

2024 COMMUNITY REPORT

A YEAR IN REVIEW



NORTHERN LAKES
COLLEGE



Everywhere you need us to be.

Everywhere you need us to be.

Northern Lakes College is everywhere that students need us to be! We know that many of our students have busy lives, so we bring classes to them, whenever possible. We believe that participation in post-secondary education shouldn't be determined by where you live. That's why accessibility is considered in every decision at Northern Lakes College.

Our Supported Distance Learning model is at the heart of accessibility. This delivery model ensures that we are able to reach students where they are. They do not have to come to us. Students can remain in their communities, continue to bring their kids to school, continue to work in their jobs, continue to be involved in local organizations, and continue to live within their social network of friends and family.

For students who wish to access a physical site, we provide students with more points of physical access than any other post-secondary in Alberta. With 31 campuses, CAP Sites, and partnership sites, students in many communities have the option to attend onsite and access to technology, in-person support, or just a quiet

place to study. In addition, we offer Power Engineering at the NLC Shell Canada Power Engineering & Technology Centre in Peace River, Apprenticeship Trades at the NLC Trades & Technology Centre in Slave Lake, and an inmate education program at the Peace River Learning Centre.

Collaboration is another way that we increase opportunities for our communities and learners. Partnering with the University of Calgary to offer a Bachelor of Education degree means 'growing our own' teachers in the north. Partnering with Athabasca University provides access to a Bachelor of Nursing program for our Practical Nurse graduates, meaning more nurses for our local hospitals. Our operation of eight Community Adult Learning Programs means increased access to Foundational Learning opportunities.

Supporting Distance Learning works! A growing number of students are choosing NLC and our accessible programming! Last year, Northern Lakes College grew by 13%. In the last five academic years, NLC has grown almost 50%!

Community Report 2024: A Year in Review is a celebration of how accessibility makes all the difference for our students!



Barry Sharkawi
Board Chair



Dr. Glenn Mitchell
President & CEO

At Northern Lakes College, we count our success ***one student at a time.***

We believe you should get ***the education you want*** with
the flexibility you deserve.

We have the ***vision*** to provide the most ***accessible*** educational
opportunities, so we are ***everywhere you need us to be.***

Let us inspire your ***new beginnings*** and help create your
endless possibilities.



NORTHERN LAKES
COLLEGE

Northern Lakes College respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 8 territory and Métis Nation of Alberta Districts 13 - 15 and 20 - 22, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis Peoples. We recognize the 15 First Nations and four Métis Settlements located throughout our service region.





Celebrating

CONVOCATION 2024

"Those of us who have engaged with you from the beginning have watched you grow in your knowledge, your abilities, and your skills and we are so proud of you today. You see, at Northern Lakes College, 'counting our success one student at a time' is not just a cliché; it's not just something that we say. It is what we believe and live every day. Truly, the success of each and every individual student matters to us."

– Dr. Glenn Mitchell, President & CEO



Northern Lakes College celebrated 915 graduates at Convocation 2024 at the Multi Recreation Centre in Slave Lake on June 7.

President & CEO, Dr. Glenn Mitchell, and Board of Governors' Chair, Barry Sharkawi, led the graduate procession with Charlie Orr, Chair of the Peerless Lake Community Education Committee, opening the ceremony with a prayer. Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Michelle Mitchell, welcomed graduates and attendees and provided introductions for the platform party, board members, and dignitaries in attendance.

Dr. Glenn Mitchell delivered the congratulatory address, recognizing graduates for the courage needed to pursue educational endeavours and for the perseverance, commitment, and hard work required to succeed in their programs.

Chief Alex Pavcek of the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service delivered the keynote address and accepted the 2024 *Friend of Northern Lakes College Award* on behalf of the Fire Service. Valedictorian, Jessica Parker, delivered the student address and President of the NLC Students' Association, Katie Perepeletza, brought greetings. The presentation of student awards was presided over by Brad Onofrychuk, Vice President, Academic.

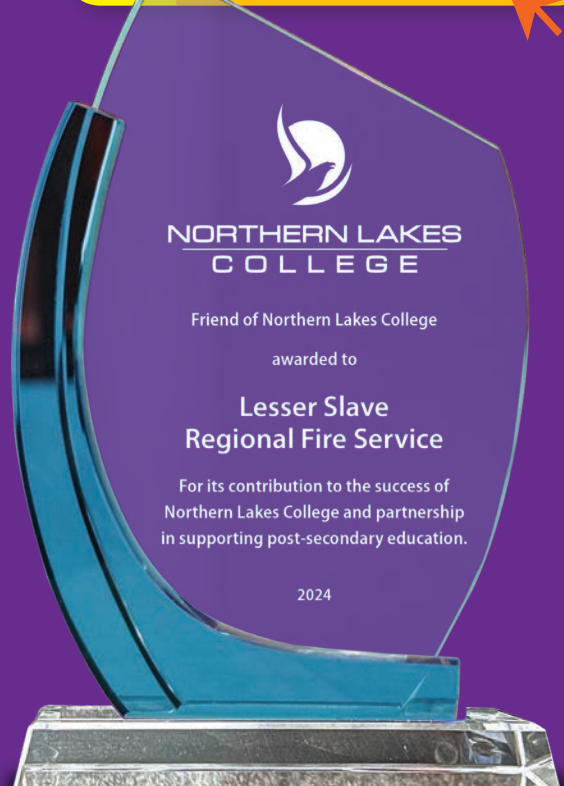
On the evening of June 6, a traditional capping and pinning ceremony marked the completion of the Practical Nurse program with 67 graduates from across the service region. During the candlelight ceremony, each nursing student was presented with a nursing cap and pin.





Dr. Glenn Mitchell presents the award to Chief Alex Pavcek of the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service.

◀ **LEARN MORE** about the Friend of NLC Award. ➡



Friend

OF NORTHERN LAKES COLLEGE AWARD

The 2024 Friend of Northern Lakes College Award was presented to the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service (LSRFS).

Comprised of two municipalities, LSRFS operates as a single service and is funded by both the Town of Slave Lake and the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River. With five fire stations across the service area, the Service covers over 500 KM of primary and secondary highways within the region and offers a wide variety of emergency response including fire, vehicle collision, medical, and specialty response such as water and hazardous materials.

With Station 1 in Slave Lake equipped with an extensive training facility, and such a broad range of services, the LSRFS is a perfect partner with which to offer the Integrated Fire and Emergency Medical Services program. This partnership was initiated by the Service and combines Lakeland College firefighter training with NLC's Primary Care Paramedic program. Firefighter training is delivered at the state-of-the-art training grounds at Station 1, with NLC paramedic students living and working at the Station and responding to fire-related emergencies with other firefighters.

The responsiveness of Chief Pavcek and his team enabled NLC to pivot and adjust during the inaugural offering of the program. The Service allocates a Primary Care Paramedic from their staff to support students in the program, a significant commitment, as it results in one of their paramedics being unavailable to the Service for approximately one week per month. The Service also participates in the College's annual Mock Mass Casualty Incident, and actively participates in activities hosted by the College.

Candidates for the Friend of Northern Lakes College Award (Organization) have demonstrated a commitment to the success and advancement of Northern Lakes College, its students, and communities. This organization is active in its support of, and partnership with, Northern Lakes College and in supporting post-secondary education.

Launch of Child and Youth Care Diploma

Northern Lakes College added the Child and Youth Care Diploma to its Human Service Careers program offerings in September. The two-year program is available through Supported Distance Learning.

The Child and Youth Care Diploma program equips learners with the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively with children, youth, families, and communities. This comprehensive program focuses on mental health, trauma-informed care, assessments, interventions, advocacy, and ethical practice.

Year one of the program includes fall semester courses running from September to December, winter semester courses from January to April, and a spring semester practicum in May and June. Year two of the program follows a different format, with students enrolled concurrently in theory courses and a practicum in the fall and winter semesters. There are three practicums over the course of the two-year program providing students the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills learned in a practical setting, while under the supervision of an agency.

Graduates of the program have the opportunity to be recognized as a Child and Youth Worker and will be prepared to pursue careers in various settings, such as therapeutic campus-based care programs, schools, the justice system, mental health centres, community-based programs, foster care, shelters, treatment centres, youth centres, and government organizations. They will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to provide trauma-informed care, advocate for social justice, support young people experiencing mental health issues, and implement informed interventions to support children, youth, families, and communities.



LEARN MORE about the
Child and Youth Care Diploma.

