This Issue Features

- Traditional moose hide tanning in Aklavik
- Aurora College preceptor of the Year
- Dehcho and South Slave students: Trades Awareness at Thebacha Campus
The newest member of the Aurora College Board of Governors is Olga Aviugana, who is a student at Aurora Campus in Inuvik. Olga completed the Nursing Access program and is now working on the Personal Support Worker Certificate. She believes that post-secondary education empowers people to improve themselves, give back to their community, and to accomplish their dreams and goals. Olga’s primary responsibility is to ensure that student issues and concerns are represented on the governing body. Other members of the Board include:

- **Chairperson** – Kathy Tsetso, Dehcho representative
- **Vice Chairperson** – Mary Beckett, Beaufort-Delta representative
- **Member** – David Miller, Yellowknife representative
- **Member** – Lynn Napier-Buckley, South Slave representative
- **Member** – Sheila O’Kane, Staff representative

In addition, three positions are in the process of being filled: Sahtu, North Slave, and Elder representatives.

Kathy Tsetso, Board Chairperson, (right) and Diane Reed, VP of Education and Training, pose during the Trades Open House and Alumni Recognition Event at Aurora College Thebacha Campus. Kathy graduated from Arctic College (now Aurora College) with honours in the Social Services program.

The Aurora College Board of Governors will be holding its next regular meeting February 17-18, 2016 at Northern United Place in Yellowknife from approximately 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. each day. Meetings are open to the public.

The first term has ended, and we are only a few months from Convocation Ceremonies already! There is always so much activity at each of our Campuses and Community Learning Centres that the academic year seems to fly by.

This is the first Aurora College newsletter of the academic year, due to restrictions on advertising and promotion by GNWT departments and agencies during the election period this past fall. Much more has taken place around the College than we can fit into these pages, so check out our Facebook page, Twitter, or the Aurora College mobile app for information about additional activities and events. If you have an event or activity you think should be shared, send it to info@auroracollege.nt.ca.

During the past several months, many of our students and staff have been honoured by groups and organizations, winning territorial and national awards, being published in journals and reports, receiving scholarships and bursaries, and much more. The achievements of students Carol Elanik of Aklavik and Trista Brennan of Yellowknife are featured in this issue. Among the several Aurora College faculty who have recently been published are the following:


- Another publication of note is “Decolonization Indigeneity, Education and Society.” Research and writings by Dr. Stephanie Iribacher Fox, who instructs courses in the Social Work Diploma program, are featured. The publication can be accessed at http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/issue/view/1584.

- Aurora Research Institute's Dr. Pertice Moffitt and Dr. Ashley Mercer authored a chapter on the NWT in the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundations report, “State of Rural Canada 2015.” Their chapter is available at http://sorcr.ca/html/_funds/32_friends_fred_carmichael.html. In addition, Dr. Moffitt was interviewed by Maclean’s Magazine about her work in Northern Research.

- Staff continue to go above and beyond for our students, including working with foundations and organizations to establish scholarships. This September, the first Nunasi Business Administration Scholarship of $1,000.00 and a full summer work placement was awarded. Next year, the first bursaries from the Muttart Foundation will be awarded to a student or students in financial need enrolled in second year Social Work. The $5,000 bursary will be awarded in full, or split into smaller amounts. It is created in the name of Helen Parker, wife of former NWT Commissioner John Parker.

In addition, Aurora College ALBE students at in the Beaufort Delta and Sahtu regions will be eligible for a new scholarship. The scholarship is made possible through donations made by Fred Carmichael when he left his position with the Gwich’in Tribal Council, and is being administered by the Yellowknife Community Foundation. More information is available at http://www.yellowknifecommunityfoundation.ca/html/_funds/32_friends_fred_carmichael.html.

On a final note, I would like to personally thank the students and staff from Yellowknife North Slave Campus who competed in this year’s Plane Pull for Special Olympics NWT. It is the first time I have missed the event, and I am thrilled that the tradition is continuing.

Jane Arychuk
President, Aurora College
Students enrolled in the Traditional Arts Certificate program in Aklavik recently had the opportunity to learn traditional moose hide tanning from instructors Mildred Edwards, Barbara Memogamik and Brian Rogers, and camp attendant, Peter Archie.

The course began in the spring with de-hairing and fleshing five hides obtained from local hunters through the school, the band office and ENR. All work was done with ulus, which are considerably more efficient than knives. The ulus had been made by the students in a previous tool-making course. Students learned care of and sharpening of ulus to do the hide tanning. Two students and a staff member from Moose Kerr School participated in the initial de-hairing and fleshing.

