

Special points of interest:

- Jan Jenson of Dalhousie (along with her supervisors) published a paper in the BMC Emergency Medicine on her thesis research entitled 'Paramedic Clinical Decision-Making'
- Gioia Montevicchi of MUN was awarded a MITACS Accelerate Internship Grant
- Emma Houser of MUN received the title 'Fellow of the School of Graduate Studies' for 2009-2010
- Nora McCarthy of UPEI received an 'Atlantic Aboriginal Health Research Program' graduate student scholarship
- Valerie Penton and Kara Roberts of MUN were awarded the ARTC Applied Health Services Research Award at Memorial University
- Amanda Hancock of MUN was awarded the Dr. Jorge Segovia Scholarship in Applied Health Services Research and the Barrowman Graduate Travel Award
- Jean Burgess of UNB won first prize in the poster session of the 17th UNB Graduate Research Conference

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Introductory Message

The past year has been one of change for ARTC as we said good bye to old colleagues and welcomed new ones, changed our funding structure for new incoming graduate students, and sought opportunities for new initiative development. We have also jumped onboard the 'green' wagon and have circulated our newsletter electronically for the first time.

The team has been busy preparing to take ARTC in new directions – one that envelops professional development opportunities and graduate diploma options that cater to working professionals while continuing with our masters program in applied health services research. Our students have been busy too as some have just completed course work and are preparing for their research residencies while others have travelled to conferences and workshops to present on their research work, been occupied with thesis submissions, or have been out receiving accolades for all their hard work.

In our latest edition of the newsletter, we share stories about those who have been a part of our team or have been instrumental in creating, establishing or supporting the ARTC through the years. We profile two members whose work and dedication has greatly benefitted the ARTC. As one of our initial team members, Pat Conrad's story is one of evolution. Though she has since moved on, she continues to support the program in various capacities. In our instructor profile, we introduce Dr. Victor Maddalena who has been teaching the policy course since 2008, first from Halifax, NS, and now from St. John's, NL—isn't distance education technology a wonderful thing! We are grateful for Victor's dedication to the students and the program. Our graduates continue to make their mark on the world and we proudly profile their whereabouts since leaving the program. And

last, but certainly not least, we share news about some of our current students as they juggle multiples roles and prepare for an exciting future in applied health services research. We trust you will be informed, enlightened, engaged, and inspired by their stories.

We thank you, the readers, for reading our newsletters and supporting the program – whether by providing residency opportunities, facilitating our workshops, supporting our students, or simply by sharing our stories with your own colleagues. As we prepare to embark on the 2010-2011 academic year, please stay tuned for another exciting issue coming your way in the fall.

Have a safe and happy summer and, as always, happy reading.

Christa McGrath is the site coordinator at Memorial University

Key Contributor Profile: Pat Conrad's Evolving Role with the ARTC

Writer, Organizer, Coordinator, Developer, Program Director, Advisor...

Pat Conrad returned to Halifax in late spring of 2000 after spending two years living in Toronto fulfilling a lifelong dream of pursuing a doctoral degree in Health Policy. Following completion of her comprehensive examination, she felt it was time to "re-connect" with friends and colleagues! As she resurfaced, she was in touch with Tom Rathwell who asked her to work on preparing a proposal that

originally involved working with DAL, UNB and MUN (UPEI joined in 2004) to create an innovative, interdisciplinary-based program in health services research – a program that is known today as the "ARTC". Pat assumed the role of proposal writer and project coordinator while working alongside an enthusiastic group of faculty supporters to develop a curriculum of study grounded in Lomas' theory of linkage and exchange. The concepts were familiar to Pat as she had previously worked on a national research project designing a

program to prepare "knowledge brokers". She was excited about this opportunity to dream about how Atlantic Canada academics and decision makers would interact to positively influence the use of evidence for health care decision making.

Over the course of an intense four months, the project team prepared a proposal for submission to CHSRF. Numerous "blue sky" meetings were held and a "needs" assessment was conducted amongst health care organizations throughout Atlantic Canada. Pat (along

Privacy Symposium: Key Messages (continued from page 1)



Pat Conrad is the Executive Director of Policy and Planning at the Department of Health in Halifax, NS

with many 'helping hands') was instrumental in crafting a groundbreaking proposal outlining a new graduate degree program aimed at qualified individuals to participate in generating new knowledge to improve health services decision making. The novel approach to the ARTC required that each university participate in a "joint" offering of this degree which represented a new level of inter-university cooperation that was almost unheard of within this sector.

