

THIS IS UNBC

Fall 2019



UNBC UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

UNBC student Marina Craig folds a raven for the 1,000 Ravens for Reconciliation project.

Dreaming big Alumna publishes children's book. 7

Cleaning up Dr. Jianbing Li researching marine oil spills. 8-9

Coming home Alumnus returns to UNBC as Canada Research Chair. 14

Building Reconciliation

A message from UNBC President and Vice-Chancellor Dr. Daniel J. Weeks



UNBC President Dr. Daniel Weeks and Lheidli T'enneh Chief Clay Poutney sign an agreement that provides two options for members of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation to attend UNBC at no cost to the student.

Our country is having many conversations around reconciliation.

Educating our community is an important step. As the chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission stated, "Education has gotten us into this mess, and education will get us out."

In the four years since the TRC released its report and 94 calls to action, post-secondary leaders across the country have sought ways to respond to the calls around education. These conversations require an ongoing commitment to change and a willingness to address the unique needs of our Indigenous students and communities in order to make a lasting impact. Simply put, reconciliation is not one-size-fits-all.

UNBC took these calls to action to heart and the spirit of reconciliation has been on full display.

Recently, we welcomed Cree/Dakelh artist Clayton Gauthier who is carving cedar planks that represent various First Nations across the North as part of Nenachalhuya – The Cedar Plank Project. Nenachalhuya is a Dakelh word meaning, "You have done us great honour" or "we are thankful for what you have done." Once completed, the planks will adorn the walls of the University's Gathering Place.

We also recently launched the 1,000 Ravens for Reconciliation initiative, which encourages students, faculty and staff to take part in a hands-on activity that teaches participants about what reconciliation means while they create one of 1,000 origami ravens, symbolizing a University-wide wish for reconciliation.

And, in early October, we built upon our strong relationship with the Lheidli T'enneh Nation to forge a new partnership, believed to be the first of

its kind in Canada. It eliminates barriers to post-secondary education, providing Lheidli T'enneh members with an opportunity to access programs at the University at no cost to the student.

In addition, I was proud to travel to my hometown of Sault Ste. Marie, where UNBC co-hosted the fifth annual National Building Reconciliation Forum. We discussed and considered the role of Canadian universities as we begin the next five years of reconciliation aspirations.

It is my hope that others will look to UNBC as an example of what is possible when we are limited only by our aspirations.



Ravens for Reconciliation

We are making 1,000 origami ravens and learning about Truth and Reconciliation

Folding a small square of black origami paper isn't as easy as it seems.

Even as one watches a video along with help from UNBC First Nations Centre staff, knowing that the end result is supposed to be a tiny raven, complete with a head, beak, tail, wings, legs and feet—most become frustrated halfway through the process.

But that's the whole point behind making a raven and the 1,000 Ravens for Reconciliation campaign, explains Bev Best, Manager of Aboriginal Student Engagement.

"The building of each raven is not an easy task, but the process of reconciliation is not easy either. Know that the end result will be beautiful both in the wish and the ravens," she explains.

UNBC launched the 1,000 Ravens for Reconciliation project in September to engage the University community in learning more about what reconciliation means.

In partnership with the First Nations Centre, the goal is for members of the University community to make 1,000 origami Ravens this year to symbolize a University-wide wish for reconciliation.

The raven is an important symbol, considered a trickster that inadvertently teaches us life lessons. In a creation story, the raven stole the sun and brought light to a dark world, and will now help us bring light to reconciliation.

Students, faculty and staff will have ample opportunity to make the ravens throughout the year in the Gathering Place. Best leads the raven-making sessions, which include a talk about the importance of reconciliation, followed by a short instructional video.

Once created, the ravens are displayed prominently around campus, celebrating those who have made a personal and professional commitment to reconciliation.



"It's not about how many one person can make; it's about how many people can make one."

"It's not about how many one person can make; it's about how many people can make one," says Best.

For students who had the opportunity to make their ravens in the Gathering Place, they too became frustrated, but realized it was all part of learning about reconciliation.

"It's not easy, it doesn't happen right away," said UNBC Timberwolves men's soccer player Michael Henman. "It's all part of the process."

Investigating the controversial life and works of Sir Francis Bond Head

Imagine being in a room full of powerful people who all share the same opinion on a matter of national significance. Now imagine being the lone dissenter.

That's the focus for Dr. Kevin Hutchings who is investigating the life and literary works of Sir Francis Bond Head, as part of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant.

Bond Head was a best-selling British journalist and travel writer who governed the British colony of Upper Canada from 1836 to 1838, and held a contrarian position to his peers regarding the ideology of assimilation that came to inform Canada's residential school system.

"Sir Francis played a fascinating and controversial role in our nation's colonial history, to which past scholarship has failed to do justice," says Hutchings, an English Professor and former Canada Research Chair in Literature, Culture and Environmental Studies. "My investigation of the relationship between his literary and political activities will demonstrate the important role that literature played in English Canada's early colonial history."

Hutchings will produce the first detailed literary study of Bond Head's life and times, with a goal of demonstrating how he exploited his literary celebrity to support his often-controversial political work, including his treaty-making among First Nations in Upper Canada, and his contentious role in both inciting and crushing the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion.

