Dr. Frédérique Pivot takes to the skies to better understand what’s happening in the ground.

**Research takes flight**

**PLAYING IT SMART**
Pro hockey and football set to score big through AU partnerships.

**FARAWAY FAMILIES**
How do you keep the home fires burning when dads fly-in/fly-out for work?

** STELLAR IMAGES**
Capturing the beauty of the northern night sky.
ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY (AU) is Canada’s Open University, a leading online university focused on the future of learning. Based in Athabasca, Alta., we’re proud to serve more than 40,000 students in 90 countries with courses and programs in the arts, business, health disciplines, social sciences, sciences and technology.

As an open university, we strive to help people everywhere overcome the challenges that can prevent them from attending traditional university — challenges like family and job responsibilities and not being able to relocate to go to school. Our open admission policy allows anyone 16 or older the potential to study with us as an undergraduate student regardless of their educational history.
Dr. Frédérique Pivot has learned to fly unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) — like the light plane she’s holding in this picture — to get a bird’s-eye view of the environment. Read more about her sky-high research starting on page 22.

Photo by Jessica Fern Facette

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Where is AU?
Wherever you are

WELCOME BACK. It’s hard to believe a full year has passed since we sat down to lay out Open. Last year, we focused on some of the exciting research underway at AU. In this issue, we’ll tell you where some of those projects are today and we’ll also take a look back at some of the people we’ve featured in previous editions of Open. We thought they were pretty interesting at the time, but had no idea just how interesting they’d turn out to be. From the halls of the Vatican to the deserts of equatorial Africa, they and their stories continue to inspire, and continue to be a powerful example of how AU is with people wherever they go.

If I had to pick a word to highlight the theme of this issue, it would be ‘remote.’

We’re featuring remote locations, like north-central Alberta, where our Science Outreach – Athabasca team spent a few nights last fall with some eager amateur photographers (when you see the images they captured, I think you’ll agree that the sleepless nights were well worth it). We’ll look at some research into remote-ness that’s just getting underway, which will investigate how families cope with the absence of a parent who has to work in a remote location, like the oil sands. We’ll talk about remote learning, and how it’s showing up in the boardrooms of professional sport, preparing the next generation of hockey executives for the challenges off the ice, and being taken on the road by pro football players who want to be well prepared for life after the game. And we’ll introduce you to a project that is creating exciting learning opportunities in remote Aboriginal communities.

As many of you know, we have a new interim president at the university, Peter MacKinnon. Peter has two passions — baseball and universities — and he’s pretty knowledgeable about both. At the end of this magazine, you’ll find an excerpt from his new book on university leadership, and discover the delicate balance university leaders must strike when dealing with governments.

Peter is fond of quoting his favourite former baseball commissioner, Bart Giamatti who, by the way, was once president of Yale University. So it seems appropriate to leave you with something from the baseball and university great:

“A liberal education is at the heart of a civil society, and at the heart of a liberal education is the act of teaching.”

I couldn’t agree more. Enjoy your read.

John O’Brien
Editor

One student went to truly extraordinary lengths to find out where AU is. Check out Priscilla Lear’s story in Student & Alumni Notes on page 33.
Notable News

News and highlights since the last issue of Open.

HE SEEMED LIKE SUCH A NICE GUY

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, romantic relationships can be more than a challenge. “Nice guys” may not be what they seem, “fun” can mask violence and, as media stories attest, missing the signals can be dangerous and deadly. It was just such a story in 2011 — three young people in Alberta were murdered by one of the women’s ex-boyfriends — that crystallized Lynn Corcoran’s PhD research. The Bachelor of Nursing program academic coordinator is looking for insights that will help young people recognize the warning signs of potential partner violence and avoid danger. She is now analyzing her research, which includes interviews with young people, and hopes to share her findings later in 2015. “I hope young people will be better equipped to say ‘that’s not okay’ or ‘you need to get out of this,’ whether they’re looking at their own relationships or their friends.”

BEAUTIFUL AND DEADLY

THE AURORAS that light up Canada’s northern night sky are dramatic and beautiful, and can also be very destructive. Auroras are generated by magnetic fields, which can play havoc with power grids, GPS navigation — and even accelerate pipeline corrosion. With a $400,000 grant from the Canadian Space Agency, the Athabasca University Geophysical Observatory is trying to get a handle on this phenomenon. Using the funding, AUGO has expanded its network of magnetometers, adding 10 new sites in Quebec. The data they provide will offer operators valuable information to adjust their operations to make them less vulnerable to space weather.

NEW WRITER TAKES UP RESIDENCE AT AU

ANITA RAU BADAMI is AU’s 2014–15 Writer in Residence. The author of four novels — Tamarind Mem (Penguin, Canada 1996/Knopf, Canada 2001), The Hero’s Walk (Knopf, Canada 2000), Can You Hear the Nightbird Call? (Knopf, Canada 2006) and Tell it to the Trees (Knopf, Canada 2011) — has also written critically-acclaimed short stories and has been published in several languages around the world.
**Comings and goings**

**DR. LISA CARTER** was reappointed dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology for a second five-year term on Oct. 1, 2014.

**PETER MACKINNON** is continuing as AU’s interim president for another year while a search for a permanent president is undertaken. The former University of Saskatchewan president came to AU in July 2014.

**DR. MARGARET EDWARDS** has accepted the position of dean of the Faculty of Health Disciplines for a five-year term, effective Aug. 1, 2014. She has served as acting dean for the past two-and-a-half years.

**DR. CINDY IVES** has been named interim vice-president, academic, for a renewable term expiring June 30, 2016. She has been acting VP academic since May.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY EMBA**

**CANADA’S FIRST ONLINE**

Executive MBA celebrated its 20th birthday in 2014. Within five years of its 1994 launch, the AU MBA program was the largest EMBA program in Canada. Word-of-mouth quickly spread and today nearly 3,500 students have graduated from the program — working in almost every industry in almost every country around the world — and there are roughly 800–900 active students at any given time.

**PLANNING THE FUTURE OF ARCHITECTURE**

**ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY** and Architecture Canada & Royal Architectural Institute of Canada have teamed up to offer Canada’s first online architecture programs, and have launched an exciting new program for students who wish to become professional architects. The RAIC Centre for Architecture at AU launched the Bachelor of Science (Architecture) on April 29, 2014.

Check out all things architecture at architecture.athabascau.ca
Bonjour to the French president and business leaders

AU BUSINESS STUDENTS helped welcome François Hollande — the first French president to make an official visit to Western Canada — and Prime Minister Stephen Harper to Banff in November 2014. The two leaders met to discuss greater co-operation on international security and threats, trade and economic development. The students (pictured above) were translators and guides for the visiting diplomats, which led naturally into conversation about business matters.

Canada’s Highest Honour

JAMES CARTER, Honorary Chair, Open Our World Campaign Cabinet, was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada on June 30, 2014.

Sir John Daniel, AU Vice-President for Learning Services 1978–80, was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada by the Governor General, The Hon. David Johnston, at Government House, Ottawa, on Sept. 12, 2014.

THE ACCOUNTED: AN APP WITH A TWIST

Take a 1940s film noir style, combine it with a hotshot detective named ACE and a villain called Tony Zoots, throw in some math, and you have it: an app that aims to get young adults interested in accounting. A joint project of The Alberta Accountants Unification Agency, AU and Rocketfuel Games, The Accounted aims to develop financial literacy by keeping young players engaged in a fun scenario. It’s available from iTunes and Google Play stores.
Celebrating the achievements of four of AU’s brightest lights

Athabasca University grads do great things at work and in communities across Canada and beyond. That’s proven by the accomplishments of our 2014 Alumni Awards recipients.

