



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Nursing
NURSING.USASK.CA



BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

NURSING MATTERS

Annual Report

- [Message from the Dean](#)
01
- [About Us](#)
02
- [College at a Glance](#)
04
- [Plan 2025 Update](#)
07
- [In the News](#)
08
- [Undergraduate Student Spotlights](#)
32
- [Recruitment Overview](#)
36
- [Dean's Honour Roll](#)
38
- [Graduate Student Spotlights](#)
40
- [Celebrating Graduate Student Success](#)
44
- [Research Highlights](#)
49
- [Research News](#)
54
- [Alumni News](#)
62
- [Alumni Reunions](#)
70
- [Donor Welcome](#)
73
- [Donor News](#)
74
- [Donor Highlights](#)
78
- [Celebrating Some of our Best and Brightest](#)
81
- [Telling the USask Nursing Story](#)
84



Writer and Report Lead

Kylie Kelso (BComm'05)
Senior Marketing and Communications Specialist
College of Nursing

Digital Report Lead

Breanna Pochipinski (BComm'22)
Digital Marketing and Communications Specialist
College of Nursing

Contributing Writers

Aiden Ryde (BComm'25)
College of Nursing

Breanna Pochipinski
College of Nursing

Editor

Suzanne Bowness
CodeWord Communications

Art Direction and Design

Deanna Miller
Deanna Miller Design

Printer

Saskatoon Fastprint

Published by

University of Saskatchewan
College of Nursing

Contact

College of Nursing
University of Saskatchewan
Health Sciences Building – 1A10, Box 6
107 Wiggins Road
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E5
Toll Free: 1.844.966.6269
✉ nurs.comms@usask.ca



In Canada, we live, learn and work on traditional Indigenous territories (Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10). We pay our respect to the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit ancestors and affirm our commitment to respectful relationships with one another and this land.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing 2025 Annual Report.

This past year has been both exciting and deeply rewarding for our college community. As I reflect on 2025, I am incredibly proud of all we have accomplished together. I feel truly fortunate to work alongside exceptional University of Saskatchewan Nursing faculty, staff, and contract teachers. Together, we all contribute to the excellence and vibrancy of our college.

This year marked continued growth for the College of Nursing, highlighted by the addition of two new distributed nursing sites in Weyburn and Swift Current in fall. With these additional sites, students can now learn where they live in ten Saskatchewan communities, reinforcing our commitment to accessible, community-focused nursing education across the province.

There is much to celebrate from the past year. Our faculty secured significant research grants and earned prestigious teaching awards, while staff were recognized for outstanding contributions. Many faculty members completed additional education, and our graduate students continued to advance nursing knowledge through impactful research.

“ This past year has been both exciting and deeply rewarding for our college community. As I reflect on 2025, I am incredibly proud of all we have accomplished together. I feel truly fortunate to work alongside exceptional USask Nursing faculty, staff, instructors, and teachers; each of whom contributes to the excellence and vibrancy of our college. ”

We proudly celebrated the first graduating class from the Lloydminster distributed nursing site in June, an alumnus received Canada's top doctoral scholarship, and we announced the launch of the new Master of Public Health Nursing program, set to begin September 2026.

This year also saw a College of Nursing Doctor of Philosophy student awarded the USask Governor General's Gold Medal at fall convocation. An alumna represented Canada on the world stage at the FIFA Women's World Cup, while others published books, adding to the growing impact of our alumni globally. We also celebrated faculty and staff years of service during the College of Nursing retreat in August.

Our students continue to excel academically, receiving nearly \$450,000 in student awards in 2025. These successes would not be possible without the generosity of our donors, and I extend my heartfelt thanks for their ongoing support of nursing education and research.

We were delighted to welcome two new appointments to our leadership team in 2025: Dr. Marnie Kramer (PhD) as associate dean academic, and Dr. Shehnaz Alidina (ScD), associate dean engagement and development. Their leadership strengthens our college and supports our vision for the future.

There are far too many accomplishments to name individually, but these are just a few of the highlights that come to mind after reflecting back on an outstanding year.

I hope you take some time to explore this year's annual report and discover the many achievements from 2025 that reflect the strength, collaboration, and accomplishments of our nursing community. While it highlights many remarkable successes, it represents only a portion of the exceptional work happening at USask College of Nursing.

For the most up-to-date news, events, and photos, I encourage you to follow us on social media and explore more stories throughout the year ahead at nursing.usask.ca.

University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur)



Dr. Solina Richter. © Dave Stobbe.

Vision

The College of Nursing is a world leader in educating nurses in interprofessional healthcare, research, practice, innovation, capacity building, and policy development.

Mission

As University nursing faculty in Saskatchewan, the College of Nursing strengthens nursing, health and the healthcare system, through the creation and integration of knowledge from research, education, and practice.

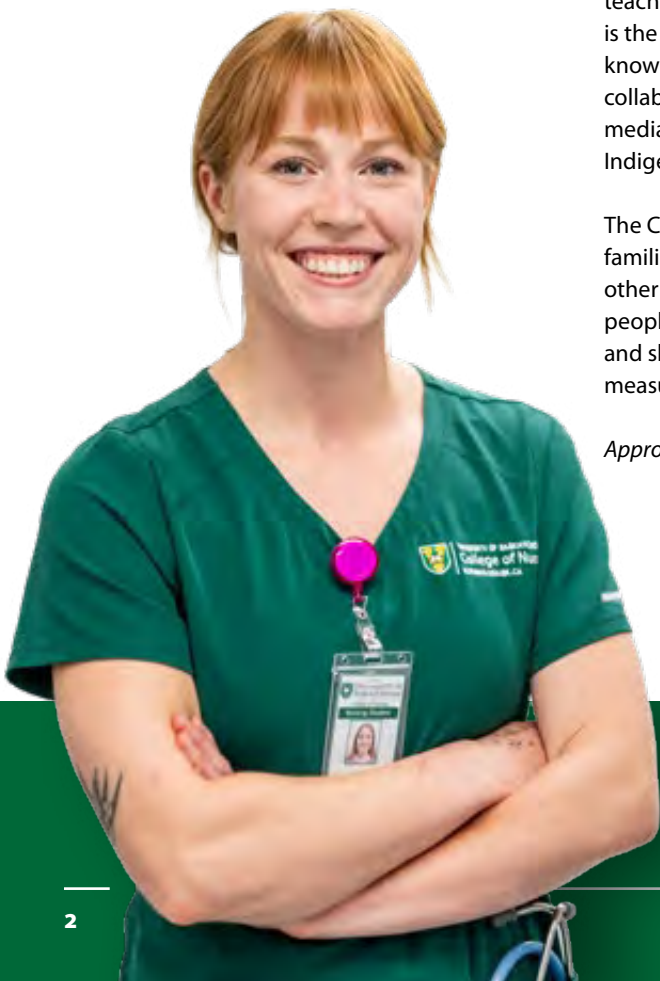
Philosophy

Nursing is a respected and caring human endeavor; a distinct health profession; and an applied discipline based on nursing and related theories. Nursing is dedicated to the purposeful, collaborative relationship with individuals, families, and communities that enables the acquisition, organization, and use of nursing and other related resources that people need to optimize their health experiences within complex, diverse, and dynamic environments.

Embedded in a research-intensive Canadian university, the College of Nursing is situated on the territory of Treaties 4, 6, 10, and the homeland of the Métis. The College of Nursing, University of Saskatchewan, believes the discovery, advancement, and transmission of nursing knowledge is achieved through the integration of teaching, research/scholarship, evidence informed practice, and service. Learning is the process of co-creating meaning that transforms experiences into shared knowledge. We value diversity, social justice, and ethical practice. We foster collaboration through primary healthcare, practical innovations and technology mediated solutions, with specific consideration of the needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

The College of Nursing and our graduates are leaders in engaging individuals, families, communities, policy makers, other health professions and disciplines, and other stakeholders to provide safe, competent care that maximizes the potential of people and health systems. Through these combined efforts, we create, support, and share equitable and sustainable solutions that improve health experiences and measurable outcomes. Solutions have local, national, and international relevance.

Approved by College of Nursing Faculty Council, April 10, 2017



Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Noel Luedtke. Matt Smith.

Programs

UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)
- Post-Degree BSN (PDBSN)

GRADUATE DEGREES

- Master of Nursing Professional Practice (MN)
- Master of Nursing Thesis (MN)
- Master of Public Health Nursing (MPHN) *Coming Fall 2026
- Master of Nursing Nurse Practitioner (MN-NP)
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing

MICRO-CREDENTIAL

- Management of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) in Adults: Clinical Update *NEW



○ Complete Pre-Professional Year (Year 1) ■ BSN Years 2 - 4

UNDERGRADUATE

The College of Nursing offers the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at University of Saskatchewan (USask) campuses in Saskatoon and Prince Albert. In addition to our primary campuses, the BSN program is also available to students at distributed sites across Saskatchewan including Île-à-la-Crosse, La Ronge, Lloydminster, Muenster, North Battleford, Swift Current, Weyburn, and Yorkton. The Post-Degree BSN option is offered at the Saskatoon Campus.

GRADUATE

All USask College of Nursing graduate programs are offered distributively, allowing students from across Canada to enrol. The main campus in Saskatoon, as well as the USask Prince Albert Campus, have dedicated learning spaces for graduate students.

MICRO-CREDENTIAL

The Management of Major Depressive Disorder in Adults: Clinical Update Micro-Credential is offered asynchronously online.

Locations

Since 1938, the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing has been shaping the future of nursing through excellence in education, leadership, and discovery.

As healthcare has evolved, so too has the College of Nursing by expanding programs and curriculums, cultivating visionary leaders, and strengthening our community of doctoral-prepared faculty.

Today, the college is educating registered nurses, nurse practitioners, nurse leaders, and nurse scholars who are making an impact across Canada and beyond, while advancing research that improves health and health systems.

At a glance, this is the College of Nursing at the close of 2025.



