

# EQUITY STUDIES STUDENTS UNION



Newsletter Editors:

Doyali Farah Islam & Izzy Mackenzie

2010-2011 in Review

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### ESSU Greet You!

By ANISHA THOMAS, ESSU President, 2010-2011  
and MONICA ESPAILLAT, incoming ESSU President, 2011-2012

The Equity Studies Students Union (ESSU) is a student-run organization that stems from the Equity Studies Program and supports students in their academic endeavours. The ESSU also applies equity-related theories towards anti-oppression work within our university and the community at large, through extra-curricular events and activities, such as our annual "Decolonizing Our Minds Conference" and "Disability Studies Week".

The ESSU forms coalitions with students and community groups with the intent to promote equity within and outside of the academic sphere. We aim to construct unique forums where systemic discrimination can be questioned and challenged concurrently with the racist, sexist, ableist, and elitist policies built to regulate marginalized identities. We have some of the best and most committed professors at the University of Toronto working with us – professors who maintain a relationship with the union and with their students.

Although the ESSU is relatively new, we are excited to witness the growths in student involvement and enrollment in the Equity Studies program. Students have fought alongside the union to save individual streams of our program. As well, union members who serve as liaisons between students and university administration have taken and/or take the same courses as other students in the Equity Studies program.

Between September and April, the union offers daily office hours in the New College Student Center. Come and speak to us about a class or an event idea – or just drop by and get to know us.

Equity Studies news and events: visit [www.uoftessu.com](http://www.uoftessu.com)  
How to get involved: e-mail [uoft.essu@gmail.com](mailto:uoft.essu@gmail.com)

### Equity Studies Program: Contact Information

Equity Studies is an undergraduate program that focuses on *social justice* theory and practice in a variety of local and global contexts. Cutting across a spectrum of academic disciplines, the program uniquely combines class-room based learning with community and activist work so that students can build tools for social change. Course offerings focus on *disability, social advocacy, and global food equity*. With a vibrant student body, a wide range of community partners, and a bold curriculum, Equity Studies at New College is a leading centre for social justice education in Canada.

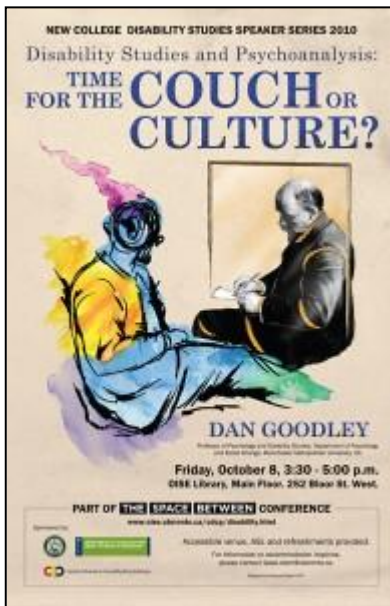
Dr. JUNE LARKIN  
Director, Equity Studies Program

e-mail: [june.larkin@utoronto.ca](mailto:june.larkin@utoronto.ca)  
telephone: 416-978-8282

40 Willcocks Street  
Toronto, ON M5S 1C6 Canada



Above:  
Some 2010-2011 ESSU Members



Above:  
Poster for Goodley's Keynote Address

Below:  
Poster for Kitchen Table Talk

## **"Couch or Culture?" Dan Goodley Speaks**

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

You may have been couched in contemplation if you attended Dan Goodley's keynote address – Time for the Couch or Culture? – on Oct 8 2010. The lecture given by the Manchester University Professor of Psychology and Disability Studies was part of a symposium entitled *The Space Between: Disability In and Out of the Counselling Room*, held at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE).

OISE Ph.D. Candidate Anne McGuire\* found Goodley's talk to be "playful, provocative, and timely." McGuire commented: "Goodley's talk seem to heed the question: how might the field of psychoanalysis provoke the transformative space of disability studies?" This question led McGuire to further consider "what ... a disability studies perspective [might] be asking of psychoanalysis." For her, "Goodley suggested that the marriage of these two perspectives might move us away from the psychiatrist's couch as a site of (individual) analysis, pathologization and intervention, and provoke us, instead, to turn toward culture as a space in which to theorize the seeming naturalness of normalcy [and] the making[s] ... and dominance of ableist ideology."