BY CATHY NICKEL

Dr. Glenn Berall
MBA, 2007 // Thornhill, Ontario

Nourishing the health of children worldwide

Dr. Glenn Berall’s life is coming full circle. He was only four years old when he decided to become a doctor, and for the past 30 years he has helped improve the lives of children around the world.

Berall is a world-recognized paediatrician focused on medical nutrition, including childhood obesity, feeding difficulties and developmental conditions of nutrition. His extensive résumé blends health care leadership, research, clinical practice, lectures, publications and patents. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (Paediatrics), an assistant professor in nutrition, nursing and paediatrics at the University of Toronto and served more than 10 years as Chief of Paediatrics and Medical Program Director at North York General Hospital. A respected medical consultant, he has spoken at conferences in more than 15 countries.

A determination to improve children’s lives led Berall to AU’s MBA program, which enabled him to develop tools to create the sound business models needed to underscore broad-based change. “I’m looking for a system-wide impact, in addition to making a one-on-one difference,” he says. “If I can give people the tools to help others, then I’m helping hundreds of thousands of others who I’ll never meet.

“It’s very gratifying to do that. I think the four-year-old in me would be impressed.”

Waiting for the right career to emerge

WHAT SOME might call a career, Jan Reischek calls a fun ride. It’s far from over for a woman who works on the leading edge of an industry that scarcely registered a decade ago.

Reischek is Senior Vice-President, Dentsu Aegis Network Integration at ICUC, one of the world’s largest social media services organizations. She focuses on social media, overseeing a global workforce of more than 400 to provide clients with content moderation and community management support. At last tally, that list included one out of every five Fortune 100 companies, among them heavyweights Disney, Starbucks and Virgin. It is, to say the least, a dynamic career in an industry that’s quickly changing, always challenging and a perfect fit.

“When I was a kid, I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but that’s because it didn’t exist yet and there wasn’t any way for me to articulate it,” she says. AU helped her get to where she wanted to be because “I knew I had the drive and ability to get it done, so it was just a matter of finding a program I could take on the road.”

With her combination of education and experience, she believes the sky’s the limit and has her sights set on becoming a company president or CEO. What, exactly, does she expect to be doing? For the answer, she may have to wait for something brand new to emerge.
Colin Reichle
MBA, 1997 // St. Albert, Alberta

A lifetime of service strengthens society

COLIN REICHLE was a man who stepped forward when a job needed to be done. He passed away in November 2014 with justly deserved respect and praise for decades of service to community and country — and a “get the job done” legacy that will long be remembered.

A career with the Canadian Armed Forces spanning more than 20 years, combined with a passion to serve, led Reichle to volunteer in senior and leadership capacities with organizations focused on conservation, community safety and strengthening national institutions.

“I was raised to believe in service,” said Reichle, who had the distinction of being the very first person to enrol in AU’s MBA program. “I believe it is everyone’s responsibility to serve. If you have the ability and the means, if you can make your community better, then you have an obligation to do something.”

He scored countless “small wins” and larger successes. He was proud to have helped implement a multi-million-dollar initiative to eliminate maternal neo-natal tetanus worldwide, offer symposia on Canada at war in Afghanistan, launch a program to keep motorcyclists and children safe in traffic and enable children with severe disabilities to go to camp.

“If something is important, you make time for it,” Reichle said. “There’s great satisfaction in developing the plan and seeing it come together.”

Sarah Kobsa
Master of Arts – Integrated Studies, 2014

Inspired by a passion for seeing things grow

SARAH KOBSA squeezes more out of a day than most people even attempt. While completing her AU studies, she managed her own company, which quickly became a full-time commitment for her and her team. Immediately after finishing her degree, she added a second full-time commitment, taking on the responsibility of managing external marketing and advertising for an Arizona-based publishing firm. And she did it all while maintaining an important volunteer commitment to Swiggtalk — the StrengthWithin Girls Group — an online community empowering young women and girls to share, learn and lead.

Kobsa is proof that “you can balance all of these things” and have a successful, rewarding, and albeit busy, life. “Swiggtalk is a place where women and girls can be inspired,” she says. “Young adulthood is a major transitional period in life, and Swiggtalk is a positive space where parents can feel comfortable with their daughters participating in a safe online community. I help young women see that hard work and dedication will help them to overcome obstacles and challenges as they work towards achieving their goals.”

Kobsa’s own achievements have become a positive message. “I am able to share what I do with Swigg girls. I don’t feel like I work long days. I enjoy what I do, and I see the growth and potential in all of it.”
THE CASE FOR AN ONLINE LAW SCHOOL

Today’s realities demand a new way to look at legal education.

BY DOUG STOLLERY, Q.C., CHAIR, AU LAW PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

IN CANADA, we are training 21st century lawyers using a model developed in the 19th century. Law students are required to attend in person at a law school, which in general is located in one of the country’s larger cities. Instruction takes place in a classroom and generally involves either a lecture format or a dialogue between the professor and one or more students.

This model, while successful in the past in providing the educational background required to produce competent lawyers, suffers from two challenges.

First, by requiring in-person attendance at an urban law school, it creates barriers to participating in legal education for some otherwise qualified candidates, including persons who live in rural or remote communities, certain persons with disabilities and certain persons with family care responsibilities.

Second, since the development of this model, law students and today’s legal environment have changed in ways that have profound implications for legal education.

Despite these challenges, the profession remains resistant to change. Specifically, it seems reluctant to embrace online education as a means of educating tomorrow’s lawyers.

Law, many argue, is an interpersonal endeavour, and the traditional teaching methods used by Canadian law schools are the only way for students to experience that reality. There is also an air of nostalgia about the interaction between a professor and an individual student. Yet, for any given student in a law class of 60–100 students, such direct interaction is likely limited to one or two occasions a semester. And many students in the classroom are focused at least as much on their own computers as they are on their professor.

The reality today is that much of a lawyer’s day-to-day practice takes place online. Solicitors draft documents on their computers, exchange those drafts by email, and negotiate the terms of those drafts by email or telephone. Civil litigation increasingly involves the review and analysis of emails and other computer-based documents and the use of sophisticated computer programs to locate and organize those documents. Legal research is fundamentally undertaken online. Even some court hearings are held online. Computer-based skills are critical to the successful practice of law.

Athabasca University is proposing the development of a law degree program based on a “blended” or “hybrid” delivery model incorporating both face-to-face and on-line components. In curricular terms this might lead, for example, to one portion of a course being taught in person, face-to-face, in the classroom in intensive sessions, and other portions online employing teaching technologies that involve instructors and students seeing, hearing and interacting with each other live and synchronously. Other components of the blended or hybrid delivery strategy would see some courses taught entirely online with interactivity, and others entirely in person during an intensive study period shorter than the typical academic semester.

The AU law degree program would enhance the development of computer-based skills. It would also open doors to a legal education, remove the barriers of cost, location and time commitment for candidates in rural, remote and regional locations, increase participation by underrepresented groups, and lead to greater diversity within the legal profession. The expectation is that law students who study while remaining, for the most part, in their local communities will be more likely to choose to stay and practice in those rural, regional and remote communities after they graduate.

