



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Athabasca University and Northern Lakes College respond to critical shortage of nurses in rural Alberta

Partnership pathway creates 60 new nursing seats in northwestern Alberta

(ATHABASCA and SLAVE LAKE, April 21, 2023) - A new partnership between Athabasca University (AU) and Northern Lakes College (NLC) will help address a critical need for registered nurses in rural Alberta. The flexibility of online learning at both institutions allows students to work and learn from their home communities.

The partnership creates a new strategic pathway for graduates of NLC's [Practical Nurse program](#) to enter AU's [Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing program](#). This allows licensed practical nurses (LPNs) to advance their skills and education and to be eligible to become registered nurses.

The 60 new seats were created through \$923,090 in [funding from the Government of Alberta](#), and will also require support from Alberta Health Services.

Online learning advantages

The online delivery models of both institutions make for a natural partnership. The Practical Nurse program at Northern Lakes College is offered primarily online, using the College's [Supported Distance Learning](#) model, to students across the College service region, which spans from Fox Creek to Athabasca in the south, to the Alberta-Northwest Territories border in the north.

Similarly, Athabasca University's Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing program is delivered online, making it a viable option for students in the NLC region.

Through its Supported Distance Learning model, NLC will support its Practical Nurse graduates enrolled in the Post-LPN Bachelor of Nursing program at AU. This includes providing tutoring and other services to ensure students are well-supported to succeed. AU also provides administrative and learning supports [for students](#), including one-on-one counsel.

Quotes

"Cooperation is key to helping address the critical shortage of health-care workers in Alberta and across Canada. This collaboration between Athabasca University and Northern Lakes College is a wonderful example of post-secondary institutions working together, with the support of our provincial government, to help licensed practical nurses become registered

nurses while working and learning online from their home communities,” said Dr. Alex Clark, President of Athabasca University.

“Athabasca University teaches more undergraduate nursing students than anywhere in Canada because our learners are attracted by the quality and flexibility of our programming. By creating even more pathways to a nursing education, we can continue to be part of the solution to the health care needs of Albertans,” said Dr. Steven Johnson, Interim Dean, Faculty of Health Disciplines, Athabasca University.

“With support from the government of Alberta, Northern Lakes College is happy to partner with Athabasca University on this initiative and is pleased to be part of the solution in meeting the need for registered nurses in the north,” said Dr. Glenn Mitchell, President & CEO, Northern Lakes College.

“The partnership with Athabasca University offers a unique opportunity for our Practical Nurse graduates to remain in their home communities while continuing their nursing education. This opportunity provides an environment that combines the support provided by the University with the Supported Distance Learning experience students receive at Northern Lakes College,” said Dr. Michelle Mitchell, Dean, Health, Human Services & University Studies, Northern Lakes College.

About Athabasca University

Athabasca University (AU) is one of the world’s foremost and fastest-growing online and open education institutions, serving over 38,000 students across 81 countries. AU is the second-largest university in Alberta. AU offers online bachelors, masters, and doctorate programs alongside online courses for both personal learning and professional development. It is uniquely founded on the principles of flexibility and openness, giving students control over their studies so they can learn whenever and wherever it is right for them. For more information, please visit: www.athabascau.ca.

About Northern Lakes College

Northern Lakes College (NLC) provides flexible educational opportunities through innovative delivery. With accessibility as a cornerstone value, we provide quality educational programs and services. NLC’s innovative Supported Distance Learning (SDL) and Supported Distance Teaching (SDT) models include unique online delivery options such as *NLC LIVE Online™* and *NLC Anytime, Anywhere*. SDL provides learners with the flexibility to balance work, home, and education, so that they can continue their education, improve their employment opportunities, and enhance their quality of life. Committed to its communities in northern Alberta and to its students, wherever they may be, NLC collaborates with business, industry, and other post-secondary institutions to benefit students and communities. Explore at www.northernlakescollege.ca.

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