

# CONNECTIONS

## Science Communication

Volume 1 Number 2, Summer 2011



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## First year of the program draws to a successful close

### Science Communication Program

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The new Bachelor of Science (Science Communication) can now celebrate the successful conclusion of its first year.

Although small in numbers, the program took hold at MSVU this year and broke new ground in the area of undergraduate interdisciplinary programming. It's been a learning experience for all of us. In communication studies, we learned about the demands of the science lab schedule (although some of us remembered it from our own undergrad years). Science faculty members learned about the idiosyncrasies of the

ways that academic faculty in professional programs must nimbly navigate the obstacles in advising students in professional studies. Two of the students who began the program in the fall of 2010 have only one calendar year left to complete the degree as a result of their transfer credits. That means that we will celebrate our first B.Sc. (Science Communication) graduates in the fall of 2012.

Something to look forward to as we move into the second year of the program when student numbers are expected to triple. ◀

## Meet the New Science Communication Coordinator

When new students arrive in September, the Science Communication program in the Department of Communication Studies will have a new coordinator.

Patty (Prof. Patricia Parsons) has been a part of this program since its first inception and its gestation through all the levels of approval; now she is stepping away to begin a sabbatical and move on. She will be ably replaced by a recent addition to the department faculty, Prof. Anthony Yue.

Tony came to academic life after an extensive career working in a variety of entrepreneurial organizations. He has managed in the retail sector, created a financial services company, contributed to a number of family businesses in the import/export arena, and trained petroleum workers and military personnel in sea and survival skills. He holds an Executive MBA from Saint Mary's University and is currently completing his Ph.D. dissertation focused on gossip in organizations.

Tony is broadly interested in how individuals navigate their organized world. His research spans diverse areas such as gossip and storytelling in organizations, occupational health and safety issues, disability and workers, and existentialist thought. His current teaching includes the areas of public relations, management, business, and research methods. He has taught courses on leadership, industrial relations, ethics, research methods, international business, case study analysis and public speaking.



*Tony Yue, new science communication coordinator on the MSVU campus*

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## Science Communication hosts science media book launch

On May 12 the Science Communication program was delighted to host the launch of [Richard Zurawski's](#) new book [Media Mediocrity: Waqing War Against Science](#).

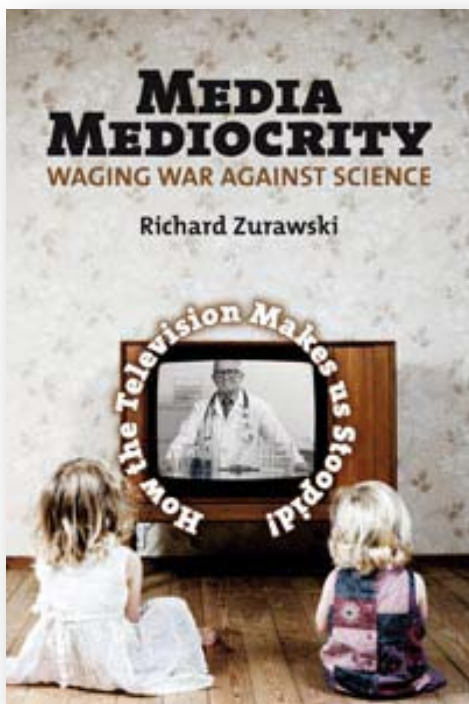
Few people in the Halifax area and beyond in Atlantic Canada are unaware of Richard and his work. He's something of a local celebrity. You hear him on the radio – if you're old enough, you remember him on television.

With a background in physics, Richard is currently the chief meteorologist for Rogers Radio throughout the Maritime region, and co-host of the *Wednesday Science Files* each week on Rogers Maritime Radio. He also writes a popular science blog for Rogers.

Richard is connected to our department as a part-time lecturer and has recently begun working on his Ph.D. in Research in Education at the University of South Australia, Adelaide.

*Media Mediocrity* is based largely on research Richard completed for his Masters degree.

Through an examination of issues such as tobacco consumption, global warming and intelligent design — as well as pseudoscientific pursuits like UFOs, ghosts and the afterlife — *Media Mediocrity* examines how television's pursuit of ratings and profit trump any interest in providing the audience with an accurate representation of science. Richard draws on both his research and his personal experiences to paint a chilling picture designed to jolt the public into taking a look at how their view of science has been shaped — for better or for worse.



Richard's past books include *Richard Zurawski's Book of Maritime Weather* and *The Maritime Book of Climate Change*. He has also written for children and has produced and syndicated three children's television series, *Wonder Why?*, *The Adventures of the AfterMath Crew* and *WiseWeatherWhys*, as well as numerous documentaries (for Discovery, TVO, VisionTV and other domestic broadcasters) which have aired around the world. He has also just completed a three hour miniseries for Discovery HD about ancient weapons, which he produced, wrote and hosted.

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## News...from the Department of Communication Studies

- ✚ Science communication student Danielle Pinkney is working this summer with the Atlantic Council on the Sciences as their communication assistant.
- ✚ Former science communication coordinator Prof. Patricia Parsons is the editor-in-chief of the new online, open-access, peer-reviewed journal *Canadian Journal of Public Relations & Communication Management*. The first call for papers goes out in about six weeks. To be placed on the mailing list or for further information, please email [patricia.parsons@msvu.ca](mailto:patricia.parsons@msvu.ca).
- ✚ The department has received approval for the M.A. program to change from an M.A (Public Relations) to an [M.A. \(Communication\)](#) thus broadening the focus. The new degree will be of interest to students who wish to do research on science or health communication in the future.