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FROM  A  
STRONG   
FOUNDATION 

A FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR THE FUTURE  
THE HARRIS CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT 2011- 2012



Photo by Chris Hammond

## Message from the President

It is my pleasure to extend greetings in this year's Harris Centre Annual Report. The Harris Centre has launched a new five-year strategic plan, and this year's report demonstrates the types of initiatives that align with each of the plan's five strategic goals.

The Harris Centre is a model organization, articulating a clear vision, guiding values, long-term goals and concrete objectives. The Harris Centre team guides its work in facilitating and co-ordinating Memorial's activities in regional policy and development with this plan. It employs best practices in organizational decision-making to respond to new opportunities, delivering on core programs and services that have become mainstays in connecting Memorial with the needs of the province.

As we articulate our priorities for research, teaching and learning, and public engagement in three new strategic frameworks, we are committed to connecting our expertise and resources with citizens, communities, industry, and governments. The Harris Centre is a key element in our efforts to connect. In doing so, the Harris Centre has been recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in public engagement and knowledge mobilization.

I want to thank the Harris Centre team, the Harris Centre Advisory Board and the hundreds of partners, within Memorial, across the province and beyond, who have made this success a reality. I look forward to seeing this five-year strategic plan implemented, and to the new directions that emerge to advance regional policy and development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Dr. Gary Kachanoski**  
*President, Memorial University*



Photo by Bojan Furst

## Message from the Director

2011-12 marked the launch of the Harris Centre's first five year strategic plan. When we were established in 2004, we experimented with programs and approaches to fulfill our mandate to facilitate and coordinate Memorial University's activities in regional policy and development. We also responded to requests and ideas from faculty, staff and students within Memorial and to communities, organizations and individuals outside Memorial. Once established, our Advisory Board became an instrumental source of advice and guidance. Before long, we had a series of programs that provided vehicles to deliver on our mandate: the Applied Research Fund, Regional Workshops, Memorial Presents, Synergy Sessions and the Galbraith Lecture. The launch of Yaffle provided an online tool that assisted in identifying new opportunities, brokering connections between people at Memorial and people outside the university, and to make project results easily accessible.

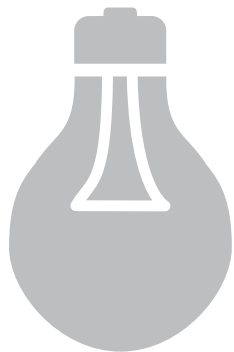
We also got better at project management, implemented decision making systems and tracking tools, and sometimes had to say no to opportunities. As our Annual Reports indicate, we have been very busy. We established a monitoring and evaluation framework and conducted evaluations of many of our core programs, highlighting what was working and where we could improve. We're proud of how the Harris Centre brand has been established in our province and beyond, and of the results we have produced.

Now we're ramping up our operations one more notch. We have developed a high level vision, along with values and goals for the Harris Centre, and developed annual strategic action plans. We have now conducted extensive consultations, learned from our evaluations, and set a course for the next five years. Like any Strategic Plan, this does not lock us into a rigid path that prevents us from responding to great opportunities or critical needs consistent with our mandate. Rather, it also allows us to put clear targets in place, with indicators, to see if we are achieving what we set out to achieve. We take our mandate very seriously at the Harris Centre and we are committed to producing results. I hope you see how this Annual Report, organized around our plan, demonstrates the types of achievements we've had in 2011-12 and where we're going in the future. We look forward to working with you in connecting the tremendous expertise and resources of Memorial with the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Dr. Rob Greenwood**

*Executive Director, Office of Engagement  
and the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development*

# Shining a Light Down the Well



**Provincial regulations govern safety testing and monitoring for municipal water sources, but what about private wells in more remote communities?**

Such is the subject of a recent Harris Centre-RBC Water Research and Outreach Fund project by Dr. Atanu Sarkar, an assistant professor with Memorial's Division of Community Health and Humanities, Faculty of Medicine.

According to Dr. Sarkar, nearly a quarter of the population of the province relies on private wells, either dug or drilled, for drinking and household water. Unlike municipal systems, there is no provincial legislation regulating the monitoring of this untreated groundwater.

