

Human Ecologists: Generalists by Design
Experts in Connecting the Dots

Human Ecology

Human Ecology Program Overview

The areas of study in the undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of Human Ecology have evolved since the first Bachelor of Science in Household Economics degrees were awarded in 1918 at the University of Alberta.

In addition to our two undergraduate majors in **Family Ecology** and **Clothing, Textiles & Material Culture**, graduate students pursue course-based or thesis-based master's degrees, or doctoral programs in the following areas: **Aging; Children, Youth & Families; Material Culture**; and **Textile & Apparel Science**.

Did you know our Department offers the only **PhD program in Human Ecology** in Canada?

What is it?

Human Ecology is an interdisciplinary applied field that uses a holistic systems approach to examine the many contexts of people's lives. In particular, we focus on the dynamic relationships people have with their near environments: clothing, family, home and community.

What do we do?

We prepare students with core skills in: science, social science, arts & humanities, critical analysis, global awareness...

What research areas?

- Family & child relationships
- Youth at risk
- Families in later life
- Caregiving
- Rural aging
- Material culture & disability studies
- Work-life balance
- Intimate relationships
- History & social meaning of objects
- Costume history
- Protective clothing
- Clothing comfort
- Social psychology of design
- Collections and exhibitions
- Apparel design
- Innovative materials
- Global textile trade

Enhanced through experiential learning, practicums, international study opportunities

Generalists by Design

Human Ecology- creating generalists by design

Ecologists have debated the relative benefits of generalization versus specialization of plant species for decades. Habitat models comparing how generalist and specialist species thrive in terms of the breadth of environmental conditions, suggest that generalists are favored in fluctuating environments.

Is there a lesson contained in this description of nature's generalists that is relevant to how people learn and work? Do people who are generalists also thrive in unstable environments? Is this relevant for today's students? Certainly it seems that with rapid technology changes, globalization, emerging global conflicts and climate change, there is a need to navigate uncertainty. Studying Human Ecology, a multi-disciplinary field rooted in a wide breadth of knowledge, helps to develop skills and world views compatible with becoming a generalist.

Connecting the Dots

Being a specialist or a generalist is not a reflection of intelligence but rather it is a reflection of how to approach problem-solving. Generalists often excel at team and relationship-building. Generalists tend to be lateral thinkers who can more easily see relationships that might exist outside of a specialized professional domain. This type of thinking is reflected in, for example, the broad human ecological approach to studying sustainability of the global apparel industry. Knowledge related to history, textile science, design, global production and consumption as well as the pivotal socio-cultural role of clothing is explored. Or, consider family ecology scholars researching the well-being of refugee families – a Human Ecology perspective would attend to immigration and settlement policies, housing, schooling, and cultural

influences on parenting. Trying to solve the world's big or "wicked" problems, as they are sometimes described, does require work within areas of deep specialization – professions such as medicine, law, and engineering come to mind. However, having a broad vision and an ability to "connect the dots," and to be able to synthesize and integrate ideas, are also extremely valuable attributes. Generalists tend to be empathic as they can imagine the world from different perspectives. This skill can be useful in breaking down the nature of complex problems. Further, it complements specialists' thinking, by challenging them to reframe problems. In terms of career opportunities, generalists are often flexible, and hence, desirable employees, because they bring knowledge and experience from several areas and are able to adjust their roles as needed. In recent business publications there has been extensive discussion about the rise of generalists. The gist of the commentary has been that new, complex problems require new capabilities and generalists are viewed as being very effective in influencing new ways of thinking.

Survey Says...

Results from a 2015 Faculty of ALES (Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences) Graduate Outcome Survey which included 85 Human Ecology graduates from 2004 -2015, suggest a generalist orientation exists among HE alumni. For example, 79% of HE respondents agreed (ratings of 4 or 5 out of 5) that their degree program improved their ability to work effectively with others (vs. 69% across all ALES programs), and 81% of those employed (n=74) agreed that their degree program helped them develop a personal code of values and ethics (versus 51% to 70% in other ALES programs).