*\*Anne McGuire has now completed her Doctorate and will be a professor in the Equity Studies program beginning July 01 2011.*



## **Hungering for Ideas: Kitchen Table Talk**

By LAUREN BAKER

On Oct 13 2010, in celebration of World Food Week, New College hosted a *Kitchen Table Talk* for the People's Food Policy Project. Over 150 people attended to contribute their food policy ideas for a better food system in Canada. Farmer activist Colleen Ross spoke about how farmers and eaters must unite to create a sustainable and equitable food system. Across Canada, similar Kitchen Table Talks were held, engaging over 3500 people in total. The resulting People's Food Policy was launched in Apr 2011. It can be found at [www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca](http://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca).

## Conversation Café with Dr. Filiberto Penados

Visiting Scholar, Galen University, Belize

By KAYLA CARTER

The decolonization of colonial institutions and systems has always been of interest to me. However, I have always found decolonization education to be especially interesting. The chance to meet with Dr. Filiberto Penados on Nov 12 2010 was a chance that I would not miss. Topics ranged from effective decolonization strategies – in particular, how to make education an institution of critical thought instead of the complacent digestion of information – to the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in education. Dr. Penados not only answered the questions of those who participated in the café, but asked questions that provoked students and professors to re-evaluate the colonial education system and how we are implicated within it.



Above:  
Dr. Filiberto Penados



Right:  
Belize Internship Experience Captured on Camera

## ***Beyond the Classroom: Belize Internship***

By JULIA BUSCH and NAVEEN SALEH

Over Reading Week this Feb 2011, we had the opportunity to travel to Belize with a small group of students. We worked with the Institute for Sustainable International Studies (ISIS) and learned from indigenous groups who are using non-violent strategies to create change. This trip, with the support of the Internationalized Course Module (ICM) fund, allowed us to experience the daily triumphs and struggles of two indigenous groups in Belize: the Garifuna and Maya people. In a short period of time, we were able to pursue a wealth of knowledge about cultural practices as well as spiritual and colonial history. Furthermore, we connected with people of incredible strength and circumstance.

As Equity Studies students, we pursued our interest in collective action through the fourth-year seminar course, “Social Change and Non-Violence”. Engaging in this praxis brought the coursework to life for us both. It was a big awakening to recognize that learning is a continuous process. Learning takes place not only within formal institutions, but in the community and the home as well. In particular, we found that the continued colonial influence on the Belizean education system is being met with resistance through efforts to reclaim the value of traditional knowledge. Consistent with what we learn from the work of social activists such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., these methods of resistance are motivated by injustice, and they strive for change and fight in non-violence for equality of power.

Change is happening at such a magnitude worldwide that it is often hard to recognize that we are all implicated in its constant movement. Caught in positions of privilege and complacent to the power we wield, our daily lives have the potential to perpetuate systems of oppression if we are not consciously in pursuit of justice. Both the Garifuna and Maya peoples of Belize demonstrated a tireless commitment to justice for their cultural rights.

Our sincere thanks to Dr. June Larkin, Paul Adjei, Dr. Richard Lee, and the ICM for awarding us such a fulfilling and unforgettable experience.



*Above:*  
Poster for *Arts! Ability! Access!*

### **A+++ for *Arts! Ability! Access!***

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

Hart House's events series entitled *Arts! Ability! Access!*, co-sponsored with New College, deserves an A+++ . Directed by Shira Avni, the documentary "Tying Your Own Shoes" played to a full and lively audience in Hart House's East Common Room on the evening of Nov 18 2010. The documentary presented explorations of, and insights into, the lives of four individuals with Down Syndrome.

A panel discussion moderated by OISE Ph.D candidate Anne McGuire offered different perspectives on the interconnected themes of disability, ability, and access to the arts. Panelists were Rebecca Till, Spirit Movers troupe dancer; Petra Tolley, one of the artists features in "Tying Your Own Shoes"; John Jowett, Founder and Key Music Director of Toronto's Keys to the Studio program; Eddy DeMooy, Keys to the Studio musician; Jason Melville, Dramaways actor; and documentary director Shira Avni.

