

Special points of interest:

- Heidi Deal, graduate student from Dalhousie, was part of a team of researchers in NS who won *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy's best paper award for 2011* for their paper entitled "Determinants of Medication Incident Reporting, Recovery, and Learning in Community Pharmacies: A Conceptual Model"
- Sara Kirk, former PI from Dalhousie, was awarded a Scotia Support grant from the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation, which has enabled ARTC student Katie Andrien to receive scholarship support for \$6,125
- End-of-Semester Workshop for students was held in Halifax, NS, December 11-14, 2011
- Application deadline date is March 1, 2012

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Introductory Message

It's been almost a year since our last newsletter and time continues to bring growth and new development for the ARTC program. Since our last update, Dr. Rick Audas has joined the program as the new Principal Investigator at the MUN site. Dr. Audas is an Associate Professor of Health Statistics and Economics in the Faculty of Medicine at MUN. He has been involved with the ARTC program since its inception as both an instructor in the program and a supervisor to several students. We welcome his expertise, energy and enthusiasm for our program. Dr. Weiqiu Yu has also joined the program as a co-Principal Investigator at the UNB site. Dr. Yu is Chair of

the Economics Department at UNB and her expertise and background are a welcomed asset to the program.

ARTC also says good-bye to a valued partner, but hopes to welcome a new partner from the Nova Scotia region in the very near future.

This latest newsletter continues to reflect the recent happenings within our program. You will learn about the recent changes occurring within ARTC over the last year in our article on "New Faces, New Places." Our instructor profile features Dr. Kate Weaver from UNB. She discusses her latest research, her background in nursing, and her involvement with ARTC since 2009.

Our "Graduates: Where are They Now" article explores the exciting career paths of several graduates post-ARTC. We also showcase an intervention project of one of the EXTRA fellows from the St. John's region. Plus the student news section continues to highlight some of our current students whose exuberance and passion for learning continue to inspire.

We hope you enjoy learning about the ARTC and all the wonderful people associated with it as we continue to transform our exciting program in applied health services research.

Christa McGrath is the Site Coordinator from Memorial University

ARTC: New Faces, New Places

The ARTC is undergoing changes to its program and its members. With lots of ARTC news to report on, an article devoted to this theme seems appropriate.

After a one-year hiatus from admissions, we are currently accepting applications for incoming ARTC students for 2012. We look forward to meeting the new students during an orientation in August.

Sadly, Dalhousie University has decided to withdraw from the ARTC. We would like to thank everyone at Dalhousie who played a role in the ARTC over the years. We would especially like to thank Tom Rathwell, Sara Kirk and Merv Ungurain for their contributions to the Centre. We hope to add a new Nova Scotian partner soon and Saint Mary's University is currently going

through a program proposal and approval processes to join the ARTC. Saint Mary's brings a particular set of strengths to the ARTC—specifically around executive education and health services research and we are looking forward to having them on board.

There have been a number of changes to the management team as well (some have been highlighted in the introductory article above). Weiqiu Yu has joined as a co-principal investigator from UNB. John Landry (from UNB) has moved on to pursue a full-time engineering career. Debbie MacLellan (from UPEI) has left to pursue other interests, and Kim Critchley (also from UPEI) will be stepping down in the next few months as she embarks on a temporary assign-

ment as the Dean of the University of Calgary's Faculty of Nursing in Qatar. Anne Kearney has stepped down as PI from MUN and is currently the Director of the Centre for Nursing Studies in St. John's. Rick Audas is now the PI at MUN.

Given that our funding from CHSRF has lapsed, we are seeking studentships from our network of decision makers. If any readers have an idea for a research project, ARTC would be happy to collaborate to identify a student to work on this.

As you can see, the program is evolving and we are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead.

Rick Audas is the Principal Investigator from Memorial University

Instructor Profile: Kate Weaver



Dr. Kate Weaver is an associate professor in the Faculty of Nursing at UNB and an instructor in the ARTC program.