Perhaps of most interest, however, is what appears to be Bond Head's stance regarding the residential school system.

"The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is concerned with finding and publishing the truth about residential schools, the sole purpose of which was to assimilate Indigenous people into 'mainstream' European Canadian society by severing them from their families, from their cultural traditions and from their language," adds Hutchings.

"During the 19th century, most members of Canada's settler society embraced the idea that Indigenous people should be converted to Christianity and be assimilated to European ways of life. Sir Francis doesn't quite fit in with that position because he came on the scene with the opposite idea. He's fascinating to me for that reason."

English Professor Dr. Kevin Hutchings is investigating how Sir Francis Bond Head's literature influenced his political work in the 19th century.





Dr. Shannon Freeman (left) and Professor Dawn Hemingway are leading the Intergenerational Activities for Growth and Engagement project.

Intergenerational friendships bloomed when a special project brought UNBC students and seniors together under the same roof.

Students spent a semester living in Northern Health's Gateway Lodge, a residential care facility in Prince George, interacting with and learning from the lodge's residents. Led by UNBC's Dr. Shannon Freeman and Prof. Dawn Hemingway, the Intergenerational Activities for Growth and Engagement (InterAGE) project is a unique research partnership between UNBC and Northern Health.

"The initial pilot with the students and residents exceeded all our expectations," explained Freeman, a School of Nursing

Assistant Professor. "The UNBC special topics course, taught on-site at Gateway Lodge, challenged the students to be reflective and to see aging not only through their own eyes but through the eyes of the residents they ended up developing close connections with."

The success of the pilot led to its continuation for the current school year. During the semester, one or two students are provided with accommodation at the lodge, living in areas not allocated for resident use, and they receive several complimentary meal tickets per month. During a typical week, students spend 10 to 15 hours meeting up with residents and enjoying activities together such as bocce ball, knitting, playing crib or dominoes, and sharing stories.

"Most surprising for me was the amount of social energy that most residents had, even those who at first appeared quiet and reserved. It didn't take much for them to open up," noted Zachary Fleck, an International Studies student who participated in the project. "The residents absolutely loved to tell their life stories and relate their experiences to me. And I also enjoyed the opportunity to share my stories with them."

"I think young people make unique conversational catalysts in this way. There is something exciting about relating stories across intergenerational divides for all involved. The more opportunity we give



young people to have these experiences, the more they would see the value in intergenerational interactions."

As part of the project, students were assigned several resident "buddies" with whom they sought to connect regularly. However, their intermingling throughout the facility led to many other meaningful connections as well.

"The experience all around has been very positive and is a reminder that older adults have as much life experience and expertise to share with young people as students have to share with seniors," said Hemingway. "The research component was also critical and will allow us to move forward with further co-housing initiatives knowing we're on solid footing."

The InterAGE research project is one of the first of its kind in B.C., and in fact the country, to compile evidence-based results on intergenerational living.

Students and seniors forge friendship and learning at Gateway Lodge

Strengthening Indigenous mental wellness

\$1.5 million collaboration supports sustainable interventions

Healthy individuals rooted in healthy communities is the focus of a unique Indigenous research partnership more than a decade in the making.

Thanks to collaboration between UNBC and Carrier Sekani Family Services, Drs. Henry Harder and Travis Holyk are undertaking a five-year project to help strengthen mental wellness and suicide prevention for Elders. The project received \$1.5 million

and stakeholders that first began in 2005, which saw them examine mental health wellness in Indigenous youth and young adults.

“This research, from its inception, has been community-led, and it was our communities that indicated that mental health and suicide prevention needed to be addressed,” said Holyk, Executive Director Research, Primary Care and Strategic Services, CSFS, and Adjunct Professor at UNBC. “The work to date has supported our organizational vision of providing services throughout the life cycle, and this next phase will help

from the Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health, part of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

The research builds on the scientists' previous work with regional First Nations communities

complete the continuum as we seek to develop sustainable interventions for Elders.”

The project will develop tools and activities that help further increase community mental wellness and improve access to interventions across the life course with a specific focus on Elders. It will also implement and evaluate interventions across member nations of Carrier Sekani Family Services and share materials created through the study with other First Nations communities.

“The motivation for our ongoing work has been to provide support and assistance to communities that are often underserved. There is a huge gap of psychological services in the North,” said Harder, a Psychology and Health Sciences Professor, and Dr. Donald B. Rix BC Leadership Chair for Aboriginal Environmental Health.

“We are looking at ways to empower First Nations communities to look at what services they themselves can provide to be of assistance to their fellow community members and to help make their communities healthier places to be, emotionally and psychologically as well as physically.”



Drs. Travis Holyk (left) and Henry Harder received funding for a project to strengthen mental wellness and suicide prevention for Elders.

“These are the messages I want young people to know and understand through my own experiences and the things that give me a sense of identity and connectedness.”



Dreams play an important role in Indigenous culture. They provide meaningful connections to a person’s past, present, future, and traditions.

When Leona Prince was gifted a dream from her friend and colleague Shelien Hadfield, it was something she took quite seriously.

