

Postsecondary “immersion” in western Canada

In April 1981 the *CPF National Newsletter* stated, “With 50,000 children now in immersion French programs alone, mostly in the elementary grades, it is clear that our universities are not equipped to provide a continuing bilingual education when those students graduate from high school.” Thus a major multi-year CPF campaign was launched to improve French language opportunities in universities across the country.

Today (with more than 328,000 in immersion) there are many opportunities to continue studying in French after Grade 12. A diverse range of courses and programs, as well as financial and academic supports, is now available. As the following four articles attest, Alberta students can stay right here in western Canada to continue their “immersion” education.

For more information and links to postsecondary opportunities throughout Canada, look in the “For students” section of our website at www.cpfalta.ab.ca.

CSJ: Alberta’s dynamic French university campus

The following article was written by Libriel Padilla, School Liaison Advisor for Campus Saint-Jean. For more information, visit www.csj.ualberta.ca or contact the recruitment team at recrutement@csj.ualberta.ca, 780-465-8790.

Walking through the halls of Campus Saint-Jean, you will often hear a mix of French, English, Arabic, Spanish and many other languages. Campus Saint-Jean is not only the French language faculty of the University of Alberta, but also a cultural centre in Western Canada and a microcosm of Canadian diversity. Campus Saint-Jean, or CSJ, is situated on its very own campus in the heart of the francophone community in Edmonton. It caters to about 750 students from all over Canada and the world in various disciplines at the undergraduate and master’s levels.

There were many things that drew me to this campus—the main attraction being the opportunity to pursue postsecondary education in French in Alberta. Having studied in a French immersion program, I decided attending CSJ would be a great way to learn and improve my second language while pursuing a degree.

CSJ offers a variety of French and bilingual French-English programs that can help students achieve their
continued on page 12

Credit courses, a drop-in centre, immersion weekends and more

Thanks to Charlène Fouqueray, FLIP Program Advisor at the University of Calgary, for the following information. For a complete list of activities, courses and bursary opportunities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/frenchcentre. For answers to any questions or more detailed information, call 403-220-7226.

The French Centre recently celebrated its 35th anniversary of service at the University of Calgary. Its creation was driven by the will and need to build a francophone space to help students who were learning or looking to improve their French as a second language.

Today more than ever, the French Centre offers a variety of options to students in their learning process: from courses to immersion experiences, through providing francophone material and a friendly space to practice their oral and aural skills.

At an academic level, the French Language Instruction Program (FLIP) allows students to complete part of their degrees by taking credit courses taught in French. Those courses can be found in a diversity of departments such as Geography, Physics, Economy or Music. The registration process for those classes is the same as for any other credit course. High school students from immersion schools can register directly in those courses. Registering in a class within the FLIP programme presents clear advantages: we guarantee a maximum of 20 students per class, which creates a better learning experience. A FLIP course can also help to complete a Minor or a Major with the Department of French, Italian and Spanish.

Apart from credit courses, but equally important in the acquisition of a second language, the French Centre helps students to practice French every day by providing a francophone environment. The drop-in centre, known as Le Centre, is opened to every student learning French

continued on page 12



I'M STAYING IN FRENCH
Because...
I'm going places.

MOI, JE CONTINUE EN FRANÇAIS
parce que...
j'ai l'intention d'aller loin.

CPF Canadian Parents for French
www.cpf.ca

A West Coast experience ... with a world of opportunities

This article was submitted by Simon Fraser University student Alex Hughes in April 2011. For more information, contact the Bureau des affaires francophones et francophiles, Simon Fraser University at www.sfu.ca/fassfr, 778-782-6927, frcohort@sfu.ca.

Imagine replacing school cafeterias and fast food chains with *cafés* and *boulangeries*. Skytrains with *métros*. English with French. Vancouver with Paris. Now imagine this replacement is an integral part of your postsecondary academic experience.

As a fourth year student in the French Cohort Program (FCP) at Simon Fraser University (SFU), I can proudly say that this was my reality last year. FCP students study Political Science and French, with the majority of classes taught in French. The four-year Bachelor of Arts program also integrates a study abroad program into the third year, when students are sent to partner universities located in francophone cities and specializing in the field of Political Science: Québec, Montréal, Paris, Strasbourg, Bordeaux or Louvain-la-Neuve, to name a few. This is a priceless opportunity to put into practice everything learned in the classroom, to experience new cultures while making friends from the *francophonie mondiale*, as well as to live your day-to-day life in another language.

In addition to this attractive travel experience, the FCP offers important opportunities to its students while they study at SFU. FCP students study Political Science with a concentration in public administration and community services in French. This allows students the option of majoring in Political Science or French while keeping the other as an extended minor, or majoring in both. On the job front, it opens many doors: bilingual careers in the public service, community planning, NGOs, law, and even teaching.