Questions posed to the panelists addressed barriers to education, the panelists' personal artistic endeavours, issues of funding, and the role of the arts as a route to personal growth and self-awareness. Panelists' remarks were insightful, heart-centred, and moving. Till's mother, accompanying Rebecca during the panel, advocated for a multiple-intelligences approach, which problematized the notion of "presumed deficiencies" in taken-for-granted representations of disabled bodies, and she offered alternative ways of orienting to them. Rebecca Till's statement reflected this problematization beautifully: "When I dance, I can bring the music right into my body and let it come out right through my heart."

Throughout the moderated discussion, the audience was attentive and supportive, erupting in spontaneous cheers and applause. The crowd's energetic behaviour continued well into the Keys to the Studio concert that followed, in the Hart House Arbor Room.

An arts exhibit entitled *Unlocking Minds* accompanied these three events and was on display in the Main Hallway of Hart House from Nov 4-20 2011.



# Linked Oppressions: Racism, Homophobia, and Transphobia



## ***Linked Oppressions Week***

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

The University of Toronto Equity Studies Student Union (ESSU); Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Trans People of U of T (LGBTOUT); the Women and Gender Studies Student Union (WGSSU); and the Centre for Women and Trans People joined together to hold a week-long series of free events between Nov 22 and Nov 25 2010. The week, entitled *Linked Oppressions: Racism, Homophobia, and Transphobia*, was presented in conjunction with *Trans Awareness Week*. The events included a documentary screening, a writing workshop, a panel discussion, a trans workshop, as well as an open mic and potluck night.

## **Spirited Debate at “2 Spirits” Film Night**

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

A spirited debate after the Nov 22 2010 screening of Lydia Nibley’s documentary “2 Spirits” started off *Linked Oppressions’* week of events in a provocative way. A crowd of 130 University of Toronto students, both graduate and undergraduate, professors, and community members filled the William Doo Auditorium at 45 Willcocks Street for the 6 pm kick-off. The documentary centred around the violent slaying of 16-year old Fred Martinez, a Navajo youth who identified as 2 spirit.

The screening provided an opportunity for debate. While the facilitator, Cameron Greensmith, a white queer settler, ally, and Ph. D. candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), suggested that participants consider the role of emotion and violence in the film, the discussion that followed the documentary took on a lively and intelligent shape of its own. Reactions and responses were varied – ranging from appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about the term ‘2-spirit’ and about Navajo and Native cultures, to dissatisfaction around the documentary’s diction as well as its “hetero-patriarchy” framework, something Percy Lezard raised.



*Left:*

Students, Community Members  
at the “2 Spirits” Film Night

Lezard, a 2-spirited member of the Okanogan First Nations, Wolf Clan, broadened the film’s definition of ‘2-spirit’ by equating it with a “way of being[,]... a process that happens over [one’s] lifetime with the help of grandmothers, uncles, etc.” Lezard described a person who identifies as 2-spirit as someone who has “the capacity to be a conduit” for the Divine and who has the “capacity to guide community members.” Yet even Lezard concluded that one “never [has] a complete understanding of 2-spirit.”

Several other viewees spoke up about how the film related more broadly to their personal lives, struggles, and sense of non-belonging. Stefonknee Wolscht said, “At 47 I’m still wondering where I fit in.” Another film attendee commented: “We have to come from a place of love and kindness. We have to get back to that.”

Despite mixed sentiments about the film, the discussion was dynamic and provocative. Many people appreciated the thoughtful remarks of Equity Studies student Chantal Persad: “[The film] made me think of the ways in which whiteness becomes an all-encompassing way of talking ... We talk through whiteness about these things ... It is an important film, but it’s through the lens of whiteness [and] colonial[ism] – like there’s one way to live or embody ‘queer,’ ‘gay,’ ‘trans-gender,’ and [this way] doesn’t account for the ways in which race and other aspects of life impact what it means to be, for example, queer.”