“The dream was about me and about the things that were about to occur in my life,” said Prince. “I went

home and had to write this story and create this narrative to make sense out of the challenges and opportunities I was facing.”

The result is *A Dance Through the Seasons*, a children’s book

written by Prince and beautifully illustrated by Carla Joseph, a Cree artist from Prince George.

The book was launched in May at UNBC.

Written for students in Grades 4 through 7, Prince says the book comes from a personal place of growth and discovery.

“I wrote this book for students who also face challenges and opportunities in their pre-adolescent phase of life,” she says. “I believe growth happens cyclically. The book is about perseverance,

recognizing your own gifts, learning with patience, and living your purpose.

“These are the messages I want young people to know and understand through my own experiences and the things that give me a sense of identity and connectedness.”

Prince is a Dakelh woman from the Lake Babine Nation and Nak’azdli and belongs to the Likh Tsa Mis Yu Clan. A descendant of the Stiche and Chief Kwah, she is the mother of three children.

As an award-winning educator, she is the School District 91 Principal for Aboriginal Education in Nechako-Lakes.

Prince is also a UNBC alumna, holding Bachelor of Science (Biology, First Nations Studies) and Bachelor of Education degrees, and a Master of Education degree in Multidisciplinary Leadership. In 2017, she received a UNBC Distinguished Alumni – Professional Excellence Award.

She also earned an Indspire Award for Educational Leadership at the 2018 Guiding the Journey Educator Awards.

From the outset of the project, Prince knew she had to collaborate with Joseph to illustrate the book.

Joseph is talented in her own right. She received her key to become the Prince George Community Arts Council’s artist-in-residence at Studio 2880.

Prince notes that the book is not only written and illustrated by Aboriginal women, but that the company, Fireweed Canada, is Aboriginal-owned.

Dreaming big

Alumna teaching children about identity, connectedness in new book



Environmental Engineering Professor Dr. Jianbing Li will conduct experiments to explore new ways to make cleaning up marine oil spills more efficient.

Cleaning up after a spill

UNBC engineer receives \$1.9 million for oil spill response study

Dr. Jianbing Li is an engineer seeking to discover a groundbreaking solution to an important global question.

At the same time, he is a rare case, hoping his results will be used sparingly.

Li, an Environmental Engineering Professor, is leading a project to investigate improved methods to separate oil from water to make it more efficient and less costly to clean up marine oil spills. He will also conduct experiments to treat oily waste and convert it into useful energy.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada pledged \$1.9 million to fund the next stage of Li's research through the multi-partner oil spill research initiative (MPRI). The project began last fall and Li and his collaborators spent the first year

reviewing regulations and technologies and developing experiments.

“One of the purposes of this project is to enhance our response toolbox in the event of a marine oil spill,” Li explains.

Current techniques for cleaning up marine oil spills involve collecting oily wastewater from the ocean and transporting it to shore for processing or disposal. Li's research will explore ways to separate the oil from the water while the response ships are still at sea. Among the tasks Li and his fellow researchers will work on include developing improved decanting techniques to separate oil and water, exploring how oily waste can be minimized and generate useful energy, and developing an integrated oily waste management decision-support system to assist in determining the best response for marine oil spill.

The federal funding will help support 11 scientific trainee positions at UNBC, ranging from post-doctoral researchers and PhD candidates to graduate students and senior undergraduate researchers. In addition to assisting in Li's research project, the funding will provide valuable training opportunities.

“Another purpose of this project is to train the next generation of oil spill response professionals,” says Li. “This experience will help

our students become highly qualified people in the field.”