It's understandable that the thought of studying at the

continued on page 13

Reap the rewards at the University of Regina francophone campus!

Awelana Akeriwe, Communications Officer with the Institut français, University of Regina, provided the following. For much more: www.institutfrancais.uregina.ca, institutfrancais@uregina.ca, 1-866-214-8097.

At the Institut français, we pride ourselves on working closely with other academic units on the University of Regina campus and in collaboration with other universities in Canada and around the world to offer students, working professionals and interested individuals a wide range of enriching and stimulating programs tailored to their specific needs. To get you started on this promising adventure of improving your

French language skills, we present the following courses and programs.

Baccalauréat en éducation

The BAC program, offered by the Faculty of Education, is intended for students who plan to teach in francophone or French immersion schools. Unique to this program is the fact that students spend their second year of studies at Université Laval in Québec, which prepares them to make meaningful contributions to the diversity of knowledge, language and culture in immersion and francophone schools.

Bachelor of Francophone Studies

This is a unique program in Canada, offered collaboratively by the Institut français and the Faculty of Arts. This four-year multidisciplinary bilin-

gual Bachelor's program, centred on social sciences and humanities, is designed to educate the young francophone leaders of tomorrow. Students enrolled in this program also spend a year in Québec at Université Laval.

Bachelor of Arts in French

Studying French is the discovery of the culture and literature of the many francophone countries and areas of the world. Offered by the Faculty of Arts, the Bachelor of Arts in French may be the starting point for a career in education,

continued on page 13

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www.cpf.ca

I'M STAYING IN FRENCH

Because...
I can connect with people
all over the world.

MOI, JE CONTINUE EN FRANÇAIS
parce que...
je veux mieux connaître
des gens dans tous les
pays du monde.

Campus Saint-Jean *continued from page 10*

educational goals. At the undergraduate level, our programs include areas such as arts, science, education, business, nursing, environmental and conservation sciences, and engineering. At the master's level, we offer programs in arts and education.

Many of the undergraduate programs are offered in conjunction with other faculties at the University of Alberta, which allows students to experience the best of both worlds at the U of A. Students are able to attend classes both at Campus Saint-Jean and North Campus thanks to staggered schedules and a free shuttle that goes between locations.

At first I was uncertain about taking university-level courses in my second language, but the first week of classes quickly dispelled my fears. Thankfully, classroom sizes were small back then (and still are, with an average class size of 14), which allowed me to get to know my professors and classmates. Asking a question in class or approaching my professor during office hours was never as daunting as it might be in a larger lecture hall. Professors also understood that for many of us French was a second language. In fact, students from French immersion programs represent approximately 60% of the enrolment at CSJ.

One of the services I accessed regularly at CSJ was the academic help centre, La Centrale. There students can make individual appointments with peer tutors for help in French, English or Spanish, or attend group sessions for science courses such as chemistry, biology, math, and statistics. Knowing that someone had already looked over my work helped me feel more confident academically in French.

The community and student life at Campus Saint-Jean also interested me when I was choosing universities. Because of the smaller campus, everyone knows everyone else: students, staff and professors alike. This familiarity eased my transition to university. The atmosphere at CSJ allows new students to find their own community within the larger one of the U of A. This is one of the many factors that contribute to the very high level of student satisfaction at CSJ.

The rich student life at CSJ also added to my university experience. As there is always so much going on, it is often hard to keep up. For example, there are bistros and social events, over 20 student clubs to join, weekly organized sports and many volunteer opportunities—all in French. These activities ultimately helped me feel more comfortable speaking French in a social setting, which is what most students from immersion programs are lacking.

As well, many of my friends lived in the on-campus Résidence Saint-Jean where they were able to truly immerse themselves in French. This francophone residence is home to 100 students—the majority in their first year—from all over Canada and the world. The residence association is known for organizing fun events to bring residents together and encouraging them to take advantage of living in French with other francophiles and francophones.

University of Calgary *continued from page 10*

in the Calgary community and to francophones alike. A language assistant is always present to answer questions or to facilitate conversation in the target language. Le Centre is a lively and friendly place, an alternative for students who cannot incorporate French courses in their course load but still wish to maintain and/or improve their language proficiency. Le Centre also provides the students with a wide range of reading material in French—newspapers and magazines as well as novels—in order not only to read in the target language but also to be exposed to different francophone cultures.

The French Centre further helps language learners by providing opportunities to be immersed in French: it offers immersion weekends, bursaries and links with federal official language programs. The immersion weekends are offered to students during the fall and winter semesters, and consist of a two-day retreat in Kananaskis. Students take part in a multitude of activities prepared by our language assistants. Those weekends are a convenient and inexpensive way to experience living in a francophone environment.