Expeditions were made by students, instructors and the camp attendant into the bush to obtain poles for the tents and the scraping and tanning structures. Students and the attendant peeled the poles. They also learned standard ways of mending holes in the hides. A final smoking required tying the hides up in a cone over a slow punkwood fire. The specific wood was collected by the camp group from the bush.

There were some challenges during the course which delayed the program, and required the hides to be attended to in the interim. Cold, rainy weather in September was also challenging, but the students overcame the obstacles. The course became a community enterprise, with several individuals helping to run and maintain it. First, a hide tanning camp was set up. Moose Kerr School lent tent and a large water container, and a student offered a second tent. Camp attendant Peter Archie split wood and kept several fires going: for tea for visiting elders, for the tanning and final smoking, and for the tanning solution made of brains. Archie, the local by-law officer, the RCMP and a person doing community service hours kept an eye on the camp when students were not present. The hamlet of Aklavik offered community space for the camp and water delivery was arranged through the college. Garbage pick-up was done by the vice-principal with his own vehicle and trailer. The Aklavik Band provided a great deal of support, including picnic tables to sit at and a driver and vehicle to fetch extra poles. Many people visited the camp including people from the Gwich’in General Assembly and school classes. Local elders regularly checked on progress and offered suggestions and support.

What was outstanding about the course was that it brought together all groups in the community for the required support. Equally important, a traditional activity was taking place in the middle of the community for all to experience and witness.

Aurora College has taken another step into the digital world with the launch of its mobile application (App) on September 1, 2015. As of January 18, the App had already been downloaded by nearly 250 registered users. Watch for contests and promotions on the App for Aurora College Week 2016 (February 15-19). Designed to better connect with an increasingly modern student body, the App will help students better organize their schedules; easily access college, campus and program information; and communicate with their instructors and peers. In addition, the Aurora College App has numerous features to help students succeed. These include course listings, event schedules, special deals for students, scholarship and bursary details and links, social media links, and chat walls for topics such as marketplace, lost and found, housing, news and ride sharing.

Jeff O’Keefe, Vice President of Student Affairs, believes the App is an excellent way to fulfill Aurora College’s goal to better serve students. “Students are becoming more technically savvy and are increasingly using new media to communicate and navigate their world,” says O’Keefe. “Our hope is this App will enable students to have a more fulfilling education experience by providing them with as much information as possible at their fingertips.”

The App also allows important announcements and emergency messages to be sent to all users. Developed for Aurora College by OOHALLA Inc., a mobile application developer which specializes in creating Apps for colleges and universities, it will continue to be upgraded to respond to the unique needs of the Aurora College student body.

Traditional moose hide tanning in Aklavik

Aurora College student earns top NWT mark in grade 12 English exam

Trista Brennan, a learner in Aurora College’s School of Developmental Studies, has earned the highest mark of all NWT students who wrote the English 30-2 (grade 12) Alberta diploma exam in June 2015.

The exams are standardized tests which must be written by all NWT and Alberta students in grade 12 level courses in English and French Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and the sciences, and are currently worth 50 percent of a student’s final mark in the course. Brennan was also the top student in the Nursing Access Program at Aurora College in 2014-15. She plans to enter the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in Yellowknife for 2016-17.

Carol Elanik, a student at Aurora College’s Aklavik Community Learning Centre, was honoured September 22 with a Council of the Federation Literacy Award. The Council of the Federation comprises all 13 provincial and territorial premiers. Each year, one person from each province and territory is chosen for this prestigious award, which recognizes the successes of an adult learner who has overcome obstacles and demonstrated progress in the pursuit of literacy skills in any of the NWT official languages.

Elanik, 38, who self-identifies as living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, was chosen as a “role model and support for others in her community.” Her optimism, enthusiasm and perseverance have helped her progress to a level of functional literacy that allows her to live on her own and be an inspiration to others. She sets her own literacy, career, education, culture, family, and personal goals and continues to challenge herself and move beyond what is expected of her. She regularly attends literacy, numeracy and computer courses at the Aklavik Community Learning Centre, and supports and encourages others to continue their education.

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Aklavik Aurora College student receives national literacy award

Carol Elanik won a Literacy Award from the Council of the Federation for Literacy. The Awards were presented at a lunch on September 22, hosted by the NWT Literacy Council and provided by Aurora College, in recognition of NWT Literacy Week, September 20-27, 2015.
Aurora College Preceptor of the Year

Cathy Landry, operating room (OR) nurse at Stanton Territorial Hospital is the inaugural winner

At Aurora College, partnerships with employers, private industry, government organizations, communities, and others are key to the success of many of our programs and students. This is especially true in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program, where critical skills and knowledge are passed on to students by registered nurses during practicums and placements.