This initiative responds to the twin needs of access to justice and access to education by making a career in law achievable for rural and remote Canadians and others who are disadvantaged by traditional legal education provided by urban law schools.
SURE, THERE’S PLENTY OF BRAWN ON DISPLAY EVERY TIME PRO ATHLETES TAKE TO THE ICE OR FIELD. BUT THAT’S ONLY PART OF THE PLAY.

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY IS HELPING TO DEVELOP THE BRAINS BEHIND THE GAMES.
Ritch Winter knows exactly what he’s going to do. “We’re going to create the Sidney Crosby of the boardroom, and it’s going to change hockey forever. And that’s exciting.”

“You’ve got to find time [for education or you] watch the guy next to you do it and go right past you.”

Brian Burke, president of hockey operations, Calgary Flames
And how is he going to do this? With Athabasca University’s new Business of Hockey Executive MBA program.

As Winter, a well-known NHL player agent, knows from years of experience, hockey isn’t just about skates and sticks. It’s also about budgeting, accounting, marketing and sales. And it’s about finding the right leaders who can bring those skills to the front office.

Winter came up with the concept of a formal plan to train hockey executives a few years ago. “What we saw was that there wasn’t a development organization to help us off the ice, which is extremely important if we’re going to compete with other industries and sports,” he says.

When he brought the idea to Brian Burke, the Calgary Flames’ president of hockey operations, Burke jumped at it. "So, at that point, the two of them went shopping for a university willing to take the idea and run with it."

They had a couple of false starts with other universities. But as Winter notes, “then we found Athabasca University, which had this great experience online, from the very beginning as one of the top — if not the top — university in the country and they provided us with an opportunity to fit the MBA into the hockey schedule.”

Hockey executives are busy people. In the NHL, the season runs from September through June, and the business side operates year-round. These individuals can’t afford to take a few years off to go back to school.

“You’ve got time on airplanes, you’ve got time after the kids go to bed, you can get up a bit early, you gotta find time to do it,” says Burke. Or, he adds somewhat ominously, you “watch the guy next to you do it and go right past you.”

Dr. Michael Mauws, professor of business policy and strategy at AU’s Faculty of Business, and academic director of the newly created Business of Hockey Institute, agrees that flexibility is key to the new program. “We don’t impose upon students that they have to be in a classroom or even in front of a computer at 7 p.m. on a Tuesday night. We say you fit the learning into your schedule as you see fit.”

It’s the same philosophy that’s guided AU’s Executive MBA program since its inception in 1994, and it enables learners to fold their education into their busy careers. The program’s unique online delivery system encourages students to learn from each other as well as from the academic experts. Mauws says that’s the real strength of the program. “Suddenly, people who are working for a variety of leagues, for a variety of teams around the world, have an opportunity to virtually come together in the same ‘classroom’ and exchange stories about best practices, about what works and what hasn’t worked in their organizations. In that way, we’re going to unlock the power of peer-to-peer learning for a group of people who have never had that opportunity before.”

So if your stick-handling skills aren’t quite up to snuff, but you know your way around a boardroom, a career in elite-level hockey is still within reach. You won’t be an MVP, but an MBA is every bit as valuable in today’s world of professional hockey.
It was, by all measures, a surreal moment. The day before Canadian football’s biggest game, players from across the CFL were at B.C.’s Canada Place. Surrounded by enthusiastic and boisterous fans, the players signed autographs — and peppered Michael Shouldice, Athabasca University’s student recruitment coordinator, with questions about continuing their education.

Gridiron and grades

A new partnership between the Canadian Football League Players’ Association and Athabasca University is shaping up to be a winning play for pro athletes.

By Cathy Nickel
If players who work all year to make it to the Grey Cup game are this excited about learning, then the new partnership between the CFL Players’ Association and AU, signed in June 2014, may prove to be this season’s hottest ticket.

“This is a huge opportunity for our players,” says CFL Players’ Association President Scott Flory of the 500 active members who stand to benefit from the agreement. “Football is a full-time, year-round sport. In addition to training their bodies, this will help players develop their minds. Most importantly, it will give the guys who want it an opportunity to be better prepared for life after football.”

Fans may be surprised to learn that Canada’s professional football players bring more than athleticism to the game. Almost all have been drafted through Canadian or U.S. universities and, if they haven’t already completed their degrees, are well on their way to doing so. That star lineman might hold an MBA, the receiver could be an accountant and the quarterback a teacher.

“There are professionals all over the place,” says Flory, himself a civil engineer. “They already have education as part of their lives — and they know it will be important to their lives after football.”

The reality of post-pro-ball life can come quickly, with the average CFL career spanning just three years (about a quarter of every team roster turns over every year). Given the physical nature of the game and the risk of injury, a player’s career could end on any play. And “freedom 25” is far more myth than reality.

“Most players will have another 30 years or more to fill after football,” Flory says. “If they don’t have the tools, education and resources, that’s a long time.”

The beauty of the of the AU partnership, he explains, is that players can take AU studies with them wherever they go, and don’t have to put their educations on hold while they play in the CFL. Some will work around their evening, weekend and weekday games and travel schedules, but most will likely study in the off-season. All will be able to tap into AU when they have the time, interest and energy.

“We’re always looking for ways to help our members,” Flory says, explaining that under the terms of the agreement, the CFLPA will cover tuition costs and players will take part on a first-come, first-served basis, to a maximum number set by the Association every year. The aim is to have about four players per team taking part initially, and to grow from there.

And that’s where Michael Shouldice comes in. He brokered the deal, which “levels the playing field” by setting standard fees that are identical for all players, regardless of where they call home. He’s also a pivotal resource helping players, who have attended many different post-secondary institutions across North America, navigate the path to degree completion or pursue new avenues.

“We’re already seeing lots of interest, especially from players who are just a few courses short of their degree,” he says of players whose educations have been “interrupted” by professional football. “They’re eager to see what we have to offer that can help them reach their academic goals.”

Flory agrees.

“Our members are always looking for ways to be better, smarter players. They’re excited about a partnership that gives them a way to do that.”

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Our members are always looking for ways to be better, smarter players. They’re excited about a partnership that gives them a way to do that. Scott Flory

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Playing It Smart
At 6’ and 240 lbs., 28-year-old Calgary Stampeders running back Tim St. Pierre is a formidable force on the football field. He’s played more than 100 regular-season games, both defence and offence, over the past seven years, and isn’t one to shy away from a challenge. His next one? Continuing his education with Athabasca University.

St. Pierre is the first person to enrol in AU as part of the partnership agreement struck in June 2014 between the university and the CFL Players’ Association. He already holds a BA in Criminology from St. Mary’s University, and is now pursuing an AU University Certificate in Finance.

“What I’m going to do after football is always in the back of my mind,” he says. “Playing in the CFL, you live comfortably and have a good salary. But the reality is that, whether you’re playing for a year or two or are the highest-paid player in the league, when your career’s over, you’ll have to transition into something else. Many of us are becoming more conscious of that.”

St. Pierre and his wife run a wedding and corporate events planning company, so the AU courses will be instantly relevant to and a natural fit with the operations, tax and marketing side of the business he handles. He also has a personal interest in the subject, and could see pursuing an MBA down the road.

“I want to keep my options open,” he explains, noting that he hasn’t given up his dream of becoming a police officer. “I want to be capable of doing a few things, to keep as many options on the table as possible. If you come out of football in your 30s and don’t have solid education or experience in a career, you’re behind the 8-ball. No matter where you are and what salary you earn, you always have to have an eye for the future.