Dr. Sarkar's study, focusing on the west coast of the island portion of the province, helps to address both a lack of information about the levels of contaminants in groundwater sources, along with questions related to local people's

perceptions about water quality, safe monitoring and the health risks of untreated water.

"Limited services are available to assist homeowners with wells to monitor the quality of their tap water," explained Dr. Sarkar. "What's more, over the course of this study, we realized that many of the people drinking the water

**GOAL 1:  
STIMULATE MORE  
RESEARCH  
IN REGIONAL  
POLICY AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

aren't aware of the potential risks of untreated water supplies." The study area included seven communities on the west coast. Researchers collected and tested water samples for microbial and chemical parameters, and cross-referenced geological data of arsenic, fluoride and uranium belts in the area with well locations to identify wells that might be prone to contamination.

From a public health perspective, the study's results were significant. More than one fourth of drilled wells and around three quarters of dug wells were contaminated with total coliforms, bacteria that are used as indicators of microbial contaminants in drinking water. Although total coliform does not pose immediate health threats, its presence indicates potential pathways for serious contamination in the future depending on external factors such as flooding or leaky septic and fuel tanks. Some were also contaminated by fecal coliforms, which pose immediate and significant health risks to homeowners.

The presence of both total and fecal coliforms is not acceptable according to current provincial health authority guidelines. There were also a few wells that had elevated levels of arsenic and fluoride. If these figures are adjusted to reflect the population of the whole province, the number of people at risk would be significant.

As part of their project, Dr. Sarkar and his team, including co-investigators Dr. Mano Krishnapillai and Dr. James Valcour, also measured the perceptions and beliefs of the



Photo by Bojan Furst

**SINCE ITS INCEPTION,  
THE HARRIS CENTRE  
HAS BROUGHT IN  
\$2.94 IN OUTSIDE  
FUNDING FOR EVERY  
\$1 IN FUNDING  
RECEIVED FROM  
MEMORIAL.**



Photo by Bojan Furst

*The Harris Centre – RBC Water Research and Outreach Fund, supported by The RBC Blue Water Project, stimulates research into drinking water issues in Newfoundland and Labrador. Along with research money, the fund also includes a public outreach element, designed to translate academic results into community knowledge.*

people whose water was tested. While Dr. Sarkar doesn't believe that provision of a public water supply to these communities is an immediate, feasible option, he does believe that more regular testing and better public health knowledge related to untreated

drinking water is essential. As part of the study, his team contacted community members by phone to explain the results of the tests and offer suggestions on future monitoring.

"Many people in the test communities are not interested in chlorinated

water," Dr. Sarkar explained. "Before testing they told us that they didn't believe their water had negatively impacted their health, so the study was eye opening – many realized the importance of regular monitoring of water and proper maintenance of wells."

# 2

## GOAL 2: STIMULATE EDUCATION IN REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

**For Jamie Ward, part of the pleasure of his current project is making complex numbers clear.**

As a member of the team that developed the Regional Economic Capacity Index, affectionately known as RECI, he's spent the past several years working closely with a wide group of collaborators, including our community partner, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, to help make the often complex world of statistical comparison more accessible to regional

Jamie's involvement in the project began while he was still a master's student. After taking a course taught by RECI project lead, Dr. Alvin Simms, Jamie realized that the project was a natural fit for his interests in both economic geography and quantitative methods.

While technology, math and economic geography lie at the core of RECI's functionality, its development also included extensive collaboration outside the university. "It's always fun to get out from behind the computer, but for a pri-

both sides, with community users expanding their awareness of statistics, and Jamie developing an understanding and interest in regional development. According to Jamie, collaborating with his community partners took flexibility and a willingness to respond to constructive feedback: "Over time and through successive rounds of engagement, you learn and get better at it," he said.

For Jamie, one of the most rewarding elements of his work on RECI is its usefulness. "As a native of the province, I am grateful to have been involved in an exercise that addresses such a clear need in Newfoundland and Labrador," he said. "It's rewarding to know that people living in communities across the province can now gain a more thorough understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of their local economies, and are therefore better positioned to make more informed decisions."

Interested in trying RECI for yourself? Drop by RECI via the Harris Centre website at [www.mun.ca/harriscentre](http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre).

