Dean Smith Presents
The “Chartreuse Paper”
— the First Step Towards a New Vision for FIS

In early 2003 the provost delivered “The Green Papers” – a preliminary set of documents outlining the University’s academic plan. This was followed, after considerable consultation with faculty, students and staff, with a second major draft, known as the “White Paper,” entitled “Stepping up: 2004 – 2010.” In this document Provost Neuman addressed the various issues and goals of the university to ensure it will be among the leading public teaching and research universities worldwide. Again modified by community-wide feedback, criticism, and commentary, a final version of the Academic Plan was passed by the U of T Academic Board on January 15, 2004, from where it was put forward to the Governing Council for final approval.

As part of this planning process, all university divisions were requested to prepare individual plans for their own units. In a show of decisive uniqueness and collaborative appeal, Dean Smith composed and distributed the “Chartreuse Paper” – the Faculty’s first step in its own Academic Planning Process. A number of Working Groups were created, focusing on a number of issues of relevance to the faculty: education, research, space, infrastructure, etc. Each group reviewed the Chartreuse Paper and provided detailed suggestions, which will be integrated by the Dean and faculty during the spring, and presented to the Provost by the end of June. The full chartreuse paper is available at http://www.fis.utoronto.ca/activities/planning/chartreuse.pdf; what follows is a brief synopsis.

An Interview with Dean Brian Cantwell Smith

By Sara Figueiredo

It is the first Monday after the winter holidays and I manage to get an appointment with FIS’ new dean, Professor Brian Cantwell Smith. The past six months have been incredibly busy for Brian – he had barely 4 months to absorb the culture of the Faculty and the University before having to turn around and create the Faculty’s next 6-year academic plan. Due to the rapidly changing face of information studies as a discipline, this calls for a complete re-evaluation of the Faculty’s vision – no easy task.

Brian was born and raised in Montreal, but spent most of his life in the United States. Why has he decided to come back to Canada now? He is very enthusiastic about the country’s potential: “If Canada is going to take an uncompromising leadership role in research, this is the time to do it. With the Canada Research Chairs, with the new leadership in the university, with the progressive spirit in the country, I think the time is right to enhance the research direction and calibre of the country. This is our time to strike out, to no longer take second place to anyone.” Brian adds that being part of a country like Canada, “allows someone to maintain a connection with the intellectual life in the university, but also to participate in the public debate, to help forge a national agenda, to steward public conversation.” Brian is very excited by this opportunity to contribute to the national dialogue. His family is really enjoying Toronto too: his 14-year-old son is enjoying school and starting to explore the city, while his partner, Jill, is excited about her own new position at the University of Toronto, as Associate Director of the Centre for Research in Women’s Health. All of them are pleased to be living in a city where one can participate in such a deep multicultural experience. Jill finds, and Brian agrees, that Toronto reflects a real “sense of social justice and the public good.”
The National Librarian of Canada Speaks at FIS

On the cool autumn evening of November 7th, 2003, an energetic crowd gathered at the Faculty for the 75th Anniversary Bertha Bassam Lecture, featuring guest speaker Roch Carrier. Holding the title of National Librarian of Canada, Mr. Carrier has played an enduring role in the country’s history, being most well-known for his children’s tale, The Hockey Sweater, which you can see quoted on the new Canadian five-dollar bill. His speech, titled “Information is About Changing Life,” was very well received by all in attendance – an impressive feat, considering that the audience came from a variety of backgrounds. One attendee remarked, “I was worried the speech would be too technical, but [Roch Carrier] spoke in a really accessible manner.” Mr. Carrier talked about his history and experiences in becoming the National Librarian, and the joining of the National Library and National Archives. He was an engaging speaker, and took time at the reception, following the lecture, to speak personally to anyone who wished to say hello. Coupled with the success of FISAA’s balloon launch fundraiser, the evening was a real hit, and the FIS community is looking forward to the next opportunity to open its doors and celebrate!