Following a successful July 2001 funding announcement, both the ARTC and Pat's role evolved. She became the first Dalhousie "site coordinator" as the ARTC shifted into the "implementation" phase and the universities began working collaboratively to move the experiment from paper to reality. ARTC team members built a base of knowledge with each passing milestone – including completion of the first term, the first student workshop, the first residencies with decision makers, the first thesis

defenses, and the first employment offers for the numerous MAHSR graduates.

By September 2005, Pat left Nova Scotia and the ARTC to become the Director of the Capacity for Applied & Developmental Research and Evaluation in Health Services and Nursing (CADRE) program with CHSRF. The regional training centres (including the ARTC) along with 10 research chairs were an integral component of this national strategy aimed at building knowledge links between decision makers and researchers. Moving to the national scene to work in a program area she was so deeply passionate about was a tremendous opportunity for Pat and she had the unique advantage of watching (with great pride) as the ARTC flourished and grew. Her role at CHSRF was particularly challenging as she stepped back from an operational role to become the overseer of the ARTC and its' sister centres that had been developed in the West, Ontario, and Quebec. Over the next

three years, the CADRE program diligently worked to form a national network that facilitated knowledge exchange and built expertise with a goal of strengthening and advancing the reach of these centres into the decision maker world.

Upon her return to Nova Scotia in 2009, Pat's involvement with the ARTC has come full circle. As the Executive Director of Policy and Planning at the Department of Health, she is now one of several decision-makers who sit on the ARTC Advisory board.

Who knows where the future will lead as Pat's "musical" chair adventure evolves in tandem with how the ARTC continues to unfold. Throughout each of her roles, she has watched with immense pride as the ARTC pushes forward from a solid base of academic integrity and inter-university collaboration that underpins the centre's growth and development throughout Atlantic Canada.

Graduates: Where are they now?

Jill MacEachern, a native of Stratford PEI, graduated from Memorial University in 2009 with a Masters of Science in Medicine (Applied Health Services Research). Her thesis work involved examining the knowledge, attitude and practices of gastroenterologists and surgeons in NL regarding colorectal cancer screening. Jill currently works as the Prevention Programs Coordinator with the Canadian Cancer Society-NL Division. She is involved in developing public education and awareness programs around cancer prevention and uses her skills as a Registered Dietitian to promote the importance of healthy eating. With the recent announcement of a new Provincial Colorectal Cancer Screening Program for the province, Jill looks forward to representing the Cancer Society on a Provincial Colorectal Cancer Screening Working Group. Jill hopes to keep in touch with her fellow ARTC students and wishes everyone much success in their

future career endeavors!

Amanda Crupi graduated from Dalhousie in 2007, at which time she accepted a position in Ottawa as the lead researcher for the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions. Her work ranges from analyzing health service delivery trends to advising government with regards to policy and legislation that impact healthcare workers.

During the H1N1 outbreak, Amanda consulted with the Public Health Agency of Canada to ensure that occupational health and safety precautions for health care workers were in place across Canada. Her position also provides her with opportunities to conduct grassroots research and share learnings through conference presentations and membership with the Quality Worklife Quality Healthcare Collaborative. Some of her research has focused on the impact of: inter-generational diversity in the nurs-

ing workforce; privatized health care; and the nursing shortage.

You can access these reports and learn more about Amanda's work by reading her research column in CFNU's monthly newsletter Nurses Voice www.cfnu.ca

Graduating from UNB in 2007, **Gail Richardson** moved out west to work at Wait Time Task Force (now Health System Innovation) at Manitoba Health. Over the last three years, she has worked on numerous projects that have allowed her to draw from her knowledge and skills gained from the ARTC program. In this role, she has been involved in developing, carrying out and analyzing a survey on Pediatric Dental Surgery; performing qualitative analysis of a diagnostic imaging computerized order entry system in partnership with the Canadian Association of Radiologist; detailing to Family Physicians for colorectal screening in partnership with CancerCare Manitoba; de-

The ARTC program prepares students for diverse careers in various health services and research arenas. Our graduates have taken diverse and interesting paths post graduation. Find out more in the 'Graduates: Where are they now?' article.

Graduates: Where are they now? (continued from page 2)

veloping dissemination plans; detailing for Bridging General and Specialist Care, Catalogue of Specialist Services, Patient Access Registry Tool; accrediting educational events; and numerous other tasks related to recruiting, presenting, writing, researching, educating, and training.

