



*Summer days are almost here ... and we invite you to put News Brief on your list of summer must-reads. The achievements of AU Faculty of Health Disciplines alumni, students and faculty never fail to inspire and are the perfect metaphor for a season of growth and optimism.*

*We're always excited to hear about your professional and personal successes, and know the feeling is shared throughout the Faculty of Health Disciplines community. So when you find some downtime this summer, please drop us a line! **Send a note to [fhdnews@athabascau.ca](mailto:fhdnews@athabascau.ca).***

*We'll be in touch again in the fall. Until then, enjoy this issue of News Brief and these all-too-fleeting warm-weather days.*

Bill Diehl-Jones and Kimberley Lamarche, co-editors



### **BN program changes promote student success**

The field of nursing is always advancing, and to ensure RNs have the knowledge and clinical skills to provide the best care for patients, Bachelor of Nursing programs must also move forward. AU is enhancing its BN program in response to the new Canada-wide licensure exam introduced in 2015.

[Read more](#)



### **Leading in Alberta. Leading in Canada. Leading in patient care.**

Keeping up with the many accomplishments of the Faculty of Health Disciplines family is a challenge we're happy to have. Here are just a few of the people who are taking the lead to improve Canadians' health and well-being (and we apologize for any we've missed). And wait! There's more! Take a moment to check out the [Alumni, Student and Faculty highlights](#), too.

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Karen Lara is taking a different approach to her Master's thesis, and discovering many 'truths' along the way. In deepening the understanding of First Nations Courts, she hopes to inspire a different way of looking at justice — for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.

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Three AU Master's program grads are building on their success in learning online to take their knowledge to the next level. Together, they account for half of the students taking part in a new Alberta online Nursing PhD program.

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### **Active Living Corner: Navigating health in an online world**

Computers and mobile devices are in nearly every home — and every hand — from coast to coast. One of the most popular internet activities is love-it-or-hate-it social media. How can all this "connecting" impact health? Elaine Ori (Master of Health Studies 2015) offers insights and a few tips.

[Read more](#)



### **Your news and updates**

Alumni, students and faculty continue to inspire! Here are the news items received since the last issue of News Brief. Do you have a new job? A new adventure? A reason to celebrate? Share it with your AU friends and family by sending an e-mail to [fhdnews@athabascau.ca](mailto:fhdnews@athabascau.ca).

[Read more](#)

**Share your news!** Submit a story! Let us know what you want to read about! **Drop us a line** and help grow and strengthen the Faculty of Health Disciplines community. Together, we'll have the conversations that matter to you.

**Invest in the future of health care** by donating to student awards, research and scholarly activities, and learning resources. Learn more at [giving.athabascau.ca](http://giving.athabascau.ca), and donate online.

You are receiving this news brief because you are a member of the Faculty of Health Disciplines community. To unsubscribe or to change your e-mail address, please send us a note.

## BN program changes promote student success

*The field of nursing is always advancing, and to ensure RNs have the knowledge and clinical skills to provide the best care for patients, Bachelor of Nursing programs must also move forward. AU is enhancing its BN program in response to the new Canada-wide licensure exam introduced in 2015.*

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Outstanding nurses graduate from Athabasca University. Recent changes to the Bachelor of Nursing program will add to the knowledge and skills of safe, competent and ethical practitioners who care for patients across the country.



[Click here to learn more.](#)

To ensure AU nursing students are well prepared to succeed on the new licensure exam introduced last year and in their future practice, **as of Sept. 1, 2016, three additional courses will be required for graduation, and an average grade threshold of 3.0 will be required to move from one phase of the program to another and into clinical courses.** [See the [Faculty website](#) for full details.]

“We know this will have an impact on students and that some will need to take additional courses,” says Dr. Margaret Edwards, Dean of AU’s Faculty of Health Disciplines. “But we also believe it is unethical to have students continue on a program path where the likelihood of future clinical and exam success will be diminished.”