“Northern Lakes College expanding its program offerings with the new Child and Youth Care Diploma addresses a critical need in our communities, providing students with the essential skills and knowledge to support the mental health and well-being of young people. By offering this program through Supported Distance Learning, Northern Lakes College continues to demonstrate its commitment to accessibility and innovation in education, ensuring that learners across Alberta can pursue their career aspirations while balancing life commitments.”

– Rajan Sawhney,
Minister of Advanced Education



“The Child and Youth Care Diploma is designed to be a very practical program, with students spending equal time in theory courses (720 hours) and in practicum opportunities (750 hours). Graduates will have developed and honed their practical skills and will be ready to go directly into practice and become contributing members of a team. This will contribute to building needed capacity in the sector of mental health specifically focused on children and youth.”

– Dr. Michelle Mitchell, Dean, Health,
Human Services & University Studies



Connecting Youth

TO FUTURE CAREERS

Northern Lakes College welcomed students to Youth Camps over the course of the year. The camps were hosted in various communities in the region, including High Level, High Prairie, Slave Lake, and Wabasca. Students aged 13 to 15 explored the trades, learned new skills and participated in fun activities while making new friendships and creating lifelong memories.

Carpentry Camp

The Carpentry Camp provided the opportunity to develop hands-on experience with woodworking tools and techniques. Led by a journeyman carpenter, campers learned to use saws, drills, sanders, and other carpentry tools to build their projects, from simple birdfeeders to more complex furniture pieces. Along the way, campers gained valuable teamwork and problem-solving skills, while having fun in a safe and supportive environment.

Computer Robotics Camp

Campers embarked on an exciting journey at the Computer Robotics Camp, delving into the world of programming using Python, mastering the art of microcontroller manipulation, and learning to interface with various sensors. From writing intricate lines of code to crafting intelligent systems, campers ignited their passion for robotics and technology in this immersive and hands-on experience. Campers took home their very own small robot to continue their exploration and innovation beyond the camp!

Culinary Camp

Led by a Red Seal Chef, the Culinary Camp provided campers the opportunity to discover basic cooking techniques in a professional kitchen and gain experience in all aspects of meal creation. Tasty delights were enjoyed by all!



Electrical Camp

Campers' curiosity was sparked by the fascinating world of electricity as they learned about circuits, wiring, and electronic components. From hands-on experiments to real-world applications, campers discovered the fundamentals of electrical careers while igniting their passion for innovation and problem-solving.

Power Engineering Camp

The Power Engineering Camp was offered in collaboration with Northern Sunrise County for youth aged 16+. Campers got hands-on experience learning about the operation and maintenance of boilers and associated equipment at the Northern Lakes College Shell Canada Power Engineering & Technology Centre in Peace River.

[Inquiries regarding future camps can be made to tradesaccount@northernlakescollege.ca.](mailto:tradesaccount@northernlakescollege.ca)

Participants who enjoyed the camps, and other interested students, can take advantage of the Dual Credit Program offered by Northern Lakes College. The program allows high school students to participate in a number of College programs, including apprenticeship trades, and obtain both high school and post-secondary credit. Through the Dual Credit Program, high school students are able to complete the first year of a trade, giving them a head start into a career after high school graduation.



LEARN MORE about Dual Credit pre-employment opportunities.



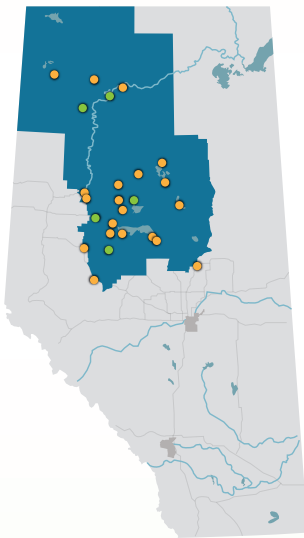
"Trades camps provide youth with a safe, experiential learning opportunity to explore the trades with professional journeypersons in a hands-on environment. Further to learning skills and building confidence, our field-experienced instructors share with students the realities, challenges, and rewards of a variety of trades professions."

– Dr. Puneet Arora, Dean, Business, Academics, Trades and Regional Stewardship

Northern Lakes College Economic Impact

“It is clear that Northern Lakes College has both a strong economic impact and investment value. The College influences both the lives of our students and the regional economy. We are proud to contribute to building strong communities in our service region and supplying qualified, skilled graduates for the workforce.”

– Dr. Glenn Mitchell, President & CEO



NLC service region

1 out of every **31** jobs in the NLC service region is supported by the activities of NLC and its students.

Our **Supported Distance Learning** model provides educational opportunities throughout the province, becoming a significant contributor to building strong communities. Northern Lakes College has a significant economic impact in communities within our service region and beyond. The College is a strong investment for students, taxpayers, and society.

[View the Northern Lakes College Economic Value Study.](#)

About Northern Lakes College



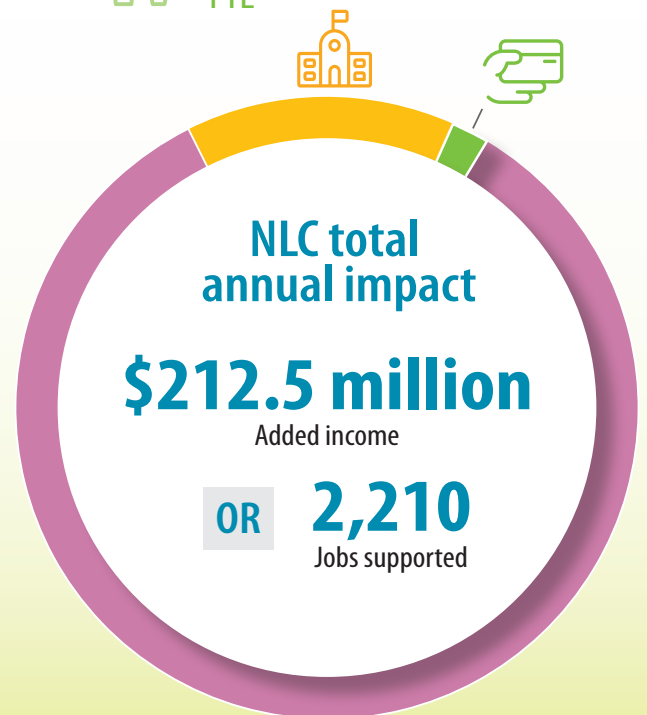
2,020
Credit Students



\$23.3 million
Payroll



223
FTE



Economic impact analysis



Investment analysis



Alumni impact

Impact of the increased earnings of NLC alumni and the businesses they work for

\$185.7 million Added income

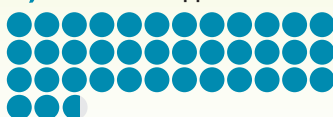


An economic boost similar to hosting an NHL playoffs game

62x

OR

1,936 Jobs supported



Operations spending impact

Impact of annual payroll and other spending

\$25.4 million Added income



Enough to buy **656** new cars

OR

258 Jobs supported



Student spending impact

Impact of the daily spending of NLC students attracted to or retained in the region

\$1.3 million Added income



Enough to buy **116** families* a year's worth of groceries

OR

16 Jobs supported



For every \$1...



Students gain **\$1.70** in lifetime earnings



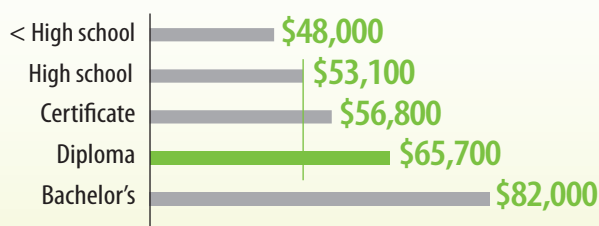
Taxpayers gain **\$1.20** in added tax revenue and public sector savings



Society gains **\$4.70** in added provincial revenue and social savings



The average diploma graduate from Northern Lakes College will see an increase in earnings of **\$12,600** each year compared to someone with a high school diploma working in Alberta.



Based on fiscal year 2021-2022.

Sources: Lightcast Economic Impact Study; <http://fortune.com/2017/04/12/nhl-playoffs-canadian-economy/>; <https://www.thestar.com/business/2017/02/07/higher-prices-will-drag-down-canadian-car-truck-sales-in-2017-forecast-says.html>; <https://globalnews.ca/news/3828492/healthy-food-cost-canada/>



Adult Trade Camps Provide Opportunity to Explore a Trade

Recognizing that many adults would like to develop new skills in a trade, Northern Lakes College offered adult camps in carpentry and welding.

