

UPDATE

A Newsletter for UNBC Alumni and Friends – Spring 2008



UNBC UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Making it BIG

2008 sees a record number graduates, including the first from the Northern Medical Program, and a provincial basketball championship.

Message from the President



Two events this spring have caused me to reflect on the role of universities in our modern society. The first is the inaugural graduation of students from the Northern Medical Program (NMP) and the second is the tremendous attention being paid to environmental sustainability and climate change.

By being so focused on educating a new generation of doctors for northern/rural communities, the NMP has the power to

be transformative. It is also symbolic of what can be achieved when universities work closely with all levels of government, business and industry, and the citizens of the region. As a province and region, let's not stop with the Northern Medical Program.

The opportunity exists to join together again and lead the nation in articulating – and implementing – a vision of environmental sustainability that includes communities, First Nations, resource industries, and governments. Northern BC provides an incredible context for developing a new standard for what it means to be resource-based, healthy, and sustainable. Is there currently anything more important for our region? As one of BC's research-intensive universities, along with our national reputation for academic excellence, UNBC is uniquely positioned to play a key role. This role is only fully realized, however, when we work together.

The Northern Medical Program and UNBC's designation as Canada's Green University are proof that when we make investments together, the results can be amazing.


Dr. Don Cozzetto

UpFront

New Student Centre

The Prince George campus is never without construction for long. Currently, the focus is the Northern University Student Centre, which is occupying half of the Conference Centre. The new facility will have a pub, lounge space, study areas, and student administration offices.

National Rankings

For the third consecutive year, UNBC placed fourth among small schools in the annual Maclean's magazine ranking of Canadian universities. A week earlier, the National Post named UNBC one of Canada's Research Universities of the Year, after it posted impressive gains for research funding and dissemination.

Deficit Budget... For Now

UNBC's Board of Governors has given the University until June to submit plans for a balanced 2008-09 budget. The unusual step followed an announcement in March – about two weeks before the end of the fiscal year – that the Government of BC would provide UNBC with \$1 million less than expected. This year, UNBC's operating budget will top \$60 million.

College Collaboration

UNBC is working with the College of New Caledonia in Prince George to develop a joint admission system that will make it easier for students to take courses at both institutions. A pilot system will start this fall involving students from Burns Lake, where a new language program is being offered in partnership with the Lake Babine Nation.

U-Pass Given Green Light

UNBC students voted 70% in favour of implementing a U-Pass on campus, which gives students unlimited access to transit and the municipal swimming pools for \$48 per semester. The approval rate was the highest ever obtained at a BC university.



We are the Champions

The atmosphere in the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre was electric. Nearly 2,000 people – the most ever to watch a UNBC basketball game – packed into the new facility to see the UNBC women's basketball team capture the provincial title for the BC Colleges' Athletic Association.

It was an incredible third quarter – when UNBC outscored their opponents from Camosun College in Victoria by a margin of 22 to 4 – that led to the victory. It served as a fitting conclusion to an undefeated season in their new home.

From the friendly confines of the NSC, the UNBC women made the long journey to Truro, Nova Scotia for the National Championship. Winning one but losing

two (one to the eventual national champion), UNBC finished 6th.

Still – a storybook season. “This has been a season with unexpected surprises and results,” says Lorilyn Murdoch, head coach of the women's basketball team since its inception. “We improved as a team all season and I can't remember a game more exciting than that gold medal win in provincials. We have something really special at UNBC and I hope the fans and supporters take as much from our success this year as we do.”

Turn to page 8 to read about two top players on the Northern Timberwolves women's basketball team.

www.unbc.ca/athletics



On the Cover

Going Green

Stephanie Oestreich of Dawson Creek is graduating this spring, but not before helping out with UNBC's first annual Green Day, an event organized by students for the UNBC community. The Agora filled with informational displays, “green” employers, performances, and activities. Stephanie and a group of fellow students also conducted a campus waste audit. Read more about the results on page 10.