He started to expand his options in February, taking two courses while working for Trinidad Drilling Ltd. in Fort Nelson, B.C. He logs a lot of air miles — “I have lots of study time” — commuting from his home in New Hampshire on a two-weeks-on, two-weeks-off schedule. He plans to tackle another three courses during the football season, starting right after June’s training camp.

“People in all industries continue to educate themselves, and it’s no different for us. We just face some neat challenges. When I played in university, I learned to manage it. This partnership has been a real kick to get going, and is a real advantage — a reminder to all of us guys not to put education on the backburner.

“Once a few of us start taking advantage of this, everyone is going to pile on.”

THE BEST OFFENCE IS A STRONG EDUCATION

YOU NEVER KNOW HOW LONG YOUR CAREER IS GOING TO BE, SO YOU HAVE TO PLAN FOR EVERY SCENARIO. EDUCATION HAS TO BE PART OF THAT SCENARIO.

TIM ST. PIERRE
OPEN OUR WORLD GOES OVER THE TOP

The success of AU’s first capital campaign is tallied in funds and new friends.

BY ALL MEASURES, Athabasca University’s first major fundraising campaign has been a resounding success. Not only did it exceed its $30-million target — raising more than $32-million — it also raised the profile of the university and engaged hundreds of new supporters from across Alberta and beyond.

“I’ve got a great job,” says chief development officer Rick Harland, with a laugh. “AU has such a great story to tell. And what’s better than working with positive, successful people who want to make a difference, and hearing great feedback from people whose lives have been so positively changed?”

Heather Kennedy, chair of the Campaign Cabinet, concurs. “There is such value in telling people who we are and what we contribute — and inviting people to partner with us to make the world a better place.”

The campaign raised funds in four priority areas: student awards, learning innovation, research and community service. Because of Open Our World, the university has been able to increase student awards significantly. For example, more than $600,000 has been raised for new awards for Aboriginal students.

“Students are at the centre of everything we do at the university,” says Dr. Pamela Walsh, vice-president of advancement. “Open Our World has let us dedicate significant resources to improving scholarship and bursary opportunities for our students, especially from under-represented groups.”

Campaign funds are also being invested in initiatives including the Project Management Research Institute and case competitions in the Faculty of Business, the Learning Communities Project in the Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research, a Virtual Writer-in-Residence Program in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Athabasca Research River Basin Institute in the Faculty of Science and Technology.

But Harland and Kennedy both emphasize that the full impact of the campaign extends well beyond the financial. “The campaign gave us the opportunity to have more than 1,000 friendly, face-to-face meetings with donors who literally had no idea what AU does,” Harland says.

“When they found out, their support was generous and swift.”

Seeing donations come in for the Learning Communities project was a proud moment for Kennedy, who has personally advocated for and supported the initiative for several years. “I thought, ‘We’re really going to make a difference in remote northern Aboriginal communities.’ As a Canadian, that’s something special.”

She was equally appreciative when she heard from alumni grateful for the opportunity to give back to AU. “When a donor comes forward, tells their story and then makes the biggest donation of their life to the Faculty of Health Studies, you realize how much AU matters.”

Now that those conversations have begun, Harland says AU is well positioned to continue them — and to continue raising funds and forging partnerships important to sustaining the university and providing the learning opportunities students need. ■

Support for AU is always appreciated. You can donate online at athabascau.ca.
Open Our World

On behalf of the AU family of students, professors, tutors and staff who will benefit from the Open Our World Campaign

Barry Walker, Chair, Board of Governors
Peter MacKinnon, Interim President, Athabasca University
Heather Kennedy, Chair, Open Our World Campaign

would like to...

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT

I’m living my career dream right now! Without AU, I don’t think that would have happened as quickly or smoothly.

Will Chang
Master of Science in Information Systems

Athabasca University is an open university, dedicated to removing barriers to post-secondary education and to letting people realize their full potential. AU students come from all walks of life: working parents, indigenous people, mature students, residents of rural and remote communities and residents of urban centres — people who always wanted to learn, but never had the chance.
You need a flash to take pictures at night, right?
Not if your subject is the night sky.

LAST SEPTEMBER, volunteers from Science Outreach Athabasca teamed up with the local Rotary Club to hold two workshops called “Photography and the Night Sky.” And while the participants didn’t get much sleep, the results were anything but bleary eyed.
Missed it the first time out?

Science Outreach Athabasca and the Rotary Club will be looking to the skies again in 2015. Send an e-mail to sc-outreach.coord@athabascau.ca to get all the details, and visit the Science Outreach — Athabasca website at scienceoutreach.ab.ca for more ways to get involved with the great outdoors.

(Above) Backlit trees make a nice canvas for a little creative flashlight work. Photo by Bromley Chamberlain

(Left) Photography workshop participants wait for nightfall. Photo by Robert Holmberg

(Opposite page)

(Top) Just a little supplemental light makes this abandoned farm house stand out against the night sky. Photo by Bromley Chamberlain

(Bottom left) The International Space Station streaks across the sky south of Athabasca, Alberta. Photo by Robert Holmberg

(Bottom right) The aurora borealis lights up the night with the Athabasca University Geophysical Observatory in the foreground. Photo by Robert Holmberg
Thousands of workers from across Canada commute regularly to jobs half a country away, leaving home and family to live and work for extended periods in remote and isolated sites. AU research will offer insights into the impact of this ‘fly-in, fly-out’ lifestyle.

**BY CATHY NICKEL**

**THEY’RE OFTEN** called the “shadow population” — people who come to a community to work, but it’s never really home. Depending on the season, they can number in the tens of thousands. In 2014, the Edmonton Journal reported that in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo alone, Alberta’s hub of oil-and-gas activity, the number of mobile workers totalled 40,000. The actual number was estimated to be much closer to 60,000.

Even with the recent economic slowdown, no matter how you look at it, there are lots of these semi-transient workers. They hail from across Canada and the vast majority work a regular “on-off” schedule, typically alternating 10 days living and working on-site with 10 days of home time. This year-round reality is a relatively new phenomenon, and very little is known about the impact of these repeated transitions on workers and their families.

Two Athabasca University researchers want to change that. Drs. Jeff Chang and Simon Nuttgens are associate professors in the Faculty of Health Disciplines Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology. They are embarking on a pilot project that’s the first step in a larger endeavour called Faraway Fathers that will look specifically at the experiences and psychosocial impacts of fathers who work in northern Alberta’s oil patch and are away from their families for significant periods of time.

“People have always gone away to work — serving in the military, working abroad or in industries such as transportation, fishing or forestry, for example — but it’s only over the past 10-20 years that we’ve seen these repeated, regimented schedules to such an extent,” says Nuttgens. “A number of studies have looked at long-term absences, but there’s really nothing relevant to what we’re seeing now.”

What’s different about today’s “fly-in, fly-out” workers, as they’ve been dubbed, is that they experience repeated transitions and, wherever they are in the cycle, they’re there for a significant amount of time.

“Life can be complicated for these workers and their families,” Chang explains. “There are all kinds of rumours about ‘camp life’ and workers who get involved with drugs or alcohol. Even with Skype or e-mail contact, wives can worry. There are situations where fathers come home and say, ‘These are my days off and I’m not going to babysit.’ Others
might say, ‘I really want to be an involved dad, but my wife has things so tightly structured that there’s nothing for me to wiggle into.’ There can be instances of domestic violence."