Carpentry Camp

Providing an opportunity to unlock their inner craftsman, the project-based carpentry class for adults saw participants building furniture to take home! Participants dove into the world of woodworking, learning essential skills and techniques and bringing their creative visions to life. From crafting custom furniture pieces to mastering precision joinery, each project provided a hands-on opportunity to hone their craftsmanship. Whether participants were

beginners or seasoned woodworkers, the class offered a supportive environment to explore and unleash creativity through the art of carpentry.

Welding Camp

Whether a complete novice with no prior welding experience or seeking to reignite a passion for craftsmanship, this exciting beginner welding camp was tailored exclusively for adults. Participants dove into the captivating world of welding, creating projects to bring home such as cowbells, bird houses, and more.

Inquiries regarding future camps can be made to tradesaccount@northernlakescollege.ca.



Program Expansion at Northern Lakes College

Pre-Employment Pipe Trades

Northern Lakes College added Pre-Employment Pipe Trades to its pre-employment offerings. The 16-week Pre-Employment Pipe Trades program prepares learners for entry to a pipe trades apprenticeship as a Gasfitter, Plumber, Sprinkler Systems Installer, or Steamfitter-Pipefitter. The first period training is common for all pipe trades, preparing students for entry into any of the four apprenticeships.

Pre-employment programs are for those individuals interested in a trade, but who are not registered as an apprentice. Learners are provided the skill set needed to enter the workforce and become a registered apprentice. The programs include first year apprenticeship theory, safety tickets, and hands-on training. Upon successful completion, students are eligible to challenge the Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) First Period Exam.



"Providing opportunities in the trades is important to support the Alberta economy. Pre-employment offerings provide those without an apprenticeship placement the opportunity to pursue a trade. Additionally, they allow aspiring tradespeople to gain trade skills, communication abilities, and safety certifications. Pre-Employment Pipe Trades is a great addition to our trades' offerings as it opens the door to not one, but four, possible apprenticeship routes."

– Brad Onofrychuk, Vice President, Academic



LEARN MORE about
Pre-Employment Trades at NLC.



Class 1 Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) available at Slave Lake Campus

MELT is the standardized, entry-level driver training program implemented by the Government of Alberta to ensure the safety of all those who share our province's highways. The training is mandatory for all new commercial Class 1 (tractor trailer) drivers. The primary goal of the MELT program is to teach new drivers the critical knowledge and skills that will create a foundation for safe driving, as well as foster the development of positive driving attitudes and behaviors in new commercial drivers.

Class 1 MELT includes components of classroom theory, in-yard practical teaching, and experience behind the wheel. Classroom training includes topics such as: traffic laws and regulations, safe driving practices, vehicle systems, and vehicle maintenance. In-yard training includes activities that occur around the vehicle when not in motion, such as vehicle inspections. In-cab training hours are spent behind the wheel, either on-road or off-road, in various conditions including coupling/uncoupling the truck and trailer and reversing exercises.

NLC also offers Air Brakes Q Endorsement, which includes a classroom session and practical training. Class 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 drivers must complete an approved course to get a Q Endorsement on their driver's licence to operate a vehicle equipped with air brakes.

For inquiries about MELT at Northern Lakes College, contact drivertraining@northernlakescollege.ca.



"Northern Lakes College is keen to support the province's mandated safety training for all new Class 1 drivers. There is a persistent need for Class 1 drivers in our region and across the province, and these drivers are an integral aspect of the economy. Ensuring the availability of this training in our region means increased accessibility for students."

– Angie White, Chair, Trades & Resource Technology



LEARN MORE
about Class 1 MELT.

Celebrating 20 Years of Partnership with PEMAC

Northern Lakes College celebrated 20 years of partnership with PEMAC Asset Management Association of Canada. Through the relationship, NLC offers asset management and maintenance management training to learners throughout Alberta, Canada, and the world.

Using its flexible, Supported Distance Learning delivery model, NLC offers a variety of programs developed and authorized by PEMAC, including Maintenance Management Professional (MMP) program, Asset Management Professional (AMP) program, and the Becoming a Certified Asset Management Assessor course in preparation for the CAMA exam. NLC has been offering PEMAC's MMP program since 2004 and AMP program since 2018. In the last five years alone, Northern Lakes College had 5,347 enrolments in MMP, AMP, and the CAMA preparation course.

From June 2018 through December 2023, PEMAC and NLC provided a special delivery of the AMP program for municipal cohorts across Canada, which allowed cross-functional teams of municipal sector practitioners to start their asset management learning journey and build skills to meaningfully improve the asset management practices of their municipality. This initiative was offered through the Municipal Asset Management Program, which was delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and funded by the Government of Canada.

"The partnership between PEMAC Asset Management Association of Canada and Northern Lakes College has been pivotal to extending the reach and impact of PEMAC and the elevation of maintenance, reliability, and asset management as a profession. Key to this impact has been the Northern Lakes College specialization in distance education and a history of excellence in support of both instructors and learners."

– Cindy Snedden, Executive Director, PEMAC Asset Management Association of Canada

"Over the last 20 years, our partnership with PEMAC has grown and evolved to include both maintenance management and asset management programming. Our mutual interest is to provide accessible, meaningful, and relevant training to the professionals tasked with maintaining the physical assets of their organizations. We look forward to many more years of partnership!"

– Dr. Glenn Mitchell, President & CEO



LEARN MORE about
[maintenance management](#) and
[asset management](#) training.

NLC Celebrating the First Class of Integrated Fire & EMS Graduates



On Friday, April 12, Northern Lakes College joined Lakeland College and the Lesser Slave Regional Fire Service (LSRFS) to celebrate the completion of the fire training for the first class of the Integrated Fire & Emergency Medical Services (EMS) program. The celebration was held at LSRFS Station 1 in Slave Lake. The program combines firefighter training with the College's Primary Care Paramedic program.

Firefighter training is delivered through the LSRFS at the state-of-the-art training grounds at Station 1 in Slave Lake. During the training, students have the opportunity to live and work at the Station, responding to fire-related emergencies. Upon successful completion of examinations and evaluations by Lakeland College, students receive a number of professional designations accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Council.

The Northern Lakes College Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) program is delivered through Supported Distance Learning, allowing students the freedom and flexibility to remain employed in their home communities for the theory portion

of the program. Hands-on training is delivered through onsite labs and scenario-based training at the Slave Lake Campus. The theory portion of the program is followed by both a hospital and ambulance practicum. Completers of the PCP program are eligible to apply to the Advanced Care Paramedic program, also offered by NLC.

Emergency Medical Services and Fire Rescue are dynamic industries that offer an exciting and rewarding career for individuals looking to make a positive impact in other people's lives.

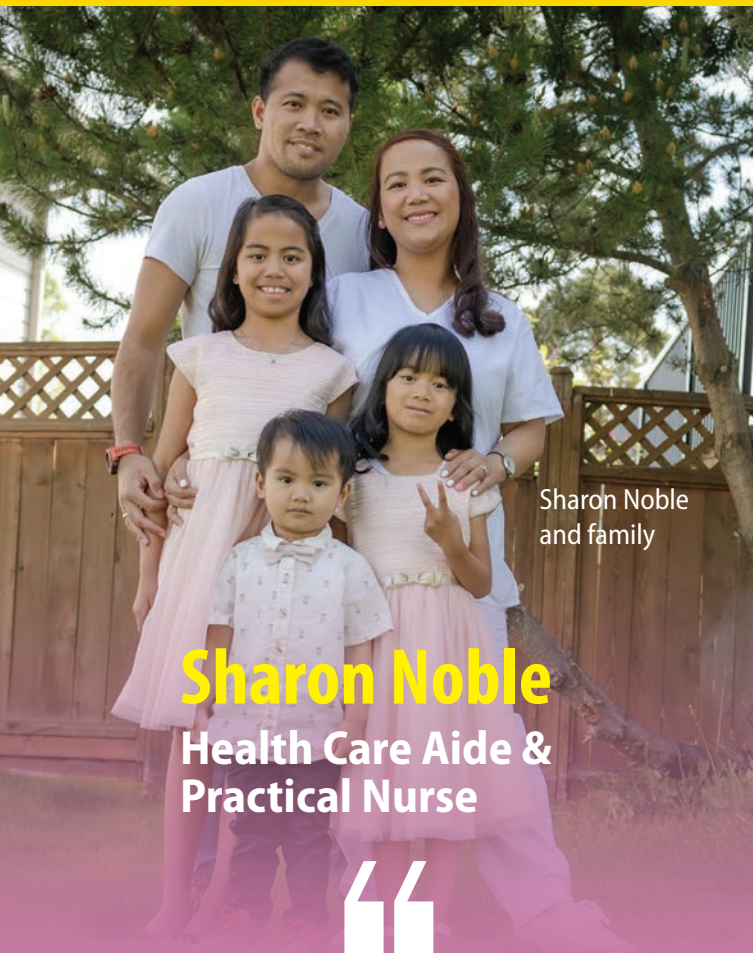


LSRFS Chief Alex Pavcek & Dr. Glenn Mitchell, President & CEO



LEARN MORE about
Integrated Fire & EMS (PCP).