An Interview with Dean Brian Cantwell Smith

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Brian is in a unique position at the University, as he is cross-appointed among three disciplines: Information Studies, Computer Science, and Philosophy. When asked how he feels about this experience, he asserts that, “the most interesting, cutting-edge things that are happening intellectually… don’t fit neatly into any traditional department. Being able to participate at FIS, in Philosophy, in Computer Science, and elsewhere at the university, is something that I have tremendously looked forward to, and am enjoying immensely. FIS is in an extraordinary position as a site of multidisciplinary study. Also, through being Dean, I have been lucky in getting to know the deans and principals of the other U of T divisions. Overall, it is a wonderful community of tremendously interesting people; being able to join it has been an enormous amount of fun.” Brian’s wide-ranging intellectual interests have been recognized in his being awarded a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair, which has just started up, as of January 1, 2004.

With his primary focus on the academic plan, Brian is not currently teaching. He is very enthusiastic about rethinking “the Faculty from the ground up, in a way that preserves what is best about its tradition and its history and the depth of its expertise, but at the same time forges a powerful sense of direction that take account of the profound changes to the wider intellectual environment; they know a lot about the specific content and matter expertise… such thinking can ultimately have a tremendous impact, but not in a way that immediately leads to a product or a sale. As such, it is much harder to support within a corporate environment.”

Despite the challenges involved in obtaining corporate support, Brian believes that FIS can be developed into an ideal environment for long-range thinking – that is, a place with enormous potential, that is growing and changing. At the same time, the atmosphere is conducive to his interests. “One of the ultimate goals of my own research is to attempt to heal the 300-year gap between ‘matter’ and ‘mattering’ — a gap that has been split apart basically since the beginning of the Scientific Revolution.”

In his final comments Brian notes, “another question you might ask [me] is how anybody who doesn’t have any training in librarianship can responsibly take up this position. I think the answer is that it genuinely wouldn’t be right, if I was to shoulder this responsibility alone. What I want to do instead is to work with the faculty here, that have all that requisite depth of subject matter expertise… I know a lot about the changing material conditions and wider intellectual environment; they know a lot about the specific content and history of this field. By bringing those two ingredients together — my sense of the shifts and the underlying conditions and what’s happening overall, together with the specific and targeted expertise of the rest of the Faculty — by integrating these things we can forge a wonderful future together.”

With these concerns for a new Faculty vision, philosophy and research, I asked Brian what he does in his leisure time. It would seem that you could not get much further away from the issues of information studies in the 21st Century. Yet Brian has a twinkle in his eye; you can see that from his perspective, it all fits together somehow …
FOCUS ON A STUDENT – PAULA CLARK

Why FIS? I was looking for a new field of study where I could apply my background knowledge in a new way. My first taste of FIS was through a PLC web course. As my first introduction to the field, I found it so practical and useful that it led me to look into the MISt program. FIS appealed to me because it sought to address both the theoretical and the applied aspects of information studies – a field that affects all veins and aspects of life.

What was your undergraduate degree in? My undergraduate degrees are in Sociology and Social Work, from McMaster University.

What program are you studying at FIS? I’m studying within the MISt program - Library and Information Science stream. As well, I’m taking advantage of the range of electives and programs to which we have access as Master’s students at U of T.

What do you think of the changes in the field of librarianship/information management in the last few years? Where do you see this field going? As I am much closer to the beginning of this degree than the end, I am clearly still a novice, so my observations are mostly a product of my background in examining social issues.

Regarding Information Studies at the moment, what stands out most immediately are budget cuts, corporate influence within culture and institutions, and the demands that these realities make on individuals and organizations in the field. At the FISSC Career Day, I heard information professionals repeat the need for us to develop skills relevant to the changing climate that requires us to inform others about the value of our services. This calls upon us to stretch our minds to cope within new and at times uncomfortable contexts – a big task in the face of maintaining our current work while defining and remaining true to professional values. As information issues continue to grow exponentially, managing this growth will require us to develop not just knowledge, but imagination. To steal one of Einstein’s better-known quotes, “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” However the process is also one of expanding at a rate that honours our limitations.

