

tackling RURAL HEALTH

Living in rural or remote areas is a health risk. In every province, rural individuals have poorer access to health care: often great distances must be traveled to obtain basic health services that those in urban areas can find around the corner; if surgery is needed, further travel is necessary, as these services are usually only offered in regional centres or large metropolitan areas; this distance/access barrier results in delayed diagnosis and treatment which in turn results in poorer outcome; in addition, fewer follow-up and rehabilitation care options are available in rural areas putting a greater burden on patients and their families. Having lived and worked in rural environments for most of our lives, we find this situation unpalatable. It should not be an inevitable result of a rural lifestyle that health outcomes are poorer than those of urban dwellers.

But what, really, is the problem? Our lifestyles, the amount we smoke, our occupations, and the distances we have to travel to access health services all affect the bottom line: living in rural and remote areas is a health risk. The problem is, we don't really know how much of a health risk. Rurality is not black and white. Some places are more rural than others and the effects can change depending on the issue. In our work, we are developing more specific measures of rurality, based on travel burden and service availability, which will be more effective than the traditional approach of dividing populations into arbitrary urban/rural splits. As a society, we've already measured health factors such as age, ethnicity, and gender, but we've never really done it with the simple (and hugely important) factor of where we live. Unlike those other factors, geography is a modifiable risk factor. At first, that sounds counter-intuitive, but we're not talking about shrinking distances literally. Instead, we can do it by developing new access models based on rural-based research that involves rural people and their perspectives.

Providing valid information to rural policy makers through well-designed studies can make a contribution to the well-being of northern and rural residents. We acknowledge that living in rural or remote areas is a health risk. We just want to do something about it.

UPDATE is published by Office of Communications of the University of Northern British Columbia. Its purpose is to provide information on the University's development to a wide audience with an interest in UNBC's progress. Readers will appreciate that the articles, while attempting to be as accurate as possible, should not be read as definitive statements of University policy.



Karen Kelly and Don Voaklander are leading the BC Rural & Remote Health Research Institute at UNBC. Karen, Don and their three children have recently moved to Prince George from Australia after examining rural health issues in Australia.

Moving? Let us know!

UPDATE

Office of Communications
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC V2N 4Z9