While issues and stresses can have a psychological impact on workers, their spouses and their children, sometimes serious enough to be defined as clinical problems, a great many families have proven adept in managing the realities of transitional work. These are the people Chang and Nuttgens are especially keen to speak with.

They plan to interview couples to look at the impact of paternal absence on a family's functioning, health and mental well-being. Using a qualitative research design, they hope to identify the factors that help or hinder a family’s adjustment to on-off work patterns.

The new insights they expect to develop into the emotional, behavioural and systemic effects of transitional employment ultimately can have a direct and positive impact on families and on professional counsellors, offering new tools to both.

"If we can find out what people do to cope well — what they do so both parents are involved parents, and so the couple has a healthy relationship even when they don’t see each other for a week or more — then we can help families adjust to changing work patterns," Nuttgens says.

The potential impact won't end there. "If we find something new or crystalize something we've known, we can share information that will be helpful to practicing counsellors and to those just entering the field," Chang notes. "And if companies have this information, they can incorporate it into their wellness programs as well, which ultimately will have an impact on safety, productivity and profitability."

Getting to those nuggets of knowledge begins by speaking with workers and their families. "This project isn't about 'academics' who purport to be experts," Chang says. "We're not the experts here. The experts are the families doing it day in and day out. When we ask them how they make it work, we won't be surprised to hear them say 'no one ever asked me.'"

Want to learn more about the Faraway Fathers project? Contact Drs. Jeff Chang (866.901.7647) or Simon Nuttgens (866.916.9653) toll-free.
DR. FRÉDÉRIQUE PIVOT had no experience with planes. She had no connection to the aviation world. She had next to no research budget. Few researchers had attempted to do what she had in mind. So what did she think of her prospects when she decided she wanted to use planes to follow her polar research passions?

“It was the right time to be getting involved in this type of research,” says the assistant professor in physical geography in Athabasca University’s Faculty of Science and Technology. “When you start something when everybody’s already working on it, there are no major challenges anymore. It’s not as interesting. When you start working in something relatively new, there are lots of challenges, and that is motivating.”

It was clearly the right time to make the decision and Pivot has literally taken her research and knowledge to new heights. She is among few researchers using drones — more correctly called unmanned aerial vehicles — in a non-military, scientific application.

A physical geographer who specializes in climatology and remote sensing, Pivot develops enhanced observing systems capabilities (technology and algorithms) to monitor the dynamics of snow and ice, using UAVs to gather data. Her achievements led to being named to the Board of Directors of Unmanned Systems Canada, a national nonprofit organization advancing public and private innovation in unmanned vehicle systems, in 2014.

“Studying snow is very important for studying climate change,” she explains. “Snow impacts the climate, and in return the climate impacts the amount and timing of snow accumulation and melt. So you can use snow as an index of climate change by monitoring snow.”

For several years, she had relied on satellite images to collect her data, but because those images have low resolution, the information they provided was limited. She wanted more and set out to find a new way to gather information.
Dr. Frédérique Pivot wants more women to break down barriers by moving into the sciences, and thinks it’s time for more to explore the horizons opened by unmanned aerial vehicles. In her role on the Unmanned Systems Canada Board of Directors, she’s addressing underrepresentation in the sector by encouraging women to get involved in UAVs, and casting the spotlight on the achievements of women already doing pioneering work.

Pivot is also inspiring future generations. As a member of Science Outreach — Athabasca, she has organized two-day UAV indoor camps for teens in the greater Athabasca, Alta., area and on the Jean Marie River First Nation, N.W.T. She’s hoping to extend those camps throughout Canada to get more K–12 students involved in the field of unmanned systems.
"The only thing I hadn’t tried yet was multi-stage remote sensing,” she explains, “which was looking at the same area but at different altitudes... So you collect data from the ground, get imagery collected from an aircraft, and then satellite. The satellite will have a coarse resolution, the imagery from the aircraft will have finer resolution, and then you can compare both of them with snow measurements from the ground. So I thought, that’s something I’d like to investigate, but how can I do that?”

She quickly ruled out typical manned aircraft because it would be far too expensive, and the first UAVs she discovered were too expensive as well. Eventually she found something in her price range — radio-controlled (RC) planes — that she thought would offer the right capabilities at the right price point.

“I thought, maybe I could buy one and make a UAV out of it for a lot less. So that’s how I decided to try it: do it yourself!” She found an online hobbyist community eager to help and joined the Fort Saskatchewan RC Flying Club, whose members helped her learn how to build, maintain, fix and, most importantly, fly her planes.

Over the past five years, she has assembled several small fixed-wing and multi-rotor UAVs using readily available components, and has learned now to integrate avionics, autopilot and other components. “I was starting from ground zero,” Pivot recalls. “I had to learn everything; I was a total newbie in the area.”

As she continues to hone her flying skills with these smaller UAVs, she’s also working to get the larger “Penny Belle” — her lovingly named UAV with six-hour flying time and a 10kg payload capacity — ready to become a regular part of her research. This larger plane will enable her to collect cryospheric information to better “see” snow and ice, and also to “spread her wings” a little wider. Pivot has already been part of an interdisciplinary team that conducted unmanned aerial survey and mapping of permafrost degradation in Northwest Territories communities, and she’s looking into other applications, including the aerobiological sampling of pollens and pathogens, multiple-UAS cooperation, navigation and collision avoidance, and monitoring populations of free-range mammals.

Two new projects are on tap for summer 2015. One will equip a small UAV with a GoPro and “coffee can” radar to map soil moisture in low-vegetation and forested areas. The GoPro will be modified with filters so it can take aerial photographs at specific wavelengths in the visible and near-infrared spectrum. The second project will equip a small UAV with a low-cost, lightweight real-time kinematic GPS system to determine its ability to gather data that can link images and locations with centimetre-level accuracy. Pivot uses a high-cost GPS system in her research, but the equipment is too large and heavy to use with smaller UAVs. This project will investigate how well a system that costs hundreds of dollars, as opposed to thousands, works to provide high-quality data. Both projects will be run on an experimental site about 150k west of Edmonton.

And, not surprisingly, given the “exploring the wide blue yonder” traditions of aviation and learning, Pivot is also on the frontier of UAVs use in education. Collaborating with computer scientists and other colleagues, she’s developing mobile technology-guided field trips and virtual geographic environments that give students in her online geography courses new perspectives on what they’re learning.
**2014 FACTS + FIGURES**

**DEGREES AWARDED SINCE 1972**
- 6,060 Humanities & Social Sciences
- 5,115 Health Disciplines
- 462 Science & Technology
- 6,334 Business
- 691 Distance Education

**STUDENTS BY AGE RANGE**

**UNDERGRAD**
- 47.8% Less than 25
- 32.9% Ages 25 to 34
- 13.6% Ages 35 to 44

**GRADUATE**
- 32.8% MALE
- 67.0% FEMALE
- *0.3% Didn't Say*

**TOP CITIES FOR AU STUDENTS**
- Mumbai: 5,420
- Chennai: 4,071

**STUDENTS BY LOCATION**

- **Undergrad**
  - 47.8% Less than 25
  - 32.9% Ages 25 to 34
  - 13.6% Ages 35 to 44
- **Graduate**
  - 32.8% Male
  - 67.0% Female

**Studens by Location**

- **Canada Total**: 96.8% | **USA**: 0.8% | **International**: 1.2% | **Unknown**: 0.3%

- **Top Cities for AU Students**
  - Mumbai: 5,420
  - Chennai: 4,071

**Figures**

- **Open Spring/Summer 2015**

**Percentage Breakdown for Undergraduates**

- Less than 25: 47.8%
- Ages 25 to 34: 32.9%
- Ages 35 to 44: 13.6%
- Male: 32.8%
- Female: 67.0%
- Did not say: 0.3%

**Degrees Awarded Since 1972**

- Humanities & Social Sciences: 6,060
- Health Disciplines: 5,115
- Science & Technology: 462
- Business: 6,334
- Distance Education: 691

**Undergraduates**

- 36,751 Undergraduates
- 68,630 Undergraduate Courses

**Graduates**

- 4,071 Graduates
- 9,975 Graduate Courses
Faculty in focus

Underscoring students’ online experiences at Athabasca University are faculty inspired to share their knowledge and expertise. Meet four who enrich and enliven learning.