1,321

Students enrolled at end of 2025

1,083

Undergraduate students

238

Graduate students

15.6%

Self-declared undergraduate Indigenous students



16.0%

Self-declared graduate Indigenous students

55

Staff



63

Faculty



342

Contract Teachers



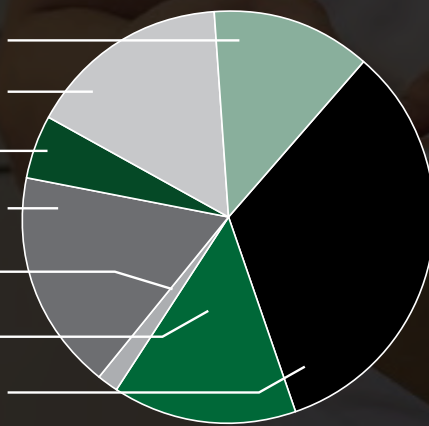
2

Senior Administration*



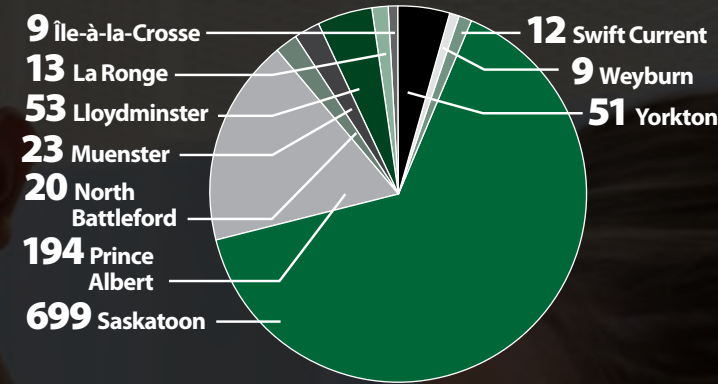
Faculty Complement

- Professors 8
- Associate Professors 10
- Associate Professor Academic Programming 3
- Assistant Professors 11
- Assistant Professor Academic Programming 1
- Lecturers 9
- Instructors 21

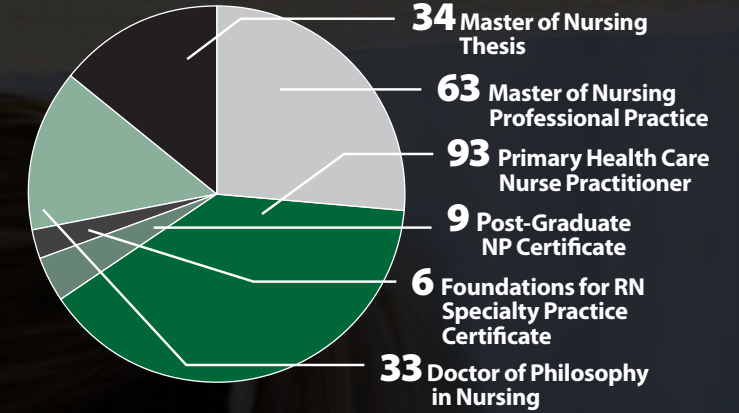


*Associate Deans who do not hold tenure-track faculty appointments.

Number of undergraduate students per campus/distributed site in 2025



Number of graduate students by program in 2025



343

Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates in 2025



73

Graduate students completed their programs in 2025

\$3.3 million

in total funding awarded across 89 active research grants held within the College of Nursing (2022-2025)



\$447,743

in student scholarships, awards, and bursaries



11,176

Alumni

- Australia: 7
- Austria: 1
- Bermuda: 1
- Cambodia: 1
- Canada: 10,503
- Germany: 1
- Hong Kong: 2
- Italy: 1
- Jamaica: 1
- Kuwait: 1
- Mexico: 1
- New Zealand: 3
- Nigeria: 1
- Philippines: 1
- Singapore: 1
- Switzerland: 1
- Undisclosed: 374
- United Kingdom: 6
- United States: 268
- Uruguay: 1



Plan 2025 Update

At the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing, we're focused on delivering accessible programs of excellence for current students, and translating research into creating innovative programs for future learners that meet the needs of a rapidly evolving healthcare system.

The College of Nursing is contributing to the University of Saskatchewan's aspiration to be "the university the world needs". Our College of Nursing strategic plan integrates seamlessly with the institutional strategic plan with focus areas in Discovery, Teaching/Learning, Engagement, and Indigenization.

What does the University of Saskatchewan's aspiration to be "the university the world needs" mean for the College of Nursing?

- It means ensuring our graduates are ready and committed to deliver and enhance collaborative patient-centered care in practice.
- It means supporting Indigenous achievement and contributing to a representative Indigenous nursing workforce that promotes equitable representation in the healthcare system and improved patient care.
- It means delivering accessible, technology-enhanced nursing education across the province and beyond.
- It means conducting patient and community-centered research that has a measurable positive impact on healthcare delivery for improved wellness of patients, families, communities, and caregivers alike.
- It means enhancing the nursing profession's administrative, teaching, and research capacity through our graduate studies programming.

Because Every Great Nurse Has Someone Who Believed in Them

Every great nurse begins their journey because someone believed in their potential. When you include the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing in your will, you become that someone – opening doors for future students, advancing innovation in teaching and research, and strengthening healthcare in communities across Saskatchewan and beyond.

A legacy gift to the College of Nursing is a meaningful, lasting act of compassion. It reflects your commitment to supporting what matters most: caring for others, advancing health, and

empowering the next generation of nursing professionals. Your belief in our students today will continue to uplift and inspire future nurses for decades to come.

Your legacy can empower the next generation of nurses to lead, serve, and care.

To learn more about legacy giving, contact Miren Luczka, Development Officer, College of Nursing at **(306) 966-5653** or email miren.luczka@usask.ca for a confidential conversation.

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS



Our strategic framework weaves together 11 goals within four priority focus areas:



DISCOVERY

Develop a culture of scholarship to achieve research excellence in nursing signature research areas, including Community Engaged Health, Health Equity, and Innovations in Health Systems and Education. Engage in interprofessional collaboration leading to new knowledge and stronger, evidence-informed healthcare systems.



TEACHING AND LEARNING

Inspire excellence and innovation in the development and delivery of nursing professional programs that leverage accessible, distributed technology to prepare graduates for interprofessional patient-centered care, for improved healthcare delivery in urban, rural, and northern/remote communities.



ENGAGEMENT

Promote healthy, inclusive relationships guided by the Seven Sacred Teachings that invigorate faculty, staff, and students to achieve their full potential. We strengthen and expand collaborative partnerships and leverage support from donors and alumni to co-create positive solutions for patients, families, and communities.



INDIGENIZATION

Understand, embrace, and support diversity as we walk the Indigenous and non-Indigenous journey toward reconciliation with a focus on *ohpahotân* "let's fly up together" and *wahkohtowin* "we are all related and interconnected."

The College of Nursing aspires to be one of the world's top 100 schools of nursing and to be among Canada's top 10.

We have made significant progress through the College of Nursing Plan 2025 since its inception in 2018. To highlight this progress, we have used the icons above to connect our news stories throughout the report to one of the four focus areas.

USask and Government of Saskatchewan celebrate post-degree nursing graduates



Post-degree students celebrate completion of accelerated nursing program, alongside University of Saskatchewan leadership and the Government of Saskatchewan. [Breanna Pochipinski](#).

In January 2025, 28 students who were part of the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing's accelerated Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (PDBSN) program, officially became one step closer to entering the Saskatchewan health-care workforce as registered nurses (RN).

This group of nursing students were part of the first cohort to graduate from the reinstated accelerated nursing program aimed to help address staffing challenges in the province.

"Our faculty, staff, and leadership are extremely proud of the achievements of this group of PDBSN students," said Dr. Solina Richter (DCur), dean of the College of Nursing. "We look forward to following these graduates as registered nurses and interprofessional healthcare providers within the Saskatchewan healthcare system."

The purpose of the PDBSN option is to recognize previous university achievements of qualified students and give them the opportunity to earn a Bachelor of Science

in Nursing (BSN) degree in a shortened period of time. Due to uncertainties during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022), the accelerated nursing program was temporarily on hiatus as the college navigated health restrictions to ensure all nursing students could finish their program requirements.

The early return of the program in the 2022-2023 academic year was made possible by the Government of Saskatchewan's Health Human Resource (HHR) Action Plan. Funding provided through this initiative enabled USask to admit students to the PDBSN program in January 2023. Additional students from the initial cohort completed their fast-tracked nursing degrees in April 2025.

"Our government remains committed to supporting health professionals at every stage of their career as part of our province's ambitious HHR Plan," Health Minister Jeremy Cockrill said. "Our goal was to create more opportunities for students and new grads to study and work in Saskatchewan and build a

rewarding career right here. We look forward to the contributions of these new nursing graduates in the communities they'll serve."

“Our government remains committed to supporting health professionals at every stage of their career as part of our province’s ambitious HHR Plan.”

– GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH MINISTER JEREMY COCKRILL

Dr. Christine Huel receives teaching excellence award



The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing is pleased to congratulate Dr. Christine Huel (PhD) on receiving a University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) Teaching Excellence Award in 2025.

Huel was nominated by students in her fourth-year nursing class, NURS 440 - Interprofessional Perspectives Health Systems and Policy Development within a Global Context.

Each spring the USSU celebrates excellence at USask through awards for teaching, volunteerism, staff spirit, and contribution to campus culture.

"I am honoured to receive the USSU Teaching Excellence award during my first year at the University of Saskatchewan," said Huel.

"The NURS 440 learners and I explored many topics related to healthcare, politics, global health, and policy development. Though some of the healthcare issues we explored were heavy, they had the courage to listen and reflect upon the diverse perspectives and experiences shared by our community of learners. Having this teaching experience with the NURS 440 class was an award in itself. I extend a heartfelt thanks to them for taking the time from their busy schedules to nominate me."

Huel joined USask College of Nursing as an assistant professor in 2024. She is a family nurse practitioner and Doctor of Philosophy graduate from the University of Victoria. She has been a registered nurse since 2002, predominantly working in pediatrics, maternal child health, and primary care. In addition to her role as an assistant professor with USask College of Nursing, Huel continues to practice as a family nurse practitioner.

Her research interests include routine childhood vaccines, vaccine hesitancy, nurse practitioner practice and education, cultural humility and care of 2SLGBTQIA+ migrant youth, and intensive parenting.

"Dr. Huel has been a wonderful addition to the College of Nursing," said Dr. Solina Richter. "She brings with her extensive global experience, the expertise of advanced nursing practice, and an evident passion for teaching. Our students are lucky to have her shaping their nursing education!"



Assistant Professor Dr. Christine Huel at USSU Awards Ceremony with her son Noah. [Submitted](#).

USask launches Canada's first two-year Master of Public Health Nursing program



As Canada grapples with record levels of homelessness, food insecurity, and public health workforce shortages, the University of Saskatchewan is stepping up with a bold new initiative: a graduate program designed to educate nurses as frontline leaders in community health.

The Master of Public Health Nursing (MPHN) program is a first-of-its-kind collaboration between USask College of Nursing and School of Public Health. The two-year online program equips nurses with advanced skills to address urgent public health challenges—from poverty reduction to disease prevention. The first cohort begins September 2026.

"This program prepares nurses to lead in prevention, education, and response," said College of Nursing Associate Professor and Graduate Chair Dr. Wanda Martin (PhD). "Public health nursing skills are essential for improving community health, especially as we face rising food costs and record levels of homelessness and poverty."

Students in the MPHN program will gain expertise as both practitioners and researchers through a combination of coursework and a thesis. The program is designed to be flexible and accessible—students do not need to reside in Saskatoon, and courses are delivered online with some live seminars.

"The Master of Public Health Nursing program is an appealing option as a clearer path toward practice and leadership roles in public health," said prospective student Morgan Christensen (BSN'09). "I'm drawn to its potential to deepen my understanding of population health and enhance my ability to contribute to effective, equitable health services."



Nursing students receive Indigenous Achievement Awards



College of Nursing Indigenous Student Achievement Award recipients (l to r) Janae Burnouf, Caitlin McNeill, Robyn Klassen, Kelly Tolley-Procyk, and Kellsey Brazeau. Submitted.