Kate Weaver is an associate professor in the Faculty of Nursing with the University of New Brunswick. She has been involved with the ARTC program since 2009. She received her Bachelor of Nursing degree from Dalhousie University, a Master of Nursing degree from the University of New Brunswick, and a Doctor of Philosophy from the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta (2005). Kate's master's thesis explored the experiences of women recovering from anorexia nervosa; and in her doctoral research, she extended the understanding of women's experiences with eating disorder service providers through an analysis of the concept of ethical sensitivity in professional practice. Focusing on observational and narrative research, Kate held postdoctoral fellowships through a CIHR Strategic Training in Health Research program (International Institute of Qualitative Methodology, University of Alberta, 2006) and the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research (2007). She teaches

courses in mental health, professional communication, integrated practice ("It's Not about Food" – peer facilitation for eating disorder education and support), and qualitative research at UNB. She has taught Ethical Foundations for Applied Health Research and has worked with ARTC graduate, Betty Daniels, preparing an ethics module for dental assistants.

Prior to coming to UNB, Kate practiced in a variety of positions including mental health, emergency room, and surgical intensive care nursing in New Brunswick, and adult medicine and pediatric psychiatry and burn unit in Nova Scotia. In addition to teaching at UNB, Kate has an independent practice providing long-term therapy for women and adolescents with eating disorders. This is her passion as she successfully integrates education, knowledge development, and research dissemination. She holds current funding from the Harrison-McCain Foundation (UNB), Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (Atlantic Region), and the New Brunswick Health Re-

search Foundation for the following projects: social support and eating disorders, women's experiences with surname change, beliefs and practices of allied health professionals working in eating disorders, and the mediating role of secrecy in the risk-taking behaviours of women with eating disorders.

Kate is a founding member of the Eating Disorder Council of New Brunswick, author of *Understanding Women's Recovery from Anorexia Nervosa* (2010) and PI for the documentary film *Through True Eyes: Women's Recovery from Eating Disorders* (www.throughtrueeyes.com) (2009). She is on the academic supervisory committees of 2 interdisciplinary PhD students and 7 master's students; 3 (including 1 ARTC student) of whom will defend their thesis research in Winter 2012. She reviews manuscripts for a number of international and interdisciplinary journals and conferences, and also serves as associate editor to the *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*.

Graduates: Where Are They Now?

Amanda Hancock graduated from ARTC in spring 2010. She is currently working with the Eastern Regional Health Authority in St. John's as a Senior Human Resources Consultant in the Department of Employee and Labour Relations. In this role, Amanda works on projects such as the transition of services to the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services; strike preparation; and quarterly reporting of quality indicators. Prior to this position, Amanda was a Human Resource Strategist with Program and Policy Development, and worked on Eastern Health's healthy workplace initiatives including respectful workplace, inclusion, and diversity. Amanda and her ARTC supervisor, Dr. Gustafson, are working on a publication for the *Canadian Journal of Public Health* using research obtained for her Master's thesis on anonymous HIV testing in Newfoundland. Amanda recalls

her ARTC days fondly and remains in close contact with her former classmates and ARTC faculty and staff from across Atlantic Canada.

Emma Housser joined the ARTC program in 2005 at MUN. During the program, Emma took on a placement with the Provincial Government and the Canadian Cancer Society (NL Division) to assist with the development of a Provincial Cancer Control Strategy. While continuing to work on her thesis part time Emma began to work at the Canadian Cancer Society as a Policy Analyst. Emma convoked from the ARTC program in the spring of 2010, with the thesis topic "Prostate cancer patients' out-of-pocket travel and drug costs", and continued her work with the Canadian Cancer Society as Acting Director of Community Services, advocating for issues such as improvements to the Medical Trans-

portation Assistance Program, a ban on cosmetic pesticides and various aspects of tobacco control. In the fall of 2010 Emma took a position with the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information as a Change Management Specialist, supporting the development and implementation of the Electronic Health Records in the province.

After graduating from the ARTC program at UPEI in May 2008, **Heather Diamond** accepted a position as Health Information Specialist with the PEI Department of Health and Wellness. This department supports Quality teams, management and staff in identifying, prioritizing and developing relevant indicators and processes to inform their projects and decisions. Heather was able to apply the knowledge and skills gained in the ARTC program to the analysis, evaluation and reporting requirements of this role.