Name: _____

New Address: _____

Telephone: _____

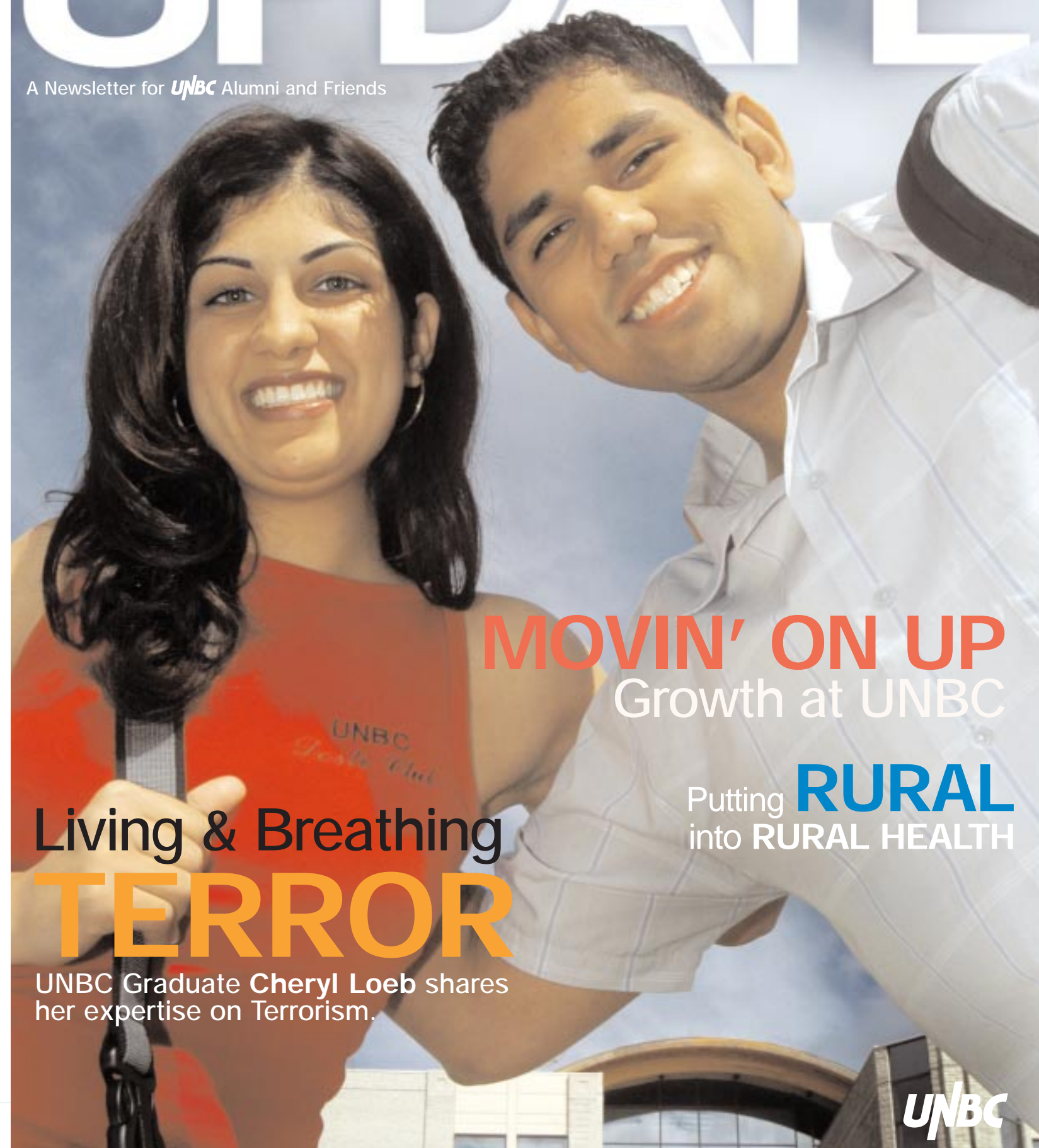
Email: _____

Are you a UNBC Grad? yes no

UPDATE

UPDATE

A Newsletter for UNBC Alumni and Friends



MOVIN' ON UP
Growth at UNBC

Putting **RURAL**
into RURAL HEALTH

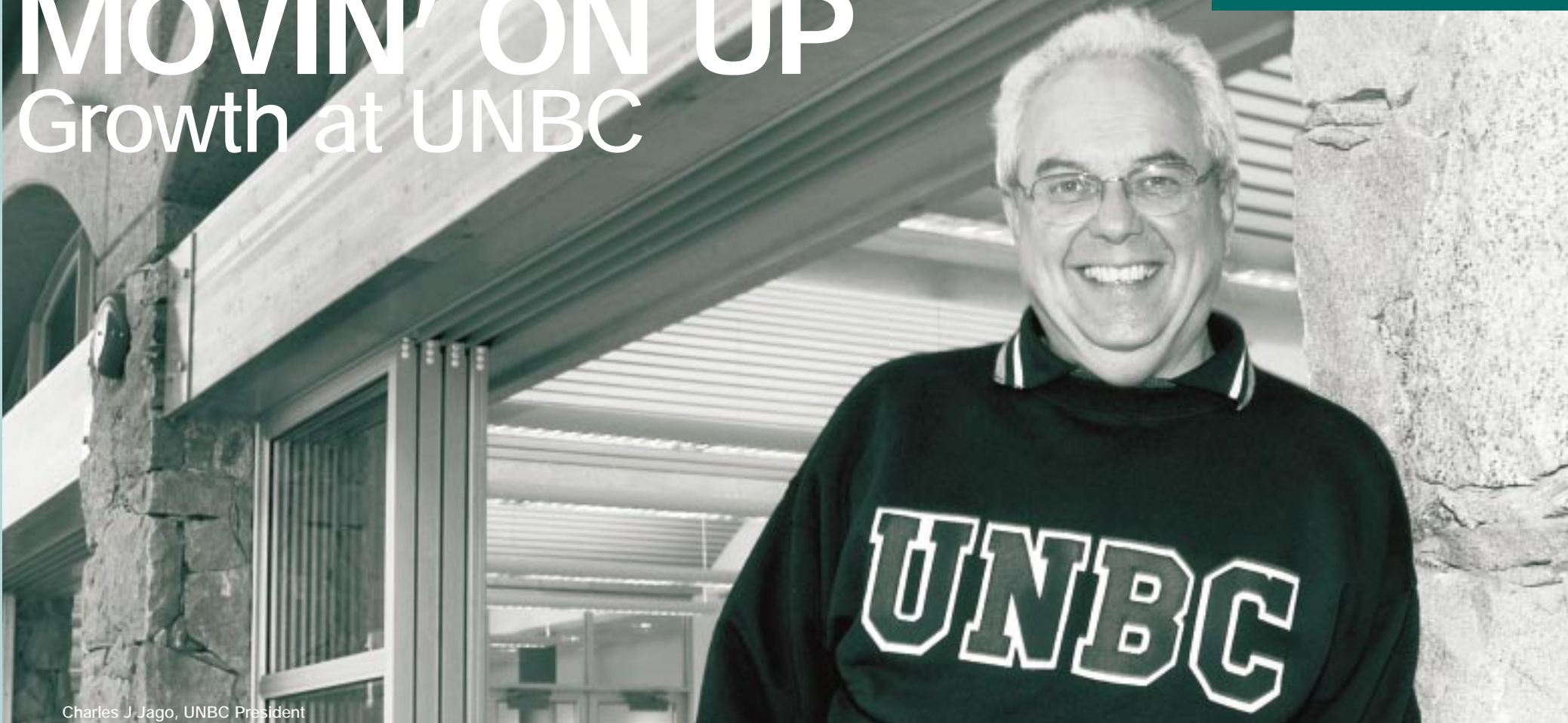
Living & Breathing
TERROR

UNBC Graduate Cheryl Loeb shares her expertise on Terrorism.

UNBC

MOVIN' ON UP

Growth at UNBC



Charles J. Jago, UNBC President

Flashback 1994: The Queen opens the Prince George campus and full operations begin for UNBC. It was a period of remarkable growth. Look around UNBC today, and you'll see signs of amazing growth again.

This summer, the Act that initially set up UNBC was repealed, with UNBC now falling under the same legislation that governs other BC universities. It had a few practical implications, but huge symbolic significance. There are three new programs starting this year (a bachelor of education, environmental engineering, and a master's in disability management), more than \$20 million worth of new buildings – the Bentley Centre and lab expansion – opened this fall, planning continues for the Northern Medical Program, a \$12

million health science building is being designed with construction to begin this spring, and an expansion to the new Lab to accommodate high-tech programs and R&D is already being eyed. UNBC hasn't witnessed such growth since the early 1990s.

UNBC will soon be educating doctors and engineers and providing additional opportunities for professional education and research around northern BC

“The University has been heavily into projects for the last year or two, many of which are having significant effects on the

look of UNBC,” says President Charles Jago, the quarterback behind many of the new initiatives.

As a result, UNBC will soon be educating doctors and engineers and providing additional opportunities for professional education and research around northern BC. The importance of doing so is reflected in a recent BC survey of university graduates five years after graduation. On average, only 5% of BC university graduates were living in northern BC, compared to 73% of UNBC's grads. Growth is necessary to produce the specialists who will shape northern BC's future.

For more news and information visit UNBC online at:
www.unbc.ca

UPDATE

What's Happening at UNBC

Short Stories

- A group of Business students are no doubt handing out stock tips after winning the national TD Waterhouse Investment Challenge. The 500 teams from across Canada who participated were judged on their ability to manage an investment - the UNBC class posted the best average return.
