Executive Director of the Institute. Sarah has been an integral part of the Shastri team for several years in her role as Communications Officer, and will continue to serve the Institute wholeheartedly during the interim period.

We will be starting our search for a new Executive Director in the following months. Any interested and qualified candidates should continue to check our website for details on how to apply.

### **New Publications**



#### [Indian Higher Education: Envisioning the Future](#)

by: Pawan Agarwal

Sage Publications © 2009

From the website:

INDIA has seen a consistently high rate of economic growth in the recent years. It has now become a major player in the global knowledge economy. Skill-based activities have made significant contribution to this growth. Such activities depend on the large pool of qualified manpower that is fed by its large higher education system. It is now widely accepted that higher education has been critical to India's emergence in the global knowledge economy. Yet, it is believed that a crisis is plaguing the Indian higher education system. While, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) set up by the Prime Minister calls it a 'quiet crisis', the Human Resource Minister calls higher education 'a sick child'. Industries routinely point towards huge skill shortages and are of the opinion that growth momentum may not be sustained unless the problem of skill shortages is addressed.

Kabita Chakraborty, Canadian Studies Research Fellow, has recently published an article based on her PhD research:

Chakraborty, Kabita. 2009. [The good Muslim girl: conducting qualitative participatory research to understand the lives of young Muslim women in the bustees of Kolkata](#) , Children's Geographies 7, 4: 421-434