The ARTC program prepares students for careers in a variety of health services and research settings. To date, approximately 45 students have graduated from the program. Read about the interesting paths some of them have since taken in the 'Graduates: Where are They Now?' article.

Graduates: Where Are They Now? (continued)

In the fall of 2010, she assumed the role of provincial Utilization Management Coordinator in the Quality and Access division of Health PEI. This position allows her to also use her Economics background to support and enhance a coordinated and collaborative systems approach to utilization management and patient flow. She is responsible for supporting strategic goals, policies and processes which use standard best practice and Lean methods to promote a streamlined and sustainable health system. Considering the present economic climate, Heather believes that making efficient and effective use of our limited health resources is an ever higher priority.

Carolyn Galvin graduated from the UNB ARTC program in 2009. She was subsequently offered employment with the New Brunswick Department of Health in Health Emergency Management

Services, where she worked her ARTC summer placement. In her capacity as a project manager, she works with health system stakeholders in emergency preparedness activities such as the development of emergency plans, mitigation strategies, training programs and exercise programs, as well as participating in any Department of Health response to emergency events, such as Pandemic H1N1 2009.

Valerie Penton graduated from the ARTC program at MUN in May 2010. Her thesis involved an assessment of services and programs related to Assistive Technology for people with disabilities in NL. While finishing her thesis, Valerie took a position with the Government of NL in St. John's as a Consultation Development Coordinator with the Disability Policy Office. In March 2010, Valerie was promoted to Policy, Planning and Research

Analyst where she currently resides. In this role, she undertakes research on current trends and technologies specific to accessibility of communications, information, service delivery, physical infrastructures and emerging technologies. She also assisted leading provincial consultations to develop a strategy for the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Valerie is dedicated to lifelong learning and has since taken courses in Organic Chemistry, Biochemistry, and American Sign Language. She was also accepted into the College of Naturopathic Medicine in Ontario but deferred that opportunity for the time being. Valerie is currently working on a journal article publication with her thesis supervisor, Dr. Diana Gustafson, to promote awareness of the need for increased assistive technology services and programs.

An EXTRA Fellow's Intervention Project: Using Technology to Create Senior Friendly ER Departments

Lisa Adams became an EXTRA fellow in 2011. Having worked in various progressive management positions within a regional health authority for 20 years, she became intrigued by the inefficiencies and gaps in services key to providing optimal quality patient care and clinical efficiency. In a career that spanned a focus of seniors, mental health and administration, it became increasingly evident that seniors suffering from mental illnesses were not only an ostracized population cohort but often suffered as well from the "Double whammy" (Kirby, 2006) of society. Being subjected to much stigma around ageism and mental illness, receiving optimal patient services for seniors is difficult to achieve. Seniors with mental illnesses are perhaps the most under-served population in society. Ironically, the population of aging adults who built the very foundation on which today's public health care system is mod-

eled now suffer for the inefficiencies it provides.

The Extra program has given Lisa the opportunity to address one of these inefficiencies. For her intervention project, she is focusing on how seniors with mental illnesses are assessed, diagnosed, treated and cared for in ER room settings. Her quantitative research project will occur over four different phases. Following pre- and post-phases involving data collection or assessing the ER clinicians' beliefs, practices, values and attitudes for initial and post-hoc analysis, a computer application will be developed. Using the National Clinical Guidelines for assessing seniors' mental illness from the Canadian Coalition for Seniors' Mental Health (CCSMH), this computer application will take on the form of an algorithm for how the assessment and screening of mentally-ill seniors should unfold. This computer app will then be

downloaded onto the ER clinicians' hand-held electronic devices and unit PCs for use over a one-month period. Lisa then plans to organize several educational focus groups to discuss these guidelines with ER clinicians.

Lisa will complete her intervention project in early 2013 and is hopeful the results will optimistically help policy and decision makers, government, health care administrators and researchers more closely examine and evaluate patterns and enhance ERs. This, in turn, can further promote the engagement of all key stakeholders in health care planning, program development, policy reform and infrastructure changes to best meet the needs of seniors with mental illness and doing so in a manner that is most respectful, senior friendly and thorough; while remaining clinically efficient, fiscally responsible, sustainable and conducive to seniors' treatment and recovery.

