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Mount Allison student receives prestigious Killam Fellowship

May 24, 2005

SACKVILLE, NB — Margaret Leighton, a third-year economics student at Mount Allison University, will be heading south of the border in September. The Saskatoon resident has received a prestigious Killam Fellowship and will be studying at Harvard College this coming academic year.

Margaret says, "I'm really honoured and excited to receive this fellowship and have the opportunity to spend a year at Harvard. I'm spending the summer at Mount A doing research in the geography department at the Mount Allison Dendrochronology Lab (the MAD Lab) and will be heading out in September."

Before embarking on the prestigious Killam Fellowship exchange, Margaret has secured a research grant to work with the MAD Lab this summer and will be using tree-ring analysis to study some old Acadian buildings in northern New Brunswick. She says, "I'm really pumped about my research, and being involved with all the exciting projects underway at the lab. With two faculty members and five students, there is an incredible amount going on here. Last year was the 400th anniversary of Acadian settlement in the Maritimes, and this year marks 250 years since the Deportation, so this is a significant time to be taking a closer look at Acadian history. My project will involve analyzing wood samples from historic Acadian houses to determine the year when the buildings were constructed. The combination of science and humanities in the project especially interests me, as they work together towards a better understanding of the world around us."

Dr. Rob Summerby-Murray, Dean of Social Sciences at Mount Allison, says, "Margaret's selection as a Killam Fellow is an appropriately prestigious recognition of an outstanding scholar. We are pleased that she will be representing Mount A at Harvard College in the coming academic year and look forward to strengthening our ties with our American counterparts through the Killam Fellowships Program."

Margaret's interests are varied at Mount Allison. As an economics student, she has a keen interest in global environmental issues, which she fosters through courses from Mount Allison's international relations and environmental studies programs. She is involved with ATLAS, the Atlantic International Studies Organization, which hosts an annual conference on international issues and produces a peer-review undergraduate journal each year. She is also involved with the student chapter of Rights and Democracy and works with Student Services as a Mount Allison

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ambassador, giving tours to prospective students. Of course to mix it up a bit, she is also a member of the Celtic Society, organizing Celtic jam sessions, and plays percussion in the Mount A Symphonic Band.

Although she won't be in Sackville this year, Margaret's presence will still be felt through the Mount Allison Sustainable Residence Project, which will be up and running in September. Margaret has been involved with the project for the last two years and is hoping to be a sustainable resident of Carriage House upon her return to Mount A. "This is a really exciting project and I'm sorry that I won't be around to see Mount Allison's first sustainable residence take shape. There is a great group moving in this fall, and it will be up to them to chart out what 'sustainability' means for university students. I can't wait to visit."

The Killam Fellowships Program is run by the Foundation for Educational Exchange between Canada and the United States of America, a joint, bi-national, treaty-based organization created to encourage mutual understanding between Canada and the United States of America through academic and cultural exchange. The Foundation is supported by the Canadian Government, through Foreign Affairs Canada, by the United States Government, through the Department of State, and by a diverse group of corporate sponsors, charitable trusts, and university partners. It is governed by an independent Board of Directors and operates out of Ottawa.

The Killam Fellowships Program is now welcoming cohorts into its third year. This program is generously supported by the American Killam Trusts and is a major initiative in their multifaceted efforts to foster mutual understanding between the citizens of Canada and those of the United States. Mount Allison is one of 11 Canadian Universities and one of only four universities in Atlantic Canada that participates in the program.

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