In 2015, a new national licensure exam, the U.S.-developed NCLEX-RN (National Council Licensure Examination), was introduced in Canada, replacing the CNRE (Canadian Nurse Registration Exam). The NCLEX-RN is computer-adaptive and places greater emphasis on basic science. The change in methodology and the areas of knowledge tested resulted in lower-than-expected pass rates across the country last year.

“It’s not a matter of ‘better’ or ‘worse;’ the NCLEX-RN exam is just different,” Edwards explains. “AU’s pass rate has always been at or above the national average, and with the move to the new exam, it is now at the provincial average of around 68 per cent.

“Completion of courses in anatomy/physiology and in pathophysiology/pharmacology and a higher grade average are key determinants of NCLEX-RN success. It is imperative we do all we can now to ensure students have the knowledge to do well not only on the exam, but also to excel in their clinical practice and in every aspect of their nursing careers.”

To help navigate the changes, a **letter has been sent to all students** and BN program advisors ([bnadvisor@athabascau.ca](mailto:bnadvisor@athabascau.ca)) are working individually with students to plan course sequences that work best for them.

AU’s Faculty of Health Disciplines offers the largest Post-LPN and Post-RN Bachelor of Nursing programs in Canada. About 1,500 students are currently enrolled, and approximately 300 new students enter the programs each year. The move to the NCLEX-RN aligns Canadian and U.S. nursing programs, ultimately creating more opportunities for RNs in both countries.

## Leading in Alberta. Leading in Canada. Leading in patient care.

*Keeping up with the many accomplishments of the Faculty of Health Disciplines family is a challenge we're happy to have. Here are just a few of the people who are taking the lead to improve Canadians' health and well-being (and we apologize for any we've missed). And wait! There's more! Take a moment to check out the **Alumni, Student and Faculty highlights, too.***

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### Celebrating a century of nursing excellence in Alberta

This spring, AU instructors were among nurses from across Alberta honoured with Centennial Awards from the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta, celebrating CARNA's 100th anniversary.



*L-R: Margaret Edwards, Donna Clare, Virginia Vandall-Walker*

**Dr. Margaret Edwards** (Dean of Health Disciplines) was recognized for academic leadership (she helped develop AU's nursing program) and as the founding director of the Women's Health Resources Unit at the Calgary Grace Hospital, as well as for her critical role in reviewing nursing practice standards and developing entry-to-practice competencies.

**Dr. Virginia Vandall-Walker** (Associate Professor) was honoured for her early career working in remote fly-in communities in the North, and for initiating the first rural licensed practical nurse program in the region. She was also recognized for developing the first proposal for nurse practitioners to be educated at the graduate level.

At the awards gala, **Donna Clare** (MN: NP alumna and Academic Coordinator) received the CARNA Award of Excellence: Committee's Choice.

### Leading knowledge and practice coast to coast

**Dr. Mary Ellen Andrews** (Post-Masters Diploma: Advanced Nursing Practice alumna) is Acting Associate Dean, North and North-Western Saskatchewan, and Director Nurse Practitioner Program and Assistant Professor at the University of Saskatchewan

**Rhonda Crew** (Master of Nursing: Nurse Practitioner alumna) is Chief of Nursing Services for the Canadian Forces.

— continued —

**Brent Guthro** (Master of Nursing: Nurse Practitioner alumnus) is the rural and northern representative on the Nurse Practitioners Association of Manitoba Board of Directors.

**Dr. Roberta Heale** (alumna), is currently President of Canadian Association of Advanced Practice Nurses, and **Dr. Kimberley Lamarche** (alumna and Associate Professor) is a former president.

Serving on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Nurses Association are:

- **Madeleine Ashcroft** (Master of Health Studies alumna), specialty network representative. She replaces Dr. Pamela Hawranik (Professor and Dean of AU's Faculty of Graduate Studies), whose term has expired;
- **Brenda Kinney** (Master of Nursing alumna), President of the Nurses Association of New Brunswick; and,
- **Nancy MacFadyen** (Master of Nursing alumna), President of the Association of Registered Nurses of Prince Edward Island.