Is there a Doctor In the House?



Northern Medical Program – Class of 2008

Back row: Christina Neufeld, Shona Penhale, Tag Danforth, Dave Sonnichsen, Brian Hillhouse
Middle row: Laura Malley, Karen Trueman, Layne Harvey, Kathleen O'Malley, James Card, Heather Smith, Philip Hui
Front row: Jennifer Douse, Jannah Wilson, Erin Hibbitts, Melanie MacNicol
Missing from photo: Joanna MacLean, Jessica Palmer, Kerri Pandachuck, Sharona Supernault, Dan Crompton, Peter Grunau, Dan Jenkin

Yes, 23 of them.

Graduations serve two purposes. First, they're nostalgic, as graduates reflect on their accomplishments. Second, they look to the future, as newly minted graduates leave their learning environment to make a difference in the "real world."

The Northern Medical Program produces its first graduates this spring, eight years after a powerful health care rally and four years after the opening of the program – which also coincided with UNBC's 10th anniversary.

The students who entered the NMP in 2004 were the first to participate in a new approach to medical education. The idea is simple: educating physicians in northern and rural communities will increase the numbers of physicians living and working in those communities. While the medical curriculum differs little from place to place, it's the experiences students have while learning in rural and northern communities that make the NMP unique.

So, is the Northern Medical Program working? Yes.

In March, graduating medical students across Canada were assigned their residency placements, the final step in their education before becoming full-fledged physicians. Seven NMP graduates were assigned to the nine available residency positions in Prince George and one NMP graduate will be the first to fill a new residency position in Fort St. John. In all, half of the first NMP grads will be completing their residency in rural and northern communities. Perhaps of greater long-term significance, 70% of NMP grads have selected Family Practice as their specialty, a rate roughly double to what other Canadian medical schools produce.

The NMP isn't just the sum of what can be achieved when UNBC and UBC work together. Rather, it's significant because it provides evidence of what can be achieved when communities, physicians, health authorities, governments, and educators all work together.



NMP students during the course of their studies

NMP grads on their clinical placements around northern BC:

"While in Dawson Creek, I became aware of the limited resources smaller communities have, such as having few specialists and long waiting times for imaging such as CTs. Many patients needed to travel to Grande Prairie or farther to attain specialist care. This opened my eyes to the difference in the practice of medicine in smaller towns versus large cities."

– Sharona Supernault

"Having the opportunity to spend a month doing general surgery in Terrace has been an absolute treat. Though I have been spoiled in my medical education being from the NMP, the amount of one-on-one time I've had with clinicians has been unparalleled. Terrace has far exceeded my expectations in the quality of life and recreational opportunities enjoyed by local physicians."

– Dan Jenkins

"My expectations of my rural family medicine elective in Quesnel were well met without a doubt. I was welcomed warmly by both staff and patients alike, and was afforded the flexibility to tailor my elective experience to my learning needs. I spent two weeks with two different family physicians who practice in separate clinics, and consequently I was able to benefit from exposure to a diverse patient population and unique styles of general practice."

– Karen Trueman

"Often, the perception is that being a family physician in a rural community is somehow less exciting or less interesting. This rotation has confirmed my belief that this could not be further from the truth. I'm left even more excited about my decision to settle in and serve a smaller community once I become a practicing physician."

– Laura Malley

Graduation Events

May 10 – 7:00am
 NMP grads host a pancake breakfast at Prince George

May 10 – 1:30pm
 NMP graduation celebration at UNBC's Prince George Regional Hospital to thank staff, physicians, and patients.

May 21 – 8:30am
 Official congregation ceremony at UBC in Vancouver.

www.unbc.ca/nmp



Alumni News & Events

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Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 17th at UNBC. Don't miss out – this is an election year!

Annual Golf Tournament

The 9th Annual Alumni Charity Golf Tournament will be held on May 29th. Last year's sold-out event raised more than \$18,000 for UNBC Athletics.