The University of Saskatchewan celebrates Métis, First Nations, and Inuit students, staff, faculty, and alumni successes annually during Indigenous Achievement Week.

“Congratulations to our Indigenous Student Achievement Award recipients Janae, Caitlin, Robyn, Kelly, and Kellsey,” said Dr. Solina Richter. “These students should take great pride in these nominations and celebrate these awards. To be recognized for their resiliency, leadership, academic achievement, and community engagement is an important acknowledgment of the successes that have led them to be selected as this year’s recipients. We are incredibly fortunate to have these students as part of the College of Nursing student body and I look forward to following them on their nursing journey in the future.”

Janae Burnouf, Resiliency Award
Program: Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Current Location: Saskatoon

Janae Burnouf is a proud Métis woman who has lived in more than five towns, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. She calls Beauval, Saskatchewan home, where most of her family is from. Her parents reside in Beauval and Lac Île-à-la-Crosse. Her mom is a dental hygienist and therapist, and her dad is a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. She has two younger brothers, one who is in computer engineering at USask, and one still in high school. After Janae completes her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, she would like to work at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon for two years before applying to the USask Nurse Practitioner program.

Caitlin McNeill, Leadership Award
Program: Master of Nursing Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner
Current Location: The Pas, Manitoba

Caitlin McNeill is a nurse practitioner student and a member of the Mosakahiken Cree Nation in northern Manitoba. She completed her Bachelor of Nursing at the University of Manitoba in 2015 and Master of Public Health at the University of Victoria in 2024. She has worked her entire career in the north. Her clinical experience includes emergency nursing, obstetrics, intermediate care, acute care, and working as the supervisor of an opioid agonist therapy (OAT) program, the first of its kind in a First Nation in Manitoba.

During her time with the Opaskwayak Cree Nation’s OAT program, she was instrumental in expanding access and improving the cultural relevance of opioid treatment in First Nations communities. She developed a policy and procedure manual for use in outlying nursing stations, acting as a consultant for the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba in the development of their prescribing practices manual, and became a faculty member for the OAT continuing competency course formerly required for physicians and pharmacists interested in providing OAT care.

In 2022, she became the director of health services for the Opaskwayak Health Authority, where she continues to advocate for reconciliation, equity, and the integration of Cree perspectives into health service delivery.

Robyn Klassen, Leadership Award
Program: Master of Nursing Thesis
Current Location: La Ronge, SK

Robyn Klassen has lived in La Ronge, SK her entire life and is a proud member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. She relocated to Saskatoon in 2011 to complete her Bachelor of Science in Nursing through the University of Regina and successfully completed her program in September 2014.

She practiced as a registered nurse at Lac La Ronge Indian Band Health Services as a public health nurse from 2015 to 2021 and as the public health nursing supervisor since 2021.

She is a certified First Nations Health Manager through the First Nations Health Manager Association.

Kelly Tolley-Procyk, Academic Achievement Award
Program: Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Current Location: Prince Albert

Kelly Tolley-Procyk studied nursing at the University of Saskatchewan Prince Albert Campus. She is a proud member of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan Western Region 2 with family roots in St. Louis and Batoche.

Once becoming a registered nurse, she hopes to work in neonatal intensive care in Prince Albert.

Kelly was nominated by the University of Saskatchewan Prince Albert Campus.

Kellsey Brazeau, Community Engagement Award
Program: Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Current Location: Saskatoon

Kellsey Brazeau is from Cote First Nation. She is committed to community care through practicums and summer employment in her home communities’ health centres. She has been a mentor in the Building Intercultural Resilience Mentorship Program (BIRM) for four years and also participated in the UPLIFT and Rivers to Success programs.

Kellsey was nominated by the University of Saskatchewan Office of the Vice Provost Indigenous Engagement.

College of Nursing appoints new associate dean academic



Dr. Marnie Kramer. Submitted.

The College of Nursing is pleased to welcome Dr. Marnie Kramer (PhD) as associate dean academic (ADA). Her tenure was effective November 15, 2025.

With a strong background in clinical expertise, educational leadership, and research innovation, Dr. Kramer brings a wealth of experience to the ADA portfolio. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Alberta, as well as a Master of Education in Adult Education and Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing from the University of Toronto.

“We are delighted to welcome Dr. Kramer to the University of Saskatchewan,” said Dr. Solina Richter. “Her collaborative spirit

and dedication to excellence will strengthen our community, help advance our strategic priorities, and support the continued success of our students and faculty.”

Coming to USask from the University of Manitoba, Dr. Kramer was previously an assistant professor and a nurse education researcher focused on understanding affective learning, stress and coping, academic literacy, and remediation practices for undergraduate nursing students.

She has expertise in supporting students writing the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN), is a national expert on NCLEX-RN remediation strategies, and an educational developer for NCLEX-RN resources.

“I am excited to begin my new role at the University of Saskatchewan and to continue to support undergraduate nursing education across the province,” said Dr. Kramer. “I am thankful to be working alongside the faculty, staff, and students in the College of Nursing.”

– DR. MARNIE KRAMER

The College of Nursing looks forward to Dr. Kramer’s leadership as she works with faculty, staff, and students to advance the college’s academic mission and prepare the next generation of nursing professionals.

USask College of Nursing continues to expand educational opportunities



Nursing student Gracie Paul from the Yorkton distributed nursing site. © LF Photography.

For decades, “going to university” meant exactly that: moving to a major centre to take your degree on campus. For Saskatchewan’s nursing students, the university now “goes to you.”

Dr. Solina Richter emphasizes the importance of the institution as a university for all of Saskatchewan. “We are really trying to be inclusive to give people living in rural and remote areas the opportunity to learn where they live.”

In addition to the college’s two campuses in Saskatoon and Prince Albert, there are eight distributed learning sites where students can earn their nursing degree: Île-à-la-Crosse, La Ronge, Yorkton, Lloydminster, North Battleford, Muenster, Swift Current, and Weyburn.

In addition to making a nursing degree accessible for Saskatchewan students, the program also plays an important role in addressing critical nursing shortages in the province’s rural areas.

“We know that if our students do their nursing education in these communities and become registered nurses, they are also likely to stay in these communities,” said Richter. “Especially in our northern communities, nursing students are very acquainted with the local context. They are really familiar with the people and the culture. That helps a lot.” She adds that just over 15 per cent of the college’s students have self-identified as Indigenous.

Gracie Paul has been studying nursing without relocating from her home town of Canora, a 30-minute drive north of Yorkton. Her program has involved a mix of regular and online classes, plus clinical work in a hospital setting.

“All my family lives here in Canora. When I’m able to stay at home and study, and commute back and forth to Yorkton, I can have all my support systems here — my friends and family,” said Paul, who adds that class size can be another benefit.

“I went to a small-town high school, so it’s nice to have class sizes of about 10 to 15, so we all know each other. We’re all really good friends. We also get a lot of focused time with instructors.”

When she was in Grade 12, Paul was interested in pursuing a career in healthcare, but unsure of what area to pursue. The Learn Where You Live model played a major role in convincing her to choose nursing.

For many students, Learn Where You Live makes a nursing degree much more accessible in a number of ways. Completing their studies while based in their home community not only saves the cost of relocating to a larger centre, it also keeps spouses and families together, helps to maintain current employment, eliminates feelings of isolation and generally reduces the psychological, as well as financial burden.

Paul is in the Canadian Armed Forces’ Regular Officers Training Plan (ROTP), so she’s not sure where she will be posted. Many of her classmates, though, are planning to stay in Yorkton and area. She, too, likes the idea of someday being a nurse in a community the size of Canora and she understands the challenges these communities face, along with the working environment.

“It’s a lot of organization to offer programming across Saskatchewan,” admits Dean Richter, “but it is so rewarding.”

Paul echoes that sentiment from a student’s perspective.

“Nursing is a very challenging program, but a very rewarding program, so if you’re thinking about nursing, you should really give it a try.”

This story is adapted from an article by Ray Penner that originally appeared in the Saskatoon StarPhoenix and Regina Leader-Post 2025 Nursing Week special feature.

Nursing wellness rooms established in Greater Saskatoon Catholic School



College of Nursing students working with an Elder on a moose hide during a community clinical at St. Frances Cree Bilingual School. © Dr. Marcella Ogenchuk.

University of Saskatchewan nursing students complete a community clinical placement in their fourth year of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. Now a clinical placement at the new awâsisak kâ-nîmîhtocik – St. Francis* School will include dedicated wellness rooms for nursing students.

Nursing students have been involved in a partnership with the St. Frances Cree Bilingual School in Saskatoon since 2007, when the 1950s-era St. Frances School began its Cree language and cultural programming. Until now, nursing students at St. Frances gathered in the boot room, library, or were juggled from room to room based on availability to work with students. But at the new awâsisak kâ-nîmîhtocik – St. Francis School, there is a dedicated space for USask Nursing students to use.

“Students come to St. Frances from all over the city and from all walks of life,” said Kelley Cardinal, superintendent of learning services at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

“Access to health services can be an issue for some families, so being able to offer those services where students come every day can better their overall health and equip them to make good, healthy decisions as they grow and mature. We’re grateful for our partnership with the College of Nursing, and we’re happy to be able to offer dedicated space at the new school.”

College of Nursing Associate Professor Dr. Marcella Ogenchuk (PhD) oversees the clinical placements at the school. “Nursing students work with the school community to learn about their strengths and needs to enhance wellness,” said Ogenchuk.

“The nursing students collaborate with a multidisciplinary team, build relationships, provide screenings, referrals and treatments, deliver presentations, demonstrate wellness skills, and teach about oral health, nutrition, and addiction.”

“The nursing students have successfully collaborated with the school community over the years working with the space they

“ Access to health services can be an issue for some families, so being able to offer those services where students come every day can better their overall health and equip them to make good, healthy decisions as they grow and mature. ”

– SUPERINTENDENT KELLEY CARDINAL

were given, but to have dedicated space for them to work with students in the new school is an incredible opportunity.”

“Students at the new school know where to find the nursing students, it increases the types of teachings the nursing students can offer, and the space will help to build the community connection with nursing students within the school,” added Ogenchuk.

**Along with the addition of the Cree new name, the school’s patron saint and namesake changed from St. Frances Cabrini to St. Francis of Assisi.*

College of Nursing ASPA member spotlight on Research Coordinator Dr. Vanessa Ellis Colley



College of Nursing Research Coordinator Dr. Vanessa Ellis Colley. © Dave Stobbe.

Dr. Vanessa Ellis Colley (PhD'23) is a research coordinator in the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing – Nursing Unit for Research and Scholarship Excellence (NURSE). She joined the college in November 2023 and was highlighted in 2025 as a member of the Administrative and Supervisory Personnel Association (ASPA).

Colley plays a key role in supporting faculty with post-award research activities. She acknowledges “the work of research coordinators is central to the success of researchers and ensuring adherence/ compliance with funding requirements to avoid any form of mismanagement at the college and institutional level.”

Colley provides guidance on various processes, including early fund release, hiring research staff, and assisting with ethics applications, continuing her support through to the final closeout of project funds.