- 550 students graduated in 2002, pushing the number of alumni to 2900. Honorary degrees were given to artist Freda Diesing & forester Ike Barber.
- UNBC's new Disability Management program has already received a national award for excellence in teaching innovation.



Worldly Education ▲

Ten UNBC Geography students and their professors (pictured above) had the learning experience of a lifetime in South Africa this summer. Traveling from tropical areas to snow storms at 13,000 feet, the group covered 3500km, exploring everything from the structures of local landforms to social issues. Meanwhile, a small group of Anthropology students were in Gustafsen Lake, participating in an archaeological field school hosted by the Cariboo Tribal Council. Some of their findings indicate that usage of the area may be older than previously thought.

UNBC FACTBOX

Construction of the building that will house medical education is to begin in the spring

The new bachelor of education degree had 70 applications for its first 30 spaces

Students will complete more than half of their environmental engineering education at UNBC, with the remainder at UBC

Over the past three years, student enrolments in regional campuses grew an average of 16% per year



Academic Year #11 ▲

UNBC has come a long way since the first 70 students registered for classes in 1992. Ten years later, UNBC has 3500 students with more than 300 first-years participating in Student Success Week – a week-long orientation to UNBC and Prince George. Activities included study skill workshops and social events that included team-building exercises, the wacky Olympics, and a reception for parents. Although still about \$1000 less than the Canadian average, tuition fees this year rose about \$500 to just over \$2750 per year for a full-time student.

UPDATE



2002 Alumni Association Executive

Left to right: Darren Ditto, Director; Robin Cawood, Recorder; Mark Stafford, President; Karl Penner, Director; Jason Plank, Treasurer; missing: Brad Lundgren.

Where are they now?

Jason Yarmish

(BSc 2002) is a Biologist for the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation Natural Resources Department and is studying the population of the Upper Fraser River White Sturgeon which are considered endangered species.

Jason Nazar

(BSc 2000) participated in the National Baseball Championships held in PG in August.