Teaching and Learning

Human Ecology Teaching Awards

The primary role of educators is to create the relationships and the context that can bring about learner engagement. Three Human Ecology faculty members who excel at this, **Jane Batcheller, Kathryn Chandler** and **Megan Strickfaden**, were the 2015 recipients of the ALES Teachers of the Year awards. Dr. Batcheller and Dr. Strickfaden teach courses in the Clothing, Textiles & Material Culture major, and professor Kathryn Chandler teaches the undergraduate professional practice courses and also serves as the Practicum Program Coordinator.



Nancy Bray, ALES 2014 Instructor

Graduate Student Teaching Awards

The Graduate Student Teaching Awards annually recognize outstanding graduate teaching assistants in each faculty. Congratulations go to PhD candidate **Nancy Bray**, 2016 award winner, nominated by the Department of Human

Ecology. Nancy has taught ALES 204, Professional Communication, for the last 3 years, introducing new teaching technologies and a new format for the course, while also mentoring several graduate teaching assistants who helped deliver the course.

Experiential Learning - Diverse Range of Practicum Placements

From insight into government policy development to museum detective work, the experiential learning that Human Ecology practicum students undertake helps to expand their academic interests and provide career opportunities. Students must complete a 200-hour practicum placement before graduation. The placements are strategically selected to match the interests and skills of students as they complete their undergraduate studies.

Allie Hulme, (Family Ecology major), completed her Practicum in the Consumer Services Department of Service Alberta, working on several different consumer protection initiatives. Her projects included important efforts to apprise consumers of potential consumer scams as part of the Fort McMurray Fire disaster response and work on Bill 204 – The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act. Student **Mercedes Cormier**, (Clothing, Textiles & Material Culture major), travelled to Toronto for her Practicum placement at The Bata Shoe Museum. Taking part in a fascinating research project, Mercedes helped to organize an archive of scrapbooks, design sketches, and marketing materials spanning c.1954 to c.1984, received by the Bata Museum from

famous shoe manufacturer Rayne after the company closed in 1993. The shoe manufacturer had gained immense prestige as a result of having held three royal warrants with the British Monarchy and its partnerships with designers Christian Dior and Roger Vivier.



Mercedes Cormier, Bata Shoe Museum

Researching the Needs of Practicum Supervisors

Through Human Ecology's Practicum Program, students are placed with organizations that link with their career goals. While the focus of this program is most often on the students who participate, a new research project by Practicum Coordinator **Kathryn Chandler** and colleague **Dr. Deanna Williamson** will consider the important role of practicum field supervisors. Funding for the project comes



Kathryn Chandler

from the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund (TLEF) which supports UofA instructors who seek innovative ways of creating exceptional learning experiences and environments. In recognition of the generous commitment field supervisors make to the program and to the students they invite into their work settings, the goal of the study is to explore ways to enhance supervisor engagement and enrich the overall supervisory experience, and in doing so, improve the learning experience for students.

Celebrating Sessional Instructors – Bringing Expertise from the Community

In many universities, more and more academic work is being performed by people hired on a per-course or limited term basis. While this trend has created some concerns about the 'casualization' of university teaching, in specialized fields like family law or finance, people are hired in the Department of Human Ecology for the special expertise they bring to their fields. For example, meet Human Ecology alum Patricia French (MSc. 2003, PHEC), a much-admired and highly-qualified instructor of Human Ecology's family finance courses, since 2005. Adding to her roles as President and co-owner of Retirement/Life Challenge retirement planning services, and as a financial counsellor for Canadian Forces members and their families at CFB Edmonton, Tricia has developed a reputation as a first-rate, award winning instructor. Students consistently comment on her ability to motivate them about a topic often

perceived to be dull. In discussing her teaching philosophy, Tricia writes, "I love that many students believe my courses on finance will be dry and boring. One of my missions is to dispel the myth and convince students that family finance and economic issues can be fascinating, invigorating, and sometimes even humorous. Through examples and stories, I transport pages of the textbook to the real world and impart a pulse. I draw from my experience working with clients, so statistics go from being numbers to individuals; this too, breathes life into the topics." Tricia discusses her interest in engaging with individual students, noting that "on the first day I ask students why they are taking my class. Regardless of their program of study or career objective, I undertake the challenge to teach



Tricia French Family Finance Instructor

courses that inspire each student to achieve personal financial success. I commit to provide practical assignments and learning activities that bring theory into practice and allow students to direct their newfound knowledge, problem-solving and analytical skills to real world financial applications. I want to ensure practical learning experiences which encourage each student to do something today that their future self will thank them for."

