

## Exploring the third dimension

**York University's new 3-D FLIC research program aims to create a new vision for Toronto — and bring a whole lot of Hollywood money to town**

A number of 3-D motion pictures have come and gone over the years (remember *Jaws 3-D*?), but something about the more than \$1.8 billion *Avatar* grossed worldwide has those in the industry thinking that this time, the glasses are on for good.

However, with stereoscopic film technology — the new wave of 3-D — being so new, its possibilities are largely untapped, as filmmakers are pretty much making up processes and techniques as they go. That's a situation a group over at York University are hoping to capitalize on, with their two-year academic-industry partnership program, the 3-D Film Innovation Consortium (3D FLIC).

"Every (3-D) production right now is a prototype, with filmmakers learning as they go," says Nell Tenhaaf, associate dean of York's Faculty of Fine Arts and the 3D FLIC project lead. "We want to try and set up ways of testing and learning things, so that we can learn how to do it better the next time around, and then get that information out to production companies," she says.

With the help of \$1.4 million in funding from the Ontario Media Development Corporation's Creative Cluster Partnerships Fund, York is bringing filmmakers, vision scientists and psychologists together to explore just how immersive the 3-D movie experience can be.

Working on actual productions at Cinespace Studios, they'll be looking at ways to better adapt the technology to current filmmaking techniques, as



well as how humans react to stereoscopic film, both physically and mentally.

Vision scientists will be bringing their expertise to bear on how to create a better illusion of depth, as well as how to limit the number of people who experience unpleasant side effects such as headaches. Psychologists will bring their research on human behaviour and the mind to the set, looking at ways we perceive stereoscopic films and how to better hold our attention.

Filmmakers, of course, will be providing their expertise, as well as providing real-time problems and obstacles in actual productions, and the project will draw upon computer science and gaming experts as well.

The goal, using the "if we learn it, they will come" idea, is to make Toronto a leader in 3-D film innovation and expertise, which in turn should bring more productions (and money and jobs) into the GTA.

"If you can demonstrate you've developed expertise in a certain area, you'll draw productions," Tenhaaf says. "3D FLIC envisions the GTA as a hub for the best quality and most original stereoscopic film production," she says.

## EDUCATION IN THE REAL WORLD

Increasingly, universities and colleges are making their programs more relevant by including real-world projects in their programs of study.

### Tourism fun and games

Fanshawe College students are teaming up with TecVana Inc. to create a new way of promoting tourism in Ontario — through digital gaming. With a focus on social media, teams of students in the Multimedia Design and Production program worked to develop real-life interactive fishing game programs featuring Bob Izumi to be used as part of a Tourism Ontario promotion to enhance the profile of some of the province's smaller towns and cities. Modelled

on the actual city of Dryden, the games showcase some of the area's tourism possibilities, as well as local angling opportunities.

### Have tuition, will travel

With its on-campus, student-run fashion boutique and aesthetics spa, Seneca College has long employed the hands-on approach to learning. This year, they're really moving forward with the concept, partnering with Merit Travel Group to have a full-service travel agency on the grounds to give tourism and travel students some real-world learning and mentoring experience.

### Ad hoc studies:

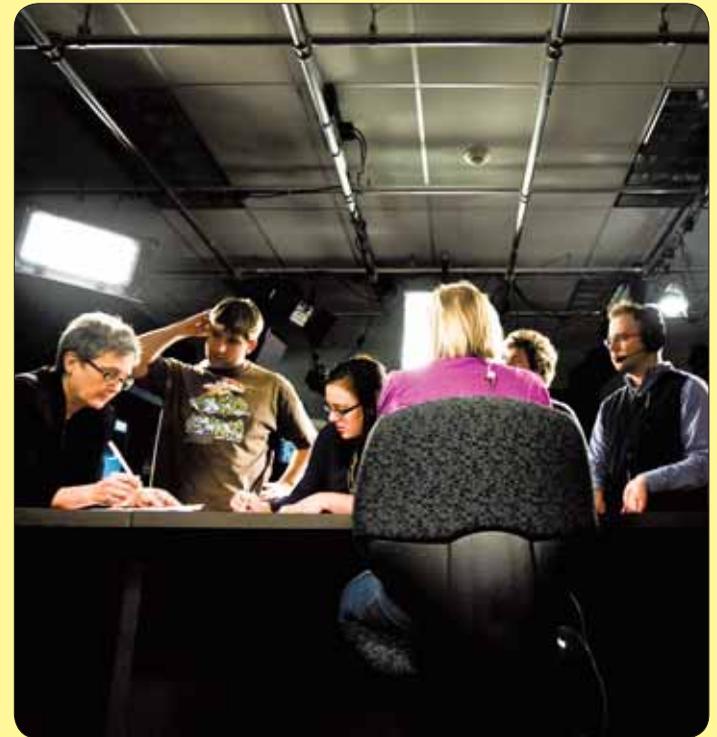
Last year, Public Relations students at Conestoga College were given the opportunity to work on a real-life project while also helping to support a good cause. Twenty-three students submitted proposals to help the Alzheimer Society of

Kitchener-Waterloo develop a new direct-mail campaign to mark 25 years of service. The winning proposal, by second-year student Nicole Hamilton, aptly named *Light the Way*, went into use late last year.



## Community Innovation

**Humber College's new Arts and Media Studios not only bring its schools creative departments together, but manages to be a part of community revitalization and integration as well.**



Originally opened in 1951, the Lakeshore Lions Arena near Kipling and Lakeshore (formerly used as the Toronto Maple Leafs practice facility) has long been a hub of community activity. And though Humber College has taken up residence in the building, having officially opened its new, 53,000-square-foot Humber Arts and Media Studios in April, local residents will be happy to know that the college isn't looking to change that.

"It's meant to be a real learning centre, and to integrate with the community," says Steve Bellamy, associate dean for the Humber School of Creative and Performing Arts. "That's important, because the community used the arena before," he says.

Renovated with funds from both the federal and provincial governments through the Knowledge and Infrastructure Program and Ontario's 2009 budget, the new facility, which is now home to both Humber's School of Creative and Performing Arts and the School of Media Studies and Information Technology, will still be open at times to for community use. Thanks to a partnership with the Toronto District School Board, local high school students will be able to use the centre's state-of-the-art gymnasium, and the community will be invited to attend shows at the facility's 3,000-square-foot black-box theatre. Humber students, of course, will also be benefitting. Performing and Creative Arts will get the most out of the new theatre, a comedy cabaret club, dance and combat theatre studios and new rehearsal rooms. To go along with two large, full-scale film studios, media and television studios and post-production labs, the college is also introducing a new four-year Film and Media Production bachelor's degree to its Media Studies and Information Technology school lineup. Bringing students from similar, though different, creative disciplines together to learn in the same space also provides spinoff benefits in the form of connections and a broadened sense of the creative arts industry as a whole. (Bonus: in the off season, the film studios will be available for rent to production companies, giving students a possible opportunity to network and earn jobs as well.)