L: LSRFS Chief Alex Pavcek & Dr. Michelle Mitchell, Dean, Health, Human Services & University Studies, with the fire training graduates and representatives from Lakeland College, LSRFS, and RCMP



Sharon Noble
and family

Sharon Noble

Health Care Aide & Practical Nurse



Just go with the flow, and the rest will follow. If you enjoy your work, continue with it and gain as much education in your field as you can. Make it your priority. It feels impossible to do that at the start, but it's easier if you enjoy what you're doing. And when you're done, it's going to be great!"

– Alumni, Sharon Noble



LEARN MORE about
Health Care Aide.



LEARN MORE about
Practical Nurse.



From Challenge to Triumph

Sharon Noble's experiences at Northern Lakes College demonstrate the power of community and personal determination. Born in the Philippines, Sharon's dedication to caring for others led her to a vibrant career, as she overcame challenges and embraced opportunities along the way.

Upon arriving in Canada in 2011, Sharon was determined to continue her career in nursing, having previously earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in the Philippines. However, she faced the daunting task of repeating her education to meet Canadian standards. Introduced to Northern Lakes College by a friend, Sharon found a welcoming and supportive community where she could pursue her aspirations.

Sharon's educational journey began with the Health Care Aide program at the Slave Lake Campus. Despite the challenges of balancing studies with caring for her growing family, Sharon embraced the experience wholeheartedly. "I'm very thankful because I had my mother-in-law with me back then," Sharon shares gratefully. "I started the program while on maternity leave after the birth of my second child and my mother-in-law would stay with my kids whenever I had to leave for practicum. And my husband is very supportive, too. He adjusts his work schedule to be with the kids when I need to work."

Transitioning seamlessly into the Practical Nurse program shortly after the birth of her third child, Sharon continued to lean on the unwavering support of her family to pursue her studies. Despite the demands of motherhood and post-secondary education, Sharon persevered, driven by her passion for nursing and the opportunities that lay ahead.

One of the highlights of Sharon's educational journey was the sense of community she found at Northern Lakes College. "My favorite instructor was Nicole," Sharon recalls fondly. "She used to work in public health at the community clinic, and I had met her there many times when she vaccinated my children. When I met her in the classroom at NLC, it was so nice to chat and catch up."

Today, Sharon works as a Licensed Practical Nurse at the Slave Lake Healthcare Centre, in the long-term care department. Embracing the challenges and opportunities of her profession, Sharon acknowledges the role that Northern Lakes College played in her transition from Health Care Aide to Practical Nurse. "There are lots of opportunities to practice my profession," Sharon reflects. "As a fresh graduate nurse, it can be challenging, so I make sure I practice my skills a lot. And I love working in long-term care. NLC definitely helped with the transition to being a Practical Nurse."

Crafting Success through Carpentry

Quentin Lindbergh's journey through the Northern Lakes College Carpenter Apprenticeship program is a testament to his dedication to craftsmanship and the opportunities provided by a career in the trades.

At just 17 years old, Quentin began his career in carpentry through his high school's Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). "I always knew I wanted to work in the trades," Quentin recalls. "I thought building stuff from scratch was really cool and I really enjoyed framing, so I knew carpentry was for me."

Following Quentin's exposure to the carpenter trade through RAP, he enrolled in the Northern Lakes College Carpenter Apprenticeship program at the Slave Lake Campus, where he was the youngest apprentice in his class. However, Quentin felt completely comfortable in his program. "It was a great program," he shares. "There weren't that many students in my class, and we got a lot of one-on-one time."

During his apprenticeship, Quentin found fulfillment in contributing to projects in his community, including building houses and working on projects for Alberta Parks. "We built houses in town, and a big shop on Caribou Trail - I learned a lot on that one! And we also did some cool jobs for Parks, like rebuilding the staircases at Devonshire Beach."

Upon completing his Journeyman ticket, Quentin's career took a new turn when his original mentor closed up shop due to a move out of town. Taking initiative, Quentin opened his own business in Slave Lake, where he now hires his former employer on a casual basis when extra work is needed. "I would have liked to work for him a little while longer," Quentin shares, "but I was able to get along without him, too. I actually hired him to help me with a big project this last year."

Looking to the future, Quentin hopes to continue growing his business and providing opportunities for others in the trades. "I hope to hire a couple more people to help me in the next five years," he says. "I'd really like to train an apprentice. Right now, I'm working on a 6,000 square foot shop with a large mezzanine. It's a great project, and I love the freedom that comes with working for yourself and on your own time."

Quentin's advice to students entering the Carpenter Apprenticeship program reflects his own journey of growth and success. "Invest as much as you can in your tools and find a good mentor," he advises. "Education matters a lot."

Quentin's journey through the Carpenter Apprenticeship program at Northern Lakes College exemplifies the transformative power of passion, dedication, and the opportunities provided by education. Through his commitment to craftsmanship and his entrepreneurial spirit, Quentin continues to build his own success while inspiring others to pursue their dreams in the trades.

Quentin Lindbergh Carpenter Apprenticeship



The program was really accessible to me because of the location. I grew up in Slave Lake, so I didn't have to find a new apartment or leave everyone I've ever known to go to school."

