

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN PROCESS PHILOSOPHY RESEARCH UNIT STATUS REPORT

[www.usask.ca/usppru/]

Mission: Our mission is to advance and disseminate knowledge, and enhance practice, about the value of process thought and its relationship to a variety of disciplines through research, scholarship, teaching, graduate supervision, and community outreach.

Goals and objectives of the centre:

The University of Saskatchewan Process Philosophy Research Unit (USPPRU) is unique in the Canadian university system. It comprises a group of interdisciplinary researchers, who have been actively engaged in investigating process philosophy and its relationship to education, ecology, culture, science and society since 1992. Its Co-directors are Professors Mark Flynn (Educational Psychology), Robert Regnier (Educational Foundations), Ed Thompson (Philosophy) and Howard Woodhouse (Educational Foundations).

USPPRU was officially recognized by the U of S in December, 1997. We have published more than sixty book chapters and articles in refereed journals, and presented numerous papers at international, national and local conferences on process philosophy and education. The framework we adopt is that of process thought, a vibrant philosophical tradition stemming from the work of John Dewey, Alfred North Whitehead and Henri Bergson. It provides a constructive yet critical perspective for exploring the presuppositions of culture, modern science, education and ecology. By incorporating elements of the new physics with those inherited from the seventeenth century, process thought enhances a balanced understanding of the various phenomena which it considers. These may be as diverse as the process of human learning, the role of science in the modern world, and the connection between Aboriginal and process philosophy. Indeed, these are all topics on which we have published in refereed journals, books and conference proceedings.

Process philosophy is a dynamic paradigm, attractive to researchers in the natural sciences as well as to those in the humanities, the social sciences, and education. As evidence of this fact, physicists, mathematicians, ecologists, educationalists, philosophers and theologians were among those who joined with us at the international conference "Education, Ecology and Science" at the University of Exeter, England, June 1998. Together we raised questions about knowledge and the human condition which are a part of the ongoing research program of USPPRU. The papers presented at the Exeter conference were published in the refereed journal *Interchange: A Quarterly Review of Education* 31 (2 - 3), 2001. We organized a second international conference, titled "Knowledge, Value, Meaning ... as Process" in Saskatoon in May 2003 with a similarly interdisciplinary group of participants. The proceedings from this conference were also published in *Interchange* 35 (1-2), 2005. In 2002, we presented papers at the Fourth International Process Network (IPN) Conference in Beijing, China; at the 2004 IPN Conference in Seoul, South Korea, we coordinated the Education Section; and in 2006 at Salzburg University, Salzburg, Austria, we also organized the Education Section, which was the largest at the IPN Conference of several hundred participants. In 2009, one of our members presented papers at the 7th IPN Conference in Bangalore, India. We plan to make presentations at the 8th IPN Conference in Tokyo, Japan.

Types of activities undertaken to achieve mandate: e.g. research; graduate student training; student experience; programming; outreach

Research

Organizing two international conferences, the proceedings of which have been published in *Interchange: A Quarterly Review of Education* (2000 & 2005)

Publishing articles in a wide variety of peer-reviewed journals as well as book chapters in Canada, the United States, United Kingdom (1995-2010)

Making presentations at international conferences in Austria, Belgium, China, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Ireland, South Korea, Sweden, Scotland, and the United States (1998-2009)

Making presentations at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences (Canadian Association for the Foundations of Education, Canadian Philosophy of Education Society, and Canadian Sociological Association) (2007-2010)

Making invited presentations at Brandon University, The Center for Process Studies (Claremont Graduate School, CA), Universite Francois Rabelais de Tours, University of Oulu, University of Toronto, and University of Saskatchewan

Publication of two books: Adam Scarfe (ed). *The Adventure of Education: Process Philosophers on Learning, Teaching, and Research* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi 2009), 227pp.

Howard Woodhouse, *Selling Out: Academic Freedom and the Corporate Market* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2009), 350 pp.

Graduate Student Training

Two Interdisciplinary Ph.D.s are currently writing their dissertations on process thought.

11 M.Ed. theses supervised and completed on different aspects of process thought (1997-2010)

Student Experience

When Professor Adam Scarfe was pursuing graduate work in the Department of Educational Foundations, USPPRU obtained a Graduate Fellowship for him to assist in the organization of an international conference, titled "Knowledge, Value, Meaning ... as Process" in Saskatoon in May 2003. Professor Scarfe has since gone on to teach in the philosophy departments at the California State University (Bakersfield) and the University of Winnipeg.

The experience of graduate students in the Department of Educational Foundations is enhanced in several courses taught by Professors Regnier and Woodhouse by exposure to process thought.

All four co-directors continue to teach undergraduates using process thought in their courses, thereby enriching their experience through the use of inquiry-based and experiential learning.

Programming

Our Annual Lecture Series was initiated in 2002 and has involved scholars from the United States (Dr John Cobb, Director of the Centre for Process Studies, Claremont Graduate School in 2003), and from the U of S (Dr Chary Rangacharyulu, Department of Physics, 2004; Dr Ron Marken, Department of English, 2005; Dr William Thomlinson, Director, CLS synchrotron, 2006; Dr Len Findlay, Department of English, 2009; and Dr Sheila Harding, Associate Dean of Medical Education, College of Medicine, 2010)

Our Interdisciplinary Research Seminar Group has operated for more than a decade, drawing members from across campus in the natural and social sciences, humanities, and education, St Thomas More College and First Nations University. Members have made regular presentations to this group on

subjects of their choice, and one such meeting is planned for November 2010 with a presentation from a member of the Department of Philosophy.

Outreach

Co-directors have made two presentations to the "Philosophy in the Community" series organized by the Department of Philosophy and supported by the Vice- President Research: "Process Philosophy and Education" in March 2007; and "Who Needs Academic Freedom?" in March 2009.

One Co-director was involved in the organization of the Peoples' Free University of Saskatchewan, a community-based form of university education, 2002-04.

Another Co-director was Executive Director of the International Process Network (IPN) from 2005-08.

In 2009 our research associate, Professor Adam Scarfe, was appointed Executive Director of IPN.

Another Co-director has been a member of the Board of Trustees of the Association of Process Philosophy of Education since 1997.

Another Co-director has made a presentation, titled "Sculpture as Process," to the Prairie Sculptors Association, which was published in the association's newsletter in 2009. He has also participated in 15 Art and Sculpture Exhibitions in Saskatoon since 2002.

Governance:

The research unit's governance structure is based on consensus among the Co-Directors at our regular bi-monthly meetings

Co-Directors:

Professor Mark Flynn, Department of Educational Psychology – Co-Director

Professor Robert Regnier, Department of Educational Foundations – Co-Director

Professor H. Edward Thompson, Department of Philosophy (retd.) – Co-Director

Professor Howard Woodhouse, Department of Educational Foundations – Co-Director

Current centre members:

Professor Yongmei Hu, Department of English, HuoHuot Agricultural University, Inner Mongolia, Peoples' Republic of China – Research Associate (2010-12)

Professor Adam Scarfe, Department of Philosophy, University of Winnipeg – Research Associate (2003-12)