



JOSH BOYTER/ THE DALHOUSIE GAZETTE

Curiosity drives Dr. Bob Anderson to continue learning, even after earning a medical degree.

Dal retirees start school for seniors

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There's a new college in Halifax. Unlike the other mainstays, tuition is \$120 for winter, spring and fall courses. There are no exams, no tests and no assignments.

There is one tiny catch, though: students have to be at least 50 years old to attend.

The Seniors' College was started last fall by the Association of Dalhousie Retirees and Pensioners and now offers six courses: Shakespeare Plays, with readings of *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest*; The Pedigree of Ideas; Women in Politics; Addiction and Addictive Behaviour in Seniors; Islam, Peace and Terrorism; and Writing for Life.

Four of the six courses (Shakespeare Plays, The Pedigree of Ideas, Women in Politics and Addiction and Addictive Behaviour in Seniors) are taught at the Bloomfield Centre, while Islam, Peace and Terrorism is taught at the Keshen Goodman Public Library. The location for Writing for Life is to be announced.

Past president and current registrar for the Seniors' College, Blanche Potter, says she expected 20 or 30 people to show up for registration last year. Instead, she was swamped with applications.

"On the registration day we had over 100 people show up," the 75-year-old says. "We had to turn people away because classes were filled."

After *The Daily News* printed an ad about the college, word of mouth did the rest.

"I'm still getting phone calls saying, 'Can I get in?'" Potter says. "I would imagine we'll end up with close to 125 individual members."

Potter, who sat in on last fall's courses, says seniors are interested in these courses because they are being given the opportunity to learn.

"A lot of women from my generation that married young and had children ended their careers or their education, stayed home and looked after the family. Now the family are grown up... and they thought, 'This is my opportunity to learn some of the things I missed out on when I was raising my children,'" she says. "And the men, of course, are very interested... they really want to keep their mind(s) active."

Potter says the response from the senior students has been "tre-

mendous."

"It shows that just because you've become a senior doesn't mean you don't want to stop learning," she says. "As long as you keep your mind active, you have much better physical health and mental health."

Potter says she hopes senior programs like this one will become more popular, both provincially and nationally.

"There's a very keen interest in the program and the members," she says. "I'm sure that this will grow. My hope is that down the road... we will spread throughout the province."

Seniors' College student Dr. Bob Anderson, who's also chair of the school's curriculum committee, says the momentum is already building.

"The Seniors' College is sort of an inevitable development in the modern world. Adult education is the fastest growing segment of education in North America," the 77-year-old says. "(In) the U.S., there are college courses where the number of senior auditor students is approaching the number of full-time students."

Anderson, who obtained his medical degree at Dal, began auditing courses soon after he retired 10 years ago. He's since completed the University of King's College's Foundation Year Program and about 20 other courses in philosophy, English and political science at Dal.

He says he's taking courses at the Seniors' College because they are thought-provoking.

"It's a very interesting... mix of people and (we) are curious, interested and very satisfied with having an opportunity to learn about these things in a non-competitive environment," he says.

College President Susan Stuttard says the range of ages creates an interesting environment.

"It's quite a nice mixture because, when you think about it, that's multigenerational. But a terrific group of people," she says in a telephone interview.

Stuttard says retired professors from Dal also want in. Sid Sodhi and Harry Whittier are two of the retired Dalhousie profs teaching at the college.

"One of the things which is just a lovely surprise is that we have retired faculty contacting us to say how interested they are [in teaching courses]," Stuttard says. "But, to a large extent, it's a labour of love."