**Meg McDonagh** (Post-Master's Diploma: Nurse Practitioner alumna), serves on the executive of the Canadian Association for Rural and Remote Nursing.

**Jerry Macdonald** (Master of Nursing student) is President-Elect of the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta.

**Dr. Lynn Miller** (Master of Nursing alumna) is the Governance Chair, Phi Epsilon Chapter, Sigma Theta Tau International, and on faculty at Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

**Kimberly Newton** (Master of Nursing alumna) is Co-Chair of the Nurse Practitioners Association of Nova Scotia.

**Lori Veregin** (Master of Nursing alumna) serves as the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the B.C. Nurse Practitioners Association.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

*More than 50%  
of Canada's Family  
Nurse Practitioners  
are AU grads!*

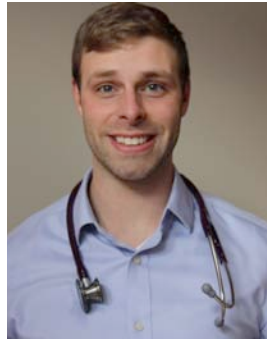
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## Advancing the role of Nurse Practitioners in Alberta

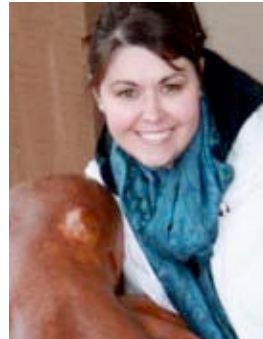


William Au photo

*Donna Clare*



*Eric Lavoie*



*Ashley Devenney*

Two AU graduates and one student of the Master of Nursing: Nurse Practitioner program are promoting the role of NPs in Alberta, through their roles with the Nurse Practitioner Association of Alberta.

**Donna Clare** (MN: NP 2007 and program Academic Coordinator at AU), was on the NPAA executive from 2007–13 and served as President from 2010–12. In that time she moved the NPAA from an “invisible” specialty-practice group to a recognized essential presence at the tables of decision-makers in Alberta Health. She is currently President of the Alberta Association of NPs in Private Practice, which provides networking and education opportunities for NPs in private practice from across the province.

**Eric Lavoie** (MN: NP 2012) began his involvement with NPAA as a student and is the current president (through 2017). He is currently in talks with Alberta Health regarding a sustainable funding model for NPs who work outside Alberta Health Services.

**Ashley Devenney**, a current student in the AU MN: NP program, is a student representative on the NPAA board.

Both Donna and Eric have private practices: Donna works at EvolveWell providing primary care services to all ages; Eric provides chronic pain treatment at Evidence Sports and Spinal Therapy.

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## Indigenous justice follows a healing path

*Karen Lara is taking a different approach to her Master's thesis, and discovering many 'truths' along the way. In deepening the understanding of First Nations Courts, she hopes to inspire a different way of looking at justice — for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.*

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Master of Counselling: Counselling Psychology student **Karen Lara** has always been interested in working as a therapist in criminal justice. But working in the mainstream criminal justice system itself? Not so much.

When her role with an Aboriginal non-profit agency in Kamloops, B.C., gave her the opportunity to learn more about therapeutic jurisprudence — using the justice process as a way of healing — and to volunteer at a First Nations Court and engage with Elders, she found both her passion and the avenue for her Master's research.

**"I had no idea this existed in Canada," she says. "It has opened the door for me. I'm learning to be a better counsellor."**

As a volunteer, Lara saw how participating Elders spent long days at the Court, and how the Court sought to hear people's stories and understand the issues that shaped their lives. She was invited to complete her MC practicum there, doing something that had never been done before. "Participants who attend the First Nations Court are given a healing plan, which may include activities like taking part in sweats, talking to Elders or counselling. Some people don't have access to a counsellor, so I provided that service."



That experience, in part, inspired her to work with her AU thesis supervisor to take a different approach to research. "I'm following more of an Indigenous methodology," Lara explains of the community-based participatory research she is completing in partnership with six Elders. "It is more abstract, about the principles, values and ethics that guide the research. It is about reciprocity and respect."