As a student, how have you stayed involved at the faculty? As a part-time student at FIS, it is easy to feel out of the loop. Last year I ran a fundraiser for people who are homeless with some fellow students, and this year I’m Social Chair on the FIS Student Council.

Is this your first time on a student council? If no, what types of things have you done before? I participated with the Social Work Student’s Association at McMaster University – a very different experience as it was structured as a collective rather than a hierarchy.

I saw the Social Chair position on FISSC as a way to participate in creating a richer community life at FIS. It is an ongoing challenge due to the constraints on student’s time and energy, and as was discussed at the latest Dean’s tea the building configuration doesn’t lend itself well to communing. We’ve held a number of events, both singular and ongoing at which there have been good times and good discussion about the field. The areas we continue to work on are connecting with the part-timers, and finding ways to explore and share our diverse backgrounds and interests in a richer way.

Is there any particular event at FIS that you are looking forward to in the next year? I’m greatly interested in participating in the evolution at FIS that is being guided by the ‘Chartreuse Paper.’ I’m also excited about our planned Coffee House for February to showcase FIS talent.

What are you hoping to pursue when you graduate? My plans post-graduation have yet to be fully formed – I have many ideas but much to learn before deciding. Right now I’m taking advantage of all that FIS and U of T have to offer. What I know is that I love to be involved in projects that plan and envision better places and programs that serve those who lack social capital and power. Where and how that will play out remains to be seen.

As this is a newsletter that goes out to FIS alumni, is there anything you’d like to say to them? Join us for Pub Night!! We’d love to see you and learn more about what’s going on in the field. (Every Thursday evening at the Ferret and Firkin on Spadina, just south of Bloor.)

NAME: Paula Clark
HOMETOWN: Simcoe, ON
Dean Smith Presents The “Chartreuse Paper” – the First Step Towards a New Vision for FIS

Key to the Dean’s vision of the future Faculty is a shift to a “radically interdisciplinary” issue-oriented unit that fosters “excellence, relationality and a diachronic sense of change.” “FIS’ mission is, and should be understood to be, investigating documentary and information practices … as they are being reconfigured by momentous changes in underlying technology …” Dean Smith would like to see FIS as a highly visible and energetic laboratory focusing on the dynamics of information use and exchange.

To establish this goal, the Dean has suggested allying the Faculty with a to-be-created Centre for Information, Media, and Documentary Practice. This dialectical combination will allow for strong interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration with other, diverse communities at the University and across the international research world. By embedding the “curriculum in a pedagogical model of issue-oriented learning,” he writes, “we will be able to focus our resources and strengths to increase the quality, though not size, of our graduating masters’ classes.” We shall take the lead in developing the best practices for the “design, exploration, exhibition, prototyping, and assessment of collaborative work environments in which documents of all types (paper, electronic, images, etc.) are made available.”

Some of the more radical and innovative ideas presented in the Paper deal with Faculty recruitment. One suggestion Dean Smith makes is to establish a “Junior Fellowship” program, in which FIS would hire recently completed PhDs, in various fields, for a 2-year term, after which they would go on to further appointments elsewhere in the University. During their tenure at FIS, they would “spend … two years exploring how the informational and documentary practices relevant to their own field of study are being reconfigured …”

There is also considerable discussion of FIS as a physical place; Smith embraces a goal of refashioning “the space to nourish and encourage the kind of high-spirited, intense collaborative work we imagine.” Key to this would be a reorganization of offices, study and research space by project or subject matter. A mingling of faculty, staff and students from FIS and other disciplines would facilitate the innovative, “cross-fertilization” of ideas while creating an energy and excitement about an issue or project. There is also a need to soften the “brutalist architecture” of the building, while updating and increasing its technological capacity.

Overall, there is widespread agreement across the entire FIS community that FIS needs to increase its strength, energy, and presence – not only within the University community, but across the full spectrum of business, academic and research information practices. People need to know where we are, what we are doing, and that we need to work together to forge a vital and sustaining “shared intellectual agenda.” So, please join us both in promoting, and in rethinking, the graduate research and capabilities of our Faculty.

