

SFU Press Releases Collection

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A path less followed

Jun 03, 2002

Cheryl Mackintosh's university experience has been a little more varied than most. It began 10 years ago when she graduated from Bishop Carroll high school in Calgary and accepted an all-expenses paid golf scholarship at the University of Alabama. Two years later, she gave it up in favour of returning to Canada to complete her bachelor of science degree at UBC. This month, she will graduate with a master's degree in resource management (MRM) from SFU.

Mackintosh is also the recipient of the dean of applied science's graduate convocation medal for the highest grade point average in the faculty - 4.0 out of a possible 4.33. She has spent the past three years researching the accumulation of phthalate esters in marine organisms, a family of chemicals used to make plastic more durable and flexible. Her research, funded by the National Research and Engineering Council, demonstrates that these high production volume chemicals do not become increasingly concentrated in the food chain, as originally feared. The results have attracted worldwide interest and Mackintosh has attended conferences in Spain, Philadelphia and Baltimore to present her study. "The research has direct management implications," she notes. Some European countries have banned the chemicals in children's toys pending research such as Mackintosh's while regulatory bodies in the US and Canada have allowed their use until proven dangerous. While Mackintosh considers whether to pursue a PhD, she does have a back-up plan - she could join the professional golf circuit.