In addition to a traditional paper, she is also developing a legal-education video (to be completed in June) which can be shared in Court presentations and communities, to increase awareness and understanding of what happens in the First Nations Court. "Presenting our research — not my research — in the usual way at conferences doesn't fit this methodology," she says. "I can't speak for all of us. So the video does that."

"It's important to remember there are many approaches to justice — and that justice isn't the same as punishment. There are systems based on responsibility, accountability, healing, change, human rights and dignity. If the system labels you as 'bad,' where is your potential for growth? There has to be a separation between the person and the action, so people can work on the behaviour and work to improve themselves."

## Soon-to-be new doctors are in the house

*Three AU Master's program grads are building on their success in learning online to take their knowledge to the next level. Together, they account for half of the students taking part in a new Alberta online Nursing PhD program.*

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**Jananee Rasiah** (Post-Masters Diploma: Advance Practice Nursing 2013 and Program Director, Bachelor of Nursing Operations), **Raelene Marceau** (Master of Nursing: Nurse Practitioner 2009) and **Upinder Singh** (Master of Nursing 2013) have gone where no AU Faculty of Health Disciplines grads have gone before: into a brand new online Nursing doctorate (PhD) program at the University of Alberta. We're proud to introduce you to this trailblazing trio.

### INSPIRED TO WORK IN RURAL AND NORTHERN PRACTICE: RAELENE MARCEAU



#### *What is your program focus?*

I'm focusing on Nurse Practitioners working in primary health care.

#### *Where are you practicing now?*

I am a primary healthcare Nurse Practitioner for the Peace Region Primary Care Network in Peace River, Alta. I practice with family physicians in a team-based environment and have my own panel of patients, practicing very independently and autonomously.

#### *How did your AU program help with your decision to enrol in the online PhD program?*

AU's distance MN program helped prepare me for this distance PhD. I was familiar with asynchronous learning, Moodle and the demands of juggling work, school and family life. Taking a degree through distance education is completely doable. The flexibility of this type of learning environment, as well as the opportunity to interact with students from across the country, is a huge plus.

#### *What do you plan to do after your PhD?*

I hope to be able to continue practicing as an NP, to focus on doing some rural, northern research and perhaps do some teaching as well (I've done some sessional instructing over the past few years for AU's MN:NP program).

## EXPANDING INTERESTS IN NURSING RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATION: JANANEE RASIAH



### *What is your program specialization?*

I will identify patient and provider outcomes as a result of having Nurse Practitioners on Collaborative Practice Primary Care Teams.

### *How did your AU program help with your decision to enrol in the online PhD program?*

My program in family all ages at AU helped me discover my passion and the topic for further research in a PhD program. Additionally, I completed both quantitative and qualitative methods courses through AU, which helped me become more familiar with various methodologies. Completing a graduate-level program at AU prepares you for both your career and for doctoral studies. The flexibility of online learning coupled with the skill and expertise of AU faculty and instructors in online learning adds to the experience and is well worth your investment.

### *What do you plan to do after your PhD?*

I'm a firm believer that plans are meant to be changed. For now, I would say, launch into a more robust research career; focus on learning and perfecting the art of publishing and continue working in an administrative capacity at AU.

## GROWING A PASSION FOR NURSING EDUCATION: UPINDER SINGH



### *What is your program specialization?*

My focus is on nursing education, specifically narrative pedagogy and games-based learning.

### *How did your AU program help with your decision to enrol in the online PhD program?*

I had had such a positive experience with online learning through AU that I always knew the only way I would ever engage in my PhD was if it were offered through the same delivery method. My experience as an online graduate student was a primary factor in choosing another online program for my PhD. And once in the PhD program, I learned that certain courses I had taken at AU really helped provide a strong foundation to begin my PhD studies.

### *What do you plan to do after your PhD?*

I would love to teach at the graduate level in an area I am passionate about! I have found that the niche between nursing and teaching is where I belong.