If you would like to submit comments to the Chartreuse Paper, please address them to plan@fis.utoronto.ca.

* All quotes are from the Chartreuse Paper

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Alumni Notes

This past fall, IRENE (BENNELL) MARTIN (BLS, ’70), a fisher, award-winning author, former librarian and an Episcopal priest released her new book, Sea Fire: Tales of Jesus and Fishing. Described as “part detective story, part history, part Biblical study,” Sea Fire reveals the author’s observations of the fishing occupation and her insight into life in New Testament times. Irene Martin and her husband, Kent, have fished for salmon in the Pacific Northwest for more than two decades. For her work in preserving local and regional history, she was awarded the Washington Governor’s Heritage Award in 2000. To order the book, please call 1-800-707-0670 or visit the publisher online at www.crossroadpublishing.com.

LAURA SOTO-BARRA (MLS, ’91) works at The Post-Standard, a Newhouse/Advance newspaper in Middleton, Wisconsin. She has had the position of Assistant Managing Editor/Library for 4 years, and is very proud of her title, which in newsroom jargon is very prestigious. She misses her FLIS days but keeps in touch with friends, and several colleagues have come to visit. The library is always open to anyone who wants to know how a newspaper is made or see what is done in a news library. In 2004, Ms. Soto-Barra is one of the instructors of a seminar at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies for news librarians, called “Mission Critical: Reshaping News Librarianship for the 21st Century.” She’ll be helping out with the management and leadership sessions.

VICKI WHITMELL (MLS, ’84) was recently appointed Executive Director of the Ontario Legislative Library at Queen’s Park. Her previous positions include Executive Director of the Canadian Library Association, Principal of Whitmell & Associates, and Chief Librarian at the University of Toronto Business Information Centre. Miss Whitmell also teaches the Special Libraries course at FIS.

During the Joint Canadian Library Association/American Library Association conference in Toronto, the Online Audiovisual Cataloguers, a U. S. organization of Internet and audiovisual cataloguers, presented JEAN WEIHS (BLS, ’53) with the Nancy B. Olson Award. The following is an excerpt from the award presentation: “For being one of the first librarians to recognize the relevance of media collections... and understanding the value of providing bibliographic access to those collections; for her pioneering work to help create [international] cataloguing standards as chair of the Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of the Anglo-American Cataloging Code; for always being motivated; [for mentoring students and colleagues...] we award to Jean Riddle Weihis this day, Saturday June 21, 2003, the Nancy B. Olson Award in recognition of her tremendous gifts to the media cataloguing community worldwide.”

Staff Update

This fall, Alfredo R. Gonzalez made his comeback to FIS, where he worked before as a “temp”. He is currently the Registration Clerk for the Professional Learning Centre, and is really enjoying the working environment at FIS. Alfredo has a B.A. in Journalism from the University of Havana, Cuba, and one of his favourite hobbies is learning foreign languages. Welcome back, Alfredo!

keep in touch

The best part of a school newsletter is keeping up with news from old classmates. If you’ve got a new job, retired from the one old, written a book, won an award or done any number of other interesting things, we’d love to hear from you. Please be sure to include the following information when you contact us: name, graduation year, address, and, of course, your great news.

Your update can be mailed to: Editor – INFORMED, The Faculty of Information Studies, 140 St. George Street, Toronto, ON, M5S 3G6. Or by email to: s.figueiredo@utoronto.ca.
Thank You to Our Donors

The students, faculty and staff of the FIS community extend a very appreciative “thank you” to all of the generous alumni, friends, and corporate contributors who have supported the Faculty’s programmes, initiatives and awards. This list reflects pledges made to FIS from January 1st, 2003 to December 31st, 2003.

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In Memory

It is with fond memory that we recall those graduates of the FIS community who have recently passed away and have contributed to the wealth of learning and experiences that we have all enjoyed.