Homecoming

Mark September 18th and 19th on your calendar for the 2nd annual Alumni Homecoming! Events will include a golf tournament, pub night, alumni awards presentations, athletics events, and more.

Alumni discount at the NSC

Alumni can now receive the corporate membership rate at the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre.

Career Advancement Program

Looking to hire? The CAP program enables alumni to post employment opportunities to students and other alumni. www.unbc.ca/alumni

New Alumni Membership Cards

The alumni membership card is now the UNBC student ID card and includes the Alumni Association logo. Obtain or update your card at UNBC's Cashier's office.



Charlee Hawes, Michael Dieleman, and Erin Smith of Smithers will join the ranks of UNBC Alumni this year. For the first time in a decade, Convocation will be held on campus. Two ceremonies – one in the morning and the other in the afternoon – will take place in the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre on May 30th.

UNBC Alumni

The first-ever convocation ceremony in Prince Rupert will take place this year, celebrating about 30 Tsimshian Language and Social Work grads who completed their studies in Prince Rupert.

Jamie Eason (BSc Forestry '03) is a Silviculture Forester for Canadian Forest Products in Campbell River, BC.

Brendon Ogmundson (BComm Finance '03) is an Economist with Price Waterhouse Coopers in Vancouver, BC. He completed a master's degree in Economics from SFU.

David Cullum (BA History '97) is a Sherriff for the Alberta government in Red Deer, AB.

Marti Katerberg (BA Political Science '98) is a lawyer for Fletcher and Company in Prince George, BC. She practices family law and civil litigation.

Dustin White (BComm Finance & International Business '02) is a Sales Manager for GE Capital in Westbank, BC. He specializes in Commercial Banking.

Melanie Makinaw (BA Social Work '01) is a Case Worker with the Kasohkewew Child Wellness Society in Wetaskiwin, Alberta.

Brian Bell (BSc Fish and Wildlife Management '06) is the Southern Lakes Fish and Wildlife Technician for Environment Yukon in Whitehorse, YK. His main focus is the recovery of the local woodland caribou herd.

Jodie Kennedy Baker (BA English '97) and her husband Steve are teachers in Prince George, BC. They are both currently enrolled in UNBC's Master of Education program.

Maruf Monwar (MSc Computer Science '07) works in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Calgary where he is completing a PhD degree.

Tracy Dolan (MSc Community Health '01) has worked for six years at the Christian Children's Fund in Aspen, Colorado, as a Global HIV Specialist, Senior Health Specialist, and now the Advisor on Child and Youth Participation.

www.unbc.ca/alumni

Teaching to Survive

UNBC grad Warner Naziel provides help to a struggling community

When I arrived in Fort Chipewyan in Northern Alberta to teach a course in Environmental Management, a young man of twenty nine had just succumbed to a rare form of cancer. This was a grim reminder that I had entered a region Health Canada is investigating for suspiciously high rates of the disease. By the time my course came to an end, three more people in this small community of 1,000 were buried – all from cancer. Many residents of this town feel staggering cancer rates are fallout from industrial development. This is why they brought me to their community.

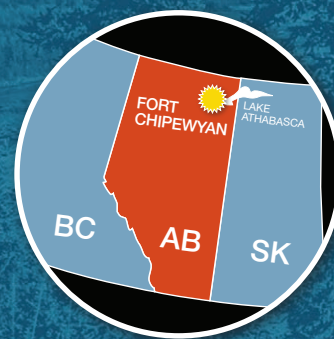
I help certify students to become Environmental Monitors equipped to oversee the planning, implementation, and the assessment of industrial developments. The students learn about industries such as mining, forestry, and oil and gas. They also learn about environmental legislation and conflict resolution. Most importantly, I try to give them the hands-on skills that will enable them to monitor the state of the environment on their own lands.