## Promoting the benefits of physical activity for breast cancer survivors

*Studies continue to show the health benefits of physical activity for women during and after breast cancer treatment. But as Dr. Jeff Vallance's latest research shows, motivating activity and instilling new lifelong habits may require a new approach.*

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There's no question about the science: physical activity is shown time and again to improve the health and longevity of breast cancer survivors, reducing the risk of recurrence and also improving women's ability to handle their cancer.

**So what's the best way to inspire women to become more active? And, specifically, how can women receiving chemotherapy be motivated to become more active?**

**Dr. Jeff Vallance** (Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management) and colleagues looked for the answers, launching the PROACTIVE trial testing the effectiveness of a home-based approach for getting women receiving chemotherapy more active. More than 90 women across Alberta took part.

The results of this CIHR-funded research (the first Athabasca University project to receive CIHR funding) were published in *Cancer Epidemiology Biomarkers and Prevention*, one of the top journals in the field, in February 2016. And while they didn't show what everyone hoped, the results also didn't come as a total surprise.

"Previous research suggested that providing women with physical activity resources, including things like a step pedometer and print physical activity resources, were effective at getting survivors who had completed their treatment more active," Vallance explains.

**"But this trial showed these types of resources weren't enough to help women to be more active during chemotherapy. We found they were no more active than women who didn't receive the resources."**

"We perhaps underestimate the impact of chemotherapy, which sometimes can last for six months or longer, has on patients," he says. "This is a very difficult point in the cancer journey, and people may simply be worn down. Giving them targeted information and having them engage in strategies designed to help them be more active wasn't enough."

— continued —

On top of that, he notes that it's notoriously difficult to change people's behaviour at the best of times, and despite a wealth of information that shows the benefits of activity — and even for people with the best of lifestyle-improvement intentions — lifelong “bad” habits are hard to break and the “good” habits are just as hard to instill.

And for women receiving chemotherapy in particular, passive or “at a distance” approaches may not be the best motivator. “To be successful, interventions may need to be more intensive, and perhaps involve more time that is face-to-face,” Vallance says. “We also need to be exploring other options.

“We seem to be focused on isolated strategies that may include the use of a website, and phone or print resource interventions, when in reality we may need to start getting more creative and making better use of new technology. And we also need to look at approaches that embed getting active into primary care. In The Netherlands, my colleagues are examining the use of online patient portals where women find all their information, from their treatment schedule, to physical activity information. It's part of their cancer care plan.

**“Exercise should be seen in the same light as chemotherapy or radiation treatments. Much like the Oncologist will refer you to the physical therapist for lymphedema treatment, a referral should also be immediately made to the resident kinesiologist and dietician. Given the impact of physical activity on health, it needs to be embedded into treatment — not an afterthought and left up to the patient.”**

“Show me a drug that can do as much good as physical activity. We know there's a clinical benefit. For cancer patients, it can complement powerful medications — it's not ‘either/or’ but ‘and.’”

*‘To be successful, interventions may need to be more intensive, and maybe more face-to-face. We need to be exploring other options. ... And we also need to look at approaches that embed getting active into primary care.’*

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ACTIVE LIVING CORNER

## Navigating health in an online world

*Computers and mobile devices are in nearly every home — and every hand — from coast to coast. One of the most popular internet activities is love-it-or-hate-it social media. How can all this “connecting” impact health? Active Living Corner author Elaine Ori (Master of Health Studies 2015) offers insights and a few tips.*

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Since 2001, Canadians have increased their internet usage by 75%. Globally, in fact, Canadian use is second only to the United Kingdom, with the average Canuck logging over 40 hours of online time per month. And much of that time is spent on social media. Instead of one-way communication, online social media applications provide a platform for user-generated content and an exchange of ideas.