## Resistance Through Writing

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

It was back to paper and pen at the Nov 23 2010 *Linked Oppressions* writing workshop, hosted by Toronto-based author and psychotherapist Farzana Doctor. The workshop was held from 12-2 pm at the Centre for Women and Trans People (563 Spadina Ave.). The space provided an intimate setting for conversation, and the workshop attracted about 15 people over the course of the two hours.

Doctor declared the theme for the workshop to be “writing as a form of resistance.” She explained that, while creative resistance can encompass many styles from “funny” and “entertaining” to “serious,” resistance in general is something that “suggests new ways of doing ... that speaks something that is silent [and] “shows something that’s invisible.” Doctor also suggested that participants be “really careful and conscious” of whether their writing reproduces “stereotypes” – but to do so in the editing stage rather than the initial draft.

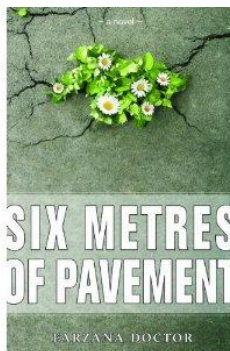
Through warm-up activities with music, along with writing exercises and strategies to build confidence in sharing work, Doctor fostered a supportive and safe environment for students to explore their thoughts and emotions about writing. Doctor responded to a common concern for all writers – lack of self-confidence. One workshop participant, Patrick, said that writing makes one “vulnerable” and that the workshop exercises helped to “free [himself] of the -isms.”

Doctor’s first novel, *Stealing Nasreen*, was published in Apr 2007 by Inanna Publications. Her second novel, *Six Metres of Pavement*, was launched on Mar 07 2011.

Doctor has since won the 2011 *Dayne Ogilvie Grant*, which is presented to an emerging Canadian gay or lesbian writer who demonstrates great promise through a body of work of exceptional quality. Writers who identify themselves as gay or lesbian are eligible and, while no age restriction exists, the grant is intended for developing writers.

*Below:*

The cover of Farzana Doctor’s latest book, *Six Metres of Pavement*



*Above:*

Author Farzana Doctor and Writing Workshop Attendants

## Panel Discussion Provokes

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

On the afternoon of Nov 24, *Linked Oppressions*’ panel discussion regarding “Racism, Homophobia, and Transphobia in Social Justice Movements” drew a large and an attentive audience. The discussion was moderated by Aqeela Nanji, Political and Educational Coordinator for LGBTQOUT, and it featured three people: Alec Butler, activist, playwright, and filmmaker of the 519 Church Street Community Centre; Zahra Dhanani, lawyer, DJ, performer, feminist, and social justice advocate; as well as Lali Mohamed, queer Somali activist, Ryerson student of Sociology, and co-founder of and reporter for Deviant Productions.

Although Dhanani and Butler, especially, were “fatigue[d]” and “a little tired” at still having to tote the same social justice line, they were encouraged by the gathering’s turnout. Butler maintained a global perspective by noting that “we have to think not just of gay people but ... demand a better world for everybody.” He also took a historically-minded approach and stated that “we have to learn from...what happened to the 2-spirit people.” Dhanani continued Butler’s historicization of social injustice by reminding attendees that “all of us who are not aboriginal are immigrants to this land.” The social responsibility of this historical fact is that we must always ask ourselves “what responsibility we need to take” and what is our “alignment to the indigenous movements in this country,” as Dhanani stated.

In response to one of Nanji’s questions about Dan Savage’s *It Gets Better* campaign, Dhanani and Mohamed both felt that the campaign is not realistic or wholly effective. Mohamed spoke of the need to share personal strategies and tools – such as writing and kickboxing – to help “queer youth, racialized youth, and trans youth” among others to navigate through society. He also appreciated the Make It Better Campaign and the We Got Your Back Campaign in the United States. Dhanani, who spoke of the “very high number of queer youth committing suicide,” recollected her own sense of teenage self-hate. The panel left the audience with much to consider.