Ms. Christine Baird (BLS ’61) - 2003
Mrs. Marion Baker (BLS ’69) - April 18th, 2001
Mr. William Bilsland (BLS ’53) - March 22nd, 2002
Mrs. Helma Bonfield (BA ’65, BLS ’66, MLS ’71) - September 22nd, 2002
Miss Edith Clare (BLS ’37)
Miss Marian Cooke (BLS ’41) - November 9th, 2003
Miss Eleanore Donnelly (BLS ’41)
Mrs. Thelma Dowding (BLS ’43) - September 20th, 2003
Mrs. Cora Falkenberg (BLS ’66)
Mrs. Gertrude E. Hammill (BLS ’60) - September 17th, 2003
Mr. Henry Hsing (BLS ’61, MLS’66) - June 5th, 2003
Mr. Robert M. Jamieson (BLS ’49) - May 25th, 2003
Mrs. Joan Johnston (BLS ’62, MLS ’71) - December 11th, 2003
Mr. David Kincaid (BLS ’70) - August 1st, 2003
Mrs. A. Elizabeth Lemelin (BLS ’68)
Mrs. Constance McDaniel (BLS ’69)
Mrs. Phyllis Louise (Foreman) Moorhouse (BLS ’40) - December 12th, 2003
Mrs. Marketa Newman (BLS ’64) - November 6th, 2000
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Mr. M. Lewis Scheffel (BLS ’63) - May 1st, 2003
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Mrs. Monica Spencer (BLS ’49) - April, 2003
Miss M. P. Tomey (MLS ’74) - November 4th, 2003

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In Memory

November 20th Attendees (L to R): Joyce Sowby ’51 ’72, John Wilkinson ’50 ’54, Clara Miller ’33 ’71, Nancy Williamson ’50 ’64, Isobel Wilkinson [November 12th Attendees not pictured: Margaret Cockshutt ’49, ’64, Al Bowron ’49]

FALL ALUMNI TEAS

This past November, graduates of the Faculty were invited to come back and visit. Several familiar faces returned for a lovely afternoon of sharing memories and being introduced to the new Dean, Brian Cantwell Smith.

FACULTY OF INFORMATION STUDIES UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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EDITOR’S NOTE: It was brought to our attention that several newsletters, packaged with the University of Toronto Magazine, were delivered later than we anticipated. Due to the later delivery, some people received the invitation to the Bertha Bassam Lecture after the event had already taken place. We sincerely apologize for this, and have taken steps to ensure that this will not happen again.
Faculty of Information Studies Alumni Association (FISAA): President’s Message

The past six months have truly flown by for us at the Alumni Association and it is hard to believe that summer is just around the corner. The Fall was a very exciting time for us as we held the 12th lecture of the Bertha Bassam series since its inception in 1965. We were very honoured to have as our guest speaker Roch Carrier, National Librarian, who truly delighted the audience with his wit and insights.

In early January, we once again launched the annual Job Shadowing program for current students and — though this initiative is still going on — I would like to take a moment to thank all participants for sharing your time and expertise with our students. It is truly appreciated!

One of our goals this year was to improve communications with alumni. As part of this initiative, we have begun sending a monthly e-mail notice publicizing various announcements and events that we are planning. In the future we are hoping to broaden this method of correspondence with alumni and would also like to distribute our bi-annual newsletter via e-mail. If you would like to receive announcements, notices and other FISAA Communication via e-mail, please send a note to: alumni@fis.utoronto.ca so that we can add you to our growing e-mail distribution list.

We are currently soliciting nominations for various positions on next year’s Executive. If you are interested in joining the Executive or volunteering your time in some other capacity, please contact Nancy Birch (nbirch@sickkids.ca) and provide her with a brief narrative on yourself and the role you would like to play.

Finally, as another year is quickly coming to a close at FIS, we are busy planning our final event of the season, Spring Reunion. Tentatively mark your calendar for our biggest event of the year being planned for the first week of June.

— Roula Panopoulos (MIS ’99)