AHEA 2016 Annual Conference

The Department of Human Ecology and the Alberta Human Ecology & Home Economics Association have committed to enhancing linkages between our organizations. To this end, the two groups worked together to integrate a poster session into the April 2016 AHEA Annual Conference. Generating a great deal of interest among AHEA members and guests, seven faculty members and several students shared findings from 14 research projects.

Undergraduate Awards

University Undergraduate Research Initiative (URI)

The Department of Human Ecology is proud to highlight the work of two of its undergraduate students, Mackenzie Martin and Anne Thomas, who were each successful in being granted \$5000 Undergraduate Research Initiative Stipends. The stipend allows undergraduate students to enrich their university experience through hands-on discovery in a mentored research project. According to the URI office, these awards are highly competitive; the overall success rate for the most recent round was 35%. As there were only three students in the Faculty of ALES who were successful in this round, having two winners from Human Ecology is noteworthy.

Mackenzie Martin

Mackenzie Martin is a fourth year student in the BSc Human Ecology/BEd Secondary program. Over the last year, she has developed an avid interest in research – helped initially by her receipt of a Roger S. Smith Undergraduate Student Research Award in the summer of 2015. Mackenzie has been studying and working with Dr. Megan Strickfaden, exploring first, assistive technologies for caregivers, and now focusing on the study of dementia in material environments. Mackenzie will travel to the Netherlands with Dr. Strickfaden to conduct an ethnography of a dementia village in the Netherlands (de Hogeweyk) and aspires to pursue more research as a graduate student.



Mackenzie Martin URI Winner

Anne Thomas

Anne Thomas, a fourth year clothing, textiles and material culture student, reflects on her award and notes, “I have been hooked on doing original research since my first introduction to it in a second year class in feminist research. To that end, I volunteered to become a research assistant with Dr. McQueen to support her work in odour retention in textiles. My work with her involved a wear trial to assess underarm odour retention in textiles, and held a few surprises, most of them pleasant. I got paid, enjoyed the work, and found the research interesting. The URI grant process was how I spent my Reading Week in Winter ‘16, and I was impressed by the amount of support I received from the URI office, and Dr. McQueen.” Anne hopes the research findings help lead to more sustainable decisions in manufacturing and prevent premature consumer discard of clothing items.

Télio Fabrics Award Winner

Third year, combined degree student (BSc Human Ecology/BEd Secondary) **Francesca**



Bombini was the winner of a \$1000 design award provided by Télio Fabrics, Montreal for her final class project in an advanced apparel design course taught by professor Vlada Blinova. Télio has been the long-time sponsor of a national Canadian Breakthrough Designers competition. The winning garment needed to be inspired by a piece of visual art while demonstrating unconventional construction techniques and use of specialty fabrics. Faculty judges and well-known Alberta designer Malorie Urbanovitch, determined that Francesca’s creativity and skill best met the assignment criteria.

Aging

RESEARCHERS CONDUCT THEORETICAL , EMPIRICAL AND POLICY RESEARCH ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF AGING. FAMILY CAREGIVING IS A MAJOR FOCAL AREA OF STUDY.

Role of Technology to Help Workers with Care Responsibilities

Launched in 2015, AGE-WELL is a federally-funded program of research focusing on the development of cutting-edge social and technological solutions to support older adults and their caregivers. One of its aims is to gain insight into opportunities to develop novel technological solutions that can help caregivers provide more effective and efficient care, and enhance caregiver quality of life. This includes developing various solutions that can be used to help caregivers make more informed decisions around the types of technologies they adopt, providing help with using technologies, and connecting caregivers to provide peer support and improve their ability to combine care work and paid work.