**We use social media to discuss anything and everything from cute cats to political candidates. But how does all this information sharing affect us? How are social media and health connected?**

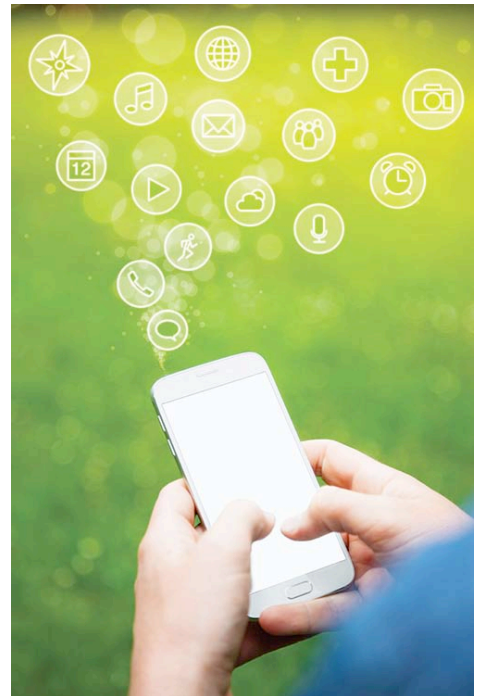
The online world of health can be a daunting, endless pool of information. With so much material at our fingertips, social media can provide a great opportunity to wade through the bulk — and strengthen networks.

Apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube may be excellent opportunities to share experiences, provide peer and emotional support and inform others. Public health agencies use social media to help identify trends in health, target at-risk populations, and reduce stigma associated with certain illnesses. For the web-savvy health professional, social media may even provide a chance for individuals to reach out and engage with practitioners, or open a dialogue about topics of interest.

**Opportunities are endless, and available resources, limitless.**

But since there is no buyer-beware label on internet resources, we must tread carefully. Using social media for health information can become a Pandora’s Box of facts and fiction. Without quality controls, it can be difficult to navigate reliable information. There is an overwhelming amount of material, much of which can be contradictory.

**So how can we harness social media for healthy outcomes?**



Try considering these tips next time you're looking for online health advice:

- **Consider the source.** Credibility of the author is important. Is the information based on a personal experience or expertise in the field? Is the material based on a sales pitch or old-wives' tales? A healthy dose of skepticism when reading online material can help you navigate the good and filter out the bad.
- **Create a supportive network.** Having social support — even online — has been shown to increase the success of health behaviour changes such as smoking cessation, increased physical activity and better nutrition. Sharing progress with your social network can provide encouragement and positive reinforcement in achieving your goal.
- **Ask questions.** If you're not sure what you've read is true, don't be afraid to ask a trusted health practitioner. Health professionals are aware of the many truths (and not-so-truths) floating around the internet, and they want to ensure you're getting the best information possible.

Social media can be a useful tool for learning about new health research, sharing personal experiences, or encouraging friends and family along their own health journeys. The popularity of social media platforms indicates they're here to stay. By using social media wisely, you can enjoy learning about your health, and achieving your health goals in the company of a vast social network.

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*Elaine is currently completing her PhD at the University of Alberta, where she is focusing on social media and health behaviours.*

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## Your news and updates

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### BREAKING NEWS!

At press time, we learned that two Faculty of Health Disciplines students graduating in 2016 had received Athabasca University's top academic awards. Well-deserved congratulations and a round of applause to:

**Governor General's Academic Medal – Gold**      **Ruth Stewart, Master of Counselling**  
**Governor General's Academic Medal – Silver**      **Keira St. George, Bachelor of Nursing**

The Governor General's Academic Medals are awarded to graduating students with the highest grade point average in the university. We couldn't be more proud!

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**Anya Brooker**  
MC student

... had her manuscript, "**Counselling within Inuit systems in Canada's north**," published in *First Peoples Child and Family Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2015).

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**Candace Brown**  
MC – Counselling  
Psychology) student

... won the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association Research and Professional Article Award in March for **her thesis**, "Fostering Multicultural and Social Justice Competence Through Counsellor Education Pedagogy." Candace lives in Slave Lake, Alta., and was a research assistant on an SSHRC-funded research project led by **Sandra Collins** (Professor) and a University of Calgary colleague.