# Areas of study

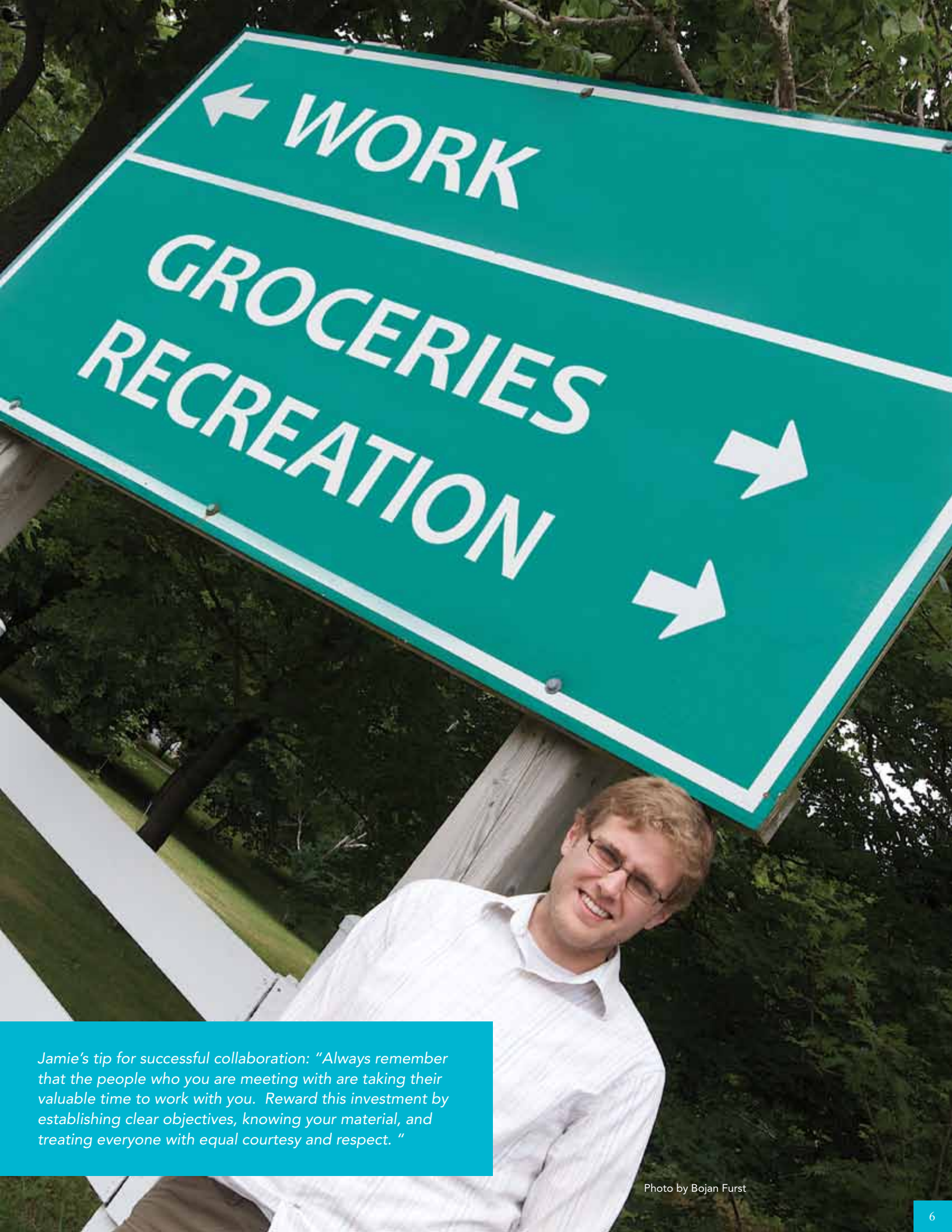
planners and developers, province-wide.

Simply put, RECI is a web-based tool that uses statistical data to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a community. It standardizes all data inputs so that socio-economic scores are expressed as percentages and are translated to textual information, allowing users to quickly assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of their community or region.

marily quantitative project like this one, the engagement process was essential for ensuring that meaning and usability didn't get lost in a haze of numbers," said Jamie. "The feedback gained from the public was essential for learning what works, what doesn't, and what needs to be explained a bit better," Jamie explained. "This was sometimes tricky, because we were creating products for an audience with a wide range of mathematical backgrounds." It's been a learning process on



**THE HARRIS CENTRE HAS OFFERED HANDS-ON REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO OVER 100 MEMORIAL STUDENTS SINCE 2005.**



*Jamie's tip for successful collaboration: "Always remember that the people who you are meeting with are taking their valuable time to work with you. Reward this investment by establishing clear objectives, knowing your material, and treating everyone with equal courtesy and respect."*

# The Lure of Labrador Power

In many ways, the Labrador Straits are in an enviable position.