To honour the many nursing professionals who have gone out of their way to mentor our students, the Aurora College BSN Preceptor of the Year Award was created in 2014-15. The inaugural winner is Cathy Landry, Operating Room (OR) nurse at Stanton Territorial Hospital. Fourth year BSN students were asked to nominate their preceptor by writing a short essay. Criteria to select the Preceptor of the Year includes: serving as an outstanding role model for registered nursing practice, promoting the preceptor role among colleagues in practice, demonstrating excellence in teaching/learning as a preceptor, and going beyond expectations in promoting student learning and achievement.

BSN student Ginny Wainwright worked with Cathy Landry for six weeks in the OR. This is her letter of nomination:

Cathy absolutely goes beyond her role as a preceptor. The evening before I was to start my first shift I was extremely nervous as the OR is my area of interest and the area with the least amount of knowledge. Cathy called me at home and in her calm, confident, and caring manner reassured me she would be there every step of the way and I was going to go through this journey with her by my side. Right before we hung up Cathy said, “I will see you tomorrow, and it will be great” and I knew in that moment I was going to be fine.

Cathy has given me an opportunity for my interest in the OR to blossom into pure passion. Cathy has allowed me the space to come to know myself and know that OR nursing is definitely my goal. Cathy has given me praise on days when I felt like everything went wrong, and reminded me of the little things I did well, even if it was remembering the name of only one instrument. Cathy continuously reminds me to not be too hard on myself and although there are days I may not feel it, I am improving my skills every day.

Inside the Aurora College Trades and Technology building, a small Literacy Outreach Centre classroom was filled by speakers, literacy volunteers - new and returned - and the smell of coffee. The team was ready for four hours of high intensity training.

The 16 volunteers were social workers, military officers, scientists, government workers, staff from other service providers, retirees, and new graduates, all determined to help tackle literacy issues. Some were veteran adult educators, and many were new to the field, but all were excited to learn something new.

Training began with the introduction of literacy concepts and expectations when working with the LOC. Then LOC Instructor, Lynn La Saga, dragged everyone out of their comfortable chairs with a “snowball fight contest”, where each snowball contained the traits of various disabilities that the volunteers would most likely encounter while tutoring. The participants had to throw the balls at each other and categorize those traits with their teams under FASD, Family Dysfunction, or ADHD. This fun and boisterous activity was not the end of the information session about learners with disabilities.

The second part placed participants in groups of five. One student was “the learner”, and was read to by both a “teacher” reading in a normal volume and a “whisperer” while their head and shoulder were tapped and a piece of paper was scraped on the back of their neck. To add to the frustration of the activity, lights were turned on and off, or made to flicker. Everyone had a chance to experience the learner’s perspective, then discussed how the activity related to daily challenges for learners with FASD, ADHD, hearing disabilities, and other difficulties. This discussion was particularly interesting because not everyone had the strongest reaction as the learners; some were more annoyed in the teacher role.

Wayne Balanoff, who with his wife Helen Balanoff has spent more than 40 years making significant contributions to Northern adult education, spoke on “Working with Aboriginal Students”. Wayne and Helen moved to Cambridge, Ont., in 1974 and have made the north their home. He stressed the importance of oral history that is connected to northern territories and to their people’s land.

Wayne made the point that the volunteer tutors should approach learners with disabilities, and other difficulties. Wayne and Helen stressed the need for education in a way that is meaningful and important to the learners.

Aurora College BSN Preceptor of the Year, Cathy Landry is pictured with Ginny Wainwright.
Strategic Planning key as revitalized Research Advisory Council set to guide Aurora Research Institute

The Aurora Research Institute (ARI), Aurora College’s Research division, will gain valuable insight from a revitalized and re-instated Research Advisory Council (RAC). The Council met on October 29, 2015 for the first time since 2008. The RAC is a council established by the Aurora College Board of Governors through legislation, with the mandate to provide guidance on research priorities and goals. It was first established in 1995 and was active until 2008, after which it was dissolved.

The meeting focused on strategic planning with the aim to grow research potential in the NWT. In 2014 Aurora College became eligible to receive and manage funding from the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Natural Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC). These two councils are major sources of funding for research projects Canada-wide, and grant millions in research funding every year. The potential for new and exciting research projects spurred the revitalization of the RAC with the intention of tackling this opportunity in a strategic way.