Dr. Janet Fast

Dr. Janet Fast leads Connecting Working Caregivers, a project within one of eight main AGEWELL research areas. She notes that maintaining employment alongside care responsibilities is a key need expressed by family caregivers but also a major challenge. The

project will study employers of caregivers to determine what role they and their caregiver employees envision technology playing in supporting employees with family care responsibilities, their willingness to adopt/provide such technologies, and barriers to adoption. Study findings will be released at a knowledge mobilization forum for all AGE-WELL partner-employers in October 2016. Participants will also hear from an industry leader in supporting employed caregivers, and discuss emerging issues and imagine potential solutions. An outcome of the study will be identification of characteristics of caregiver-friendly organizations that will enable AGE-WELL partner organizations to become “employers of choice.”



Health, Wealth and Happiness: Dynamics of Families and a Good Old Age?

Having completed her first year of work in the Department of Human Ecology, assistant professor **Dr. Joohong Min** is



Dr. Joohong Min

embarking on an innovative research project that will help to understand how differences in family life-course paths affect older adults' health, wealth and happiness. With funding from the **Kule Institute for Advanced Study**, the project will build an international interdisciplinary team, deepen community partnerships, and test the

capacity of Canadian data to track trends such as higher rates of divorce and remarriage, delayed marriage and parenthood, childlessness, lower fertility rates, same sex marriage and changing employment situations. Noting that population aging is one of the most pressing global challenges we face and that families are expected to play a starring role in meeting those challenges, Dr. Min adds that the effects of major family transitions may accumulate – as advantage or disadvantage – over the life course, intensifying their impact on later life well-being. Despite these profound changes, families continue to be the key social institution in which individuals are embedded, cared for, and supported – especially in later life. Grant co-investigators are: J. Fast, N. Keating, L. Strohschein, J. Parmar, J. Swindle, Z. Wu, L. Funk.

Children, Youth & Families

RESEARCHERS FOCUS ON HEALTHY INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY FUNCTIONING ACROSS THE LIFECOURSE IN VARIOUS CONTEXTS SUCH AS PARENTING, INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS, WORK-FAMILY INTEGRATION, AND YOUTH AT RISK.

ALES Research and Innovation Award

Assistant Professor **Dr. Matthew Johnson** was the 2015 Recipient of the Faculty of ALES Research and Innovation Award which recognizes the outstanding individual contributions of new staff members who have completed a doctoral degree within the last 10 years. The purpose of the award is to highlight those achievements that contribute theoretically as well as to the practice of one's discipline. Dr.



Dr. Matthew Johnson

Johnson joined the Department of Human Ecology in July 2012, having completed his PhD at Kansas State University (Marriage and Family Therapy). His current program of research is centered on understanding intimate relationship development from the transition to adulthood into midlife, with a focus on identifying the behaviors and beliefs that contribute to relational and individual health. Dr. Johnson describes efforts to challenge and test widely accepted theoretical frameworks with cutting edge quantitative methods as the unifying theme of his research program.

Homeless youth in Edmonton

Assistant Professor **Dr. Pushpanjali Dashora**, in collaboration with Dr. Solina Richter (Faculty of Nursing), is leading a pilot project exploring the impact of a housing program on the mental health and well-being of homeless youth living in Edmonton. Dr. Dashora and her research team are using a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the impact of an innovative and unique harm reduction based model of transitional housing for at-risk homeless youth over a period of 6 months. Led by Homeward Trust and operated by the Edmonton John Howard Society, the housing program provides on-site support with mental health and addiction, counselling, employment, and educational opportunities. This study



will contribute crucial evidence to the limited pool of rigorous research on transitional housing for youth, inspiring new insights on how well the "housing first" program model works in Canada.