The region is gearing up for the potential opportunities and impacts of the proposed Lower

Along with giving the proposed project a new sense of reality, the ongoing environmental assessment process has emphasized the need for people in the Labrador Straits region to be aware of the possible implications of the development.

From there, the Harris Centre contacted individuals at the university with experience in various aspects related to the assessment process.

Two professors came forward to help: Dr. Joe Wroblewski, with the Ocean Sciences Centre, and Dr. Tom Cooper, of the Faculty of Business Administration.

Since then, the two professors have both visited the region, helping the regional stakeholders unpack and assess the component studies and Environmental Impact Statement released by Nalcor. They attended meetings with local fishers, tourism operators and municipal leaders, to gather perspectives and help determine any possible gaps or flaws in the documents. After careful consideration, the region was able to respond with confidence, ensuring a regional voice in the ongoing discussion about the development.

According to Ms. Marshall, part of the success of the partnership between the region and Memorial

GOAL 3: GENERATE GREATER INTERACTION OF MEMORIAL STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF WITH STAKEHOLDER NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Photo L to R: Barb Marshall, Dr. Tom Cooper and Dr. Joe Wroblewski  
Photo by Bojan Furst

Churchill Project. The project proposes to transport electricity down through Labrador and across the Strait of Belle Isle to the island part of the province.

"We always knew in the back of our minds that this development could happen," said Barb Marshall, executive director of the Labrador Straits Development Corporation, "but, it has become much more real since the environmental assessments were registered."

"Not being experienced with the environmental assessment process, we started trying to think about how to get a better sense of what it all means," said Ms. Marshall. "We knew what our questions were, but we needed to get some answers."

After securing participant funding from the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency, the group looked to Memorial for help. They entered their research needs into Yaffle.ca, Memorial's online connecting tool, as an "opportunity".

was the spirit of partnership. "Both of the professors were very supportive and collaborative. They recognized we all have different knowledge to contribute, and that by working together, we were able to improve the quality of our response to the environmental assessment process," she said.

"The region could not have completed this work alone - we had local knowledge, and Joe and Tom supported us with their expertise and research skill," she said. "It's a good example of how academics and communities can work together."



**The proposed Muskrat Falls debate has proven one of the most divisive and hotly contested political issues in recent provincial memory.**

With so much public debate happening at Confederation Building, in the media and in kitchens and coffee shops all over Newfoundland and Labrador, the Harris Centre decided to provide a space for Memorial researchers to share their insight into the issue.

SOMETIMES A GOOD IDEA  
NEEDS A BIT OF SUPPORT TO  
GET OFF THE GROUND.



Dr. Stephen Bruneau  
Photo by John Duff



Dr. Wade Locke  
Photo by Bojan Furst

We organized two Memorial Presents public policy forums on the topic, one featuring Dr. Wade Locke, a professor in Memorial's Department of Economics, and the other featuring Dr. Stephen Bruneau, of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science.

The two sessions were the most highly attended in the history of Memorial Presents, with over 1,500 people attending, either in the room or online. The sessions also yielded lively debate on Twitter and in the provincial media.

Both sessions are available to view on the Harris Centre website at [www.mun.ca/harriscentre](http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre)

Muskrat Falls photo by John Munro  
[www.munrojohn.wordpress.com](http://www.munrojohn.wordpress.com)



# 4

## GOAL 4: ESTABLISH MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY AS A RECOGNIZED LEADER IN REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

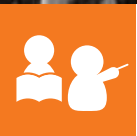


"I had a great tour and very interactive workshop in Port aux Basques. I learned a lot of things, especially the creativity of thinking in rural people. Now, I strongly believe that engineers must get out of their comfort zone." - Memorial Engineering Grad Student

Photo by Amy Tucker



Photo by Jody Locke



Mutual admiration was the name of the game between Holstein calves and Memorial students, faculty and staff this spring at New World Dairy Farm. The Memorial group toured regional attractions before heading to Port aux Basques for a Memorial Presents forum and Regional Workshop. Together, Memorial and community participants came up with over 30 projects for potential collaboration.