*Above (top to bottom):*  
 Norberg Hodge beside student infographic;  
 Norberg Hodge addresses a packed auditorium;  
 Panelists (left to right) respond to audience questions:  
 Helena Norberg Hodge, Joshna Maharaj, Eric Rosenkrantz

*Below:*  
 Dialogue at the Conversation Café with Norberg Hodge  
 (Photo courtesy of Sustain Ontario)



## Art and “Economics” Draw Crowd

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

The Jan 24 Sheridan College art exhibit and screening of Helena Norberg Hodge’s documentary, “The Economics of Happiness,” acted like a magnet for curious and concerned students, educators, activists, and community members. The combined event, which was held in the William Doo Auditorium (45 Willcocks St.), attracted a mass of people, so much so that, by the time of the screening, the auditorium was at full capacity – even the stairs were crammed with bodies.

The art work was created in four weeks by Sheridan College students as part of the Bachelor of Applied Illustration program (BAA). Infographics were displayed in rows towards the front of the auditorium, and a short video of digital animation entitled “Animating Good Food Ideas” was played. In response to some of the artwork, Norberg Hodge clarified that she “wants to speak against the mainstream view that meat and dairy are bad: ... the problem with them today is monoculture.” Rana Qasass enjoyed some of the infographics including “How Much CO<sub>2</sub> You’re Eating”.

The documentary screening was followed by a thought-provoking panel discussion moderated by Wayne Roberts, former manager of the Toronto Food Policy Council. The enthusiastic panelists were urban farmer Eric Rosenkrantz, activist chef Joshna Maharaj, and Norberg Hodge herself. Feedback about the panel discussion was positive. Anny Chen, a Project Leader of Katimavik, said that “most valuable [were] the suggestions for action”. Chen felt that “it’s really the local actors, the panelists, that can help inspire change. Theory can only go so far.” Another Katimavik Project Leader, Brent Campbell, was especially inspired by Rosenkrantz’s discussion of Community-Shared Agriculture (CSA) farming as well as his thoughts on supply and demand.

## Conversation Café with Norberg Hodge

By CHANTAL PERSAD

The Student Conversation Café was held on Jan 25 2011 at 12 pm in the East Common Room at Hart House, as a follow-up to the screening of the documentary, “The Economics of Happiness”, produced by Helena Norberg-Hodge. The event consisted of a series of discussions which were guided by engaging and complex questions and topics ranging from the role of the government in preserving and promoting sustainability; to the possibilities of globalization and localization as solutions to issues around sustainability; to the role of individuals as responsible citizens to take action in advocating for better policies and long term strategies in promoting sustainability. These questions allowed for insightful dialogue between attendees and challenged us to locate ourselves as agents in thinking through these issues. The Conversation Café created a space away from inaccessible board rooms, where ordinary people can come together to envision a safer, healthier, and happier environment as well as world.

## ***Disability Studies Week:***

### **Overview**

By IZZY MACKENZIE

Disability Week, held Mar 01-04, 2011, showcased discussions, performances, and presentations dedicated to addressing disability not as a personal tragedy or as an individual medical condition, but as a socio-political phenomenon that is structured in hegemonic discourse to marginalize and oppress disabled peoples. Most importantly, the week was a celebration of alternative orientations to disability that interrogate and transform dominant and taken-for-granted interpretations of the body.

## **Dr. Rod Michalko Speaks of Storytelling**

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

Professor Rod Michalko's open lecture from 1-3 pm on Mar 02 2011 kicked off the second annual Disability Studies Week, created by the Equity Studies Students Union (ESSU) and funded by New College. A Disability Studies scholar and lecturer in Equity Studies, Michalko spoke to approximately 100 Disability Studies students and guests about sociologist and Disability Studies scholar Parin Dossa's article, "Disability, Marginality, and the Nation-State – Negotiating Social Markers of Difference: Fahimeh's Story".

In a style both casual and captivating, Michalko spoke about how Dossa's article deals in part with the intersectionality or "intermingle[ing]" of "race, gender, [and] disability." Michalko also highlighted the idea that students of Disability Studies need to think about and reflect upon the idea of "representation," which he hyphenated as "re-presentation" to amplify his meaning – "to present disability once more." Michalko made clear that "as Disability [Studies] scholars, we re-tell the story of disability experience, of conceptions of disabilities and noted that we need to think about what those stories do. He concluded that "We are joining a group of storytellers," he said, "so it's up to us to tell the 'best' story we can." Quoting indigenous author Thomas King, Michalko advised, "We'd better be thoughtful."