Graduate Research Assistant Shiva Kiaras and Dr. Pushpanjali Dashora

Couple Well-Being Project

Dr. Adam Galovan, a new faculty member as of July, 2015, recently launched a research initiative called the Couple Well-Being Project. The project seeks to understand both positive and negative relationship dynamics stemming from both personal characteristics (such as humility and positivity), contextual challenges (such as stress), and relationship behaviours (such as conflict, gratitude, and forgiveness). In collaboration with researchers here at the U of A and at 3 other universities, this multi-disciplinary team has collected nationally-representative data from across Canada and the United States, with approximately 20% of the sample coming from same-sex relationships. This project will also explore associations with parenting behaviours and the use of technology and consider factors that contribute to both relationship and personal well-being.



Dr. Adam Galovan

Material Culture & Design Studies

MATERIAL CULTURE SCHOLARSHIP CONSIDERS THE SOCIAL MEANING OF OBJECTS IN TERMS OF THEIR CREATION, USE, AND CIRCULATION WITH AN EMPHASIS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN ECOLOGY ON TEXTILES AND CLOTHING.

New Publication

Human Ecology associate professor and designer **Dr. Megan Strickfaden** and Human Ecology adjunct professor **Dr. Patrick Devlieger**, an anthropologist from the University of Leuven in Belgium, are excited to announce the recent release (June, 2016) of a co-edited book entitled *Rethinking Disability: World Perspectives in Culture and Society* (Devlieger, Miranda-Galarza, Brown & Strickfaden). The book is described as a source for compelling arguments for viewing disability through the multiple lenses of disability culture and is intended to inspire researchers who wish to explore and examine disability across social, cultural and economic barriers.



(Garant Publishers, 2016)

Dementia Care by Design Film

An ethnographic film documentary, *Dementia Care by Design*, created by master's degree student **Nicole Gaudet**, working with her graduate supervisor **Dr. Megan Strickfaden** and filmmaker Stephen Hope, made a big impact with screenings occurring at the Art Gallery of Alberta, the annual conference for Canadian Association on Gerontology and at other national and international venues (Netherlands, Australia, Sweden). Given exclusive access to a care facility in the Netherlands for people with dementia – de Hogeweyk, also known as the “Dementia Village”, the film makers explored how the mindful design of care facilities impacts wellbeing and quality of life of residents with dementia. Nicole received her MSc in Aging in Fall 2015 and is Vice President of Choices in Community Living (CICL), an Alberta-based, family-run Supportive Living provider in Spruce

Grove, Red Deer and Lethbridge. See link for a short film teaser: <http://dementiacarebydesign.com/>



Nicole Gaudet

Well Being and the Creation of the Material Environment

Associate Professor **Dr. Arlene Oak** and postdoctoral research fellow, **Dr. Claire Nicholas**, have been busy throughout 2016 with two research projects: first, the SSHRC Partnership Grant “Thinking While Doing”, which studies architecture education in Canada and the USA; and second, the “Health, Design, Research Network.” For “Thinking While Doing,” Drs. Oak and Nicholas are collecting video and audio recordings, field notes and photographs of students and professors who are involved in designing and building a range of grid-shell structures. Over the year their work has taken them from a series of meetings with engineers in London, England, to a construction site in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Additionally, Drs. Oak and Nicholas have been active in developing the “Health, Design, Research Network” at the UofA. In both projects they are focused on exploring how aspects of wellbeing are fostered through the creation and use of the material environment.



Dr. Claire Nicholas and Dr. Arlene Oak at research site

Faculty Updates:

Dr. Anne Bissonnette, Curator of the Clothing and Textiles Collection, was on sabbatical from July 1, 2015 to June 31, 2016.

Dr. Megan Strickfaden is on sabbatical from Jan. 1, 2016 to Dec. 31, 2016.

Textile & Apparel Science

RESEARCH IS CARRIED OUT WITH A MULTIDISCIPLINARY FOCUS THAT AIMS TO ENHANCE HUMAN PERFORMANCE, PROTECTION AND COMFORT THROUGH TEXTILE AND CLOTHING SOLUTIONS.