Paul Tilley, an instructor at CNA's Clarenville campus operates the camera while Beaton Windsor, of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), Clarenville, interviews recreational curling president, Pam Sullivan. After being inspired by a presentation on a Harris Centre research project, members of SIFE Clarenville undertook a multimedia project designed to help communicate winter activities in their region.



**OVER 1,250 MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATED IN THE HARRIS CENTRE'S PUBLIC POLICY EVENTS DURING 2012.**



Photo by Bojan Furst



Photo by Bojan Furst



Andrew Treusch, associate deputy minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, (and the Federal Deputy Minister University Champion for Memorial) and Robert Thompson, clerk of the Executive Council, discuss the changing role of the public servant at a Harris Centre Synergy Session. During 2011-2012, we presented 10 Synergy Sessions on topics ranging from sustainable planning to poverty reduction.



Looking for a sense of purpose in your life? Perhaps the British army is for you! Unfortunately, performer, Kevin Woolridge, didn't convince any new recruits at the North Atlantic Forum: culture, place and identity at the Heart of Regional Development, a conference organized by the Harris Centre, in Partnership with the North Atlantic Forum (NAF), the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF), and the Small Islands Cultural Research Initiative (SICRI). The event drew participants from around the province and around the world.

## GOAL 5: ESTABLISH HARRIS CENTRE OPERATIONS FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

This spring the Harris Centre hired professional evaluator, Bea Courtney (below), to measure how well we're currently meeting the goals and objectives of our five-year plan. Over the course of her work, Bea interviewed partners and collaborators from within Memorial, community organizations, private sector stakeholders, the media, government and representatives

organizations. The interviewees also identified the role of the Centre in fostering debate on policy issues, both at Memorial and in the province at large.

The participants also made some suggestions. For example, they said the Harris Centre should make an increased effort to emphasize interdisciplinary work through our applied research funds. It was also noted that many of the community organizations who partner and collaborate with the Harris Centre have limited capacity, both in terms of funding and people, so we need to continue to ensure that our interactions are both meaningful and relevant.

Speaking of relevance, another way that the Harris Centre is planning ahead is through the creation of a task force on possible funding models for independent public policy research. The task force was requested by the Harris Centre Advisory Board, in order to find a way to allow us to pursue topical programs and initiatives that fall outside the boundaries of our various funding arrangements. Along with investigating the ways that other public policy organizations deal with the issue

of funding, the task force, chaired by professional associate, David Vardy, has also examined the potential for the creation of an endowment fund.

Do you have suggestions or ideas that could help us meet our goals? We're always interested in feedback – after all, collaboration is at our core. Please share your thoughts by emailing [harriscentre@mun.ca](mailto:harriscentre@mun.ca).



Photo by Bojan Furst

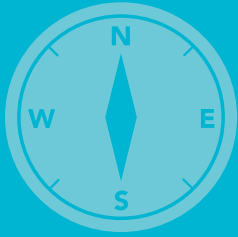
**With the Harris Centre approaching its ten-year anniversary (get ready to break out the party hats in 2014!), we're increasingly focused on laying a strong foundation for another successful decade.**

Along with establishing the five-year strategic plan (see facing page), we've also undertaken two special projects, both with the aim of establishing the Centre for continued success.

from other universities, to get a better sense of the impact of our work.

Bea also spoke with employees of the Centre, gathering insight on potential challenges and opportunities.