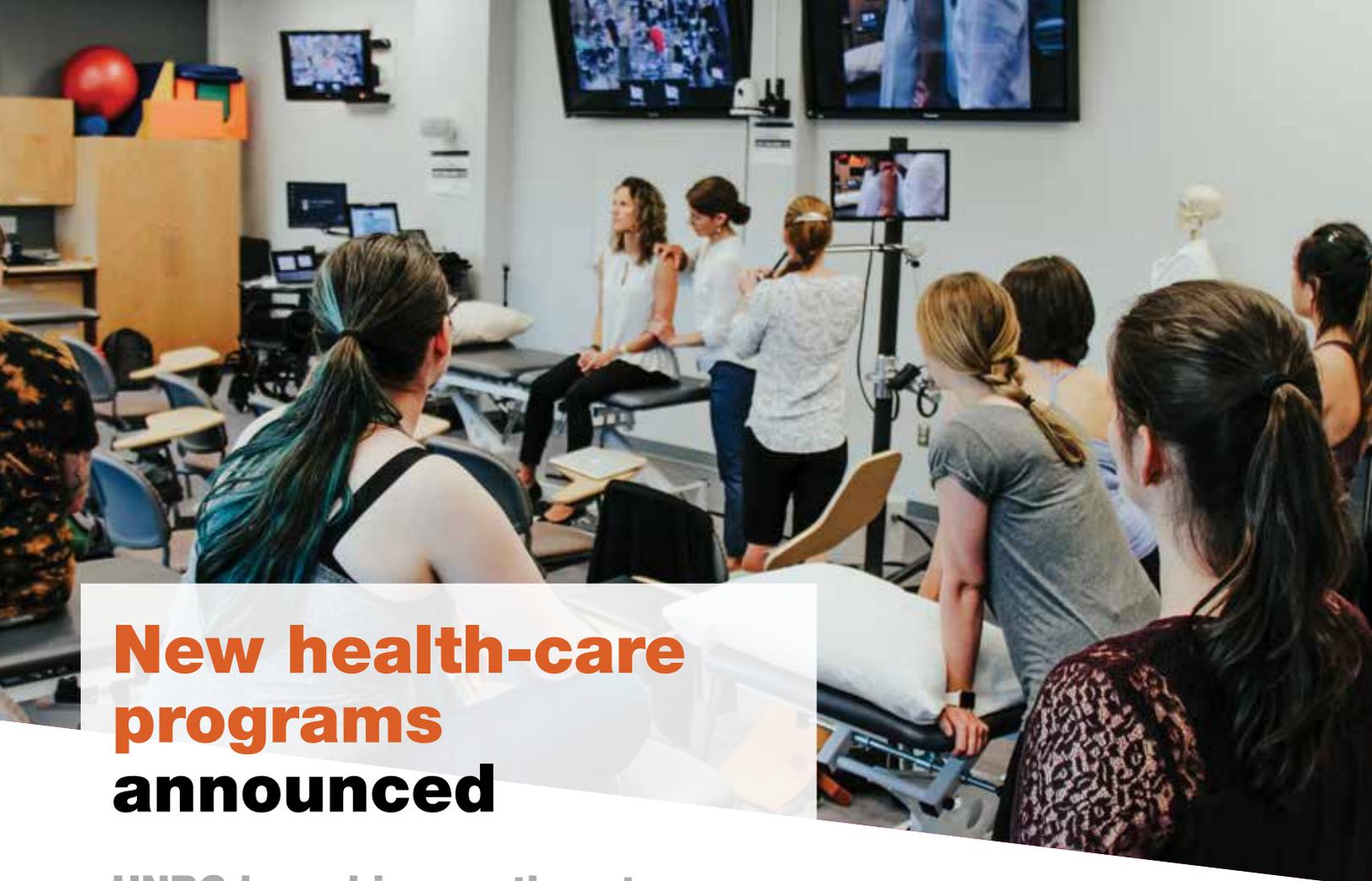
PhD candidate Nahid Hassanshahi came to UNBC from Iran to join the project. She is looking forward to applying new techniques to salvage spill oil for other uses.

“We know that oil is expensive. Not only will this research help protect our oceans, but we would like to be able to use the oil again, rather than throw it away,” she says.

Li is collaborating with researchers from Memorial, Dalhousie, the University of British Columbia – Okanagan, McGill University, the National Research Council of Canada, Huntsman Marine Science Centre and the University of California – Berkeley, as well as industry partners.

“This is an applied science project,” Li says. “As part of this project we will work with many partners, including oil-spill response corporations, to ensure the methods we test in our laboratories can be applied in the field.”

“One of the purposes of this project is to enhance our response toolbox in the event of a marine oil spill.”



New health-care programs announced

UNBC launching northeast nursing program, collaborating with UBC on physical therapy & occupational therapy

More and more opportunities are opening for students who want to stay closer to home in Northern B.C. while they earn their degrees in a variety of health-care disciplines.

This past spring, the provincial government announced new seats for physical therapy, occupational therapy and nursing at UNBC.

UNBC will partner with the University of British Columbia to expand its Master of Physical Therapy program in the North with the anticipated first intake of 20 first-year students in September 2020 in Prince George.

In partnership with UNBC, UBC will also expand its Master of Occupational

Therapy program in the North, with 16 first-year students in September 2022.

“This is great news for students and communities in the North,” said UNBC President Dr. Daniel Weeks. “We’re excited about this partnership and launching a joint northern program to support students who want to pursue careers as occupational and physical therapists. As we’ve learned from the success of our academic programming and alumni community, we know that when we train students in the North, they are more likely to stay in the North.”

Post-secondary nursing students in the northeast region of the province can also stay closer to home thanks to a new five semester, two-year Bachelor of Science in

Nursing program to be offered out of Fort St. John.

The first class of 16 students, operating out of Northern Lights College’s campus, is expected to be up and running by September 2020. Students who apply must have a minimum of 60 university transfer credits, with the program set to support 32 students at full capacity.

The nursing program is a partnership between UNBC, Northern Lights College, Northern Health and the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.



Amazon-ing connections at field school

Grad student Adrian Smith learns about ancient forest gardens in Ecuador

Immersed in a field school in the middle of the Amazon rainforest, Adrian Smith let his mind drift. How, he thought, over the course of many generations had the Indigenous people in Ecuador determined which plants to mix with each other to create medicines and other concoctions important to everyday life?

“We learned Indigenous people would take the root of one plant that grew over here and mix it with the root of another plant that grew a mile away and that is what they would use to make poison darts for hunting,” Smith says. “It would take a biochemist years to put that together.”

This summer, Smith, a recent graduate from the School of Environmental Planning, spent a week at the Yasuni Research Station in Ecuador as part of the International Summer School of

Historical Ecology in Amazonia.