BY ERIN OTTOSEN AND JOHN O’BRIEN

Studying the roots of social change

DR. MIKE GISONDI is fascinated with social change and, in his research, he doesn’t just observe it — he tries to figure out how to make it actually happen.

In Unleashing Local Capital, a project exploring community investment co-ops, for example, “I’m in it right up to my nose,” he says with a smile. “I’m a researcher, I’m helping with the learning materials and I’m in the investment group.” The project, funded by the Rural Alberta Development Fund, looks at eight projects in Alberta in which community members pool their money to invest in business ideas that have been dreamt up by local entrepreneurs.

In Scaling Innovation for Sustainability, he looks at how to scale out and scale up the success of grassroots projects like co-ops and volunteer groups which are part of the social economy. “There are all these successful grassroots projects, but how do we reproduce them in another context? Or say there’s a successful local car share co-op in Victoria. What’s the essence of that innovation, and can you transfer that essence to another context?” The argument is that meeting local needs through grassroots initiatives — like co-ops that grow food like the tomatoes Gismondi grows every year in his garden — is more sustainable.

He finds that his research interests are also informed by the real-life experiences of his AU students. “The students here ... tend to be older, and a lot of them have a lot of life experience — domestic life, civic life, political life, work life, social life — and it brings a richness. Often they want to explore questions when they come here based on their lived experience.

“In the class I have now, I probably have people in seven or eight provinces and a couple in international locations.... That’s quite a rich context for discussion, and the peer learning that goes on, that horizontal learning, is quite rich.”

Dr. Mike Gismondi
Professor, Social Sciences

PHOTOS BY JESSICA FERNANDEZ

Dr. Mike Gismondi
Professor, Social Sciences

PHOTOS BY JESSICA FERNANDEZ
“Our most valuable contribution in the Centre for Distance Education is creating education interventions that solve social problems.”

DR. MARTI CLEVELAND-INNES

Dr. Marti Cleveland-Innes
Chair and Professor, Distance Education

Sharing a passion for breaking down barriers

Considering her dedication to helping “non-traditional” students — adults coming back to school after a long time away, for example, or students with disabilities — it makes sense that Dr. Marti Cleveland-Innes eventually found her way to Athabasca University.

“I’m passionate about providing quality education for all, just like AU is,” she says. “I believe education can help improve life chances and bring people to higher awareness, higher achievements. So I’m deeply committed to the continual improvement of learning environments to increase accessibility, reduce barriers and enhance learning outcomes.”

The chair of AU’s Centre for Distance Education, Cleveland-Innes also teaches research methods and leadership to students completing master’s and doctoral degrees in education. Amongst her teaching and administrative duties, she pursues an abundant research agenda that feeds her passion for removing barriers to education and striving to make learning experiences better and better for all students.

From 2012–14, Cleveland-Innes was a regular visitor to Stockholm, Sweden, where she was a guest professor and researcher at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology. In her post there, she was developing research and education on technology-enhanced learning, serving as an advisor for online learning projects and collaborating with faculty and PhD students on their research.
So what does it take to lead an institution facing uncertain funding, while trying to balance the needs of students, the desires of faculties and the demands of governments? In University Leadership and Public Policy in the Twenty-First Century: A President’s Perspective, AU interim president Peter MacKinnon argues that Canadian universities must embrace competitiveness and change if they are to succeed in the global race for talent. University of Toronto Press 🌐

After two decades of research involving hundreds of studies, the evidence seems pretty compelling: exercise during and after breast cancer treatment is one of the best things a breast cancer patient can do for improving her physical and mental health. In Fight Breast Cancer with Exercise, Dr. Jeff Vallance, associate professor, Centre for Nursing and Health Studies, and Dr. Kerry Courneya from the University of Alberta offer practical exercise tips. Company’s Coming Publishing 🌐

Legal Literacy: An Introduction to Legal Studies by Archie Zariski, professor of legal studies, is among the first books to be published through the AU Press Open Pathways to Enriched Learning series. This introductory text provides a foundational understanding of key legal concepts and analyzes what it means “to think like a lawyer.” AU Press 🌐

Sustainability is also a city issue

DR. ANSHUMAN KHARE’S work, research and teaching has taken him all over the world and given him familiarity with everything from airports to car manufacturing, city planning to corporate stewardship. He brings this knowledge and experience together to contribute to solving some of humanity’s biggest challenges – including urban evolution and climate change.

“We know that by 2050, about 70 percent of the world’s population will be living in urban areas,” he explains. “City planning, transportation issues, urban development, infrastructure … these are all under stress. In Canadian cities, there’s a lot of resistance to change. We are so much focused on the economics of doing things that we tend to set aside the environmental and social issues. … We don’t have a long-term focus. So investment in long-term infrastructure is very limited.

“In some developed countries in Europe and Asia, they are thinking about 50 to 70 years ahead, and that’s something that we are not doing.”

He also finds it interesting that people are still caught up in arguing about whether climate change is actually happening or pointing fingers about who’s responsible. “Because I’m a business prof … it’s not a question of whether it’s happening or not happening. It’s not a question of who’s responsible for it,” he says. “I think climate change presents us with some unique business opportunities. … Some companies will see those opportunities and others will miss out.”

He brings those two research interests together as a member of the steering committee for the Cities and Climate Change Network, an international research network. And in May 2013, he and fellow AU faculty member Dr. Terry Beckman co-edited Mitigating Climate Change: The Emerging Face of Modern Cities, the result of research and collaboration among members of the CCCN. ▶️
Engaging patients as partners in health care research

**DR. VIRGINIA VANDALL-WALKER** has been named lead for the Patient Engagement platform of the Alberta SPOR (Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research) SUPPORT Unit and will play a key role in engaging Alberta patients and their families as full partners in health care research.

“I am extremely pleased to welcome Virginia into this critical leadership role and platform,” said Tim Murphy, executive director of the Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit. “Along with the other platform leads, she will be advancing the Alberta SPOR SUPPORT model in the months ahead, moving towards operational readiness.”

The Alberta SPOR SUPPORT Unit is a multidisciplinary health care research centre created to support patient-oriented research. Organized and funded by Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions and the Canadian Institutes for Health Research, the Alberta unit was launched in November 2013 and is the first such provincial unit opened to support SPOR, a national initiative led by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

The “SUPPORT” in the name is an acronym for Support for People and Patient-Oriented Research and Trials. Seven province-wide platforms will operate under the umbrella of the Alberta unit, offering resources for researchers in areas such as data services, knowledge translation and clinical trials.
Northern communities become learning communities

An innovative project builds on the culture of knowledge sharing in First Nations and Métis communities.