Despite her extensive experience managing research grants at the University of the West Indies (Mona, Jamaica), Colley quickly realized the importance of being able to “adapt and learn the nuances that come with a new job”, especially as new responsibilities emerge. Navigating the

various platforms used to assist faculty was a fast-paced, but rewarding learning process, because it helped her create a proactive approach to supporting their research work more effectively. Colley has developed and delivers Research 101 presentations to guide faculty and research support staff through various stages of the research lifecycle.

Although drafting ethics applications can be complex and time-consuming, Colley finds it gratifying knowing her work helps speed up and advance research productivity within the college. She also values every learning opportunity that comes from reviewing impactful nursing project with significance for Saskatchewan and beyond. “As I am passionate about research, reviewing research proposals to prepare USask Research Ethics applications provides a sense of fulfillment,” said Colley.

When asked about her most memorable accomplishment, Colley speaks with pride about earning her doctoral degree.

“Crossing the stage at Merlis Belsher on June 5, 2023, during the College of Education convocation ceremony to accept my PhD was a significant and most memorable accomplishment for me. This marked the culmination of years of dedication and sacrifice! Oh, there were many! Reaching that milestone was a moment of pride – even more so for the unwavering supporters I had in the audience and across the globe. This achievement is a testament to hard work, discipline, and focus commitment.”

Her PhD thesis in Educational Administration was focused on academic deans and their evolving roles.

Colley remains involved in the academic community by reviewing articles for scholarly journals and being involved in academic and professional associations. As a member of the Jamaican community in Saskatoon, she extends support to individuals and families in numerous ways in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

Colley also volunteers with her colleagues through various initiatives to contribute

to bridging the food security gap for international students on the USask Saskatoon Campus.

This story is adapted from an article written by Mariam Alaverdashvili and was originally published in the Administrative and Supervisory Personnel Association quarterly newsletter.

“ **As I am passionate about research, reviewing research proposals to prepare USask Research Ethics applications provides a sense of fulfillment.** ”

– DR. VANESSA ELLIS COLLEY

Canoe Lake First Nation sisters study nursing together at USask



They look alike—you can tell they’re sisters. On a Zoom call, they speak as if they’re tossing a volleyball back and forth, each handing off their answer before passing to the next.

The Woodward sisters Hilary, Kylee, and Deanna are all in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the Saskatoon Campus. They’re from Canoe Lake, a Cree First Nation on Treaty 10 territory about five hours north of Saskatoon.

Although they are sisters and are all currently studying nursing, they didn’t all take the same path to get here.

Hilary, the youngest, was the first one – right out of high school – to begin her first year of studies to apply into nursing.

“I picked this program because I wanted to choose something right away,” said Hilary. “I didn’t want to figure myself out. I figured I would do that while studying in a program. So far, it’s been going well!”

The next to fall in line was Kylee, who had already started university where she was taking a variety of courses, when she saw her younger sister enjoying nursing.

“She went directly into nursing, and I was like, that will give me a career, and she’s going to be in it, so I guess I’ll give it a try as well,” said Kylee.

The eldest, Deanna, had already completed post-secondary studies as a veterinary medical assistant and worked for a year as a continuing care aid when she decided she wanted to pursue her nursing degree and joined her sisters the same year Hilary began the USask Nursing program.

With a close childhood and many memories of playing together, riding bikes, hanging out with their three brothers, and going on family vacations, the sisters are tight knit. Their shared education allows them to work as a unit, scheduling their classes together, which is great for sharing notes and supporting each other.

“It’s nice in labs because you basically have a designated partner already,” said Kylee.

Sometimes they study together, and Deanna appreciates when her sisters remind her



USask Nursing students (l to r) Hilary Woodward, Kylee Woodward, and Deanna Woodward. © Submitted.

about upcoming due dates.

While they are all in the same program, there are individual preferences. Kylee loves clinical the most, Deanna prefers the hands-on experience in the labs, and Hilary finds her passion in theory classes.

Their career goals are also different.

Hilary would like to get a few years of experience working in Saskatoon, but then return to Canoe Lake. “I miss home a bit, and I want to see how everyone’s doing, even for a little while. I don’t think I’ll stay in Canoe Lake my whole life, but I do want to go back for a couple of years,” she said.

Deanna wants to work in geriatrics, especially to help patients with dementia. Kylee started out wanting to work in labour and delivery, but is now thinking about working with older individuals as well.

Not surprisingly, the sisters are close outside of the classroom. Kylee and Hilary live together, and Deanna lives nearby. They’ve all played volleyball together, with Hilary and Deanna on one nursing student team and Kylee on another.

With their strong connection to their First Nation, the sisters also appreciate the support they’ve found for celebrating their Indigenous culture at USask.

Hilary attended a powwow her first year and danced in her traditional jingle dress. Deanna notices the difference between USask and her past education experiences.

“The University of Saskatchewan is so much different than the college I went to in the beginning because you didn’t see Indigenous people on campus, and they didn’t have anything to connect us together. Going to USask is so much different because we get emails almost every week about different things we can join for Aboriginal group activities,” she said.

Kylee added that she appreciated the specialized tutoring support she received in first year with her statistics course, and the guidance she has received from College of Nursing Academic Advisor Gina DiPaolo.

While Hilary, Kylee, and Deanna are all engaged in nursing together, they also appreciate the profession is big enough to choose their own pathway.

“You go into nursing not knowing there’s so many doors for you with this degree,” said Deanna. “Then you start studying and you’re like, ‘I have so many options.’ Just because we’re sisters and we all want to go into the same profession, having the option of different careers within nursing once we complete our degrees is really nice.”

Uganda trip transforms nursing student's life



Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Jayne Waterhouse in Uganda. Submitted.

For Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Jayne Waterhouse, finding room in her studies to join the One Health Community Partnerships (OHCP) project in Uganda from May to August 2025 was transformative, not just professionally, but emotionally.

"My eyes were opened to how these under-resourced communities experience both moments of joy and the harsh realities of daily life," said Waterhouse.

"I was inspired by the resilience of women who, despite gathering water, raising families, growing produce, caring for animals, and making baskets or beads to sell, are some of the most joyful people I've ever met."

"I am so glad to have challenged myself to experience nursing in a setting very different than here at home, as I feel it will really benefit my practice once I become an RN," said Waterhouse.

Supported by Global Affairs Canada, the OHCP project focuses on improving the health of vulnerable women and girls by empowering poor and marginalized rural farmers, especially in female-headed households.

The program serves communities in Uganda, Ghana, and Ethiopia.

For Waterhouse, the experience included preparing and planning lessons to teach school children in project villages.

"We taught at five different schools in the communities we worked with," said Waterhouse. "We also observed health centres to gain a ground-level perspective on health concerns, emergency preparedness, and safety and hygiene practices."

For Waterhouse, a highlight of the experience was the students' enthusiasm, particularly as they taught them about water and sanitation practices.

"I was pleasantly surprised by how warmly we were received by both teachers and students, and I truly felt the love and joy of these children," said Waterhouse.

After choosing USask for her nursing education because it was close to home with a great reputation, Waterhouse sought out the OHCP opportunity because she wanted to gain cross-cultural experience.

Now she advocates strongly for the benefits

of volunteering with OHCP. "If you want to grow personally and professionally, this program offers the chance to collaborate with students from different academic and cultural backgrounds, a valuable way to practice teamwork, just as you would in healthcare," she said.

This final experience of her undergraduate nursing education is one Waterhouse will carry with her into her professional life.

"The people I met in Uganda truly touched me. Life there is centered around a collective community, where everyone is involved in each other's lives and supports one another. Being part of a close-knit team of volunteers was a blessing, and I am very grateful for the students I went with and the friendships I formed."

Once becoming a registered nurse, Waterhouse hopes to work at the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in pediatrics.

Celebrating 20 years of nursing education in Prince Albert



Nursing alumni, stakeholders, partners, and supporters gather at the USask Prince Albert Campus to celebrate 20 years of nursing education in Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan. JazCatte Photography.

The University of Saskatchewan Prince Albert Campus was vibrant on May 10, as 20 years of nursing education was celebrated during a reunion organized by College of Nursing alumna and chairperson Joanne Mercredi (BSN'06), alongside a large committee.

The reunion was open to all alumni who graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from USask College of Nursing Prince Albert and northern distributed sites between 2006 and 2025, as well as graduates from the USask Master of Nursing, Nurse Practitioner, and Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing programs.

"This is a significant milestone recognizing the graduates who completed their nursing education in these communities and a celebration of previous partnerships between First Nations University of Canada, Saskatchewan Polytechnic, and the University of Saskatchewan, that resulted in nursing graduates going on to do incredible things," said Mercredi.

The reunion included tours of the previous nursing campus at First Nations University

of Canada and morning presentations about everything from careers in nursing, an Indigenous nurse's journey, to cultural safety. Attendees were also offered a tour of the Victoria Hospital and attended a program and reception in the afternoon at the USask Prince Albert Campus.

With alumni attending from all over western Canada and as far as Toronto, approximately 260 people were in attendance throughout the day of celebration.

"Alumni from Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan are practicing in northern Saskatchewan, including Stanley Mission, Montreal Lake, Southend, Pelican Narrows, and Dechambeault Lake, which is testament that distributed nursing education really works," said Dr. Solina Richter.

"These graduates completed their nursing education in Prince Albert or at a distributed nursing site through our partnership with Northlands College, then some returned to their home communities to practice. These are great examples of why distributed nursing education is so important for our rural and remote communities in this province."

“ These graduates completed their nursing education in Prince Albert or at a distributed nursing site...then some returned to their home communities to practice. These are great examples of why distributed nursing education is so important for our rural and remote communities in this province. ”

– DR. SOLINA RICHTER

Master’s graduate aims to elevate nursing in Ghana



Kofi Junior Effah Frimpong with supervisor Dr. Natasha Hubbard Murdoch. © Matt Smith.

Kofi Junior Effah Frimpong (MN’25) is a nurse from Ghana, who came to the College of Nursing to pursue his Master of Nursing (MN) degree. But he’s not stopping there. While most nursing students celebrated the completion of their program during USask’s fall convocation November 12, 2025, for Effah Frimpong, it marked both an ending and a new beginning — the conclusion of his MN thesis studies and the start of his journey towards a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing.

After earning his Diploma in Nursing from Berecum Holy Family Nursing and Midwifery in Ghana, his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Cape Coast, and his Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) specialty training, Effah Frimpong built his career as a specialist in ENT nursing, while also working in acute care and emergency.

Three years into his profession, he began to wonder what the next step in his nursing journey might be. His search for new challenges led him to apply to schools in Canada and when he received a scholarship

offer from the University of Saskatchewan, he knew it was time to take the leap.

With excitement and determination, he packed his bags for Saskatoon.

He admits life in Canada has been quite different from what he was used to in Ghana, where it’s common for extended families to live together under one roof. Adjusting to a new culture and language came with its challenges at first, but the experience has been overwhelmingly positive.

“Canada has been very welcoming... the people, the faculty... everyone has been so friendly,” said Effah Frimpong, who is also registered to practice as a nurse in Canada.