Much of the feedback was positive. For example, Bea found that all the interviewed groups understand the Centre's role as a broker between the resources and individuals at Memorial with communities and external



# THE HARRIS CENTRE 5 YEAR PLAN 2011/12 - 2015/16

## GOAL 1: RESEARCH

### STIMULATE MORE RESEARCH IN REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective 1.1 - Develop and maintain suite of applied research funding programs

Objective 1.2 - Establish population project applied research funding program

Objective 1.3 - Advance annual applied research funds and/or research projects, related to MUN Research Plan strategic themes

Objective 1.4 - Establish source of independent funding for proactive research and initiatives

Objective 1.5 - Establish research synthesis program to inform regional policy and development

## GOAL 2: EDUCATION

### STIMULATE EDUCATION IN REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Objective 2.1  
Advance regional policy and development in the curriculum of graduate and undergraduate programs

Objective 2.2  
Advance knowledge mobilization / community engagement in the curriculum of graduate and undergraduate programs

Objective 2.3  
Support the establishment of undergraduate and graduate degrees in regional policy and development

## GOAL 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### GENERATE GREATER INTERACTION OF MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY FACULTY, STUDENTS AND STAFF WITH STAKEHOLDER NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Objective 3.1- Organize regional workshops to communicate current activity and identify new opportunities and needs

Objective 3.2 - Organize knowledge exchange / transfer processes and sessions to allow sharing of expertise

Objective 3.3 - Broker new opportunities for collaboration

Objective 3.4 - Facilitate the establishment of Memorial and NL knowledge mobilization/community engagement networks

Objective 3.5 - Increase adoption of Yaffle in NL

Objective 3.6 - Expand Yaffle to more institutional partners in NL and beyond

Objective 3.7 - Facilitate MUN Research Plan "Community, Regional and Enterprise Development" and "Governance and Public Policy" themes external partner engagement

Objective 3.8 - Formalize collaboration with CNA

Objective 3.9 - Advance informed public policy debate and discussion through Galbraith Lectureship, Memorial Presents Public Policy Forums and Synergy Sessions

Objective 3.10 - Lead, partner or support conferences relating to regional policy and development, subject to strategic fit and availability of resources

## GOAL 4: CAPACITY

### ESTABLISH MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY AS A RECOGNIZED CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN REGIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective 4.1 - Support the establishment of research chairs relating to regional policy and development

Objective 4.2 - Facilitate MUN Research Plan "Community, Regional and Enterprise Development" and "Governance and Public Policy" themes within Memorial

Objective 4.3 - Support recognition of alternative forms of scholarship in university promotion and tenure processes

Objective 4.4 - Respond to requests to present and collaborate nationally and internationally, where benefits for NL mandate and mission are demonstrated, resources are provided and capacity allows

## GOAL 5: OPERATIONS

### ESTABLISH HARRIS CENTRE OPERATIONS FOR LONG- TERM SUCCESS

Objective 5.1 - Establish physical and technical infrastructure to meet needs

Objective 5.2 - Establish the Harris Centre as an exemplar of best practices in governance and operations

Objective 5.3 - Establish sustainable funding for public policy staffing and programming

Objective 5.4 - Develop mechanisms to engage associates, visiting fellows, retired faculty and other experts



Photo by Bojan Furst

The Harris Centre team - Back row: John Duff (Yaffle Projects Co-ordinator), Lisa Charlong (Yaffle Project Manager), Pat Rahal (Yaffle Support), Cindy Andrews (Administrative Staff Specialist), Megan Turner (Intermediate Secretary), Rebecca Cohoe (Communications Co-ordinator), Mike Clair (Associate Director, Public Policy). Front Row: Bojan Fürst (Manager, Knowledge Mobilization), Jennifer Adams-Warburton (Manager, Operations), Merv Andrews (Professional Associate), Rob Greenwood (Executive Director). Missing: Amy Tucker, (Knowledge Mobilization Co-ordinator), Karen Follett (Knowledge Mobilization Co-ordinator-on leave), David Vardy (Professional Associate), Amy Poole, (Intermediate Secretary- on leave)





The Harris Centre is named for the late Dr. Leslie Harris, scholar, leader and past-president of Memorial University. Known for his integrity, his independence, and his love of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dr. Harris is not just a namesake, but a model for our activities- we work every day to live up to his values of integrity and independence, while making a practical contribution to the needs of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Harris Centre truly believes in Memorial's responsibility to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. Led by our chair, Sheila Downer (above), our advisory board is made up of leaders from all across the province and Canada, including industry partners, governments, non-profit organizations and educational institutions. The group meets twice yearly to advise the Harris Centre on a range of issues, including strategic themes, opportunities, regional policy and development capacity-building and funding.

For a full listing of the members of the Harris Centre Advisory Board, please visit our website at [www.mun.ca/harriscentre](http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre).



## THE HARRIS CENTRE

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