Pippa Seccombe-Hett, ARI Director, says she is excited to see the Council gather. “Research in Northern Canada helps enrich the lives of all NWT residents. The RAC will re-invigorate Aurora College’s research profile and direct us in ways to develop new research and funding opportunities.”

The RAC consists of two members of Aurora College’s Board of Governors, and four external member with expertise in Traditional Knowledge, Social Science, Health and Physical Science. External members include Dr. Andre Corrioupe, Dr. John England, Dr. Allice Legat and Jim Martin.

New program prepares RNs to provide health care in remote northern communities

Program will help fill need for further education of Northern nurses

A new Post Graduate Certificate in Remote Nursing program being offered at Aurora College will prepare Registered Nurses (RNs) to function in an expanded practice role as community health nurses in some of Canada’s most isolated regions.

Denise Bowan, Chair of Aurora College’s School of Health & Human Services, says the new program will help fill an identified need in furthering the education of Northern nurses. “Aurora College educates students from all over the Northwest Territories to become Registered Nurses. Many return to their home communities to work, and programs like this provide important skills, perspectives and insight into the realities of nursing in this unique work environment.”

The Post Graduate Certificate in Remote Nursing will prepare Registered Nurses to care for patients with common health concerns, and to provide initial urgent/emergent care. Emphasis will be placed on the consideration of culture and community while providing health care, and on the unique aspects of delivering that care in geographical isolation.

The Post Graduate Certificate in Remote Nursing is a 15-credit, one-year program. It will be delivered through a combination of distance learning, a three-week on-site component at Yellowknife North Slave Campus, and two clinical practicums in a remote health care setting.

Trades facilities Open House and alumni recognition celebrate national Skilled Trades & Technology Week

Aurora College’s School of Trades, Apprenticeship & Industrial Training (TAIT) hosted an Alumni Recognition Event and a community Open House in Fort Smith on November 4, 2015 in recognition of National Skilled Trades and Technology Week, took place November 2-8, 2015. Residents and prospective students were able to see for themselves the shops and equipment available for trades and apprenticeship programs, try their hand at a training simulator, and meet the highly qualified instructors. Programs offered at Thebacha Campus in Fort Smith include: Apprenticeship Carpentry, Electrician, Heavy Equipment Technician, Housing Maintainer, Plumber/Gasfitter and Oil Heat Systems Technician; Heavy Equipment Operator, and Observer-Communicator. Underground Miner Training is delivered in Yellowknife. Community and campus-based programs, including such courses such as Camp Cook, Building Trades Helper, Pre-Apprenticeship Carpentry, Introduction to Underground Mining, Mineral Processing Operator, and abridged Heavy Equipment Operator, are offered at various locations across the NWT. Aurora Campus in Inuvik uses the Mobile Trades Training Lab to deliver trades training in the Beaufort-Delta region.

The goal of the Open House at Aurora College was to promote and create awareness about the many career opportunities in skilled trades and technology in the NWT. Aurora College also recognized a number of trades alumni and industrial partners for their support of the programs.

Duane MacDonald, Acting Chair of the School of Trades, Apprenticeship and Industrial Training, says he was proud to showcase Aurora College’s trades facilities. “Our shops are state of the art and our instructors have a wealth of knowledge from years of working in the field,” he notes. “We strive to offer a balanced education which includes the newest methods, as well as focusing on tried and true techniques within respective trades.”

Attending the Trades Awareness Program as a student at PW Kaeser High School in Fort Smith helped spark an interest in a trades career in Chelsea Bradbury, right. She was one of the original group of TAP participants, and is now apprenticing to be an Electrician. She is one of several former TAP participants who are now apprenticing in various trades. With Chelsea are Jacqueline Melan, Regional Superintendent, South Slave ECE Service Centre, and Duane MacDonald, Acting Chair with Aurora College’s School of Trades, Apprenticeship and Industrial Training.
Dehcho and South Slave students: Trades Awareness at Thebacha Campus

It was a busy Autumn for the Trades Awareness Program which takes place at Thebacha Campus. For the first time, students from a school division outside of the South Slave travelled to Fort Smith to spend five days learning about the trades and college life. Approximately 25 students from the Dehcho communities participated. The Trades Awareness Program introduces junior high and high school students to various trades – such as carpentry, electrician, heavy equipment technician, camp cook, and plumber – that are available at Aurora College. There are two components to the program, Introductory and Intensive. During the Introductory program, students rotate daily through four trades, while the Intensive portion offers four days with one trade. The program has been running successfully in the South Slave since 2005. It is a partnership between Aurora College, the South Slave Divisional Education Council, and the GNWT Education, Culture and Employment, South Slave Region. Dehcho partners include the Dehcho Divisional Education Council, Dehcho First Nation ASETS, ITI, and GNWT Education, Culture & Employment Career Centre - Dehcho Region.
Aklavik Community Learning Centre has been busy so far this academic year, offering a range of courses and programs. This fall, ten participants were chosen for the new Introduction to Construction Labourer Basics course, which wrapped up in November.