LIVING IN a remote northern Alberta First Nation or Métis community used to mean that access to local educational opportunities was limited at best, requiring residents to travel away from their communities and families in order to reach their academic goals. For many, the barriers to education proved insurmountable.

Those obstacles are coming down for people in the 10 communities currently taking part in the Athabasca University-led Learning Communities Project, which is literally opening online doors to knowledge — and building on a rich tradition of Indigenous knowledge sharing.

“It’s truly a grassroots initiative,” says Dr. Lisa Carter, dean of AU’s Faculty of Science and Technology, explaining that the project is a partnership among Aboriginal and Métis communities and northern post-secondary institutions. “It gives people access to education at their fingertips, within their communities and near their communities. It works because we are building relationships; because Elders are very supportive, coordinators live in the communities and the learning opportunities respond to what communities want.”

Participating communities have provided space to create resource centres, "We are learning that this is a model that could work in any community anywhere in the world. Any community can be a learning community.”

DR. LISA CARTER, DEAN
FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
People in Northern Alberta First Nations and Métis communities who take part in Learning Communities are setting the course for future success. Here are just four examples of journeys underway.

- **A Bigstone Cree** member is now operating a licensed day home in Edmonton after completing an Early Childhood Education course facilitated through Learning Communities.
- **A Garden River** community member who has struggled with substance abuse was motivated to take a five-day safety and training course to become a wildland firefighter.
- **A Young Father** in East Prairie found himself unemployed and under-educated, and realized that to provide for his family, he needed to be skilled in a trade. After consulting with the Learning Communities community coordinator, he upgraded his math and applied to a carpentry apprentice program.
- **In Buffalo Lake**, the community coordinator mentored a young man who overcame learning disabilities and dyslexia to successfully obtain his welding ticket and is now employed.

The result is a blend of traditional and formal education that integrates Indigenous beliefs and knowledge in a modern-day context. Some students pursue post-secondary studies, while others complete their high school education. Some people take part in workshops that teach traditional skills, such as beadwork and working with animal hides. Others take courses to learn specific skills, such as how to run a business or to be certified to work on oil rigs. Elders, too, have asked for workshops to hone their own knowledge and skills.

Over the past four years, more than 3,000 people have taken part in Learning Communities, but Campeau emphasizes that increasing the participant count isn’t the goal. “It’s about getting hundreds and hundreds of people into the program,” she says. “It’s about making sure that one student has the access to what they need — it’s about that individual person’s success.”

“[Our aim is to work hand-in-hand with communities to build learning capacity, and it is really blossoming,” Carter concludes. “It has been a remarkable, remarkable journey for us — and we are learning that this is a model that could work in any community anywhere in the world. Any community can be a learning community.”
For the third year in a row, AU Faculty of Business undergraduate students take top honours at the annual Chartered Professional Accountants Board Governance Case Competition. Team iDea — BComm students Bonnita Arbeau, Charles Gallucci, Corrina Green and Clayton Reeder — claim first place and $10,000. Team BILs — Bmgmt student Laina Beeharry and BComm students Chris Ireland, Sarah Leverton and Brandon Simmons — take third and $2,000.

MAY
Lorraine Way (Bachelor of General Studies ’80), a nursing instructor at Red Deer College since 1988, receives a lifetime achievement award from the College and Association of Registered Nurses of Alberta. She studied with AU early in her career as a stepping stone to completing her nursing degree at the University of Alberta.

St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital concludes an international search and names Mary Stewart (MBA ‘08) vice president and chief of human resources. The hospital is located in St. Thomas, Ont., and serves it and surrounding municipalities.

Djenana Jalovcic, a Doctor of Education student, receives a $60,000 scholarship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to complete a three-year project called Access to Online Higher Education for Students with Disabilities.

Alumni in Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal come together to undertake an important shared endeavour: drinking wine. Alumni wine tastings were organized by Alumni Relations.

JUNE
Colin Reichle (MBA ’97) receives AU’s 2014 Volunteer Service Award in Edmonton. Sadly, he passes away in November, leaving a rich legacy of service and a grateful community. Read the full story on his extraordinary efforts, and the stories of other Alumni Award recipients, on pages 6-8.

AU’s annual convocation, held over three days in Athabasca, celebrates the academic achievements of 1,720 grads who completed undergraduate and graduate degrees, certificates and diplomas in 2013–14. Alberta Innovates - Technology Futures awards are presented to six AU students, all of whom are focusing their research on ICT: Arthur Barbut [DBA], Dan Jovicic [MSc(IS)], Diane Mitchnick [MSc(IS)], Elijah Hini [MSc(IS)], Jeffery Kurcz [MSc(IS)] and Ryan Mills [MSc(IS)]. The doctoral awards are $15,000/year for four years and the...
JULY

Yes, Priscilla, there is an AU

WHEN YOU live in Maputo, Mozambique, and want to take courses online from a place that’s half a world away, you wonder if everything’s on the up and up. So Priscilla Lear decided to check out Athabasca University in a way few students do. On a visit to Canada to attend a festival in July, she bought a plane ticket to Edmonton, rented a car and made a pilgrimage out to the very real main campus of AU in the very real town of Athabasca, Alta. Needless to say, few students come to the AU campus, so staff were more than a little surprised by the visit, and doubly so when they learned now far Priscilla had come. For Priscilla, who is studying Sociology, the warm welcome and comprehensive tour confirmed that she’d made the right choice. Read the full story about Priscilla’s visit at news.athabascau.ca/news/yes-priscilla-athabasca-university-is-real.

AUgUST

Brendan Cook (MBA ’12) becomes associate vice president, regional finance, for TD Bank Group, providing leadership and support to the retail distribution regional finance teams across Canada.

Emmy Okazawa-Bortolin (MBA ’09) “returns to AU” to become the new LMD and AACSB coordinator in the Faculty of Business.

SEPTemBER

Gina Ko (Master of Counselling – Psychology ’14) receives the first installment of her University of Calgary Eyes High Doctoral Recruitment Scholarship, which is valued at $100,000 over four years and will support her doctoral studies in Educational Leadership.

What are your Business classmates up to now?

AU’s Faculty of Business celebrated the 20th anniversary of the online Executive MBA in 2014, and that’s just one of many gems shared at business.athabascau.ca/news. Click on Class Notes to read about the comings, goings and accomplishments of fellow grads — and to share your news.

master’s are $10,000/year for two years.

Moiz Bhamani (MBA ’12) receives a Business in Calgary Leaders of Tomorrow Award. He was AU’s 2013 Alumni Rising Star Award recipient. Read his story at athabascau.ca/aboutau/media/publications.php.

“(AU) is more concrete to me now than a ghost page on the Internet, and I think you should be proud to be reaching all the way down to southern Africa.”

Priscilla Lear, Athabasca University Student from Mozambique

Gina Ko (Master of Counselling – Psychology ’14) receives the University of Calgary Eyes High Doctoral Recruitment Scholarship, Leadership. She is a counsellor at Eastside Family Centre.

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Gina Ko (Master of Counselling – Psychology ’14) receives the University of Calgary Eyes High Doctoral Recruitment Scholarship, Leadership. She is a counsellor at Eastside Family Centre.
Master of Nursing thesis students Jennifer Jackson and Colleen Toyes are awarded Rising Star status by Sigma Theta Tau, the International Honor Society of Nursing. In December 2013, Jennifer received an SSHRC Joseph Armand Bombardier Graduate Scholarship valued at $17,500 for her project called “The Process of Critical Care Nurse Resilience in Workplace Adversity.”