Take Part in Clothing Odour Research Study

Dr. Rachel McQueen, Associate Professor in textile science, and her students are working on a number of stinky projects which require the help of the public. As a textile scientist, Dr. McQueen's research on odour in textiles focuses on the mechanisms of how odorants are retained and released by clothing fabrics. This work involves spending a lot of time in the laboratory inoculating fabrics with bacterial strains and chemical odorants. Also incorporating a human ecology perspective means that Dr. McQueen centres her research on the human element. She notes that human body odour is emitted from human

bodies and human noses smell those body odours. If they didn't "smell" (noses or human bodies) then odour in clothing wouldn't be a problem. This inherent human problem results in the need for volunteers to act both as odour providers (i.e., wearing t-shirts) and as odour detectors (i.e., sniffing those worn t-shirt fabrics). Odour intensity and/or quality emitted from the worn t-shirt fabrics are then rated. Another aspect of Dr. McQueen's odour research involves learning about people's personal experiences with odour in clothing, and what impact there is on other behaviours. For example, can odour in clothing cause people to launder their clothing differently or discard their clothing prematurely? Discard and laundry habits can have important consequences for the environment in terms of the amount of waste that goes to landfills or the amount of energy and water used for washing. To take part in Dr. McQueen's research, please check the following website: <http://textile.ualberta.ca/studies>. The survey is open until Sept. 1, 2016 – your responses are welcome! Dr. McQueen is also seeking donated clothing that has persistent underarm odour. There is a drop-off box in the lobby of the Human Ecology Building.



Dr. McQueen with undergraduate student Lauren Degenstein

A rare historical find – yes or no? Textile Analysis Service Provides Definitive Answer

The Department of Human Ecology's Textile Analysis Service focuses on textile testing in response to requests from a wide range of clients. Earlier this year, two Chinese embroidered textiles were offered to the University of Alberta Museums and Collections Services as rare historical pieces, possibly two-thousand years old. The Textile Analysis Service performed fibre identification that established a relatively modern date for the pieces. **Dr. Jane Batcheller** confirmed that the embroidery on each textile fragment was machine stitched, not hand sewn, and that the embroidery threads from each piece consisted of both rayon and polyester fibres. Rayon, one of the earliest man-made textile fibres, was developed in the late 19th century. Polyester was in development, but not commercialized for textile use until the 1950's. Therefore the earliest date for the embroidered Chinese textiles is mid-20th century.



Photomicrograph of brightly-coloured, rayon fibres from embroidered Chinese fragments.



Encouraging the Next Generation of Scientists

WISEST: Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science & Technology is a unit of the University of Alberta that has dedicated over 30 years to empowering women in the fields of science, engineering and technology. Textile Science graduate student **Mary Glasper** and a team of student volunteers worked with The WISEST Choices Conference in 2015 and 2016 which hosts up to 600 grade 6 girls from Edmonton area schools to encourage their interest in scientific disciplines. Mary developed a series of “textile detective” experiments to help students carry out fibre identification. The activity was designed to complement the grade 6 forensic science unit “Evidence and Investigations,” focusing on identifying unknown textile fibres through microscopy and dyeing techniques.



Mary Glasper, Textile Science graduate student

2015-2016

2015-2016 Convocants Congratulations

November 2015 Convocation

Nicole Gaudet, MSc Aging

Drew Turner, MSc Aging

Linh Nguyen, MSc Family Ecology & Practice

Tristan Robinson, MSc Family Ecology & Practice

Karly Coleman, MA Material Culture

Scott Varga, MA Material Culture

Spring 2016 Convocation

Annah Jaricha, MSc Family Ecology & Practice

Caitlin Mungham, MSc Family Ecology & Practice

Awards and Scholarships

Sharon Anderson:

Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship; Dorothy J Killam Memorial Graduate Prize

Mohammed Mukhtar Abdul-Bari:

Helen Desilva Buchanan Memorial Graduate Scholarship

Karly Coleman:

University of Alberta Doctoral Recruitment Scholarship

Nicole Furtak:

Betty Crown Graduate Scholarship; Edmonton & District Quilters' Guild Graduate Scholarship