The trip of a lifetime not only put a capstone on his undergraduate work; it helped kick-start his graduate studies at UNBC. This semester, he began working towards a Master of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies degree studying ancient forest gardens in Northern British Columbia. His research, under the co-supervision of UNBC Planning Professor Dr. Darwin Horning and Dr. Chelsey Geralda Armstrong from the Smithsonian Institute and University of British Columbia, involves locating places where Indigenous people conducted various forms of agriculture and the impact it has on biodiversity.

“When we locate the sites of these ancient forest gardens, whether it’s in the Amazon or right here in British Columbia, we see that plants that have useful properties for people are located closer together and in greater abundance,” Smith says.

The gardens themselves were integrated right into the forest.

“In Indigenous culture, people are part of the landscape, they thrive within it,” Smith says.

The field school brought together scholars from all over the world, including many from Central and South America. It included a mixture of classroom lectures from world-renowned experts in ethnobiology and historical-ecology and field excursions into the rainforest on foot and by boat along the Tiputini River.

“The field school was a terrific opportunity to begin to build relationships with future colleagues in my field,” Smith says.



UNBC maintains Maclean's ranking

Once again, UNBC continues to shine on the Canadian post-secondary landscape.

Maclean's Magazine released its annual university rankings this fall, and UNBC placed second in its category, the sixth consecutive year the University placed in the top two and its 12th straight year in the top three.

This year, UNBC ranked first in two categories and second in another. The first-place results are in the number of students who have won national awards, and operating budget (the funding UNBC provides on a per-student basis). UNBC placed second in the category that evaluates student-to-faculty ratio.

UNBC continued to make gains in the national reputational rankings, in which Maclean's surveys "university faculty and senior administrators, high school guidance counsellors and a variety of business people across the country, asking for their views on quality and innovation at Canadian universities." UNBC jumped three to five spots in multiple categories, in some cases passing by much larger, better-known institutions.

UNBC continued to show well in the student survey rankings as well. Most notably, the University placed first in the category related to the promotion and visibility of Indigenous history, culture and language on campus.

In addition, the Times Higher Education World University Rankings placed UNBC among the top five per cent of universities in the world for the third straight year.

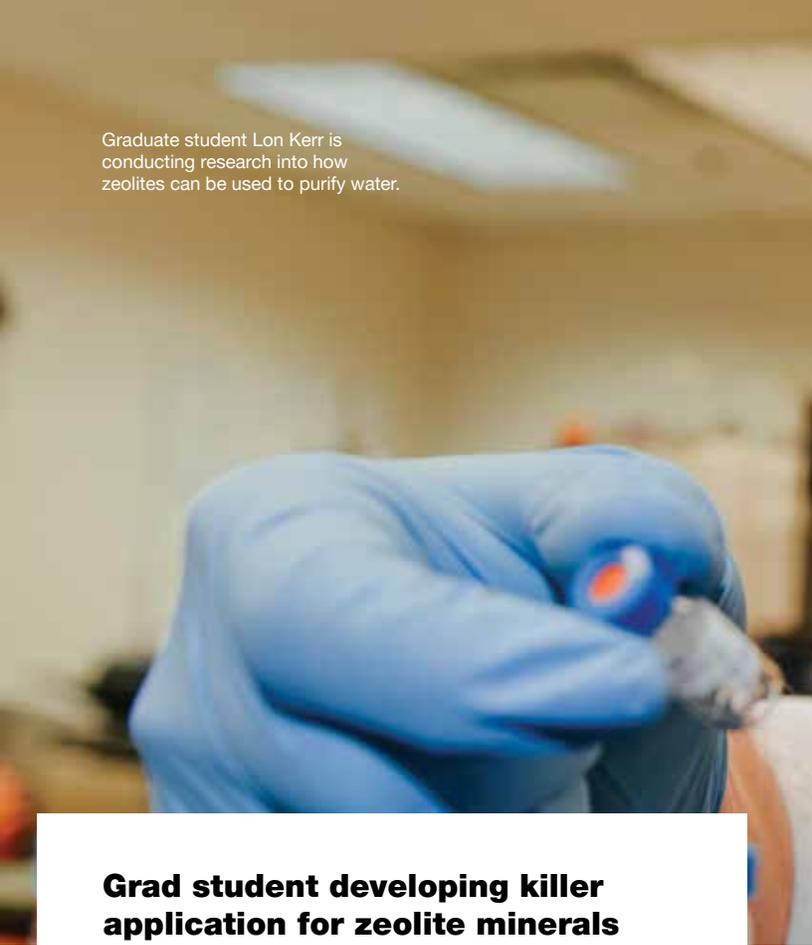
UNBC saw steady growth in each of the five categories Times Higher Education considers. The biggest jump came in citations, used to measure the influence research conducted at UNBC is having at other institutions around the world.

Second phase of David Douglas Botanical Garden launched

Whether as a backdrop for grad photos or a place to go for a quiet lunch, the David Douglas Botanical Garden is a jewel of the Prince George campus. Now the society that operates the garden is launching a new phase with a grand vision for a second garden to enhance research in botany, horticulture and arboriculture.