When Effah Frimpong first arrived in Canada, he planned to focus his thesis on ENT nursing — the field he knew best. But after discovering that ENT nursing wasn’t recognized as a specialty in Canada, he began to rethink his path. In searching for a new direction, he looked inward, drawing

on his experiences and connections to his home country of Ghana. That reflection led him to a field where he could make a real difference and shine a light on issues close to his heart.

After connecting with his supervisor, Dr. Natasha Hubbard Murdoch (BSN’02, MN’09, PhD’19), and committee member, Dr. Sithokozile Maposa (PhD), both from the College of Nursing, Effah Frimpong found himself drawn to the topic of burnout.

He wanted to understand what drives nurses, especially those working in challenging rural settings, to keep going despite exhaustion and limited resources. His master’s thesis, *“Driven to Nurse in Rural Africa: A Scoping Review of the Experiences of Burnout,”* brought together existing literature on the topic, but he also wanted to hear real voices behind the data. To do that, he conducted a small qualitative study with African rural nurses, who are now students at USask, capturing their stories and the realities they’ve faced on their nursing journeys.

The findings confirmed what Effah Frimpong had suspected all along.

“I found burnout is quite high in Africa. Almost all the nurses I spoke with said they had experienced signs of burnout,” Effah Frimpong explained. “Some of the main factors were heavy workloads, low salaries, and a sense of being excluded from decision-making.”

Participants also shared how they cope, often through prayer and spirituality, as well as the support of family and community.

“Because of the way we live in Africa, when someone is experiencing burnout, we come together to support them,” said Effah Frimpong. “If a person is facing financial difficulties, we pool money to help. If they are going through emotional stress, we provide support and encouragement.”

Despite this strong informal network, he noted no formal burnout mitigation strategies existed within the healthcare facilities in Ghana; it’s a gap he suggests should be addressed.

With his Master of Nursing now complete, Effah Frimpong is moving into his doctoral research, taking a slightly new direction while remaining focused on Africa. His PhD will explore migrant health, with a particular focus on HPV immunization among children.

Effah Frimpong is enthusiastic about beginning his PhD. “I have this need to continue reading and learning,” said Effah Frimpong. “I am deeply committed to expanding my horizons. In Ghana, there are currently no ENT nurses with a PhD.”

When Effah Frimpong completes his PhD and returns to Ghana, he knows he will do so with a full heart.

“It’s not just the guidance from my supervisors and professors that I’ve appreciated,” he said. “I’ve really enjoyed connecting with fellow students. The College of Nursing has dedicated graduate student spaces where we meet, chat, and share ideas. I’m constantly meeting new people and learning from them. My educational experience in Canada has been more than I could have imagined.”

“My educational experience in Canada has been more than I could have imagined.”

– KOFI JUNIOR EFFAH FRIMPONG

Dr. Jodie Bigalky receives Provost’s Teaching Award



College of Nursing Assistant Professor Dr. Jodie Bigalky. © Dave Stobbe.

A commitment to lifelong learning, an empathic and passionate teaching style, and dedication to using health equity research in the classroom earned College of Nursing Assistant Professor Dr. Jodie Bigalky (BSN’02, MN’12, PhD) a USask Provost’s College Award for Outstanding Teaching, as the College of Nursing 2025 recipient.

Dr. Bigalky has over 20 years’ experience as an educator, but appreciates although she has nursing knowledge, her students bring their own lived experiences to the classroom.

“My experience teaching in nursing education has shaped how I teach and as I reflect on my career, I can see how my teaching philosophy has evolved over the last 20 years,” said Bigalky.

“As a novice educator, I saw myself as the expert, imparting my knowledge onto the learners I taught. However, over the last number of years, my perception of teaching has shifted to the current view of teaching as a dynamic, reciprocal relationship between the educator and the learner. While I hold more knowledge related to nursing, my learners also bring their experiences to the learning environment, and these can be used to broaden the depth of the knowledge shared.”

Not only has Bigalky’s teaching philosophy changed over the years, so has the classroom. Dr. Bigalky is located in Regina and previously taught undergraduate theory, lab, and clinical courses in-person, but with the College of Nursing Learn Where You Live model, Bigalky has embraced the challenge of teaching theory in a distributed online format, demonstrating adaptability and innovation.

Her teaching philosophy is aligned with the College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan practice standards emphasizing professional responsibility and accountability, knowledge-based practice, ethical practice, service to the public, and self-regulation. “Both educators and learners share responsibilities in the learning environment,” said Bigalky.

During her two-decade tenure at USask College of Nursing, Dr. Bigalky has been a part-time clinical instructor, lecturer, clinical associate, instructor, and most recently, assistant professor since 2023.

She teaches in the undergraduate nursing program, with a passion for teaching perinatal nursing. Dr. Bigalky has recently expanded her role to teach at the graduate level. “At the conclusion of each course, I hope my learners leave my classroom, lab, or clinical setting with the skills needed to succeed, but also an eagerness to continue learning,” said Bigalky.

“My ultimate goal is to foster competent, confident, professional, and knowledgeable practitioners who are equipped to provide safe and compassionate nursing care. I anticipate my teaching philosophy will continue to evolve in the dynamic environment of nursing education, as I continue to grow both personally and professionally throughout my career.”

“Dr. Bigalky is a talented professor and passionate researcher in the area of health equity for women and gender diverse populations and we are very fortunate to have her in the College of Nursing,” said Dr. Solina Richter.

“Her enthusiasm to teach students is evident and her teaching philosophy inspires students. She is committed to educating the next generation of nurses about the disparities in the social determinants of health and uses her background in perinatal nursing to author textbooks and present her work to shape the future of perinatal nursing practice.”

Governor General’s Gold Medallist uses virtual reality to level up nursing education



Dr. Geneveave Barbo. Submitted.

Long before she became a Governor General’s Gold Medallist, Dr. Geneveave Barbo’s (PhD’25) first experience with digital caregiving came in the form of a Tamagotchi, a pocket-sized virtual pet. Now, she has taken her lifelong love of video games and leveraged it into immersive virtual reality (IVR) simulations that help nursing students support migrants facing mental health challenges.

Before pursuing her doctorate at the University of Saskatchewan, Barbo worked as a nurse in both urban centres, as well as remote rural areas. While working as a community health nurse in northern Manitoba, Barbo recalled meeting a teenager experiencing suicidal thoughts. With few mental health resources available in the community, Barbo did her best to offer compassionate listening and support within her professional role. The experience stayed with her, reinforcing her belief that far more must be done to ensure young people, particularly those navigating complex social or personal challenges, receive the care and support they deserve.

“It just struck me that there’s really limited access to mental health supports in rural or remote areas. I also began thinking about urban settings, where barriers to

accessing mental healthcare persist, and how healthcare professionals play such a critical role in bridging these gaps,” said Barbo. “Even after graduating, many nursing students are still unprepared to meet mental healthcare needs for the general population, and even more for marginalized populations.”

Having immigrated to Canada years ago, Barbo thought about her own experiences and the barriers that prevent other migrants from accessing mental healthcare, including cultural differences, language barriers, stigma, and discrimination.

“There are systemic and structural barriers, but at the same time, healthcare professionals, such as nurses, have an important role to play in being part of the solution. Through the way they interact with patients and approach care, they can gradually help dismantle these barriers from within the system. There’s this avenue we have as nurses that can be part of the solution in our practice.”

Under the supervision of Dr. Pammla Petrucka (BSN’93, MN’97, PhD) and with guidance from advisory committee members Drs. Donald Leidl (BSN’01, EdD), Hua Li (BSN’09, MPH’13, PhD’18), Solina Richter, and Marjorie Montreuil (PhD), Barbo started her doctoral journey at the University of Saskatchewan. She built an immersive virtual simulation where nursing students at USask and McGill University practiced supporting a virtual Filipina immigrant patient (Mrs. S.), in a safe environment that allowed them to make mistakes and learn without fear of real-world consequences.

The IVR simulation was built using Unity, a game development engine that offers a blank canvas for developers, and AI tools like ChatGPT were used to assist in coding. Barbo created a simulated emergency department and community health clinic where students could meet, communicate, and follow the care journey of Mrs. S., who was experiencing a mental health crisis and diagnosed with anxiety and depressive disorders.

Student reception for the IVR simulation has been positive.

“Students are really interested, and it helps them practice in a safe space to make mistakes,” said Barbo.

Based on evaluations before and after participating in the simulation, students have demonstrated growth in cultural competency, as well as a modest reduction in stigmatizing attitudes towards individuals with mental health challenges. Some students reported the experience helped them to reflect on their practice and how inequities and stigma impact patients in the Canadian healthcare system.

“The cultural competency piece of it is very, very important, because it helps them prepare for the nuances they may only see later in their career,” said Barbo.

As a teacher herself, Barbo is excited to see a shift towards tools like this.

“The curriculum doesn’t prepare you as much as actually going out there and talking to somebody with mental health challenges does.”

Currently, Barbo is in talks with course coordinators about integrating VR into mental health areas of the curriculum, but she thinks there are more opportunities to leverage the technology to create a more interactive learning experience.

The cultural competency components of the IVR can be adapted and developed into Indigenous anti-racism modules for nursing students and may even help to prepare students for critical care and community placements.

The safe space offered by IVR may also be helpful to prepare students for sensitive topics when learning about ethics in the classroom.

“Students can have a safe space to grapple with their own biases or experiences and learn how to better navigate them,” said Barbo.

For Barbo, being recognized with the Governor General’s Gold Medal is an immense honour, and she carries deep

gratitude for her mother, whose sacrifices and strength have inspired her to keep striving to make a difference through her work.

“I am very thankful to my mother, who gave so much to my sisters and me,” said Barbo. “She’s the one who encouraged me to pursue a career in nursing and instilled in us the values of compassion, respect, and humility that continue to guide me today.”

College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Dean Dr. Debby Burshtyn (PhD) said Dr. Barbo’s work is a powerful example of how compassion and innovation can come together to create meaningful change.

“Barbo’s dedication to improving mental healthcare and nursing education through technology is inspiring,” said Burshtyn. “We’re proud to see her recognized with the Governor General’s Gold Medal.”

Dr. Louise Racine (PhD), associate dean research and graduate studies at the College of Nursing, believes Barbo’s work challenges the traditional perceptions of nursing.

“Dr. Barbo illustrates what it means to be a nurse scientist—using evidence-based research to develop practical tools enhancing both nursing education and quality of care for individuals experiencing mental health challenges.”

Barbo is currently a postdoctoral fellow at McGill University, where she is working on how digital innovations can contribute to improving youth mental healthcare. In the future, Barbo hopes to continue to research and use virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and other technologies to enhance the accessibility of mental healthcare, health education, and health literacy.

This article is adapted from a piece written by Cassidy Guy for the College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website.

“**Dr. Barbo illustrates what it means to be a nurse scientist—using evidence-based research to develop practical tools enhancing both nursing education and quality of care for individuals experiencing mental health challenges.**”

– DR. LOUISE RACINE

Congratulations to Dr. Susan Fowler-Kerry



Dr. Susan Fowler-Kerry. Dave Stobbe.