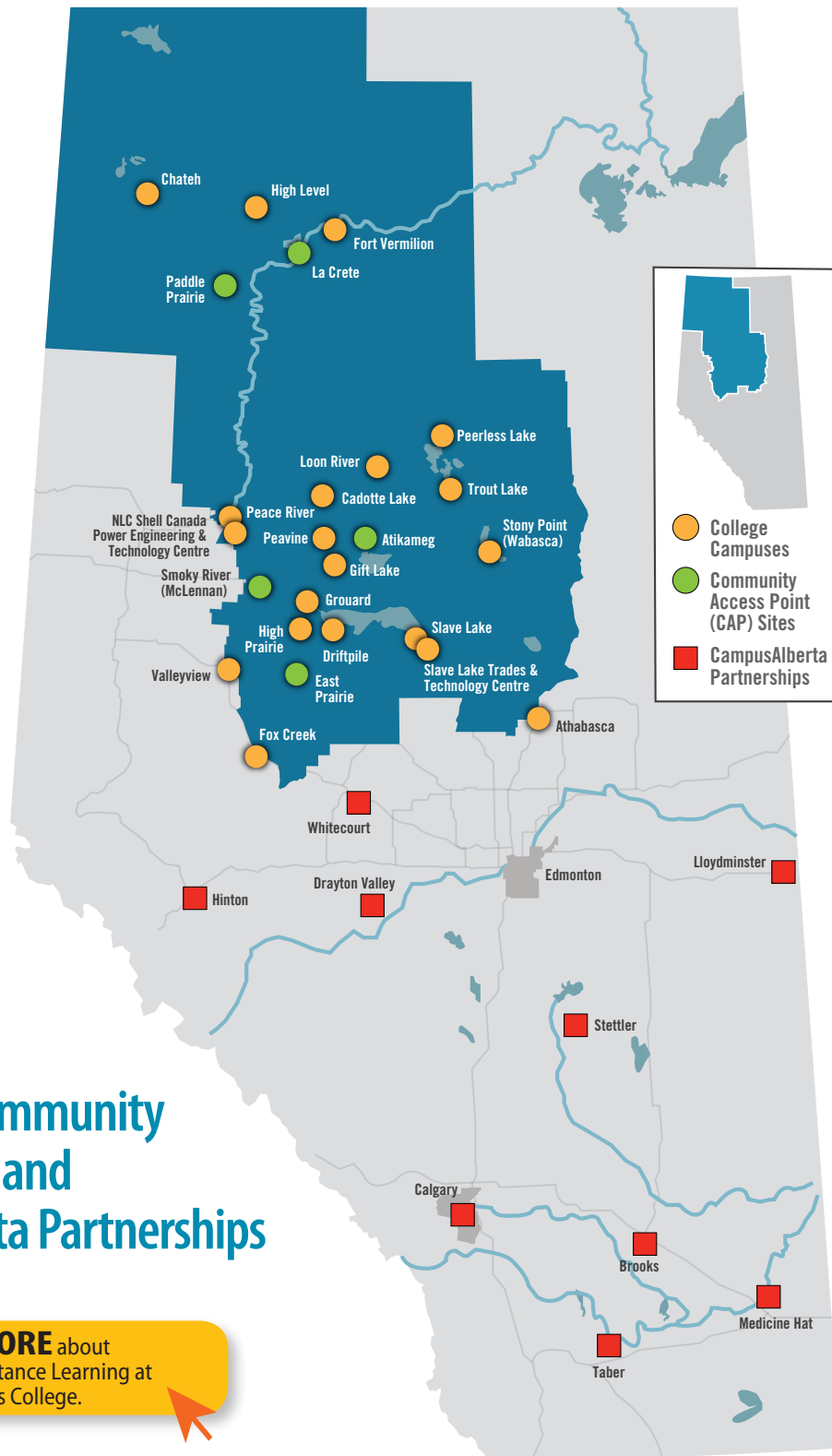
– Alumni, Quentin Lindbergh



LEARN MORE about
Carpenter Apprenticeship.

SUPPORTED DISTANCE LEARNING

We are everywhere you need us to be!



Campuses, Community
Access Points, and
CampusAlberta Partnerships



LEARN MORE about
Supported Distance Learning at
Northern Lakes College.



Learner Survey

A student survey was conducted during the winter term regarding the Northern Lakes College Supported Distance Learning (SDL) model, which comprises eight components. Six of these components relate to various resources and services available to students: tutoring, career advising, IT support, library access and writing support, counselling, and Educational Supports. The aim for these components was to assess student usage and satisfaction. The remaining two components are not resources or services per se, but are inherent to the online student experience at the College: instructor-led learning environments and 24/7/365 (i.e., the ability to study *Anytime, Anywhere*). The aim for these components was simply to evaluate student satisfaction.

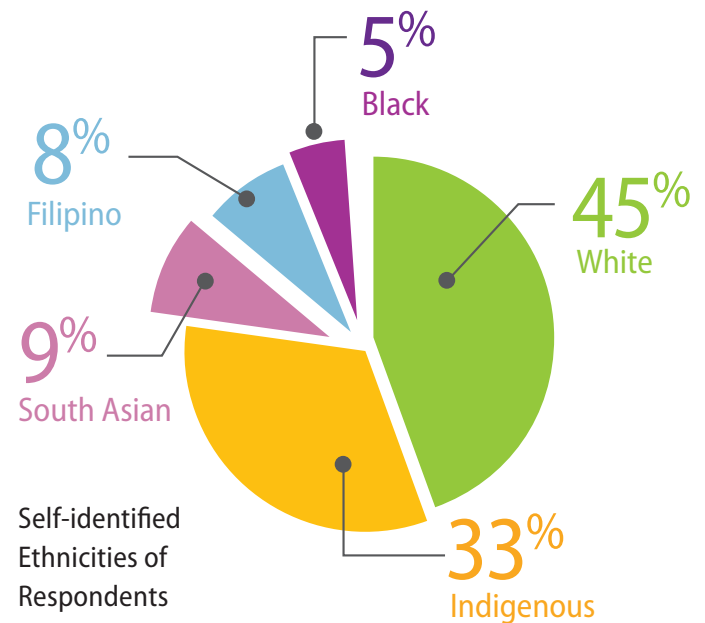
542 registered students from a variety of programs completed the survey. The usage rates of the different SDL resources and services varied widely. While some resources and services were used by close to three-quarters of respondents, others were only used by approximately 1 in 10. However, while the proportions of respondents who made use of the SDL components displayed notable variation, satisfaction rates among those who had made use of them were consistently high. In fact, the average satisfaction rate across all SDL components was 90%.

At the end of the survey, students were able to rank the SDL components in order of personal importance. In line with NLC's core value of accessibility, students ranked 24/7/365 (*Anytime, Anywhere*) as the most important component.



94% of respondents were satisfied with the ability to study *Anytime, Anywhere*, and several students described this format as the primary reason they were able to pursue their education.

Overall, the results of the Supported Distance Learning survey show that although not all students utilize the various SDL components, those who do generally express a high level of satisfaction. The findings can inform efforts to effectively promote the SDL resources and services, ensuring all students are aware of the support available to them.



◀ **LEARN MORE** about Supported Distance Learning at Northern Lakes College.

◀ **LEARN MORE** about Supported Distance Teaching.

Supporting

STUDENT SUCCESS

We understand that life doesn't hit pause when you become a student. Being successful means finding balance, navigating challenges along your educational journey, and having access to the support you need when you need it. As part of NLC's unique Supported Distance Learning model, we offer a variety of both distance-based and self-directed resources and services to support students on their path to success.

Road Trip to Success

The Student Success team visited numerous campuses in September for the inaugural Road Trip to Success! This gave the Student Success team an opportunity to meet students and provide fun wellness events. Participants received a wellness kit and learned about upcoming Student Success initiatives.

Multi-Faith Program

Supporting students, holistically, is a key principle of the NLC Multi-Faith program. With a focus on spiritual wellness, the Multi-Faith program serves all NLC students, inclusive of all faith orientations. The program provides:

- Spiritual services and guidance that respect individual's unique experiences in order to create meaningful relationships.
- An open and inviting environment, reflecting diverse life experiences, free of judgment.
- Support during times of distress and bereavement.
- Helpful strategies to promote understanding and healing.

Pastor Heath Jeffery

Walk 100 KM in 100 Days Challenge

The annual Walk 100 KM in 100 Days Challenge encourages students, employees, and their families to develop the habit of walking at least one kilometer a day as a form of exercise. For highly-motivated walkers, the Mount Everest Challenge adds an extra 138 KM to the challenge, including 69 KM for both the ascent and descent. The ultimate goal, other than increased health and wellness, is a group goal to walk 10,000 KM.

Wellness Wednesdays

Wellness Wednesdays are monthly sessions designed to give students a break from a busy day or week. Each event focuses on a different wellness topic that encourages the incorporation of healthy habits and practices into daily life. Wellness Wednesdays are designed to support students' wellness journeys by creating an environment to de-stress and promote well-being.



De-Stress Fest

Three days of wellness activities were offered just before mid-term exams began in October. De-Stress Fest provides opportunities to de-stress including colouring sessions, guided mindfulness meditation, storytelling, and exam preparation and anxiety workshops.



LEARN MORE about Student Services at Northern Lakes College.



"We understand that many of our students have family responsibilities and may be working while studying. Finding the time to balance it all can be a challenge. Northern Lakes College recognizes the importance of providing mental health and wellness activities to assist students as they juggle all the demands they face."

– Tammy Purchase, Dean, Student Success and Registrar



Building Community Capacity

The Community Education Committees and their Council believe that:

- The residents of northern Alberta have the right to access the breadth and quality of adult education services afforded to other Albertans;
- The College is composed of students, communities, and staff;
- Each partner has the right and responsibility to participate in determining, providing, and evaluating the endeavours of the College.

Over the course of the academic year, the NLC Council of Community Education Committees (CCEC) hosted a series of online workshops and training opportunities, offered free of charge, to community members throughout the Northern Lakes College service region. Responding to the unique needs of the region, the CCEC sponsored on-demand webinars, individual courses from CTRI / Achieve, and the opportunity to explore financial training with three courses from CPA of Alberta: A Six Point Plan for Financial Freedom, Financial Myths that Will Ruin Your Retirement Dreams, and How to Retire in 10 Years or Less. In March, the CCEC partnered with the Regional Economic Development Alliance in hosting the REDI-Made Business Showcase where they sponsored an in-person and online training session with Craig Elias, Bow Valley College's Entrepreneur in Residence.

In May, the CCEC workshop was hosted in Slave Lake, where CCEC members experienced some of the trades programming available at the College. The carpenter, electrical, and welder programs were showcased. CCEC members also heard from three NLC alumni from a variety of programs about their educational journeys, sharing how they started at NLC and landed into their professional careers in the service region.