UNBC is committing 11 hectares (23 acres) of land located south of the residence buildings and west of the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre, for the sub-boreal forest garden.

Once complete, the garden will include a visitors' centre with a classroom, botanical library and reception hall. Outside there will be a research garden for UNBC faculty and students, themed ornamental display gardens, a wetland area with viewing platforms and an Indigenous garden developed in partnership with local First Nations. There will also be a featured pathway with overhead arbours and trellises.



Graduate student Lon Kerr is conducting research into how zeolites can be used to purify water.

Grad student developing killer application for zeolite minerals

Graduate student Lon Kerr is modifying natural zeolites, a class of porous minerals found in British Columbia, to kill bacteria in contaminated water.

Kerr, who's research is supported by Mitacs, takes zeolite samples from the International Zeolite's Bromley Creek Quarry near Princeton, B.C., washes them with deionized water and treats them with a sodium-chloride solution to remove water-soluble impurities and make a sodium-form zeolite. The purified sample is soaked in a zinc solution.

Tests confirm that zinc-modified zeolite is capable of killing 100 per cent of bacteria. Just 0.1 grams of product can reduce the cell count of bacteria-contaminated water by over two thousand per hundred milliliters, in under an hour of exposure.

"According to World Health Organization reports, by 2025, 50 per cent of the world's population will live in water-stressed regions and at least two billion people will be drinking water from sources contaminated with bacteria generated by feces," says Kerr. "These numbers show the importance of our research in developing an inexpensive, yet very effective compound for water purification, particularly for underdeveloped countries. In some cases, floods, earthquakes and other events can damage or destroy existing water treatment systems in developed communities. Zeolites are a solution for disaster that can be prepared in advanced and stored long term."



Our Stories

Our students, faculty, alumni and staff are making headlines for their work on campus and in the community. To learn more about these stories, please visit our website. unbc.ca/newsroom

Award-winning political science book

Political Science faculty members Dr. Jason Lacharite and Dr. Tracy Summerville won the British Columbia Political Studies Association 2019 Lynda Erickson Prize for their book, *The Campbell Revolution?: Power, Politics, and Policy in British Columbia*. Both UNBC researchers edited the book and contributed their own essays.

The Lynda Erickson Prize recognizes the best political science edited book by B.C. authors published in the preceding two years.

Book celebrates Métis history

Anthropology Professor Dr. Michel Bouchard co-authored a book that sheds new light on the yet-unrecognized Métis community in the Outaouais region in western Québec. Along with Sébastien Malette (Carleton) and Guillaume Marcotte (independent researcher), Bouchard explores the history of a resilient community that remained outside the preoccupations of university research, but that has been fighting for its rights and recognition since the 1960s.

Les Bois-Brûlés de l'Outaouais is currently available in French. An English-language version, titled *Bois-Brûlés: The Untold Story of the Métis of Western Québec*, is set for release later this year.

New academic structure

From two colleges to five faculties, the academic structure of UNBC is changing.

For two decades, the university's academic units have been divided between the College of Science and Management and the College of Arts, Social and Health Sciences. After an extensive consultation process, UNBC is restructuring into a new academic model.

The new faculties are Environment; Human and Health Sciences; Business and Economics; Indigenous Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities; and Science and Engineering.

The new structure will foster innovation, creativity and interdisciplinary dialogue.

If Dr. Tristan Pearce has a dream job, then perhaps the one he currently holds is it.

In July, he returned to Prince George and his alma mater when he was appointed as an Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair of Cumulative Impacts of Environmental Change in UNBC's Department of Global and International Studies.

"Returning to my hometown and UNBC for the CRC position is truly a dream," says Pearce. "I am passionate about contributing to sustainability in Prince George, UNBC and Canada and this position provides me the opportunity to do so. I love where I am from and strongly believe that making progress on global issues such as climate change and biodiversity starts at home."

When he thinks about his memories as an undergraduate student at UNBC, they're all positive.

It's the wonderful times he shared at the University and the professors who showed confidence in him as he embarked on a Bachelor of Arts degree in International Studies.

"I grew up in Prince George and came to UNBC after a semester of study at CNC and after completing high school at Kelly Road Secondary," he says. "The University provided me with a new and magical space full of opportunities. It's exciting for me to see students today who grew up in Prince George and elsewhere embracing these opportunities."

He graduated from UNBC in 2003 and went on to earn a Master of Arts in Geography/International Development and a PhD in Geography from the University of Guelph.

Today, Dr. Pearce is a geographer with an international research profile in the human dimensions of environmental change. His research has made a global contribution to the understanding of how communities in the Arctic, Australia and the Pacific Islands Region are experiencing and responding to climate

change. He works closely with people in communities and splices local and traditional knowledge together with scientific knowledge to better understand our relationships with the environment and how it is changing.

The overarching goal of his research is to contribute to the development of more sustainable environmental and social policies that better reflect and support the needs, concerns and aspirations of communities.

Having been away for more than 15 years, Pearce says UNBC has matured in many ways, but its foundation remains strong.

"People change, buildings evolve, but the ideas and culture that are the core of UNBC are bigger than any one person or structure," he says. "For me, UNBC has always been about having a world-class university located in northern B.C., focused on issues of importance to the North and internationally, and accessible to students from the North."