Many of the people in "Fort Chip" are concerned about the oil and gas pipelines, drilling platforms, ever-increasing logging activity, and pulp and paper mills on the sub-arctic marshes and bogs that make up their traditional territory. There is also oil sands development and a uranium mine situated on the eastern shore of Lake Athabasca – Fort Chipewyan's life source. Now there is a proposal to put an open-pit uranium mine right next door to the community. Some of the Chipewyan elders speak of an ancient prophecy foretelling of a time when the land and animals would rise up and destroy the people. Many are worried that this time has come.

But now, residents of Fort Chipewyan are gaining vital skills to help ensure a healthy destiny for their land and people. Enabling this community to conduct environmental research was my responsibility. Shouldn't we all share that responsibility for the sake of our continued existence on this earth?



Warner (left) with his students in Fort Chipewyan.



Fort Chipewyan

Fort Chipewyan is located on the northwestern tip of Lake Athabasca. Its population of around 1,000 is mostly comprised of Chipewyan and Cree First Nations. The community is only accessible by air, boat, or ice roads in the winter.

Warner Naziel

Warner graduated from UNBC in 2006 with a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology and First Nations Studies. He now owns a research company that applies academic and professional research to traditional use studies and wildlife impact assessments.

Get involved with the UNBC Alumni Association! Call (250) 960-5873 or email alumni@unbc.ca.

UNBC Donations

Office of University Advancement

UNBC, 3333 University Way
Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9

Phone: (250) 960-5750
Toll-free: 1-866-960-5750
Email: advancement@unbc.ca

We are located in room 1065 on the main floor of the Administration building.



2009 Wall Calendar Support UNBC students

UNBC is pleased to present an elegant, limited-edition wall calendar featuring stunning photos of the northern BC region and UNBC's campuses.

\$20.00 (taxes included)
Proceeds from the sale of the wall calendar support UNBC students directly through scholarships and bursaries.

Features:

- 16 months: September 2008 to December 2009
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This limited-edition UNBC wall calendar is now available for \$20. Proceeds support students directly through scholarships and bursaries.

Giving to UNBC

Supporting UNBC can be as simple as going online. Visit the Giving website at www.unbc.ca/giving.

Ewert Event

Former Premier of Alberta Ralph Klein spoke at the 2008 Dr. Bob Ewert Memorial Lecture, Dinner, and Dance in January. More than 540 guests attended the event, which was held in support of the Northern Medical Programs Trust.

Vernon C. Brink

UNBC pays tribute to Vernon C. Brink, one of BC's most respected educators, researchers, and conservationists who passed away in December. Vernon devoted his life to conserving and promoting our natural environment. Last year, he established a scholarship for the study of biological diversity at UNBC.

Wolf Club Success

More than 120 supporters have become members of the new UNBC Wolf Club program, raising \$31,400 in support of UNBC Athletics. The annual membership includes tickets to all basketball home games, a club jacket, and several other benefits. UNBC Athletics attracted a record number of donors in 2007.



Spectra Energy Awards

Spectra Energy Transmission recently awarded ten Aboriginal students each with \$2,500 bursaries. The new awards mark the company's 50th year of operations in BC.

The recipients are all from northern BC and enrolled in a variety of programs: Education, Social Work, Business, Psychology, English, Nursing, History, and First Nations Studies.

More than 10% of UNBC's students are Aboriginal, the highest proportion of any university in British Columbia.

UNBC Donors: Making a Difference



Above: Elly Johnsen (centre) with UNBC Northern Timberwolves members Carlye Hicks (left) and Laurel Wallace.

HoopDreams

In 2006, Elly Johnsen established a personal foundation with the primary goal of providing funds for UNBC athletes to assist them in their pursuit of academic and life goals.

What started off as a way to gain some exposure for her investment and financial planning practice has become much more. In two short years, the number of scholarships has jumped from two to ten per year while the value has increased five-fold to \$25,000. However, the real story is the effect the award has had on the promising young lives of two members of UNBC's Northern Timberwolves.

Carlye Hicks, a fifth year Nursing student, says without the scholarship, she simply would not have been able to come back to school or play ball. "Last summer, I had a serious crisis in my family, which prevented me from working and earning the money needed for tuition. Elly's scholarship unlocked the door for me to return after a difficult period."