The College of Nursing wishes to celebrate the distinguished career of Dr. Susan Fowler-Kerry (BA’77, BSN’79, PhD’08).

Dr. Fowler Kerry joined the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing in 1986 and became a tenured full professor in 1994. Her research contributions focused on pediatric pain management, palliative care, and maternal and child health.

Through collaborations with various non-governmental organizations, she contributed to the development of critical healthcare initiatives worldwide, including work in Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa.

Throughout her career, Dr. Fowler-Kerry was committed to inspiring and empowering her students, encouraging critical thinking and advocacy on behalf of patients and communities. Her efforts in the classroom, nursing practice, and research have left a lasting impact on the nursing profession.

We honour the contributions of Dr. Fowler-Kerry, who retired in 2025, and wish her the very best in her well-deserved retirement.

Dr. Shehnaz Alidina appointed associate dean engagement and development



Dr. Shehnaz Alidina. Dave Stobbe.

The College of Nursing welcomed Dr. Shehnaz Alidina (ScD) as associate dean engagement and development in May 2025.

Dr. Alidina joins USask from Harvard University, where she served as a health delivery systems researcher focused on improving the quality of care, service integration, and the performance of health systems globally. Her research

has encompassed global surgery, primary care innovation, and capacity-building initiatives for health providers in low-resource settings.

Dr. Alidina brings with her decades of experience leading strategic health reforms. She previously served as the founding executive director of the Nipissing-Timiskaming District Health Council and the Child Health Network in Canada. Internationally, Dr. Alidina has spearheaded the planning and development of regionalized health delivery systems in Tajikistan and East Africa.

“We are incredibly lucky to have Dr. Alidina join the College of Nursing,” said Dr. Solina Richter. “Her lived experience and scholarly expertise will be instrumental in advancing the college’s commitment to globalization, engagement, development, and inclusive excellence.”

Dr. Alidina holds a Doctor of Science (ScD) and a Master of Public Health from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, as well as a Master of Health Administration from the University of Ottawa.

Her scholarship has been recognized with a number of awards including the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs Research Fellowship, the Alice E. Wilson Dissertation Award, and Duke University’s Global Health Fellowship.

Born in Uganda, raised in Canada after living as a refugee in Italy, and having worked across North America, East Africa, and Central Asia, Dr. Alidina brings a truly global perspective to the new associate dean engagement and development position in the College of Nursing.

“It is a privilege to join a college that is deeply invested in shaping the future of nursing and health systems by enhancing globalization efforts, fostering development, strengthening engagement at all levels, and advancing inclusive excellence,” said Dr. Alidina.

Prince Albert student returned to post-secondary as an adult learner



Nursing student Bukunola Bamimore at the Prince Albert Campus. Submitted.

Bukunola Bamimore began her studies in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program after being away from school for a number of years.

When deciding to continue her education as an adult learner, Bamimore knew nursing was her calling.

“I have always been drawn to the idea of helping people, and after witnessing the impact compassionate care can have on patients and their families, I knew nursing was the right path for me,” said Bamimore.

“It is a field that combines science with genuine empathy, and it was a calling to make a difference in the lives of others. As someone who has gathered years of life wisdom outside the classroom, I felt USask would value what I bring to the table and help me integrate my past experiences with the latest in nursing education.”

Bamimore says choosing to return to school and pursue a BSN feels both challenging and fulfilling. Her advice to those considering taking their first step to becoming a registered nurse is to go for it!

“Embrace every moment of this journey. Your life experiences are an asset, and they will enrich your learning and your practice as a nurse. Nursing school can be tough, but it is also incredibly rewarding. Stay true to your passion, do not be afraid to ask for help when you need it, and remember it is never too late to follow your dreams.”

“After finishing my program, I hope to work in community health, where I can directly contribute to the well-being of my community,” she shared.

“Whether it is through patient care, health education, or mentoring younger nurses, I want to use my background and skills to help people navigate their health challenges. Nursing is about connecting with others and making a difference, one person at a time.”

Celebrating years of service



During the annual College of Nursing retreat in August 2025, the college was proud to recognize and celebrate faculty and staff with 5, 10, 20, and 25 years of service.



(l to r) Dr. Karen Juckes, Jennafer Klemmer, Lorraine Garchinski, Lisa Duffield, Regine Gerow-Scissons, Dr. Carol Bullin, and Dr. Louise Racine. Missing: Mobola Ogunbiyi, Dr. Helen Vandenberg, and Dr. Phil Woods. Breanna Pochipinski.

5 YEARS

Lisa Duffield
Lecturer, Prince Albert

10 YEARS

Lorraine Garchinski (BSN’13, MN’19)
Instructor, Prince Albert

Regine Gerow-Scissons (BSN’12, MN’19)
Instructor, Saskatoon

Jennafer Klemmer (BSN’10, MN’14)
Instructor, Saskatoon

Mobola Ogunbiyi
Instructor, Yorkton

Dr. Helen Vandenberg (PhD)
Associate Professor, Regina

20 YEARS

Dr. Carol Bullin (BSN’97, MCEd’04, PhD’14)
Assistant Professor, Saskatoon

Dr. Louise Racine
Professor, Saskatoon

Dr. Phil Woods (PhD)
Professor, Saskatoon

25 YEARS

Dr. Karen Juckes (BSN’84, MN’01, PhD)
Assistant Professor, Regina

Master of Nursing student receives prestigious scholarship



Master of Nursing student Robyn Klassen. Submitted.

University of Saskatchewan Master of Nursing student Robyn Klassen was named the recipient of the College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (CGPS) Indigenous Graduate Leadership Scholarship (IGLS) in 2025.

Klassen is in the Master of Nursing thesis program and is located in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. She is a proud member of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and practiced as a registered nurse at Lac La Ronge Indian Band Health Services as a public health nurse since 2015, before becoming the public health nursing supervisor in 2021. She is a certified First Nations Health Manager through the First Nations Health Manager Association.

"It is a true honour to have been selected as a recipient of the Indigenous Graduate Leadership Scholarship," said Klassen. The scholarship is aimed towards Indigenous students who have taken an active role of leadership within their community.

Klassen has coached with the La Ronge Figure Skating Club for 12 years, serves as treasurer on the Tri-Community Dance Club Board of Directors, and is on the Prenatal and Breastfeeding Support Committee, a joint initiative between the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Saskatchewan Health Authority, Nisto Ihtāwina Early Years Centre, and Northern Medical Services.

Klassen has a love of physical activity and her research for her master's program is focused on Type 2 Diabetes (T2D) prevention with Indigenous Youth from two reserves in Saskatchewan exploring the experiences of the youth after participating in T2D educational lessons and physical activity.

"Coaching figure skating has allowed me to engage with the youth in my community, promote physical activity, and help them build self-confidence," said Klassen. "I am committed to fostering positive change in my community by empowering youth to express themselves in healthy ways."

Master's students are eligible to receive up to \$20,000 for up to two years as part

of the Indigenous Graduate Leadership Scholarship.

"The IGLS was established in 2018 to recognize and support Indigenous graduate students who embody that special combination of academic excellence and leadership in the community," said College of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Dean Dr. Debby Burshtyn.

"Robyn Klassen exemplifies these qualities, highlighted by her research focused on early education to prevent poor health outcomes in ways that will resonate with Indigenous youth. Clearly a changemaker on the rise!"

Klassen says she's fortunate she's been able to work towards completing her advanced nursing education online from her home community of La Ronge and not relocate to Saskatoon.

"I have had the incredible opportunity to connect with fellow students from diverse areas across Canada, exploring nursing through a critical lens of exploration and discovery."

When Klassen isn't practicing as a registered nurse or volunteering in her community, she enjoys spending time with her two young children cross country skiing, hiking, swimming, and painting.

“Clearly a changemaker on the rise!”

– DR. DEBBY BURSHTYN

USask graduates first cohort of nursing students from Lloydminster distributed site



Nursing students in Lloydminster celebrate during Lakeland College graduation celebration. Submitted.

Gillian Studer (BSN'25) celebrated the completion of her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree during USask spring convocation, alongside 11 of her classmates from the first cohort at the Lloydminster distributed nursing site. Studer was able to complete her nursing degree in the same town where she grew up, thanks to the College of Nursing's Learn Where You Live philosophy.

USask Nursing announced the partnership with Lakeland College and accepted the first class of BSN students in fall 2022. Prior to the partnership, students located in the Lloydminster area relocated to a USask campus after completing their pre-professional year in the university transfer program at Lakeland College.

Having the opportunity to study in Lloydminster allowed Studer to maintain the support network she's known all her life. It gave her the chance to develop nursing skills that she is eagerly waiting to apply to help her community, a place where she is familiar with the hospitals and care centres.

"All of my friends and family are here, and this is where I grew up," said Studer. "Being able to take my entire nursing degree from Lloydminster worked out well for both my finances and convenience," she said.

Given the demands of the busy nursing program, the option to learn where you live makes it that much easier for students to choose nursing. Case in point: when reached over Zoom for an interview,

Studer shares that she is fresh off a night shift. Eager to get started in the nursing profession, she's been working as a graduate nurse in nearby Vermillion.

"When we announced the partnership with Lakeland College in 2022, I told the students I was excited to celebrate their program completion in 2025 and here we are today," said Dr. Solina Richter.

"Watching these first students complete their nursing program in Lloydminster and soon become the registered nurses the world needs, has been an honour. I wish to thank our faculty, staff, and instructors, Lakeland College, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, Government of Saskatchewan, and local clinical placement partners, for making this collaboration an astounding success. But most importantly, to our students, the BSN Class of 2025 from Lloydminster, thank you for choosing USask Nursing and for being part of this moment in college history!"

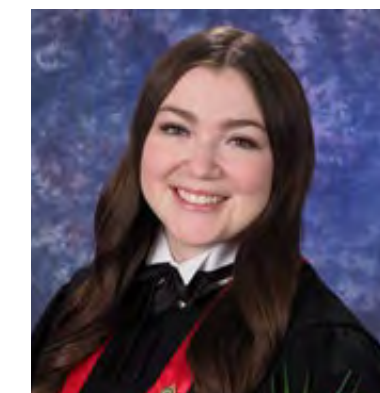
"Today marks a milestone for Lakeland College as we proudly celebrate the first graduating class in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program," said Jackie Bender, Lakeland College dean of university transfer and foundational learning.

"This achievement is a testament to the strength of our academic partnership with the University of Saskatchewan, the dedication of our faculty and staff, and the incredible perseverance of the students."

Moving through the BSN program, Studer has been grateful to complete almost all her placements in Lloydminster, giving her the opportunity to get to know the different specialities, while also learning about the medical community and opportunities in the city. She's thankful for her professors and classmates, especially this first Lloydminster graduating class that she is part of.

"We've been through it all together; the new students in a new program," she said with a laugh.

"We all helped each other out. That's a big part of nursing school is your classmates, working together and figuring things out as a team."



Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduate Gillian Studer. Submitted.

"I'm very glad the nursing program opened in Lloydminster. Since I plan to live in the community, now I have my foot in the door in different areas in healthcare. I've had clinical placements all over, so I have contacts and I've been able to network where I want to further my nursing career," Studer added.