Community Education Committees (CECs) also addressed training needs in their respective communities. Sponsored courses offered for free, or at a discounted rate, included safety courses, babysitting courses, computer basics, a carpentry camp, and individual sponsorship of leadership and mental health courses. Overall, the CCEC and CEC-sponsored courses and events had 433 enrolments. Additionally, the CECs distributed 546 student awards.

A new CEC was formed this year in the community of La Crete, meaning the CCEC is now comprised of 18 CECs. Each CEC meets



Council members made benches in the session with Carpenter Instructor, Ron Hunt.

five times per year. At these meetings, College and community representatives meet to discuss the education and training needs of the communities. The CCEC, composed of the Chair from each CEC, meets four times per year. This is a venue for community collaboration on projects and to bring forward questions and concerns to the President & CEO. No other institution in Alberta utilizes a public advisory model like the CCEC. Through the highly-valued partnership between the CCEC, CECs, and NLC, post-secondary education in the service region is responsive and reflective of community need.

LEARN MORE about the [Council and Community Education Committees](#) or email cec@northernlakescollege.ca.



"It's an honour to support the Council and Community Education Committees in fostering dialogue that connects the College with the local community. By addressing community identified priorities like mental health, financial literacy, workforce development, trades training, safety training, and economic development, the Council ensures programs offered meet local needs. It's inspiring to see how community members come together to make a positive impact."

— Jasmine Neustaeter, Chair, Business Programs & Regional Stewardship





Lucille Labrecque

Early Learning & Child Care



Northern Lakes College is accessible to rural students: it's everywhere in the north. I'm always promoting it because I really do think all people should have the opportunity to build a career in an area that brings them joy."

– Alumni, Lucille Labrecque



LEARN MORE about
Early Learning & Child Care.



Success Through Accessible Education

Northern Lakes College presents opportunities for individuals seeking to pursue their dreams and serve their communities through the advancement of accessible education. Lucille Labrecque, a former student-now-turned-governor on the College's Board of Governors, exemplifies how advanced education readies alumni to play instrumental roles for future generations.

Lucille was introduced to Northern Lakes College when she enrolled in the Early Learning and Child Care program in 2015. At the time, she juggled her studies while working for Child and Family Services, conducting daycare inspections and negotiating Early Intervention contracts across northern Alberta. The flexibility offered by the College's multiple campus locations, particularly those in Fort Vermilion, High Level, McLennan, and Peace River, proved instrumental in accommodating Lucille's demanding travel schedule.

Reflecting on her experience, Lucille fondly recalls the opportunity to explore the different campuses and connect with fellow students and employees. "It was really fun to get to know the other campuses and the people there as I passed through different towns. I just thought, you know, this works out really good for me!" she shares.

Lucille was impressed with the College's refreshing attitude towards working students. She found her program's learning format highly compatible with her busy lifestyle, enabling her to excel academically. "Originally, I had attempted to take a program at a different college, but the format was so cumbersome, and it just really wasn't a good fit. Then I switched over to Northern Lakes College. I was actually having fun learning, and I got great marks!" In May 2016, she graduated with a Certificate in Early Learning and Child Care with Honours.

Lucille also appreciated the intimate learning environment fostered by the small class sizes at Northern Lakes College. "I really liked that I could write my exams right there at the College, and that the classes were small," she emphasizes. "The larger course projects we were assigned were also really fun and insightful."

Equipped with her education from Northern Lakes College, Lucille transitioned into a fulfilling career as the Mental Health Promotion Facilitator for Alberta Health Services. In this position, she coaches others in managing their wellness as individuals, family units, and as part of a community. She facilitates skill development strategies that promote mindfulness, resiliency, and emotional intelligence. Her work includes hosting community workshops on suicide prevention and emergency preparedness.

Now serving as a governor for Northern Lakes College, Lucille continues to champion the institution's mission of accessibility and empowerment. Lucille's advice to aspiring students reflects her awareness of the importance of self-actualization: "Always finish what you start. It shows commitment that you're willing to go to the end. Northern Lakes College can help you with that. Don't give up. There's always a way to accomplish your goals."

Balancing Duty, Family, and Education

Kaber Koski's career as a first responder is evidence of his dedication to service, community, and lifelong learning. As Deputy Chief of the Sucker Creek First Nation fire department, Kaber has devoted over 11 years to firefighting and emergency response and has continually sought to enhance his skills and knowledge to better serve those in need.

Earlier in his career, Kaber became certified as a professional firefighter, HAZMAT technician, and fire training instructor through a fire academy in Texas, USA. However, Kaber decided to expand his expertise to include emergency medical training upon recognizing the need for further emergency response skills in his community.

Kaber embarked on his educational journey at Northern Lakes College, earning his Emergency Medical Responder certificate in 2018 before enrolling in the Primary Care Paramedic (PCP) program a few years later. "I decided it was time to take the next step in life and complete the PCP program," Kaber shares.

Dedicated to giving back to his community, Kaber continued to provide firefighting services with the fire department while pursuing his studies. Balancing the demands of family life and career with his studies was a challenge, but Kaber soon found strategies to cope with his competing demands. "Managing my time was pretty difficult," he acknowledges. "But, eventually, I discovered the time of day when I work best and without interruption. For me, that was usually in the late evening."

As father to 11 children, the demands on Kaber's time were extreme, but he remained committed to his educational goals and soon noticed how his studies empowered his parenting. "My wife and I have a blended family," Kaber shares. "Our eldest is 16 years old, and we currently have another on the way."

Looking to the future, Kaber remains committed to serving northern communities as a Primary Care Paramedic, with plans to continue his education at NLC by enrolling in the Advanced Care Paramedic program. His dedication and hard work have not only inspired his own career aspirations but have also influenced his eldest daughter, who plans to follow in her father's footsteps by entering the Primary Care Paramedic program upon her graduation from high school.

Offering advice to those considering a career in first response, Kaber emphasizes the importance of commitment. "Make sure the career is right for you," he advises. "Volunteer, go on ride-along calls. It takes a lot of courage."

Through his unwavering commitment to his community and his own personal growth, Kaber serves as an inspiration to all who aspire to make a difference in the lives of others.



Kaber Koski Primary Care Paramedic

“

I actually assisted in the delivery of our last two children after I started the PCP program, so I felt quite prepared. My wife delivered our children at home in a teepee. It was incredible.”

– Alumni, Kaber Koski



LEARN MORE about
Paramedic programs.





Holly Friesen

Business Administration



Students don't have to do every program full time. They can start with one or two courses and see if post-secondary education is for them. There's no need to speed through college. At NLC, students can do what works for their schedules."

– Alumni, Holly Friesen



LEARN MORE about
Business & Administrative Studies.



From Alumni to Employee

Northern Lakes College has long been a catalyst for transforming lives through education, and Holly Friesen's inspiring journey from student to instructor exemplifies the College's commitment to empowering individuals to achieve their dreams. Through dedication, perseverance, and a passion for learning, Holly has navigated her way from the Business Administration Certificate program to her current role as an instructor at the Peace River Campus, leaving an indelible mark on both her students and the College itself.

Holly Friesen's educational journey began in 2010 when she enrolled in the Business Administration Certificate program at Northern Lakes College. With a background in office administration, she aspired to transition into the human resources department of the school division where she worked, and also sought greater professional security.

"I wanted to play a larger role in the school division, but I also knew I needed to build on my education. My husband is not from Peace River, and I knew that if we decided to move, it would be very hard for me to find a comfortable job with only a high school diploma. So, I enrolled in the program."

Balancing work with her studies, Holly took two courses each semester, attending evening classes to accommodate her busy schedule. Encouraged by her success in obtaining the certificate, Holly's academic pursuits eventually led her to earn a Bachelor of Business Administration before completing a Master of Business Administration degree in 2021. Supported by over 16 years of combined experience in administration and human resources, as well as her necessary academic credentials, Holly was hired as an instructor at NLC. She now teaches in the Business Administration program where she was once a student, as well as other NLC business department programs.

As an instructor, Holly is keenly attuned to the unique challenges faced by mature and rural students. Understanding the importance of flexibility in education, she prioritizes developing flexible course schedules to accommodate students' diverse learning needs. Additionally, Holly advocates for students who may be hesitant about returning to school, advising them to start with one course in a certificate program to gauge their interest before committing to further studies—a testament to her commitment to supporting her students' success.