Hicks' teammate, Psychology student Laurel Wallace, adds that having financial assistance allows her to focus better on her athletic and academic experience at UNBC. "The commitment required to play basketball leaves very limited time to work throughout the school year. The financial assistance

from Elly enabled me to focus my time on basketball and academics, which is a huge relief and I feel very fortunate."

For her part, Elly Johnsen says she simply feels glad she is in a position to give back to the community and make a difference in the lives of others. Asked why she felt compelled to start the foundation, Elly's answer is simple. "If you ask any donor why they give, they will tell you they give because giving feels good. Plus, when I see the positive impact my giving has on people's lives, it makes me want to give more."

www.unbc.ca/giving

People in the News

Green is a theme for 2008. The UNBC community is taking on environmental issues through research, teaching, learning – and doing! www.unbc.ca/green

UNBC professor Dr. Ken Prkachin

No Pain, No Gain

Ken Prkachin's research often leads to painful places. The Psychology professor studies the way we communicate when we are in pain. His work, which looks specifically at facial expressions, will be featured in a documentary at the Montreal Film Festival later this year.

Dr. Prkachin's latest research reveals that certain areas of the human brain are activated when pain is experienced and that these same areas are similarly affected when we witness pain in others.

"It suggests that humans possess an instinctive form of empathy," says Prkachin. "This characteristic is much, much stronger in humans than in any other animal. It has broad implications for how and why we came together to form a complex culture and society."



Budding Cancer Researcher

15 year old Taneille Johnson of Fort St. John has been studying the growth of cancer cells with renowned UNBC cancer researcher Dr. Chow Lee as part of a provincial mentorship program. Taneille recently placed third in a national science fair competition.

New Provost and CFO

UNBC's senior administration team has been filled out with the additions of Dr. Mark Dale as Provost (the University's top academic administrator) and Eileen Bray as Chief Financial Officer. They join UNBC president Dr. Don Cozzetto in the top three executive positions at the University.



Homeless Students

UNBC students recently hosted two events to draw attention to local homelessness and raise funds at the same time. Students in residence hosted a dance that raised \$1,500 toward the work of a Prince George agency supporting the homeless. Five students also participated in the national Five Days for the Homeless program, during which they slept outside, had no disposable income, and could only consume foods that were donated to them.



Our Pacific Leaders

Hardy Griesbauer, Kara Przczek, and Marc Steynen are UNBC's first students to receive the prestigious Pacific Leaders Graduate Student Fellowship. They are researching climate change, snow-melt, and forestry-dependent communities. The graduate fellowships honour top master's and PhD students who will spend up to two years researching key issues affecting the province.

Premier's Awards

UNBC was recently recognized by Premier Gordon Campbell for its involvement in two programs that underscore the importance of collaboration with government. The Aboriginal Social Worker Recruitment Program received a gold award for helping to increase the number of Aboriginal social workers in northern BC. A bronze medal was awarded to the Muskwa-Kechika Management Program, in which UNBC works with citizens and government to conduct research aimed at environmental sustainability in the Northern Rockies.

Waste Audit

How much garbage does a university produce? A lot, according to a waste audit conducted by a group of UNBC students in March. In sifting through just two days' worth of garbage, the students found more than 1,700 coffee cups and 150kg of material that could have otherwise been composted. The audit will inform UNBC plans to become more green.



Dramatic Event

UNBC's Drama Club attracted more than 260 spectators to *The Real Inspector Hound* in April, the club's biggest and most popular play to date. Work on the production, which was the club's first full-length performance, started in January and involved a dozen students.



Pine Beetle Genetics

UNBC professors Brian Aukema, Dezene Huber, and Brent Murray are part of a landmark research program examining the genetic relationship between pine beetles, the fungus they produce, and the trees they kill.