Turning life's challenges into compassionate nursing care



USask Nursing alumna and current nurse practitioner student Celeste Paquette. © Matt Smith.

When asked why she chose to return to school after working as a registered nurse, USask Master of Nursing – Nurse Practitioner student Celeste Paquette (BSN'14, MN'20) gives an answer that beautifully reflects the motivation shared by many who pursue advanced nursing education.

“After years of bedside nursing as a registered nurse and providing clinical instruction to students, I wanted to influence care delivery at a higher level—helping patients navigate complex systems, while empowering them through education and prevention,” said Paquette.

She credits her undergraduate education and early nursing career with both deepening her empathy and expanding her understanding of healthcare as a complex ecosystem.

“My years at the bedside opened my eyes to the challenges faced by both patients and healthcare providers - the time constraints, emotional toll, and the moments when

people simply need to be heard and seen for who they are, and where they are at in their journey toward health and well-being,” said Paquette, adding her Catholic faith has been a driving force throughout her journey.

For Paquette, nursing is more than a career; it's a vocation.

“The education I will complete in the nurse practitioner program will allow me to live that calling more fully by providing care that is both clinically competent and deeply human.”

Paquette's wisdom has been forged through both professional and personal experience.

During her second year of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at USask, her husband passed away suddenly. The compassion she received from classmates, faculty, and staff became a defining moment.

“Their kindness helped me turn one of the

most difficult experiences of my life into a source of strength and empathy that continues to shape my daily encounters with patients.”

Since beginning her nurse practitioner (NP) journey, Paquette has faced further hardships including her father's cancer diagnosis, the tragic loss of her son's best friend, and the passing of her father-in-law. Each experience tested her resilience, but also deepened her belief in humanity at the core of nursing.

“They've reminded me of the deep humanity that underpins nursing, the privilege of supporting others through vulnerability, loss, and healing,” said Paquette.

Despite the challenges she has faced, Paquette considers herself blessed, with her three children serving as constant reminders of the importance of balance and resilience.

“My children have been my greatest motivation to keep learning and growing;

they've taught me it's possible to pursue your goals, while nurturing family life,” she said.

Fueled by the inspiration her children provide, Paquette is showing them the breadth of opportunities a nursing career can offer.

Before entering the program, as a registered nurse, Paquette worked across diverse areas of nursing including obstetrics, pediatrics, oncology, public health, home care, and acute medicine. In addition, Paquette has served as a practical nursing instructor at Dumont Technical Institute and as a contract teacher for the USask BSN program.

“Teaching and mentoring students has been one of the most rewarding parts of my career, it keeps me grounded in the foundations of nursing, while inspiring me to model critical thinking, compassion, and professional growth,” said Paquette.

When reflecting on her decision to return to school to become a nurse practitioner, Paquette highlights the role of the University of Saskatchewan in shaping her path.

“USask has a strong reputation for producing practice-ready nurse practitioners grounded in evidence, collaboration, and community engagement. As both a USask teacher and alumna, I've experienced firsthand the university's commitment to mentorship, accessibility, and excellence in nursing education.”

For Paquette, the combination of the College of Nursing's academic excellence and welcoming collegial environment has been a key reason she keeps returning.

She adds that she values the flexibility of the program's distance-learning model, which has enabled her to continue teaching, while pursuing her studies.

Paquette cites the real-world clinical experiences and guidance from preceptors and faculty as her most rewarding aspects of her program so far.

“Collaborating with other NP students and

healthcare providers has reminded me how strong nursing is when education, clinical skill, and advocacy align,” said Paquette.

Paquette plans to remain in Saskatchewan and practice primary care in a rural or semi-rural community. She has particular interests in pediatrics and end-of-life care, areas that require compassion, presence, and the ability to meet people where they are. She's also excited to see how the role of nurse practitioners continues to evolve across the province.

“NPs bring a unique perspective to health care, one that blends the art of nursing with the science of medical diagnostics,” said Paquette.

“I see the NP role becoming an essential cornerstone of the healthcare system, improving access, collaboration, and holistic care for communities across Saskatchewan.”

As she advances toward completion of her program, Paquette continues to embody the heart of nursing - grounded in compassion, strengthened by faith, and inspired by family.

“This program has transformed me, strengthening my voice as a clinician, educator, and advocate,” she said.

“I strive to bring the heart of nursing into every encounter by listening deeply, caring fully, and helping others find strength in their own story.”

“Collaborating with other NP students and healthcare providers has reminded me how strong nursing is when education, clinical skill, and advocacy align.”

– CELESTE PAQUETTE

Faculty member celebrates earning PhD



College of Nursing Limited-Term Lecturer Dr. Anne Hyde. © Dave Stobbe.

the focus on one patient and the ability to interact closely with the patient’s families,” said Hyde. “Also, the complexity of care in the ICU.”

After working for a while, she applied to the University of Saskatchewan nurse practitioner program. Upon graduation, she went on to work in primary care in both small urban and rural areas and ended up working as a nurse practitioner with a geriatrics program in Saskatoon.

“It turns out the population I really like to work with is geriatrics, instead of pediatrics - the other end of the spectrum,” she said with a smile. “I like the geriatric patient population and in general, just talking with my patients. From a medical perspective, they are really interesting, as there is often a lot of complexity, so you need to think about the whole person, their home, their community, and supports, as that really forms who they are as a person and the care they require.”

When she applied to do her PhD, Hyde knew she wanted to both boost her research skills and fill in gaps in her knowledge of older adult health.

Supervised by College of Nursing Assistant Professor Dr. Mary Ellen Labrecque (BSN’92, MN’02, PhD’08) and Dr. Michael Szafron (BEd’09, PhD’09, MD’00), professor with USask School of Public Health, Hyde wrote a doctoral dissertation titled, “*Canadian Rural and Urban Older Adults: A Comparison of Functional Status.*”

Using the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging’s data set to look at what factors might shape the health of rural and urban older adults, she found that both sets of adults are affected by age, gender, socio-economic status, and self-rated health.

Finding no difference between the two populations led her to realize the difference may lie in the level of service available to each.

“What my research tells me is that perhaps we need to think about how we serve these populations differently,” said Hyde.

“When their needs are the same, the things

that affect them are the same, but we know things like healthcare service, for example, or the demographics in rural and urban areas are very different, we need to think about how we can meet those needs in the two different contexts.”

Hyde also began teaching as she completed her PhD, most recently taking on a limited-term lecturer role with USask Nursing.

“It’s exciting to meet people who are going to carry the NP role forward,” said Hyde.

“You can see what some of our former students have done with advocating for the NP role in Saskatchewan and that’s really exciting. It’s particularly rewarding to be with students as they move from RN to NP and see the possibilities of the advanced nursing education.”

Hyde aspires to stay both teaching and in nursing practice. She continues to work in primary care in a small, rural area. She’s also furthering her research, into older adults and into ways to improve nurse practitioner teaching.

“Nursing has really aligned well with who I am and how I like to interact with my patients, in that very relational kind of way.”

– DR. ANNE HYDE

Completing her Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) in 2025, Dr. Anne Hyde (BSC’01, BSN’04, MN-NP’08, PhD’25) is both a dedicated practitioner and an accomplished academic.

She is interested in pushing the overall nursing profession forward, while also embracing the ability to make a difference at the bedside. Hyde credits USask College of Nursing with helping her to do all this and more.

“I’ve certainly felt the college has always supported me to continue to the next phase of my nursing journey”, said Hyde. “That is something I think is really special.”

Knowing she wanted to work in healthcare, but unsure of her pathway, Hyde had already completed a bachelor’s degree in microbiology before applying to nursing. She was admitted through the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan.

“It was a great decision,” she said. “Nursing has really aligned well with who I am and how I like to interact with my patients, in that very relational kind of way.”

As a nursing student, Hyde thought she would go into pediatrics, but instead gravitated to cardiology and medicine, working in an intensive care unit (ICU) when she became a registered nurse. “I really liked

Nursing student experiences growth through international exchange



USask Nursing student Queen Tayab enjoying a quiet moment in front of the Parliament Building in Budapest, Hungary. © Submitted.

Queen Tayab (BSN’25) chose to attend the University of Saskatchewan for her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree because she wanted to live close to her support network in Saskatoon.

In her final year, she decided to spread her wings and chose to apply for the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Program Scholarship and study in Finland to expand her horizons, both culturally and professionally.

She now looks back on the exchange as a life-changing experience.

“I’ve always kept my eye out for international learning opportunities, as I love to travel and learn from different places to improve the quality of my practice or for inspiration,” said Tayab.

“I thought the scholarship exchange was a good opportunity to network and connect with other likeminded people. I also heard of

Finland’s renowned healthcare system and wanted to see it for myself.”

The Erasmus+ Scholarship took Tayab to study nursing at Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (UAS), Finland’s largest university of applied sciences. Tayab says the best part of her study abroad experience was meeting new friends, both from Finland and also fellow exchange students from places like Africa and Sri Lanka.

Tayab says she is grateful she was given the opportunity to grow professionally, while fulfilling her love for travel. She visited 10 countries in five months, including Finland, Sweden, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, and Greece.

In addition to extensive travel, Tayab made the most of her time at Metropolia University, taking in as many classes and labs as she could.

“I found the learning approaches similar between Metropolia and USask, but especially enjoyed the simulation labs at Metropolia,” said Tayab.

“Metropolia had interesting technology, multiple simulation rooms, and students got to act out a wide variety of scenarios as part of the simulated learning. I always volunteered to participate because I found it fun and engaging.”

“Immersing myself in other cultures broadened my perspective and deepened my humility, reminding me that nursing is not just about care, but about relationships and understanding,” adds Tayab.

“I have to be able to pick up on cultural nuances to be able to connect and provide care, which is such a huge part of nursing. We learn a lot about cultural competency, cultural humility, and cultural safe care in theory at USask, but this exchange gave me the chance to live it out on a global scale and really see the differences, even just among fellow nursing students.”

While abroad, Tayab jumped at the opportunity to attend the 2025 International Council of Nursing Conference in Helsinki,

with over 7,000 attendees from more than 130 countries.

Overall, Tayab says the biggest reward of the exchange experience was personal growth.

“Navigating a new country on my own in a language I don’t speak taught me independence and adaptability. It was also a multicultural experience, from the classmates I had at Metropolia to my roommates from Belgium and Poland and the people I met during the Erasmus student network trips. We all brought different views, and I learned how to navigate challenges, including situations where our values, even in nursing care, didn’t align. I also became more aware of cultural differences in everyday interactions.”

Tayab says the exchange has energized her to seek out more international opportunities, but also reaffirmed her appreciation of Canada.

“There is no place like home, and for me that’s where my family is. But I also carry with me the friendships and connections I made during my exchange, and I hope one day to cross paths with them again.”

“This opportunity inspired me to keep exploring, whether that’s through research, further studies, or future international experiences. I know this is only the beginning of my journey.”

“Immersing myself in other cultures broadened my perspective and deepened my humility, reminding me that nursing is not just about care, but about relationships and understanding.”

