



Brock University

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## Responding to the needs of research faculty

In the summer of 2005, the Office of Research Services conducted a survey of faculty members on the key services and resources that ORS provides to them. ORS staff is currently analyzing the outcomes from the 100 respondents. We are very much satisfied with the positive response from faculty members regarding the services that our research grant facilitators and financial officers provide. We do recognize that there are many areas in which we need to increase services to faculty members and to improve the level of service and information. Shortly after the NSERC and SSHRC research grant deadlines, ORS will make the results available to the University community along with the ways in which ORS will respond to these recommendations arising from the survey.

Linked to our transition to a more research intensive and comprehensive university is the need to understand the place of internationalization – what does *internationalization* mean for Brock faculty members and students? How do we encourage and support proposal development and management of international research and development projects? Brock International will be conducting an on-line survey of faculty and staff to seek your advice on our internationalization priorities.

Combined, the two surveys will provide useful information as we move toward a broader consultation on a Strategic Research Plan that will help set the direction for the development of Brock's scholarly and research initiatives over the next decade. The Plan will identify priorities for submissions to the Canada Foundation for Innovation and Ontario infrastructure and research programs, and other programs that require the University to have identified research priorities.

I look forward to your advice and support.



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## “Let the games begin”

To say that hosting the Canada Games is a daunting task would be an understatement. Since 1967, the Canada Games Council (CGC) has staged a total of 15 Summer and Winter Games involving some 45,000 athletes and 67,000 volunteers who execute a multitude of tasks during the national, multi-sport competition for Canadian youth.

Because the sport sector relies heavily on volunteer human resources, studying organizational capacity within not-for-profit, volunteer-driven sport organizations is critical given the dynamic context of the Canadian amateur sport sector. It is not surprising that Dr. Julie Stevens, Associate Professor in the Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences chose the 2005 Canada Summer Games (CSG) Host Society in Regina as the focus of her research program.

While at the University of Alberta, Stevens wrote her PhD dissertation on *The Canadian Hockey Association merger: an analysis of institutional change* – a case study on the 1994 merger between the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association and Hockey Canada. It focused on organizational change from an organizational theory perspective, combining management studies with sport studies. Stevens says, “One valuable issue that came out of my dissertation research was the importance of organizational capacity in ensuring that there was

successful management of radical organizational transformation.”

Stevens is passionate about hockey. She has played and coached women's hockey for over 25 years, and was an assistant coach for Team Alberta, bronze medallists in the 1999 Canada Winter



Dr. Julie Stevens

Games. She co-authored *Too Many Men on the Ice; Women's Hockey in North America* (Dec. 1997), and continues to write and critique socio-historical issues around hockey. Her reviews of the Canadian hockey industry include commentary and reflections on types of changes that have happened to the game.

Since her arrival at Brock in 1999, Stevens' research program on organizational change has expanded to include the area of capacity. She is developing methodologies and tools to assess organizational capacity and change within the Canada Games in an effort to create effective organizational strategies for the transfer of knowledge from one Canada Games to the next. “Producing a study while volunteers are involved in the Games is very important,” says Stevens. “The participants' perceptions and knowledge about organizational capacity will be captured when they are most closely involved with the event.”

The CGC Board of Directors has been very supportive of Stevens' work and formally endorsed a research partnership with her. She has

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worked with the CGC during the past five years on a project to assess technical capabilities of Canada Games volunteers which totals 5000-6000 people for each event. In an effort to expand this project, Stevens successfully obtained funding through an independent three-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant last March.

According to Stevens, capacity in management literature has only been examined in the context of commercial corporations and businesses. She says, "Past research focuses on organizations that are continuing entities with employees. This is very different from the CGC who utilizes volunteers and staff teams, works with many Host Societies, and stages major Games that begin and end within a given time frame. It is the defined life cycle across many Games and Host Societies that presents capacity challenges – specifically the transfer of knowledge or learned wisdom from one host to the next."

In the last 40-50 years, a lot of work has been done in the amateur sport sector on change, but little has been done on capacity. People have looked at leadership, decision-making and characteristics of volunteers both in sport and recreation, motivation and satisfaction of volunteers.

"Much of those works speak little about the details of capacity. For example, recent government initiatives in the voluntary sector and within the Canadian amateur sport sector use this term in the objectives and goals of public policy documents, but the processes needed to achieve capacity are not addressed," says Stevens.

Responding to this problem, Stevens' study involves mixed methodology incorporating quantitative analysis of volunteer technical capabilities and qualitative analysis of the characteristics of organizational capacity needs. She is exploring volunteer and staff perceptions of organizational capacity, determining the capacity characteristics of volunteers and comparing them to the capacity needs of the organization. Analyzing the relationship between organizational capacity and Games operations will help to identify surpluses and deficits within venue and non-venue Games units.

In July 2005, Stevens conducted "Pre-Games" interviews with 42 planning volunteers and staff members, some of who kept verbal journals to address challenges found in preparation for the Games. During the Games, she collected data from interviews, observations, document retrieval and focus groups. "I examined every aspect of the Games from Chefs de Mission meetings, where I learned what areas have issues, to Athletes Village operations and transportation," says Stevens. She will also conduct "Post-Games" follow-up interviews with the same 42 planning volunteers and staff to gain insight on their perceptions of what the long-term impact of capacity from the Games will be.

During a year-long sabbatical, Stevens will interpret her data and publish journal articles based on themes that emerge from organizational capacity, such as project management. The results of her study have important implications for not-for-profit and private sector sport organizations involved in staging major sport events or Games.

~ Lynne German

## Office of Research Services Faculty Workshops 2005-2006

### **The Art of Grant Writing**

*"Tips for writing a winning grant proposal"*

September 21, 2005  
Pond Inlet  
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### **NSERC Site Visit**

*"A general information session hosted by NSERC program officers and grant selection committee members"*

September 26, 2005  
Pond Inlet  
9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

### **Human Ethics**

*"Completing the ethics application form: Getting it right the first time"*

October 12, 2005  
Senate Chambers  
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### **Finding Funding**

*"Finding funding, using databases, and more"*

October 25, 2005  
Senate Chambers  
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### **Project Management**

*"Research project and account management"*

November 9, 2005  
Senate Chambers  
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### **CIHR General Information Session**

*"How to prepare a winning CIHR Grant"*

January 18, 2006  
Senate Chambers  
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### **IP/Technology Transfer/ Commercialization**

*"Demystifying technology transfer and growing your research into your business"*

January 31, 2006  
Alumni Lounge  
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### **Human Ethics**

*"Informed consent: Not just a piece of paper"*

March 8, 2006  
Alumni Lounge  
10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

### **NSERC Financial Workshop**

*"How to manage your NSERC account"*

April 27, 2006  
Senate Chambers  
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

### **SSHRC Financial Workshop**

*"How to manage your SSHRC account"*

April 28, 2006  
Senate Chambers  
10 a.m. to 11 a.m.

To register for any of these workshops, please contact  
Sheila Romanyk in the Office of Research Services at  
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