The \$4 million project is being funded by Genome BC and Genome Alberta and also involves researchers at UBC, the University of Alberta, and the Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre in Vancouver.

Glaciers Feeling the Heat

PhD student Matt Beedle recently won an award for top doctoral presentation from the Canadian Association of Geographers for research he conducted on glacier retreat near McBride. The glacier, known locally as Roberts Glacier, provides a rare geological record of glacial retreat in the form of a series of annual moraines, similar to reading tree rings. In fact, the glacier has retreated roughly 750 metres since 1959 and melting has accelerated in recent years largely due to rising summer temperatures. Beedle's research is part of the Western Canadian Cryospheric Network, a major research program based at UNBC that is exploring the fate of BC's glaciers.



Top Delegates

UNBC students Theon te Koeti (Physics) and Kyle Guy (Political Science) recently walked away from a national Model United Nations simulation in Ottawa with the top two delegate awards, beating out 650 other participants

from more than 50 universities in Canada, US, and Afghanistan. The two were part of a debate about nuclear disarmament and ballistic missile defense.

www.unbc.ca/releases

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Carbon Tax

The New Cost of Consumption

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Canadians are among the worst contributors of greenhouse gases on the planet. Per capita, we contribute more than our American neighbours and significantly more than the Swedes and Norwegians (other residents of cold climates). However, surveys, including my own, have shown that Canadians care deeply about the environment. It follows that we should be thinking more about our carbon footprint.

Most of our daily activities involve energy use, yet the majority of us rarely think about energy conservation. For example, in a recent survey that we conducted as part of the UNBC sustainable landscaping project, Prince George residents stated that environmental conservation should be one of the top concerns of the municipal government. However, residents also admitted that they rarely thought about environmental conservation when making decisions about activities such as the landscaping practices they use in their own yards.

In an effort to get us thinking more about the environment, the Government of BC recently introduced the first carbon tax in North America. It's based on the simple idea that increasing the cost of carbon-emitting fuels will discourage their use. And this is a valid assumption. As a psychologist interested in the factors that motivate and impede people's conservation efforts, I know that changing people's behaviour is not easy and educational campaigns on their own have little impact. In terms of reducing people's energy consumption, the carbon tax has three strengths: it affects a wide range of behaviours, it brings some of the costs of our energy consumption into the immediate short-term, and it generates funds for incentive programs that can further encourage energy conservation.

Environmental problems are challenging because they are collective rather than individual: no one person causes climate change and no one person can stop it. Collective problems require strategies that influence the behaviour of large numbers of people. A carbon tax is one of the few strategies that can influence a wide range of behaviours. Also, with energy-consumption, the positive outcomes

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are immediate (e.g., an SUV gives us access to the outdoors, it makes us feel safe, and it offers a “cool” image), but the negative environmental outcomes of gas-guzzling vehicles emerge much later in time and thus tend to have a weaker influence over our behaviour.

A carbon tax brings some costs of fossil-fuel use into the short-term and thus can make us think about different choices now rather than later, when the problem becomes much more serious and difficult to solve.

Policy makers have to realize, however, that many aspects of our energy-consumptive lifestyle are governed by forces beyond the control of the individual. Societal barriers to conservation include lack of affordable access to renewable energy or to energy-efficient products (cars, trucks, water heaters, and appliances), leaky and poorly-insulated home and rental-accommodation, and car-dependent urban and regional planning and design. All have an enormous influence on people's choices and ability to reduce their use of fossil fuels. Until some of these barriers are removed, the affordable choices for energy conservation are very limited. But the carbon tax might help with this by getting us to start pressuring government and business to make energy-efficiency a priority and demand that money collected from the carbon tax goes into making a more energy-efficient lifestyle accessible.

Loraine Lavallee

Dr. Loraine Lavallee is a Psychology professor at UNBC. She is one of a handful of researchers in Canada specializing in the area of conservation psychology. Her work focuses on the social implications of resource use, including people's willingness to share natural resources, conflict over forestry, and environmental values associated with forestry.