Rebecca Horne:

Walter H Johns Graduate Fellowship; Delta Delta Delta Alumnae Fellowship

Razak Oduro:

Dianne Kieren Graduate Award in Human Ecology; University of Alberta Doctoral Recruitment Scholarship

Ren Hui:

David and Marian Duggan Memorial Scholarship; Alberta Association on Gerontology Provincial Board 2016 Student Award (PhD)

Vanessa Ostapchuk: *Engberg Graduate Scholarship in International Home Economics; Louise Davies Memorial Graduate Scholarship*

Janice Rieger: *President's Doctoral Prize of Distinction*

Adolfo Ruiz: *President's Doctoral Prize of Distinction; Alice E Brewer Graduate Travel Award*

Robyn Stobbs: *President's Doctoral Prize of Distinction; EDQG Graduate Scholarship; Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship (Doctoral)*

Sumit Mandal: *Andrew Stewart Memorial Graduate Prize*



Dr. Deanna Williamson, Chair & Associate Professor

Message from the Chair

Following a one-year administrative leave, I began my second term as Chair of the Department of Human Ecology in July 2015. Although the leave provided an invaluable opportunity to recharge my batteries and attend to my rather neglected research program, it's been great to get back to my "regular life." It's energizing to work with colleagues and students in Human Ecology – a group characterized by creativity, wisdom, and commitment to high quality, rigorous education and research – a few examples of which are showcased in this annual report. One of the highlights of the past year was to participate in Gold College, a year-long professional development and leadership program sponsored by the University's Office of the Provost and VP (Academic) and HR Services. I took away a lot of new ideas and an array of strategies for addressing challenges and working toward the achievement of goals in our department. A key take-away for me is the power of the collective – the power of "we." Human Ecology staff and students are a diverse group. We each contribute important and unique knowledge, skills, insights, and talents, and our individual accomplishments are integral to the Department's success. However, the Department of Human Ecology is at its best when we work as a "we," focusing on what unites us. Despite our rich array of diversities, what we share is a commitment to enhancing people's quality of life. We accomplish this through the generation, dissemination, and application of knowledge about things that shape people's everyday life – things such as meeting the demands of paid work and unpaid family responsibilities; supporting ageing parents; requiring safe and comfortable clothing; and considering the optimum design of the places where we live and work. In short, through our collective efforts in Human Ecology, "we" make tangible positive differences in people's quality of life at home, at work, and in the community. This is compelling and exciting work to be part of!

Upcoming Events

Sept. 24 Alumni Weekend - Please join us

An afternoon tea from 1:30-3:00 p.m. will be hosted by the Department for all Home Economics/ Human Ecology alumni in the newly renovated Greenhouse Atrium in the Ag/Forestry Building. Come to hear short presentations about new frontiers in Human Ecology research and learn about plans to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Home Economics at the University of Alberta in 2018.

For Richer or For Poorer: Til Consumption Do Us Part Exhibit

The "For Richer or For Poorer: Til Consumption Do Us Part" Exhibit traces the giddy rise of our consumer culture as reflected in the changes to weddings over the past 100 years.

RUNS TO OCTOBER 3 IN THE GALLERY OF THE HUMAN ECOLOGY BUILDING,
116TH ST. AND 89TH AVE.

Tour the Collection

Learn more about Human Ecology's hidden gem on campus –the **Clothing and Textiles Collection**. In

October 2015, Shaw TV visited the Department of Human Ecology and produced a terrific video profile about the Clothing and Textiles Collection, and the Stitched Narratives exhibit that was on display in the Fall in the department's public gallery. Collections manager Vlada Blinova and graduate student Robin Stobbs are both featured in the piece. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6_BMfd05SE



Tours of the Collection for the university community and members of the public are offered the last Thursday of every month between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00p.m. (two weeks advance booking required). Please contact Collections Manager, Vlada Blinova, at 780-492-2528 for bookings or more information.

Keep up with Department news

by viewing our website:

<http://www.hecol.ualberta.ca/>