Looking ahead, Holly aspires to obtain a Master in Adult Education degree to enhance her career prospects in post-secondary education. She also entertains the possibility of pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration, perhaps to further advance her career in human resources in order to provide a voice of advocacy, a testament to her lifelong commitment to continuous learning, professional growth, and assisting others. As she concludes, "Education, to me, is always worth the effort."

Empowering Children, Parents, and Communities

Bonnie Rhoades' educational journey at Northern Lakes College is a remarkable story of dedication and community empowerment. Beginning her studies in the Teacher Assistant program (now known as the Educational Assistant program), Bonnie's passion for education and her commitment to her community laid the foundation for a remarkable career.

Returning to her home community of Loon River upon completing her program, Bonnie worked as a teacher's assistant, but was inspired by her own kindergarten teacher, Rosie Auger, and former school principals, Don Sinclair, Brian Dewar, and Connie Molcuk, to pursue a Bachelor of Education degree. Encouraged by her mentors, Bonnie enrolled in the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP), a University of Alberta program which was facilitated by NLC at that time.

Bonnie acknowledges the exceptional quality of education she received at NLC, particularly highlighting the dedication of her statistics instructor. "I was nervous when I started my statistics course," Bonnie admits. "But the teacher that taught it was so dedicated that she'd make time for group tutoring every Friday evening, and I fell in love with math. Even now, I love to teach students mathematics. It's kind of hard to believe!"

Upon graduating, Bonnie returned to her community to lead her own classrooms, viewing her students as her own children. "I wanted each one to be successful," she explains. "I'd do anything to help them, and I developed close relationships with their parents, as well. It was so reflective of the ATEP program; I was able to use my education to strengthen my own Indigenous community, to bring our children a sense of belonging, to keep our culture vital in our schools, to restore our community relationships."

Continuing her own educational journey, Bonnie pursued her master's degree while working as a teacher, authoring a thesis paper entitled, "Building Positive Relationships Within First Nation Schools." Upon completing her newest credential, Bonnie became the Principal of Little Buffalo School – a position she continues to excel in – inspiring her students, family, and even her greater community to pursue advanced education.

Reflecting on her journey, Bonnie offers empowering advice to Indigenous women considering a return to higher education. "Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today," she urges. "Believe in yourself and settle for nothing less than your very best. Expand your mind and your experiences. Don't ever quit."

Through her dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to education, Bonnie continues to inspire generations of Indigenous youth to dream big and pursue their aspirations.



Bonnie Rhoades
Educational Assistant,
University Studies, &
Aboriginal Teacher Education
Program



Northern Lakes College felt like one big family. Still, today, I will pop in and see my former teacher, Dr. Michelle Mitchell. Now she's Dean, [Health, Human Services, & University Studies] but she always makes time to chat and visit because she really cares about all of her students."

– Alumni, Bonnie Rhoades



LEARN MORE
about University Studies.



LEARN MORE
about Educational Assistant.





Truth and Reconciliation

SEPTEMBER 30

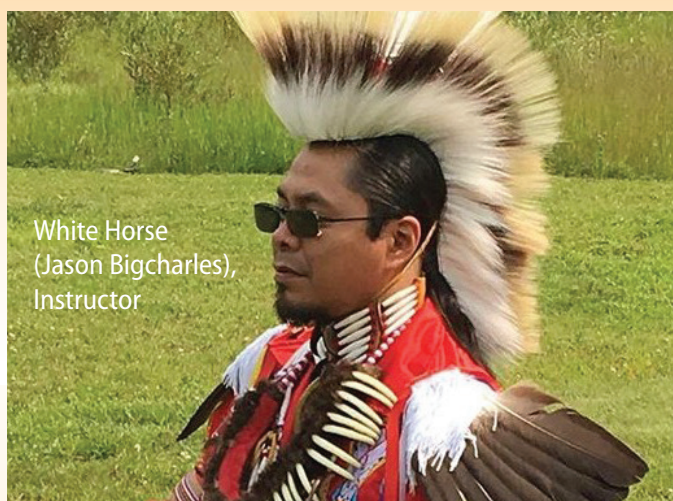
National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

Northern Lakes College recognized Truth and Reconciliation Week 2024 from September 23 to 27, and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30. The College hosted learning opportunities and shared resources to support an increased understanding of Indigenous history and culture.

To encourage reconciliation, Northern Lakes College hosted free, online sessions open to the public. Presented by NLC's **Indigenous Administration Certificate** program instructor, **Jason Bigcharles**, participants learned how to actively promote and practice reconciliation in daily life.

Session one explored what truth and reconciliation mean in terms of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Through an introduction to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the 94 Calls to Action, participants had the opportunity to reflect on meaningful questions, such as "What does reconciliation mean to me?" and "How can I actively promote and practice reconciliation in my daily life?"

Session two provided a deeper dive into truth and reconciliation, including the meaning of Orange Shirt Day, gaining an understanding of intergenerational trauma and its present day effects, and exploring how it affects our



White Horse
(Jason Bigcharles),
Instructor

interactions with Indigenous Peoples today. Participants explored how we can become allies in recognizing and accommodating intergenerational trauma in our everyday lives.

Orange Shirt Day

Students and staff wore Orange Shirts to recognize the experiences of children who were taken from their families and placed in residential schools.



Métis Week

The Métis Nation of Alberta has declared the week surrounding November 16, which is the date of The Right Honourable Louis Riel's death, as Métis Week. Métis people pay tribute to Riel and his visions. These visions include recognition of Métis people as a distinct group and nation, along with fairness and equality for all.

NLC observed Métis Week, November 14 to 17, offering students, employees, and community members the virtual opportunity to engage and learn. A temporary webpage

provided access to resources featuring Métis culture and history and the NLC Library featured books by Métis authors.

Free public online sessions, hosted by **Jason Bigcharles**, provided an opportunity to learn about Métis history, culture, and traditions. Session one, Métis History and Legislation, provided insight into the historical and contemporary legislation relating to Métis Peoples in Canada. Session 2, Métis Hunting and Gathering, explored Métis hunting and gathering rights in Alberta.

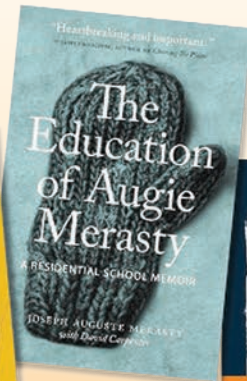
Visit [mamawapowin](#), NLC's **Virtual Indigenous Student Centre**.

Learn more about [Truth & Reconciliation](#) at Northern Lakes College.

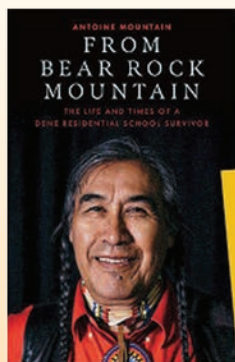
Northern Lakes College respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 8 territory and Métis Nation of Alberta Districts 13 - 15 and 20 - 22, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis Peoples. We recognize the 15 First Nations and four Métis Settlements located throughout our service region.

The NLC Library featured Indigenous authors and their works regarding residential school experiences and truth and reconciliation.

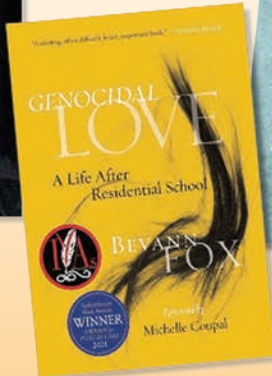
The Education of Augie Merasty:
A Residential School Memoir by Joseph Auguste Merasty with David Carpenter



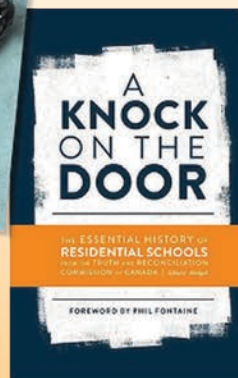
Did You See Us?
Reunion, Remembrance, and Reclamation at an Urban Indian Residential School by Survivors of the Assiniboia Indian Residential School



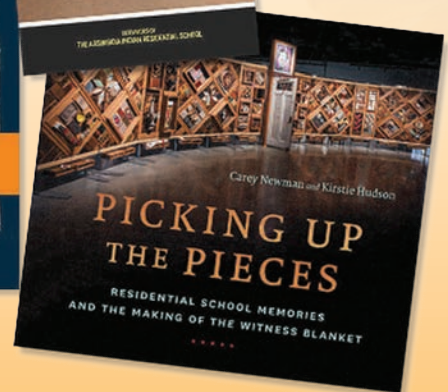
From Bear Rock Mountain: The Life and Times of a Dene Residential School Survivor by Antoine Bear Rock Mountain