Coming home

Grad returns to UNBC as Canada Research Chair



Accolades for outstanding grads

Stemcells a common connection for Distinguished Alumni Award winners



Sarah White (Community Service) and Dr. David Llewellyn (Professional Practice) received 2019 Distinguished Alumni Awards at the Chancellor's Dinner in May.

“The education I received at UNBC was excellent and set the stage for my career.”

Cancer is scary.

It is physically draining. It is emotionally taxing. It is painful.

Sarah White understands all those feelings. She has lived through them as a cancer survivor. Twice.

Now the Social Work graduate is trying to make life easier for others coping with a cancer diagnosis through her work with the Northern Cancer Survivor Society. The society she founded in 2015 holds bi-monthly support groups, provides individual encouragement, arranges hospital visits and organizes fun social events.

“I was in a dark place when I started the group,” says White, who was first diagnosed with leukemia in 2012 at age 28. “Connecting with so many beautiful souls in our community, from all different backgrounds, and all ages and stages was and continues to be one of the most exceptionally profound experiences of my life.”

The disease came back a year later, but after a stem-cell transplant she has been in remission.

“I may have started this group but it is the members who make it what it is,” she says. “I am grateful for every experience I have had. People who have faced death know how to really live.”

This year, the UNBC Alumni Council presented White with the Distinguished Alumni Award for Community Service.

White is currently working on her Master of Education in Counselling degree where she is planning to apply what she learned with the Northern Cancer Survivor Society. As part of her research project, she is expecting to develop the first-ever extensive peer resource guide for those diagnosed with cancer.

For White, stem cells played a life-saving role in her battle against cancer. For Dr. David Llewellyn, they play a critical role in his professional life. Llewellyn, Senior Vice President for Business Operations at STEMCELL Technologies, received the Professional Excellence Award.

Llewellyn grew up in Prince George and was part of the first graduating class of two students from the Chemistry Department in 1997.

He regularly gives back to his alma mater, visiting UNBC to meet with students and hire UNBC graduates. He engages students in research talks discussing various initiatives at STEMCELL and provides informative lectures on the work in which his company is involved.

“The education I received at UNBC was excellent and set the stage for my career,” he says. “I am very thankful to the University and all of the time that the professors spent on my development.”

Class Notes

Be part of Class Notes: unbc.ca/alumni

1997

James Tracey (BA History) is the Integrated Pest Management Manager at TSC Nursery Sales Ltd., based in Richmond.

1998

Michael Nishizaki (BSc Environmental Science and MSc NRES 2003) is an Assistant Professor at Carleton College in Minnesota. His lab conducts research in intertidal ecology at field sites in Narragansett Bay, R.I. and Friday Harbor, Wash.

1999

Scott Forrest (MA International Studies) is the Chief Communications Officer at UArctic (University of the Arctic), based at the University of Lapland, Finland. While completing his master's degree in 1997, Scott moved to Rovaniemi, Finland. He has been involved with UArctic since its inception.



2000

Jared Kassel (BSc NRM Forestry and BSc Environmental Planning 2003) is Director of Planning & Development Services for the Municipal District of Big Horn. He leads a team of land-use planners, development officers and community development organizers to manage community development projects in the Bow Valley of south-central Alberta.



Dan Milburn (BSc Environmental Planning) is the General Manager of Planning, Properties and Permits with the District of North Vancouver.

2001

Darla Bain (BSW) (nee Huber) is an Adult Addictions Counsellor at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre.

2002

Paul Cooley (BSc Computer Science) is the Chief Technology Officer at Imprev Inc, based in Seattle. Imprev develops marketing automation platforms for the real estate industry.

2004

Julian Buck (BSc Mathematics) is a Professor in the Mathematics & Statistics Department at Okanagan College in Kelowna.



2009

Gillian Edwards (BSc Biochem & Molecular Biology) is a Registered Nurse with Interior Health. She also works as a travel nurse through Solutions Staffing. Since graduation, Gillian has travelled to more than 30 countries and hiked Mt. Kilimanjaro last year.



2010

Erin Berry (BScN) is a Registered Nurse with Vancouver Island Health Authority in Nanaimo and intends to return to UNBC to complete a MScN.

2011

Melissa Hunt (MEd Multi-Disciplinary Leadership) is the Executive Director at Childhood Connections in West Kelowna.

2012

Graham Mack (BA History) is an Associate with the law firm Fulton & Company LLP in Kamloops.

2013

C. Lee Anne Deegan (BSW) is an Instructor for the Northern Social Work Program with the University of Manitoba, in Thompson, Man.

2014

Chantelle Grafton (BSc Biology) is the Senior Regional Specialist – Water and Dyke Safety for the Government of British Columbia. **Warren Grafton (BSc Geography 2010)** is a Hydrogeologist/Partner at Western Water Associates Ltd. The two met at UNBC and have been happily married since 2014.

Chantelle has shown tremendous courage and resilience after a mountain biking accident in June left her paralyzed from the neck down. With her husband by her side, Chantelle has begun to breathe on her own, swallow and talk, surpassing doctors' expectations. Her current goal is to return to work as soon as possible.