James Moore

(BA 2001) was named *Alumni of the Year* at the annual Alumni Reception held in May. James is Member of Parliament, the youngest elected member in British Columbia's history.

Troy Morin

(BSW 2001) is the Aboriginal Education Coordinator for School District # 91 Nechako Lakes.

Damien Maile

(BSc 1998) is an RCMP officer in Saskatchewan.

David Llewellyn

(BSc 1997) is a Medicinal Chemist for MethylGene Inc. in Montreal.

Lana Sullivan

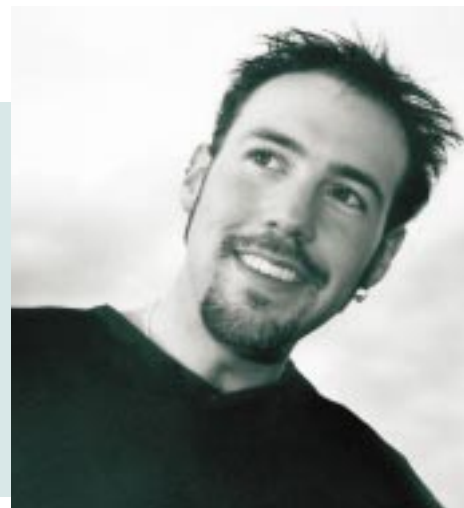
(BA 1998) is a Research Associate for the BC Centre of Excellence for Women's Health.

Rayma Rediker

(BSc 2001) is a Youth Alcohol & Drug Prevention Worker at the Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert.

Ken Miscovitch

(BA 1999) is an Engineering Technologist for UDI_TETRA Engineers in Concord, California.



Alumni Profile: Justin Bisson ▶

Justin (BSc 2002) received the national *Shell Award for Teaching Excellence* this summer recognizing his dedication to making math and science interesting to young people. Justin is currently a math tutor at UNBC.

ASSOCIATIONNEWS

We're looking for volunteers to serve on the executive, help organize some special events and assist with fundraising. Contact Robin at rcawood@go.com.

The Alumni Gardens is expanding. We started outside of the Upper Cafeteria and will now also be beautifying the planters outside of the original lab building. The beds will be ready for planting this spring – stay tuned!

Wine & Cheese

Grads are invited to a wine & cheese reception and tour of the new Bentley Centre and Lab Expansion, Thursday, November 21 from 6-9pm. To RSVP call Jennifer at 960-5620 or hammond@unbc.ca.

To submit an update for a future newsletter or change your address online, go to: www.unbc.ca/alumni

Terrorism:

Cheryl Loeb

Terrorism is the first thing I think about in the morning. It's the last thing I think about at night. I started studying terrorism while I was a student at UNBC and to be working in Washington with world leaders in the field has been an incredible learning experience. Thanks to every prof who allowed me to direct my research to some issue related to terrorism or security.

September 11 is so significant, but for me, the anthrax scare that followed changed my perspective on terrorism and biological weapons. Some were saying it would never happen; that biological weapons weren't a realistic threat. Those who study biological weapons are members of a small community – at recent meetings in Washington, I was probably the only one under 40-years

Many extremist groups are not only willing, but also prepared to cause mass casualties in order to achieve their radical goals.

old and the only non-American. Sitting around the table with diplomats, non-proliferation experts, and pharmaceutical company representatives, I was struck by how interesting and frustrating this issue can be. For example, the Biological Weapons Convention actually encourages biological weapon research and possession for defensive purposes. Unfortunately, the more normal these things become, the greater, I believe, the risk for use.

Hype or Reality?



Terrorism is no longer a phenomenon that only occurs in the Gaza strip, in the disputed regions of Kashmir, and in other war-torn and conflicted areas of the world. Hundreds of different terror groups are currently active throughout the world. Some of these groups harbor an intense hatred and suspicion of not only the American government, but also the entire Western world. Many of these extremist groups are not only willing, but also prepared to cause mass casualties in order to

achieve their radical goals. Attacks in Oklahoma, Washington, and New York underline the point.

Reflecting on the one-year anniversary of the most deadly terrorist attack ever to occur in North America, let us be reminded that terrorism was and continues to be a clear and present danger. Without a doubt, the threat from continued acts of terrorism is a possibility we dare not ignore.