Gail returned to the Maritimes in April 2010 with an impressive list of newly enhanced skills and knowledge.

Kathleen Shipp graduated from Dalhousie University's MAHSR program in the fall of 2007. During her time at the ARTC, Kathleen was employed by Medavie Blue-Cross as a pharmacist consultant to the Nova Scotia Pharmacare Programs and continued in this role after graduation. In the fall of 2008, Kathleen joined the Nova Scotia Department of Health as

Acting Manager of Insured Pharmaceutical Programs. In this capacity, Kathleen is responsible for managing the provincial drug formulary, interfacing with provincial and national drug expert advisory committees and delivering public drug programs in Nova Scotia. She continues to be a busy mother to her three children (one now in university!) and maintains her professional roots as a part-time community pharmacist. Kathleen is grateful for the time she spent in the ARTC program and highly recommends the MAHSR as a broad and flexible program which can suit many student backgrounds and many employment areas.

Etienne Orr-Ewing graduated from the ARTC program at Memorial University in 2006 and immediately enrolled in Law School at the University of New Brunswick.

After graduation in May 2009, Etienne returned to his native province of British Columbia and began articling at a Vancouver law firm known as a leader in civil litigation defense for doctors in BC. He is primarily involved in the health law and professional regulation group whose clientele consists of a variety of health care professionals including dentists, dental surgeons, chiropractors, physiotherapists, and psychologists. In this new post, Etienne has been tackling litigation cases concerning multiple, complex and novel issues related to the standards of medical care, informed consent, limitation defenses, and regulatory issues. Etienne has been able to combine his previous educational experience in applied health service research with law and enjoys the day-to-day challenges of working in the area of health law.



Source: Sheraton Hotel Newfoundland website

End-of-Semester Workshop in St. John's, NL, April 19-21

Workshop facilitates interaction of ARTC students with policy/decision makers and researchers in the area of health services research

Instructor Profile: Dr. Victor Maddalena

Dr. Victor Maddalena is an Assistant Professor in Health Policy in the Division of Community Health and Humanities, Faculty of Medicine, MUN. He also holds a cross-appointment in the MUN School of Nursing and is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Health Administration at Dalhousie University.

Victor has held several positions in the healthcare system over the past 27 years including Registered Nurse in the Burn Unit of the Victoria General Hospital and the Intensive Care Unit at the Izaak Walton Killam Hospital for Children, Policy Analyst in Health Human Resources for the Nova Scotia Department of Health, Administrator of Sacred Heart Hospital in Cheticamp, and the Chief Executive Officer of the

Western Regional Health Board in Nova Scotia. He completed his doctoral studies in 2005 and he has completed two Post-Doctoral Fellowships in Palliative and End of Life care.

He has served as a consultant to government agencies and health organizations on a wide range of health policy issues, including strategic planning, health human resources policy, primary health care, and health systems. In 2008, he began teaching the AHS6005 Policy and Decision Making course and also began serving on a number of supervisory committees for ARTC graduate students. Victor enjoys teaching and interacting with students, and adds, "Teaching is the best part of the job. I enjoy the

interaction with students and facilitating learning." Currently, he is also a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for "Leadership in Health Services".

Victor's research interests are focused primarily on answering the question, "Who is not well served by our health care system?" Past research projects have examined access to palliative and end of life care in Nova Scotia's Black communities and the South Asian immigrant community. Presently, Victor is collaborating with the Deaf community in St. John's to examine issues related to palliative and end of life care and access to genetics testing and genetics counseling services.



Dr. Victor Maddalena is an Assistant Professor in Health Policy at Memorial University and is also an instructor and faculty supervisor with the ARTC program

Student News

Jan Jensen is a 2nd year ARTC student at Dal. She entered the program with a BSc (psychology) from Dal and a BSc (health sciences—post dip) from Athabasca. Jan is an advanced care paramedic with Emergency Health Services ground ambulance in Halifax. She is also the Paramedic Project Coordinator at the Dalhousie

Division of EMS. She coordinates the Prehospital Evidence-Based Protocols Project, a national research evidence repository for paramedic interventions. Her clinical and research experiences have become invaluable assets in the ARTC program.