Traditional Arts Certificate courses are going strong, with Sewing, Aboriginal Footwear, and Northern Embellishments classes offered. In the sewing course, learners have been making mitts, bags, aprons and parkas, as well as learning techniques to produce embroidery, mitt strings and Delta Braids. The mitts were made using hide that had been prepared in the hide tanning course. Moose Kerr School has generously been providing space for the classes. In addition to the regular academic upgrading learners, the Community Learning Centre is offering five courses that are not available through the high school to seven.

Aurora College’s new course, Construction Labourer Basics, was a huge hit in Behchoko. More than 100 individuals applied for the 12 seats in the six-week course, which was sponsored by the Tlicho government. Learners covered a number of topics, including general safety, WHMIS, Introduction to Construction Hazards, Fire Safety, Introduction to Electricity (DC circuits), AC circuits and Electrical Safety, a hands-on project building a shed, Ready to Work NWT, and various essential skills, such as employability, communication, employment standards, career planning, goal setting, and overcoming barriers. Since completing the course, several participants have been actively exploring apprenticeship opportunities.

To ensure that Aurora College graduates continue to receive the most current business and administrative education, reviews of both the Business Administration and Office Administration programs were undertaken. The review of the Business Administration program was completed in 2014-15. Instructors, program leaders, and the School Chair worked together to review, discuss and formulate ideas about the curriculum in planning for the future of the program. The revised program will have an Accounting Stream and a Work Experience Option and was approved by the Board of Governors in June 2015, to be implemented in September 2015. A consultant was hired in 2014-15 to assist in the review of the Office Administration program. Data collection included a variety of methodologies to obtain feedback from various sources including employers, graduates, students, instructors, and program managers at other community colleges. The revised program is expected to be offered beginning September 2016.
A total of 12 students graduated from the most recent Underground Miner Training program, which wrapped up in November. Shelby Nadli of Fort Providence received NWT Mining Leadership Award, which is sponsored by the three diamond mines and presented to a deserving student in each graduating class. The 12-week program includes classroom and safety training, learning on a driving simulator, and operating mining equipment in a realistic setting. More than 90 percent of graduates find employment in the field.

Partnerships are key to the success of Aurora College’s programs. Recently, the three NWT diamond mines made a generous donation of equipment that will be used in the Underground Miner Training program. Aurora College and the Mine Training Society NWT hosted an event to thank De Beers Canada, Diavik Diamond Mines (2012) Inc., Dominion Diamond Ekati Corporation for their gift of a haul truck, scoop tram, and a Toyota multi-utility vehicle. This donation will benefit the Underground Miner trainees as students will have hands-on experience with equipment that is actually used at the mine sites.

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The BSN program received a seven-year accreditation from the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN) in 2015. This is the longest period of accreditation that can be achieved by a school of nursing. Site reviewers from CASN highlighted the robust nursing curriculum offered at Aurora College and the close relationships between nursing practice and college partners. Graduating students and alumni one year post graduation continue to rate the program “exceptionally to very well”, noting the opportunity for quality practice placements as a strength of the program. Graduates also felt that the BSN program prepared them well for their role as a Registered Nurse.

On December 12, the Yellowknife Literacy Outreach Centre and Integration Office jointly held a potluck lunch and family carnival. More than 100 people turned out, including adult students, seniors, family literacy clients, volunteers, and partners - such as YKACL, Computers for Schools, and Avens Manors. The event was truly a community gathering and
DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly 300 Registered Nurses have graduated from Aurora College.

Aurora College offers nationally recognized bachelor’s degrees in Education and Nursing.

That Bear Monitor is one of the many courses you can take through Continuing Education with Aurora College in Inuvik.

In addition to 3 Campuses, Aurora College has 23 Community Learning Centres throughout the NWT.

Learn more about Aurora College
visit: www.auroracollege.nt.ca or email: info@auroracollege.nt.ca

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