Cheryl Loeb is a graduate of UNBC, earning both a BA (2000) and MA (2001) in International Studies. Upon completion of her undergraduate degree, Cheryl moved far from her hometown of Courtney, BC to Bonn, Germany where she worked at the Bonn International Center for Conversion. Her research has included studying chemical weapons destruction, weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. She left Germany to take a research associate position at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in Washington DC. This was where Cheryl was on September 11, this was where she heard about the terrorist attacks on the WTC and Pentagon and where she learned that her research was about to become very personal. Cheryl has recently accepted a position as Associate Research Professor in the Centre for Technology & National Security Policy at the National Defense University in Washington, DC.



critical SUPPORT

Peter Bentley was one of the donors acknowledged recently during the official opening ceremony for the Bentley Centre and lab expansion (both pictured above). The building named in his honour connects the 60,000 square foot lab expansion to the rest of the campus and recognizes Mr Bentley's \$1.2 million contribution – UNBC's largest from an individual. Other donors to the buildings included the provincial government, the Bank of Montreal, and Mitsui Co. of Canada Ltd.

- CIBC has contributed \$250,000 to become a partner in the Northern Advancement Program, a program to assist students from rural and First Nations communities in making the transition to university.

- Weyerhaeuser, the WCB, Forest Renewal BC, and ICBC have all been founding contributors to the new Disability Management program, providing funding for a faculty position, student support, and research.
- 18 northern BC communities have pledged to raise \$4 million over the next five years to increase financial support for northern students pursuing health education in the North. Launched in tandem with UNBC's planned physician training program, the Northern Medical Programs Trust will be managed by the communities that participate in the fundraising initiative. For the communities, their involvement in the program is part of their response to the critical need for more health professionals in rural areas.



Where are we at?

Since 1998, UNBC has been working towards a \$15 million fundraising goal outlined in the 7-year Building on Success campaign. With about \$13 million raised, UNBC is reaching its target, but many more fundraising priorities are lining up: Northern Medical Program student support (\$6 million), BC Rural & Remote Health Research Institute (\$2 million), the Archives (\$1.2 million), the BC Leadership Chairs (\$2.5 million each), and of course a hoped-for Sportsplex. The new projects outstretch the original goal but are critical to UNBC's continued growth. In fact, UNBC has never had more projects than it does now; a testament to its opportunities for expanding community capacity in the North.

Annual Campaign Aims for Student Support

Donors, alumni, parents, students, faculty and staff, businesses, and community friends from across northern BC are being asked to give to this year's annual campaign, a fundraising program to support student awards, the library, athletics, a future student union building, and the northern medical program. With tuition increases this year, the need for financial support has never been greater.

UNBCDONATIONS

For further information or to make a donation to UNBC, please contact:

Office of University Development
email: devoff@unbc.ca
phone: 1-866-960-5750
(250) 960-5750



Where are the NURSES?

Nursing prof Martha Macleod has been leading a national rural nursing study and has discovered some alarming statistics about the nature of nursing practice in rural vs urban areas. Across Canada, there are 75.6 nurses per 10,000 people, but residents of rural BC don't enjoy similar statistics. In rural areas, there are fewer than 52 nurses per 10,000 people. The 3-year research project is examining what the disparities mean for nurses in terms of their everyday practice, and will aid in developing effective training, recruitment, and retention strategies.

A Likely Story

UNBC has recently acquired the Likely Fish Hatchery on the Quesnel River, and will use the facility – and its riverfront access – as a base for research on the landscape level impacts of ranching, logging, mining, and road construction.

It's a small world

Ken Wilkening of the International Studies program recently helped to organize a major US-Taiwan environmental conference, which partly served to provide Ken with an opportunity to share some of his evidence concerning the cross-oceanic transport of pollution from Asia to North America. Where those toxins go is being pursued by Heather Myers, Ken's colleague in the International Studies program. Heather is conducting research on the awareness of the high toxicity levels in Nunavut and Labrador.

www.unbc.ca/research

National Appointments

- Biochemistry professor Chow Lee has received a National Cancer Institute research appointment for his work on the genetic factors that control the growth and aggressiveness of cancer cells. Chow – who works with seven students/research assistants – is one of only six people in Canada to receive the appointment this year and the only one from a small university.
- Joe Ackerman of the Environmental Studies program is the third UNBC professor to be named a Canada Research Chair, a program funded by the federal government to support innovation. Joe's research evaluates the impacts of physical disturbances and climate change on aquatic ecosystems. He joins Greg Halseth (small-town studies) and Lito Arocena (soils and environmental science) as CRCs at UNBC. ▶

Off Shore, On the Agenda

UNBC's Northern Land Use Institute has received \$2 million from the provincial government to expand our knowledge base about the ecological and socio-economic impacts of the potential development of an offshore oil and gas industry. The NLUI is working with communities to develop a research plan. On a terrestrial level, other UNBC research is examining remediation options of soils contaminated by petroleum and pesticides.