*Below:*

Dr. Rod Michalko and ASL Interpreter Wendy







*Above:*  
 ESSU Art Exhibition for Disability Studies Week welcomes participants

*Below:*  
 Exhibition Coordinator Kayla Carter Appreciates Art



## **Powerful Art, Arresting Poetry: University of Toronto Students Speak**

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

The University of Toronto Equity Studies Students Union (ESSU) continued its second annual Disability Studies Week with an Art Activism Exhibition on Mar 03 2011 in the Wilson Lounge (40 Willcocks St.) that showcased the skillful labour of both current and former University of Toronto students.

Visual pieces included Rosa Sacco’s “Untitled” – an artfully-painted cast of a torso which captured common words and ideas that our culture associates with disability. Sacco accompanied her visual piece with a plaque that explained how “[c]ulture is written on my body, your body, and the disabled body.”

Other art pieces included current Equity Studies student Sarah Hoedlmoser’s work, which used “graphic” and “unsettling images [to] address cultural, political, and social issues.” Tanya Hoshi, from Professor Rod Michalko’s Introduction to Disability Studies course, created a DVD entitled “Speechless,” about a deaf “6-year-old who ... encounters mistreatment by an able-bodied child at a daycare.”

The evening also included a poetry reading by third-year undergraduate student of Equity Studies, Doyali Farah Islam. From an intimate circle of chairs, Islam intoned her poem, entitled “contra-diction and pause-abilities: a poetic suite”. Student Siva Sivarajah found Islam’s poem and reading to be “beautiful.” Islam encouraged students to “! stop, take pause” – as a verse from her work demands – and to think about positive meanings of the phrase ‘wheelchair-bound’. This was, in fact, Islam’s first public poetry reading. Her first full-length book of poetry, entitled *Yūsuf and the Lotus Flower*, will be published by Ottawa small press BuschekBooks this Oct 2011.



Above:  
Poster for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual *Decolonizing Our Minds* Conference

## ***Decolonizing Our Minds* Conference**

By CHANTAL PERSAD

The Mar 19 2011 *Decolonizing Our Minds* (DOM) conference organized by Equity Studies Student Union (ESSU), Women and Gender Studies Student Union (WGSSU), and Caribbean Studies Student Union (CARSSU), in addition to other organizations on campus, kicked off with a brilliant speech by Paul Adjei on the crucial significance and urgent need for us, as critical bodies, to decolonize our minds and bodies. Adjei outlined various means through which this could be done. These means included the process of unlearning dominant narratives; reclaiming critical indigenous knowledges as legitimate forms of knowing; and being vigilant and always questioning while we seek and practice knowledge.

A moving performance by Amai Kuda – of the R3 Collective, Moyo Wa Africa, and Seven Directions – followed Adjei’s speech. The conference continued with three panels addressing: Narratives of queerness in the Caribbean Diaspora; the Politics of the Diaspora in the Canadian nation-state; and Race and Disability in the Canadian education system. The panelists encouraged dialogue among those in the audience and provided rich food for thought. A warm, delicious meal was provided during the lunch break, and two additional performances were interspersed throughout the day.

DOM 2011 was a triumphant celebration of students, teachers, and community members who were reclaiming their right to be critical of the institutions and dominant narratives that permeate our lives. The conference provided a bold statement about the need to create alternative visions for our world, starting first and foremost with where we are situated.



Above:  
Dr. June Larkin  
(Photo Courtesy of  
Women and Gender  
Studies Institute)

## Dr. June Larkin Wins Award

By DOYALI FARAH ISLAM

We are very pleased to announce that Dr. June Larkin of Equity Studies has won a 2011 *President's Teaching Award*. The award recognizes "sustained excellence in teaching, research in teaching, and the integration of teaching and research" (Office of the Vice Present and Provost). Larkin receives an annual professional development allowance of \$10 000 for five years, and she also joins the Teaching Academy for a term of five years.