OCTOBER
AU’s 2014 Alumni Awards are presented to three exceptional alumni. Glenn Berall (MBA ’07) receives the Distinguished Alumni Award, Jan Reischek (MBA ’13) receives the Rising Star Award and the Future Alumni Award goes to Sarah Kobsa (MA – Integrated Studies ’14). Read about the accomplishments of all of this year’s award recipients on pages 6–8.

Louann Poirier (BPA: Human Services ’14) receives her degree at her home in McBride, B.C., personally conferred by AU professor Dr. Jane Arscott. Louann has been working on her degree since 2002 and graduated with distinction. Her cancer has been diagnosed as terminal, and she was thrilled to receive her degree because she very much wanted to graduate. She spent much of her career working with mentally ill drug addicts on Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.

Inspiring Indigenous Students
David Gabriel Tuccaro is a member of the Mikisew Cree First Nation in Fort Chipewyan, Alta., and the president and CEO of seven successful companies that create opportunities for Indigenous people. He established scholarships for Indigenous students in AU’s Faculty of Business.

His generosity has been matched with a $50,000 gift from Indspire, an Indigenous-led national organization that invests in the education of Indigenous people. Combined, these donations will provide for up to 12 student awards each year.

To learn more or to apply for one of these awards, visit: indspire.ca/apply

Promoting Health & Knowledge
The Robbins family is passionate about health and education, and have pledged $50,000 to provide $1,000 bursaries to 10 students every year, to help them offset the costs of their studies.

Because there is little funding support available for part-time students, these bursaries are open to part-time students who are single parents, live in the Edmonton area and are involved in community work.

Find out more about the wide range of scholarships and bursaries available to AU students, and apply for student awards, at registrar.athabascau.ca/studentawards

“ I don’t feel like I work long days. I enjoy what I do, and I see the growth and potential in all of it.”

Sarah Kobsa
MA – Integrated Studies ’14

November
Bachelor of Science student Steve Shideler wins the runner-up prize in The Korea Times’ 10th English Economic Essay Contest. His essay answered the question, “How can Korea have Samsung- or Hyundai-like global players in the financial sector?”


Patti MacEwan (MBA ’05) is named health services administrator for Northern Health in B.C.

December
Louise Turcotte (Graduate Diploma in Management ’08) is named dean of the Schools of Skills Training and Community and Corporate Learning at Cambrian College in Sudbury, Ont.

Have news to share?
Send your info. and pix to Alumni Relations at alumni@athabascau.ca
Where are they now?

Wonder what some of the people we’ve highlighted previously are up to now?
We’re happy to report on a few.

Abraham Nhial Wei

When he shared his jaw-dropping story in *Open* in 2012, Abraham Nhial Wei was one quarter of the way through his AU BPA: Communication Studies degree. Now, an article in African newspaper *The Nation Mirror* features him as the communications manager for World Vision South Sudan, Juba Office. Local conflicts are preventing farmers from growing their crops and Abraham talks about helping farmers and working to prevent food shortages.

Read the AU story at athabascau.ca/aboutau/media/publications.php

Sebastian Clovis

It’s not hard to see Sebastian Clovis these days — just tune in to *Tackle My Reno* on HGTV. Clovis was playing for the CFL’s Saskatchewan Roughriders when he completed the final course for his BA in Psychology (graduating in 2008). He parlayed his interest in home renovations into a post-gridiron gig as the engaging host of the new how-to show, which debuted in 2014. Sebastian was featured on AU’s blog in November 2014.

Check it out at news.athabascau.ca/news/getting-things-done-the-au-way

Adam Lowry & Keegan Lowe

Adam Lowry and Keegan Lowe were both playing for the WHL when they were featured in the 2013 issue of *Open*, sharing why studying at AU was a great fit with their lives as hockey players. Today, both are realizing their NHL dreams. Adam is part of NHL’s Winnipeg comeback as a left winger with the Jets, while Keegan plays defense for the NHL’s Carolina Hurricanes.

Read their words about studying at AU at athabascau.ca/aboutau/media/publications.php

Dave Perlich

When we last checked in with Dave Perlich in early 2010, the former CBC producer was at CFB Wainwright, mentoring young journalists taking part in AU’s Journalism in Conflict Zones course. Well, he’s been pretty busy since, co-authoring a book (in Dutch) on journalism’s new golden age, finishing a master’s degree in New York, and appearing regularly on his old network as, of all things, a Vatican expert. Perlich covered the resignation of Pope Benedict and the election of Pope Francis for the CBC in 2013 and has made numerous appearances since speaking on Vatican issues.
Yes, Minister: the uneasy relationship between universities and governments

In this excerpt from his new book, University Leadership and Public Policy in the Twenty-First Century: A President’s Perspective, AU interim president Peter MacKinnon looks at the evolving perspective on governments’ involvement in university operations.

Yes, minister: the uneasy relationship between universities and governments

THE TRAJECTORY OVER recent decades is a decline in the per student public support for the operating costs of universities. Sometimes the trajectory straightens out, and it may even turn up for a time. But the long-term direction down is clear. If this continues for an extended period of time, it is not hyperbole to speak of the privatization of university education.

If it is fair that the public interest in an individual’s decision to complete a degree or certificate be recognized equally with the private interest, provincial government contributions falling below that share constitute a shirking of provincial government responsibility. If this happens, and it should be recognized as a public policy choice to let it happen, government must accept the consequence.

University contributions to the public good include research as well as teaching. Here the funding arrangements vary but, whatever they may be, universities must recover their full direct and indirect costs, which should not include a contribution from tuition. Students do not attend a university in order to subsidize research, though they have been doing so, because institutions have been unable to recover their full costs from research agencies and sponsors. When sponsors are provincial governments, they must be prepared to pay full costs, though their engagement in university research is not limited to exclusive sponsorship. Research partnerships may include federal and provincial governments, industry, and other collaborators.

It is important that provinces remain open to participating in these partnerships, with financial contributions commensurate with their engagement.

An understanding of government priorities and limitations is also important to universities, and they should expect clarity on them. Governments are large and complex organizations, but so are universities, and they need to be able to anticipate and plan on more than a reactive basis. University leaders know that meeting the always increasing costs of health care is the top priority of provincial governments, and that education will yield before this and sometimes other social and political budget imperatives. This too is a public policy choice. But if universities are treated like annual supplicants, waiting uncertainly in line behind health care and other more immediate priorities for government decisions that they cannot anticipate, they cannot plan effectively. For this reason, too, relationships and communication are important, because they can foster the informal messages that can lead to more informed and timely decisions.

The third expectation that universities can reasonably have of governments is that they will respect autonomy and governance. Of course, for them to be respected, they must be understood. Autonomy does not mean — as some in the university would like it to mean — that government writes cheques, then stands back and watches. Governments can be too deferential as well as too interfering, and the challenge is to find the right level of engagement. Doing so requires them to recognize that trusteeship, oversight, and administration of a university’s plans and day-to-day activities have been entrusted to its governing bodies and senior administration. The president is responsible to the board of governors or its equivalent, not to the minister. The board is also responsible for appointing a president and for oversight of the institution’s finances, property, and business affairs. Its academic affairs are in the hands of a senate or similar body by whatever name. Its faculty have academic freedom in their teaching and scholarship.

Expectations are reciprocal, and governments have some of their own. Universities expect to be understood by governments, and it would help if university people understood the burdens of governing.

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