NEW GRADUATES

ARTC proudly announces the following graduates of 2011:

- Amelia Beaney (UNB)
- Mary Brachaniec (UNB)
- Julie Puiras (UPEI)

CHANGES TO THE EXTRA PROGRAM

The EXTRA program—which is geared toward teams of healthcare executives—has become a 14-month team-based fellowship. It now offers shorter and more focused training in better management and use of evidence for quality and performance improvement.

The revised program has five components:

1. One-day orientation
2. Away-from-home residency
3. Intervention project
4. Online learning curriculum
5. Network-building

Student News

Margaret Donahue came to ARTC with a BA from Mount St. Vincent University and a Masters in Theology from Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax. Prior to entering the program, Margaret worked for a number of years as a Clinical Chaplain and Research Associate at the IWK Health Centre. Her research interests are multi-faceted, focusing mainly on populations encountering diverse socio-economic challenges in accessing and negotiating care in the healthcare delivery system. Margaret has co-authored eight peer-reviewed publications, stemming from research that explored in some manner or form how diverse populations experience and navigate the Nova Scotia healthcare delivery system.

Upon acceptance into the ARTC program, Margaret left the IWK Health Centre and accepted a half-time position as a Research Coordinator/Data Analyst in Respiriology with Capital District Health Authority. In her role, Margaret completed qualitative data analysis on three data sets exploring the impact of opioid therapy on patients' experience of advanced chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). While working on these data sets, Margaret became increasingly interested in what (outside of pharmacological interventions) could be provided by the healthcare delivery system to improve the lives of people living with advanced COPD. Margaret's thesis explores the experience of living with advanced COPD from patients' perspectives. She is working diligently to complete her thesis to graduate in May of this year.

In Margaret's other life, she

currently works as a full-time Research Coordinator with the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre and is engaged in conducting a "realist review" of formal interventions for opioid-dependent users on methadone.

Christopher Murray is a student from the 2009 cohort of the ARTC's Master of Applied Health Services Research Program at the UPEI campus. Christopher came from a background working as a Kinesiologist, and his academic pursuits with the ARTC were the product of his desire to be more involved in the Canadian health system as a whole. He has been working in Ottawa in Knowledge Translation since securing his summer residency with the Office of the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care. Christopher's career has become strongly focused on the field of knowledge translation and implementation sciences, for which he credits his experience with the ARTC. He has had the pleasure of working with some of the leading experts in both academic and applied knowledge translation, including Dr. Sharon Straus and Mr. Peter Levesque. Christopher's work has most recently taken him to a position in Knowledge Exchange with the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH). He is hoping to extend his experience in knowledge translation to the international stage, and has recently consulted with the research arm of the Movember initiative, the Promoveo Network in Melbourne.

Christopher is in the final writing stage of this thesis analyzing the role social construct plays

in influencing adolescent physical activity behaviour and plans to convocate later this year

In fall 2010, **Sarah Campbell** joined the ARTC program at the UNB campus. In reflecting back over the last couple of years, Sarah finds herself trying to reconcile where she thought she would be today to where she actually is. Two years ago Sarah was preparing an application for what she believed would be an interesting program in a growing field. She now realizes that there was a massive chasm between what her expectations had been for this program and what her actual experience has been.

Through the program, Sarah has met an amazing group of women in her classmates. For her, course curriculum has sparked a passion for the marginalized people in society (both locally and globally) and class readings have even reduced her to tears (and not just because of the sheer volume of reading!). She shares, "the Master's of Applied Health Services Research program has helped to create an experience that not only trains students in health related research, but produces a set of individuals with a higher social consciousness." For her thesis research, she is focusing on the impact of Nurse Practitioners on wait-times, length-of-stay, and walk-out rates in a local Emergency Department.

As Sarah looks back on her time with the program, she is thankful to have drawn on the knowledge and experiences of the diverse students, exceptional instructors, and devoted team that makes this program what it is. The future looks bright.

"the Master's of Applied Health Services Research program has helped to create an experience that not only trains students in health related research, but produces a set of individuals with a higher social consciousness."

Sarah Campbell
MAHSR Candidate

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