CrossRoads Brewing, owned by alumnus **Bjorn Butow (BComm 2001)**, has created a limited-edition pale ale for the Graftons. Moby Dick beer will be available on tap soon at CrossRoads and pays homage to the trail in Valemount where Chantelle's accident took place.

A GoFundMe has been set up to support their return home to Prince George.



Lainy Nowak (nee Stevenson) (BA Political Science and Certificate in Public Administration) is a Planning Assistant for the City of Nanaimo. She recently completed her Master of Community Planning at Vancouver Island University where she conducted research on how to help cities better prepare for natural disasters and climate change. Her husband **Alex (BComm Accounting)** is a Financial Analyst at VIU.

Farah McKenzie (MScN Family Nurse Practitioner) was recognized by Myeloma Canada with the Marion State Memorial Myeloma Canada Nursing Award. Farah is a Nurse Practitioner at the BC Cancer Centre for the North in Prince George. She was awarded for her significant impact on both myeloma patients and staff. Her husband **Garth (BComm Finance 2005 and MBA 2018)** is a Senior Commercial Account Manager for Indigenous Markets at RBC.



2015

Tyler Halliday (BComm Accounting and General Business) is a Superintendent with DP World Canada in Prince Rupert.

Laurie Mercer (BComm Accounting) just completed the West Coast Trail. She is the Manager of Capacity Development for the First Nations Management Board, based out of Prince George. She assists First Nations governments with the implementation of their financial administration law.

Dustin Gagnon (BComm Finance and General Business) finished his law degree at Thompson Rivers University in 2017 and was recently called to the Bar. He is an attorney in Kamloops at his own firm, Gagnon Law.

2016

Michala Jansa (BA Political Science) is a Policy Analyst in the International and Intergovernmental Relations branch of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, based in Ottawa.

2017

Leah March (BA English and BEd 2019) recently got married and moved to Mackenzie. She teaches secondary English and social studies for School District 57.

2018

Aishat Oguntola (MA Development Economics) calls Edmonton home, working as a Financial Service Representative for CIBC.

Tofa Fakunle (BSc Psychology) recently debuted in the Canadian Premier League. Tofa signed a professional soccer contract to play with Cavalry FC in Calgary. He holds four men's Timberwolves soccer records including shots on goal and points. Tofa is thankful for the inspiration and support from UNBC coach Steve Simonson, athletics staff Lorilyn Murdoch and Rich Abney, Victoria and Malka, who work at the front desk in the dining hall, Ken and Rhonda McIntosh, and all the professors he was able to build relationships with.
Photo credit: Jim Wells, Postmedia



Over The Edge

UNBC's Official Student Newspaper

Volume 5 - Issue 10 - February 9, 1994

VARSITY NOW REALITY FOR TIMBERWOLVES

By Darynne L...
Jim O'Meara...
excited. The...
Women's am...
Basketball T...
now part of...
excited...
the oppo...
to build school...
spirit at UNBC...
and hopefully...
expand...
the future...
include...
There was...
criteria...
order for UNB...
gran...
popu...
effort...
administrat...
went to the...
basketball is...
most popular...
clubwise and...
exciting to wat...
that's the reaso...
it was chosen...
Varsity, ac...

Throwback to 1994

Moezine Hasham recalls "Starbucks coming to campus was a big deal!" Moezine also played on the second men's hockey team, called the Greywolves.



Big Sugar played at the Backyard BBQ.

Dan Milburn
UNBC P

999

Spotlight on UNBC, hosted by Rob van Adrichem, was broadcast on Shaw Cable 10 from 1993 to 2000. The entire archive can be found on the Northern BC Archives Youtube channel.



One of the first alumni events, held at the Buffalo Brewing Co. in Prince George. Laura Murphy (nee Ryser) (BA Geography 1996 and MNRES 2003) holds the banner in front.



Dan ran in the 1999 Prince George civic election for city council leveraging his planning background.



Saleem Dossa, NUGSS President '89-'99 / Ombudsperson '99-'00

Share a memory!

See yourself, let us know!
Email alumni@unbc.ca

Planning student



As a graduate of the **University of Northern British Columbia**, you and your family¹ can benefit from an **exclusive discount** on your optional car and home, condo and tenant insurance with **belairdirect**. **When you purchase a policy with belairdirect, you support UNBC students.**

Call 1.844.850.0285 or visit unbc.ca/alumni to learn more.

¹The following persons are eligible, provided they reside in British Columbia: University of Northern British Columbia Alumni, Family relatives residing with the Alumni, and Children of the Alumni.

Offers may change without notice. Certain conditions, limitations, exclusions and eligibility requirements apply to all offers. Not everyone will qualify for a phone or online quote. belairdirect only offers home insurance, travel insurance and optional auto coverage in British Columbia. Visit belairdirect.com for more details. Insurance products underwritten by **Belair Insurance Company Inc.** Services provided by belairdirect Agency Inc.
©2017 belairdirect Agency Inc. All rights reserved.



belairdirect.
car and home insurance

Enjoy your alumni privileges.
Call **1.844.850.0285** or visit unbc.ca/alumni to learn more.