## Janet Lambert Book Prize

The Janet Lambert Book Prize in Equity Studies, named in honour of a long-serving member of the New College administrative staff, goes to a graduating student who has excelled, and made a contribution, in the Equity Studies Program. This year's winner, Lillian Wein completed a Major in Equity Studies, Minors in Geography and History and did a Service Learning Placement with the Common Ground Co-Operative and Frontier College.

## Impressive Independent Studies

By IZZY MACKENZIE

This year, eight undergraduate students of Equity Studies participated in a unique independent-study project, crafting individual disability studies in a collective collaboration process led by Professor Rod Michalko and graduate student Eliza Chandler. As critical pieces of inquiry, these written papers challenge hegemonic constructions of Disability in pop culture, Western medicine, psycho-psychiatry, accessibility services, and in the formulative day-to-day interactions people have with Disability. The works wrestle with personal narratives, fictional interpretations, mainstream constructions, creative understandings, and historico-political accounts of how Disability is conceptualized and related to as a socio-political phenomenon.

Independently and as a whole, these stories set the stage for new emerging and alternative creative works that attest to the innovation and strength of Disability Studies and the diverse tales that it represents. They will be published in the forthcoming Disability Studies Undergraduate Journal.

## Independent Studies: Paper Titles

Chapman, Tania Ruiz

*Dangerous Desires: Sexualizing Disability*

Foster, Anthony

*LD and Me: Analyzing Contemporary Notions of Learning Disabilities in Western Society*

Mackenzie, Izzy

*Ravenous Cow*

Mavrogiannis, Alexis

*?And the Oscar goes to...Disability!?: Taking a Critical Look at the Alternating Realities of Disability*

Ngo, Melissa

*The River of Words: The Implications of Language in the Creation of Culture in Occupational Therapy*

Philipupillai, Gillian

*Disability and the Canadian Legal System*

Preyde, David

*You'll Never Take Me Alive*

Thomas, Anisha

*Accessing Accessibility*





*Above:*

Dr. Rod Michalko

(Photo by Daniel Ehrenworth and first published in *U of T Magazine*)

### ***Dr. Rod Michalko: Award Achievement and Our Appreciation***

By IZZY MACKENZIE

Over the past few years, Dr. Rod Michalko has made an incredible impact on the university in his development of the Disability Studies stream in Equity Studies at the University of Toronto (U of T). A progressive teacher with an appetite for breaking down boundaries, pushing limits, and encouraging his students to do the same, Michalko has acquired the reputation of being an inspirational educator and leading academic in the international Disability community. His growing popularity at New College has culminated in the steep rise of student enrollment in the Equity Studies program, as well as the creation of Disability Studies campaigns, international academic speaker series, conferences, and accessible events at the university. Most importantly, he has transformed how people think about Disability in all its diversities, embodiments, and representations as a socio-political phenomenon that interrogates the exclusionary practices which marginalize Disabled and marginalized bodies as a whole. In taking personal interest in his students' lives, Michalko successfully provides them with the platform of Disability Studies to express themselves creatively, as well as to develop their own ideas, writing, and connection to the world through alternative orientations to it.

As a result of his passion for building community – fighting for critical area studies and the education, people, ideas, and culture that surrounds it – Dr. Michalko is the recipient of the 2010-2011 *Terry Buckland Award for Diversity and Equity in Education*, granted by the Arts and Science Students' union of U of T. The award recognizes an individual who has outstanding achievements in promoting diversity and equity issues – such as race and ethnicity, class, family, gender, age, and ability – and in eliminating barriers to diversity and equity at our university. It honours Dr. Rod Michalko's work in the development and teaching of the Disability Studies stream at New College and his dedication to equity both inside and outside the classroom.

Michalko will be missed by Equity Studies as he continues on to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) to teach at the graduate level. However, his foundational contributions to the program will allow it to thrive at New College, and we continue to work with him and the greater equity community in the development and teaching of Disability studies. So here's to Rod! You are an inspiring academic, leader, and friend. We thank you for your all of your hard work and dedication to the Equity Studies program.