



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

INNOVATIVE TEACHING
Take advantage of new
teaching tools and
technologies used by
U of T colleagues
— pages 8-9

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the Bulletin

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CALL FOR PARTICIPATION NOMINATE A FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR

There is a nomination
deadline of May 15 for
the Sara Kirke Award
for Women Entre-
preneurs, presented
annually to a woman in
the physical sciences or
engineering who has
demonstrated consistent
innovation and
leadership skills,
resulting in the creation
and international
acceptance of significant
world-class products
and/or services. For
more information, visit
http://link.library.utoronto.ca/rir/program_details.cfm?ID=1666

WWW.NEWS.UTORONTO.CA/
BULLETIN

Work Can Be Educational and Fun



JAMIE BRAND

Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day April 24 was a hit with youngsters. It featured tours to departments such as chemistry (shown above) where the youthful visitors enjoyed some dramatic demonstrations.

Bernstein wins 2008 Gairdner Award

BY CATHERINE NGAI

Professor Alan Bernstein of the Faculty of Medicine has a list of accomplishments that many would only dream of — he is a renowned mentor, international scientific leader and inaugural president of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research — and now, he has been named as this year's recipient of the Gairdner Wightman Prize, one of the prestigious Gairdner International Awards.

The awards were established by the Gairdner Foundation in 1959 to recognize individuals who work in or

have made contributions to the field of medical science and research. Founded by Canadian philanthropist James Arthur Gairdner, the awards are held at the U of T every year. They are often viewed as a precursor to more international recognition since 70 of the 288 Gairdner winners have gone on to win Nobel Prizes.

"The 2008 awards honour outstanding achievements in some of the most promising areas of medical discovery," said Dr. John Dirks, president of the Gairdner Foundation.

The Gairdner Wightman Prize recognizes a Canadian who has

demonstrated outstanding leadership in medicine and medical science. Bernstein was awarded the prize because of his "outstanding contribution to Canadian health research as a scientist, research institute director and as the inaugural president of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research."

Bernstein specializes in the field of cancer, hematopoiesis and genomics and has been a professor at the University of Toronto since 1984. He has also served as head of molecular

• • • BERNSTEIN ON PAGE 4

Building athletic excellence at the University of Toronto

BY ANJUM NAYYAR

Ontario's high-performance athletes will get the opportunity to train at the University of Toronto's world-class facilities, thanks to a \$2-million investment provided through the Ministry of Health Promotions Quest for Gold program. U of T is set to open its doors to top athletes in Ontario, offering access to facilities and

services that will give them enhanced training and development. This funding comes from the \$10-million Quest for Gold program that helps provide direct financial assistance to Ontario athletes.

"The University of Toronto has made world renowned strides in high performance sport," said Margaret Best, Ontario minister of health promotion, in announcing the funding April 17 at

the Athletic Centre. "This commitment has led to improving current facilities and to building new ones. This funding will provide Ontario's athletes with opportunities to train in one of the best facilities in the province, so that they can compete on the world stage."

Part of the University of Toronto's renewed commitment to high

• • • BUILDING ON PAGE 4

Collaborative
technology
provides new
options for
students and
teachers



JAMIE BRAND

Professor Shafique Virani of historical studies at UTM is working with two St. George campus colleagues on a wiki with new options for virtual collaboration.

BY JENNY LASS

A **virtual education** project called UTORWiki is aiming to improve teaching and learning at the University of Toronto by providing new options for electronic collaboration.

UTORWiki, which received a grant from the Instructional Technology Courseware Development Fund in 2007, was presented at the Office of Teaching Advancement's sixth Innovative Teaching and Technology conference by three of the project's core members: **Professor Shafique Virani** of historical studies and religion at U of T Mississauga, **Professor Hugh Gunz** of the Rotman School of Management and **Brian Whalley** of computing services.

The wiki consists of three virtual tools that address the needs of teachers and students. The first is collaborative annotation, a technology that allows many students to electronically comment on a single virtual document, such as a play or book chapter. The advantage of this type of group work is that students from various academic backgrounds can provide different perspectives and learn from one another.

SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF ONLINE GRADING ARE THAT IT SAVES PAPER, LETS INSTRUCTORS SCREEN FEEDBACK PROVIDED BY TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND MAKES RETURNING ASSIGNMENTS TO STUDENTS EASIER, FASTER AND MORE SECURE

The wiki's second component is document co-construction, which lets students work together in a virtual setting to create text, such as a Wikipedia-style article. Virani explained that this tool facilitates not only collaborative learning, which has been shown to be "more successful than individual learning," but also service-learning, a teaching strategy that encourages the sharing of skills and knowledge among peers and outside the classroom.

The final tool that UTORWiki offers is a digital grading system that allows instructors to use a mouse "as a red pen," Whalley said. Students submit assignments electronically and special technology allows instructors and teaching assistants to grade and return them without ever producing a hard copy. Some of the benefits of online grading are that it saves paper, lets instructors screen feedback provided by teaching assistants and makes returning assignments to students easier, faster and more secure, especially if an instructor's time is divided between more than one U of T campus.

The idea for UTORWiki was spawned two years ago when, Virani said, he and a handful of other instructors who were independently developing new collaborative learning methods "found out we were working on similar things and we started to collaborate." He said that their biggest challenge has been "making imagination work in concrete terms" but that "the potential impact [of these technologies] is tremendous." The next step for this project will most likely involve field testing it with students.