The French Centre also offers an annual \$7,000 bursary to study in a francophone university in the province of Québec for an entire year. Recipients of those bursaries work at perfecting their French while gaining an incredible experience of life in the target culture.

Finally, the French Centre helps create awareness about extracurricular programs that support French language learning, such as Explore and Odyssey.

Through all its program and amenities, the French Centre is committed to excellence in education. It helps students to use and develop knowledge of French during their academic career.

The last aspect that drew me to Campus Saint-Jean was the attractive scholarship opportunities. With rising tuition costs, it is important that students have access to funding for their postsecondary studies. CSJ has a very generous scholarship and awards program for new and continuing students. They can receive scholarships based on their academic achievement, involvement in leadership and community activities, and financial need. In addition, there is a Fellowship for Full-time Studies in French of \$500-\$1,000 per semester, which is funded by the federal department of Canadian Heritage and administered by Alberta Scholarship Programs.

Looking back at my undergraduate experience at Campus Saint-Jean, I am glad I took the chance and pursued postsecondary studies in French. Not only did my degree allow me to become fully bilingual and have a great time in the process, it exposed me to employment possibilities in French. As a School Liaison Advisor for CSJ, I work in my second language every day to inform future students about this opportunity.

Simon Fraser University *continued from page 11*

university level in your second language seems daunting. Though I had been in French immersion since Kindergarten, neither of my parents speak a word of French. However, it's important to realize that the vast majority of students are facing the same situation and that this is the point of the FCP: to challenge your abilities while supporting you. The FCP accepts 25 students per year, and this limited class size allows for dynamic relationships not only among students but also between students and their professors. FCP students benefit from the one-on-one help offered by their professors, as well as from the language support offered outside the classroom.

Another advantage to the FCP is that students do not simply study French, but rather study *in* French. They see dramatic improvements in their language skills and confidence.

Opportunities beyond the classroom are abundant for FCP students, even during their undergraduate years. For example, they have the ability and tools necessary to engage in BC's francophone community as participants, volunteers and organizers. In addition, students are encouraged to take on term projects and research that could make a difference in their community. In the upper levels of the FCP, these projects may also be eligible for application to national conferences, taking students across the country and giving them the opportunity to experience presenting at professional conferences. For instance, one of my fourth year papers was selected for presentation at conferences at the Official Languages and Bilingual Institute in Ottawa and the Association francophone pour le savoir in Sherbrooke, allowing me the opportunity to present in French in front of academics and professionals in the field.

The French Cohort Program at SFU claims to be "a unique program in Canada": an immersion in French education on the Canadian west coast, with small class sizes, student support, and educational and professional opportunities. As a student nearing graduation from this program, it is with great pleasure that I confirm this statement to be absolutely true. Taking into consideration my academic achievements, my personal growth, my volunteer work and professional opportunities and experiences, in addition to my transatlantic studies, I can confidently say that given the chance to go back to the start of my academic career, I would still chose the French Cohort Program!

And I encourage French immersion graduates to pursue postsecondary education in French.

University of Regina *continued from page 11*

translation, international relations or any other area where knowledge of French would be an asset.

Certificate in French as a Second Language

The CFSL program is the only one of its kind in western Canada. Offered by the Institut français in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts, it is an intensive two-semester program designed to allow students to achieve a strong intermediate level in French, both oral and written. As part of the program, students are placed in internships within French-speaking workplaces in Saskatchewan.

Master's in French Education

The Institut français in partnership with the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research offers the Maîtrise en éducation française. The first of its kind offered by a Saskatchewan university, this Master's program is known for its focus on developing curricula and instruction on issues specific to French-language education in minority settings.

Master of French

This graduate program, offered by the Faculty of Arts, allows students to further their knowledge in their specialized fields, such as French literature and language, cultural studies or translation.

Services and social activities

The courses and programs are not the only attractive features of studying French at the University of Regina's francophone campus. The location, the setup and the services are equally inviting.

The campus is integrated and at the heart of the university. Located on the second floor of the Language Institute (LI) Building, it consists of the French Department, Le Bac en éducation and the Institut français. Within the Institut français is the Rotunda, where French language and culture come alive. Students of all levels often gather in this spacious, warm and inviting area to speak French, participate in various socio-cultural activities and to experience francophone culture.

The Institut français' Centre de services aux étudiants (Student Services Centre) offers services such as tutoring sessions, assistance in applying for bursaries and scholarships, employment resources, internships and exchange programs, as well as mentoring support and referrals to professional services in French.

Enrol in one of our programs today—reap the rewards—experience the valuable and unique benefits of learning French!