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**Dr. Lynn Corcoran**  
BN Program Director

... successfully defended her thesis and received her PhD from the University of Calgary in early 2016.

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**Arlene Court**  
MN student

... was published in the Winter 2016 issue of the Canadian Oncology Nursing Journal. "**E-cigarettes: Guiding patients in a time of uncertainty**" looks at concerns about e-cigarettes, the potential for harm reduction and also provided suggestions for how patients with cancer can be guided regarding e-cigarette use. She thanked long-time Faculty of Health Disciplines sessional instructor Dr. Joyce Springate for helping make publication possible: "The dedicated time during the course as well as the wonderful feedback from you and my group members certainly facilitated the writing!" Arlene is on the Interprofessional Clinical Documentation Team and is a Clinical Educator - Nursing, at Odette Cancer Centre, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, in Toronto.

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**Dr. Bill Diehl-Jones**  
*Associate Professor*

... was featured in *The Voice* magazine, published by the Athabasca University Students' Union, last December. His PhD student, Yenly Londono, successfully defended her doctoral thesis, "Probiotics for Preterm Infants."

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**Kristen Ellis-MacDonald**  
*MN: NP alumna*

... recently moved to the Peace Region in B.C., from Halifax, where she completed her AU studies. She currently works for Northern Health in the Chetwynd Primary Care Clinic and a story in *Alaska Highway News* announced her arrival to the community.

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**Erin Hall**  
*BN alumna*

... wrote in mid-May: "I finally got a job! After finishing my Post-LPN-to BN-degree this past February, I chose between a casual RN position in endoscopy and a job-share position as Patient Flow Coordinator (PFC). I am very excited to move into the PFC role in 30 days."

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**Jennifer Jackson**  
*MN alumna*

... successfully defended her thesis, *Managing Exposure: A Grounded Theory of Burnout and Resilience in Critical Care Nurses* and has now headed "across the pond" to work on her PhD studies at King's College London, England.

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**Dr. Jennifer Knopp-Sihota**  
*Assistant Professor*

... was accepted in May as one of approximately 20 investigators on the TREC (Translating Research in Elder Care) research team at the University of Alberta. Members hail from most of the Canadian provinces, Sweden and the U.S. Jennifer was also among the many volunteers who stepped up to help people who were forced to evacuate from Fort McMurray as the result of devastating forest fires. Jennifer provided medical assessments and care for those who needed it at the Northlands Evacuee Centre in Edmonton.

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**Margaret Rauliuk**  
*MN: NP Academic Coordinator*

... put thousands of kilometres in her definition of "working at a distance" earlier this year. In January, she headed to Tanzania for a six-week volunteer assignment.

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**Mariko Sakamoto**  
*MN alumna*



... travelled to Glasgow, Scotland, in May to accept the prestigious 2015 International Institute for Qualitative Methodology (IIQM) Master's Level Dissertation Award for her thesis "Perceptions of Personhood and the Early Onset Dementia Experience." Her thesis was selected from among 14 submissions. **Dr. Sharon Moore** (Professor) also attended the IIQM Conference, at which Mariko received her award and presented her research (Sharon and

**Dr. Steve Johnson**, Assistant Professor, were Mariko's co-supervisors).

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**Russell Stagg**  
*MC alumnus*

... published “The Nadir Experience” in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. His invited article on a person-centred approach to trauma recovery , titled “When the Desert Starts to Bloom,” is currently in press, and will appear in the Summer 2016 issue of *Self and Society*, the journal of the Association for Humanistic Psychology (U.K.). Russell has two counselling offices in B.C. — one in Nanaimo and one in Ladysmith — and you can [find out more on his website](#).

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**Dr. Virginia  
Vandall-Walker**  
*Associate Professor*

... was pleased to announce in December that the Patient Engagement platform of the Alberta SPOR (Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research) SUPPORT Unit was “open for business” and supporting researchers. Virginia is the platform lead.

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