Prior to ARTC, Jan became intrigued with the decisions para-

medics make while taking care of ill and injured patients in the out-of-hospital setting. Her supervisors, Dr. Pat Croskerry, a clinical decision making expert, and Dr. Andrew Travers, the provincial medical director for EHS, helped her develop two thesis studies. The first is a Delphi study to determine the most important decisions paramed-

Student News (continued from page 3)

ics make in terms of patient safety and outcome. The second is a Think Aloud study about how paramedics verbally work their way through two scenarios, explaining why they made each decision. Data analysis is complete on both studies, and Jan finished her oral exam in March 2010.

In addition to the exciting news of a looming graduation, Jan is also happy to share that her family grew in December 2009 with the birth of baby Lexi.

Gioia Montevocchi is enrolled in her first year of the MAHSR program at MUN and has a passion for social justice and empowerment of vulnerable populations through out the world. She is a true devotee to the people and places of the beautiful, wild and rugged NL.

Gioia's extensive travel experiences and aspirations to be 'everything at once' motivated her to apply for an internship with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). After completing a BSc. (Hons) in Psychology & Biology at MUN in 2007, she spent a year working as a Gender Analyst/Project Coordinator on an aquaculture project at Prek Leap National School of Agriculture in Cambodia. This CIDA-funded initiative is in effort to encourage local sustainability in farming communities, increase food security, & decrease poverty in rural areas of Cambodia. She was absolutely amazed and inspired by the Cambodian people and their sheer resilience and spirit in the face of adversity within their society and recent war torn past. As most of her classmates know, the place became a part of her in the same way a mentor does. It shapes her in ways she is still discovering. With these experiences fresh in her mind, Gioia came to the ARTC program motivated to focus her passions in improving the health

and wellbeing of vulnerable populations in her beloved NL. Gioia feels incredibly honored to be working under the wise, challenging and inspiring guidance of Dr. Victor Maddalena and Dr. Diana Gustafson, who continue to feed her wide-eyed enthusiasm. Her research, funded by MITACS and Labrador's Rural Secretariat, will involve an examination of the factors influencing health care access in Labrador. She is excited to be traveling to Labrador this summer to carry out her research and complete her practicum with the Rural Secretariat in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Gioia treasures the challenging and rewarding experiences she has had thus far in the program and will surely carry them into all her future local and global endeavors.

Betty Daniels joined the ARTC program at UNB in 2008. She has completed the required course work and is now concentrating on writing her thesis with the intention of defending in September 2010.

Her background is in oral health, having worked as a certified dental assistant, dental practice manager, and most recently an instructor of dental assisting with the College of North Atlantic in Qatar. Her career path has naturally guided her research focus and her thesis is a systematic review of the interventions related to management of drug induced dry mouth in older adults. Betty was born in Moncton, New Brunswick, and calls Fredericton home having lived there the majority of her adult life. Completing an undergraduate degree and embarking on her current master's degree while her daughters were young adults themselves, Betty exemplifies the definition of the lifelong learner and truly believes that education is a lifelong journey.

She had the privilege of com-

pleting her summer residency with the College of Pharmacy at Dalhousie and is currently working part-time with the National Research Council (People Centered Technology division). She has enjoyed the ARTC program immensely and looks forward to utilizing her newly acquired education in a health research related job in Fredericton. And as the consummate lifelong learner, she is currently pondering her next learning project.

UPEI student **Kristal LeBlanc's** current thesis explores how stage 1 transition homes in Atlantic Canada are meeting the needs of women in midlife and older experiencing intimate partner violence. Through both an online survey and semi-structured interviews, shelter directors shared that they are often unable to meet the particular needs of older abused women who are attempting to start a life free from violence. Kristal is set to defend her thesis in April. She commented, "ARTC provides an excellent opportunity for students to essentially become 'experts' on a particular topic of interest".

Kristal has presented her findings at various conferences and won first prize in the Master's poster competition at the Canadian Association on Gerontology Conference in October 2009. She has also disseminated her research through an interview with CBC Radio and guest lecturing at UPEI. She is currently working on a grant with her research team provided by the Rural Centre at Dalhousie University which investigates service provision for abused rural women across the lifecourse. She explained: "The Master's thesis creates avenues for exchange between researchers and decision makers and in many cases leads to future research and career opportunities".

"ARTC provides an excellent opportunity for students to essentially become 'experts' on a particular topic of interest"

Kristal LeBlanc
MAHSR Candidate

Funding by:



CIHR IRSC



For more information, visit our website: www.artc-hsr.ca
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