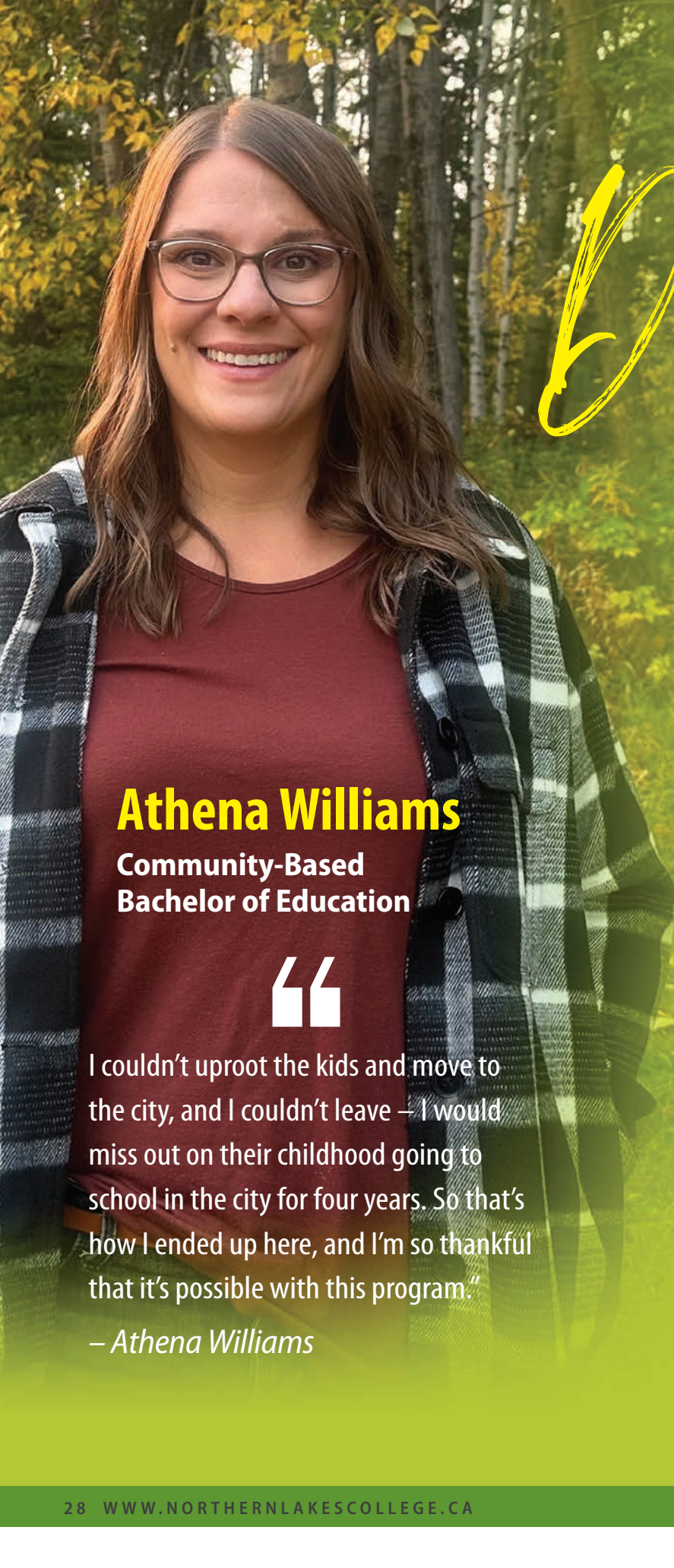
Genocidal Love: A Life After Residential School by Bevann Fox



A Knock on the Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools by Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada



Picking Up the Pieces: Residential School Memories and the Making of the Witness Blanket by Carey Newman and Kirstie Hudson



A chance to fulfill

Dreams

through Northern Lakes
College partnership
with University of
Calgary

Athena Williams

Community-Based
Bachelor of Education



I couldn't uproot the kids and move to the city, and I couldn't leave – I would miss out on their childhood going to school in the city for four years. So that's how I ended up here, and I'm so thankful that it's possible with this program."

– Athena Williams

An initiative that allows students from Northern Lakes College to transfer courses towards a Bachelor of Education degree through the Werklund School of Education is making dreams come true.

Athena Williams says she always wanted to be a teacher, but several years of high-flying adventure veered her so far off course that she feared she missed her chance. Originally from Red Deer, Athena and her husband Marc heeded the call of the north, moving first to Nunavut, then to Canyon Creek, a hamlet 25 km west of Slave Lake in north-central Alberta. For a spell both worked in aviation — Athena as a flight instructor and her husband as a medevac aircraft maintenance engineer. But then a quite different sort of life adventure – motherhood - grounded Athena as she chose to dedicate herself to raising her children full time.

"I always thought, you know, I'll fly for a while, and then I'll go back to school and be a teacher later on in my adult life," she says. "One of my first thoughts when we moved [near Slave Lake] was, 'that's never going to happen for me,' you know? I can't uproot my family to go to the city. My husband's got a good job here – it's just not going to happen."

Fate – not to mention a well-timed partnership – intervened in 2019 as Werklund and NLC formalized their BEd transfer program agreement through which NLC University Studies students complete most of their program requirements via online courses with NLC, plus a two-week residency at the University of Calgary for each year of their program.

One day that fall, Athena was dropping off her kids at their swimming lessons – which just so happened to be at the Northern Lakes College Slave Lake Campus – when she came across an advertisement for the program. “I thought, ‘Oh, my goodness, this could be my chance to fulfill my dreams – it might be possible,’” says Athena.

Now entering her third year, Athena is just a step away from realizing her ambitions, something she says never would have happened without this kind of community-based programming.

Serving Students Where They’re At

Addressing issues of access and equity and finding real world solutions to the teacher shortage crisis in rural and northern communities underpins the Werklund School of Education’s commitment to community-based learning. Dr. Amy Burns of the Werklund School says that remote communities often rely on attracting out of province teachers through incentive programs, but these are usually a short-term fix at best, as individuals tend to stay in these roles for only a couple of years at a time.

“What we’ve gone to now is this concept of ‘grow your own teacher,’ which means, take those people in your community who have a connection to the people and to the land and who are invested in the community, and find a way for them to do a Bachelor of Education that isn’t going to uproot their entire lives,” says Dr. Burns.

Northern students continue to have the opportunity to study in their home community and earn a BEd thanks to the renewal of the Werklund/NLC partnership for an additional five years.

Dr. Michelle Mitchell, Dean of Health, Human Services & University Studies at Northern Lakes College, says the program has been making a considerable impact, with students getting scooped up for teaching positions upon graduation – if not beforehand, as many are landing educational assistant jobs through their practicum placements.

“When I talk to principals, I hear wonderful things about our graduates. They’re telling me that the community-based graduates are coming with the skills that they want them to have. We are hurting for teachers in the North, so having a pool of teachers that are local is a game changer for the schools, I believe. I hope that we can continue to produce more and more graduates here and keep helping to fill that void.”

– Dr. Michelle Mitchell, Dean of Health, Human Services & University Studies

Connection

For her part, Athena says that the annual two-week summer residency at the Werklund School of Education is a highlight of the program. She credits both UCalgary and Northern Lakes College for making remote students feel connected year-round.

“The University of Calgary does a very good job of making us feel like we’re very much still part of the community even though we’re physically separated from it,” she says.

“Northern Lakes College is in constant communication as well. We’re very much a community, despite being physically or geographically separated.”

“The summer residency brings it all together for me each year,” she continues. “The connections I’ve made with people from all over Alberta, it’s so cool because we bring such diverse experiences, and we’re all from different communities, some are rural, some are urban, some are from Indigenous communities, and to bring all that experience into one place for two weeks – we learn so much from each other. We have incredible teachers on their way all over Alberta, I think.”

[**LEARN MORE** about University Studies and the Community-Based Bachelor of Education.](#)

Thank You

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The Board of Governors of Northern Lakes College extends sincerest thanks to all the individuals, companies, and organizations who have made generous contributions, including those who wish to remain anonymous.

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Lesser Slave Lake Community Development Corporation	Synterra Technologies Ltd.	Grouard Seniors Community Club	
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