– QUEEN TAYAB

USask College of Nursing Huskie Athletes achieve academic excellence



(l to r) Téa DeMong, Dr. Solina Richter, Abbey Klein, and Chigozirim Okechukwu. Missing: Rayne Butler-Siemens and Jade Houmphanh. [Submitted](#).

The College of Nursing congratulates five nursing students who were recognized in 2025 by Huskie Athletics for their academic excellence. Go Huskies!

Rayne Butler-Siemens (BSN'25)

Sport: Women's Cross-Country, Women's Track and Field

Téa DeMong, Year 4 Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Sport: Women's Basketball

Jade Houmphanh (BSN'25)

Sport: Women's Soccer

Abbey Klein, Year 2 Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Sport: Women's Volleyball

Chigozirim Okechukwu, Year 3 Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Sport: Women's Track and Field

"Effective time management is crucial in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, especially given the demanding course load," said Dr. Solina Richter.

"These students have successfully balanced their nursing studies with their rigorous sports commitments, excelling in both areas. It was a privilege to attend the Huskie Athletics U SPORTS Academic All-Canadians Breakfast alongside all USask athletes, and it was especially rewarding to celebrate our outstanding nursing students."

Assistant Professor Dr. April Mackey celebrates PhD convocation



College of Nursing Assistant Professor Dr. April Mackey. [Dave Stobbe](#).

Dr. April Mackey (BScN'12, MN'19, PhD'25), assistant professor at the College of Nursing, undertook her doctoral journey motivated by a deep commitment to justice and the elimination of violence against women.

Mackey successfully defended her Doctor of Philosophy in Interdisciplinary Studies in June 2025.

Her dissertation, *"Her Story, Her Power, Her Transformation: Narratives of Women's Resistance to Intimate Partner Violence,"* combined rigorous qualitative research with deep personal reflection. While grounded in academic scholarship, it was her lived experience and empathy that gave the work its depth and power.

Over six months of fieldwork, Mackey immersed herself in the stories of two women who were survivors of intimate partner violence, meeting with them weekly to listen, learn, and explore their experiences.

"My time with them was just a small part of their lives, but the interviews were so powerful, they really gave my thesis an emotional charge," said Mackey.

The methodology used isn't very common, but it's deeply relational.

"I don't think I could have gotten the

answers any other way," adds Mackey.

"I had to sit with both of them every week for six months—for them to trust me, to process their experiences while we talked, and to lead the conversation themselves, which was really important. I didn't come in with a list of questions. I just said, 'Hey, tell me about your experience, and let's see where that takes us each week.'"

Mackey notes one of the major grounding points for her dissertation is intersectionality, which involves looking at the many overlapping factors that influence someone's experience of violence.

"Women, or anyone experiencing violence in a relationship, aren't defined just by their gender, race, or socioeconomic status," she said. "It's all of these things layered together and overlapping."

Mackey adds that taking a broader perspective could improve support services, which are often limited by a narrower lens.

"We still tend to see people as just one thing when they're not," said Mackey.

In studying intimate partner violence, Mackey's PhD dissertation built on what she learned from her Master of Nursing thesis, which explored how technology empowers women. She credits her MN supervisor College of Nursing Professor Emeritus Dr. Sandra Bassendowski (EdD) not only for nurturing her academic interests, but also for igniting her passion for social issues.

"Nursing has a part of my heart, but I have always been drawn to social issues," said Mackey. "Those are the classes and the professors I connected most with."

After completing her master's thesis, Mackey found a mentor in her PhD supervisor, College of Nursing Professor Dr. Pammla Petrucka, who helped her refine and solidify her research focus.

"She sat me down and asked, 'What do you want to be known for?' In that moment, I reflected on my own experiences and said, 'I think women don't have enough power in our society, and I've seen that since my childhood.' It made me pause and really

think: how can we tip the scales back to women? How can we reclaim that power? That's when I realized this is the work I could dedicate my life to."

Since completing her PhD, things have moved quickly for Mackey, who was an instructor in the College of Nursing throughout her studies.

"I finished my PhD in June. There were openings for assistant professors at the College of Nursing, and I thought, 'I'm probably too new, but I'll apply and see what happens.' And then, on September 1, I started as an assistant professor."

Mackey is eager to pay the mentorship forward in her new teaching role, while remaining deeply passionate about the research side of academia.

"Teaching has a special place in my heart. I've been doing it for about eight years now, but research, being able to take ideas that have been rattling around in my mind for five years and bring them to life, is incredibly fulfilling."

Of course, she has already jumped onto her next research project, planning a symposium day for women on agency and empowerment.

Mackey says she's grateful to have found her place at the College of Nursing, where she can pursue the work that truly defines her.

"I'm so thankful I love what I do. Some people say, 'I've got to go to work,' but for me, coming here is a joy. This research, it brings me to life. It reminds me why I started, and why I'll keep going."

The University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing takes pride in recognizing the passion, resilience, and commitment of our undergraduate students. Their curiosity, compassion, and dedication to learning enrich our college community and reaffirm the vital role nurses play in healthcare. The following spotlights showcase five students currently studying in our Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program across Saskatchewan and Post Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (PDBSN) program in Saskatoon.

BRIANNA ZURBURG

Rooted in her hometown of Humboldt, Saskatchewan, Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Brianna Zurburg is building a career grounded in compassion and community. Zurburg maintains a strong connection to her hometown and spends much of her time outside of school and working with family doing activities outdoors. At home, her family's five puppies keep life busy and have helped her to develop skills that she has carried into her nursing education.

Her diverse healthcare background in pharmacy, dentistry, and nursing have helped shape her decision to pursue a career as a registered nurse. Her time as a continuing care assistant at a local nursing home helped strengthen her communication skills, reliability, and commitment to compassionate patient care.

"Having had the opportunity to see healthcare from multiple perspectives has confirmed that nursing best aligns with my values," said Zurburg. "Working in the nursing field offers the opportunity to combine scientific knowledge, hands-on care, and advocacy, while building meaningful relationships with patients and families."

One of the highlights of her time in the BSN program has been learning alongside the group of students at the Muenster distributed nursing site. "Learning in a small cohort of 11 students has allowed me to build strong relationships with my peers, who have become like family," said Zurburg. "The lectures have strongly prepared me for clinical and simulation experiences, allowing me to apply theory in practice."

Now in her third year, she says she is proud of the growth she has experienced. She notes significant improvements in her confidence, communication, and clinical skills, as well as her ability to connect classroom learning to real-world patient care.

Following graduation, she plans to begin her career as a registered nurse and continue building a strong clinical foundation. Although she is keeping her options open, she is particularly interested in the areas of pediatrics, intensive care, emergency, and surgical nursing.

"I look forward to learning and continuing my professional development, so I can provide safe, compassionate, patient care throughout my nursing career."



Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Brianna Zurburg. Submitted.

OLABIMPE SIGBEKU

As an international student from Nigeria and only daughter in a family of five, Olabimpe Sigbeku, a third-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing student at the North Battleford distributed nursing site, grew up naturally taking on a caregiving role within her family.

Growing up in Nigeria exposed her to significant gaps in access to quality healthcare, particularly for children in rural areas. "Seeing the limited access to care, especially for children, deeply impacted me," said Sigbeku. "When I learned of the opportunity to study outside of my home country, I was excited to gain the knowledge, skills, and global perspective needed to make a meaningful difference through healthcare."

Her choice to pursue a BSN degree came from a desire to care for her family and to address the gaps observed in healthcare growing up, particularly in pediatric and mental health care in rural areas of Nigeria.

"I wanted a profession that allows me to support individuals and families not only physically, but emotionally and culturally, and nursing provides that in a holistic approach," said Sigbeku.

One of the most meaningful highlights of her time at USask has been her personal and professional growth. "I am proud of how I've adapted to a new healthcare system and academic environment, while developing strong assessment, communication, and critical-thinking skills," said Sigbeku. "Successfully applying theory to practice in clinical settings has reinforced my resilience and commitment to safe, patient-centred quality care."

After completing her nursing program, Sigbeku plans to begin her career as a registered nurse, continuing to strengthen her clinical skills, while contributing meaningfully to patient care. Long term, she hopes to use the education and experience she has gained to improve access to quality healthcare, particularly for children and under-served populations in rural areas, while continuing to grow into leadership and advocacy roles within the nursing community.



Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Olabimpe Sigbeku. Submitted.

MARCUS DUMUK

Marcus Dumuk, a third-year BSN student studying at the Muenster distributed nursing site, knew from a young age he had an interest in the healthcare field. Dumuk immigrated to Canada from the Philippines with his mother in 2006. As Dumuk grew up, he was taught strong values of selflessness and responsibility, resulting in an early interest in caring for others, paving a path towards a career in healthcare.

"I have always enjoyed caring for people, however that may look," said Dumuk. "Pursuing my BSN felt natural and I believe it aligns well with my strengths and values as a person." Dumuk was also drawn to nursing because of the variety of opportunities the profession offers. He values the versatility having a BSN degree provides and the doors it can open.

One of the biggest highlights of his time in the BSN program has been seeing his growth as a person and as a future nurse. "Looking back and reflecting on the past two years has been incredibly gratifying," said Dumuk. "This program has given me such a sense of identity and purpose that I have never experienced before."

After graduating, Dumuk hopes to work in the emergency department, where he can thrive in a fast-paced environment and care for patients across a wide range of clinical situations.



Bachelor of Science in Nursing students Marcus Dumuk and Ainsley Clark. Submitted.

JOSIE DOERING

Josie Doering is a Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing student, originally from a rural town outside of Renfrew, Ontario. She grew up on a farm, an experience that facilitated her appreciation for the outdoors and an active lifestyle.

Doering completed her first undergraduate degree at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario.

Outside her studies, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, staying active through sports, and travelling whenever she can. Family plays a central role in her life and have provided significant support through her academic journey.

Doering chose the PDBSN program because of the satisfaction she feels when engaging in learning that is hands-on, fast-paced, and challenging. Her biggest inspiration came from her grandmothers’ career in nursing.

“I was drawn to the profession because it allows me to contribute to helping people and communities in meaningful ways, while applying what I have learned to real-life situations,” said Doering.

One of the greatest highlights of her time in the PDBSN program has been sharing her experience with the class of 2028 cohort. “It has been exciting to get to know everyone and learn alongside such a supportive group,” said Doering. “I am proud of the sense of community we have built so early in the program.”

As she continues her studies, Doering remains open to the many possibilities within the nursing profession. “I am excited to grow into the field, develop my skills, and find a place where I can make a meaningful difference.”



Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Josie Doering. Submitted.

VANESSA CRUTHERS

Vanessa Cruthers is a nursing student in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, balancing her studies alongside life as a single parent to four children. As a mature student living in southern Saskatchewan, Cruthers said the availability of USask’s distributed nursing sites has made pursuing a nursing career much more accessible.

“Without the option to study at a distributed nursing site like Swift Current, continuing my education wouldn’t have been possible,” said Cruthers. “The flexibility and support have made it possible for me to succeed, while raising my kids.”

Cruthers said her background as a parent and caregiver has strongly shaped how she approaches nursing. Years of navigating health and social systems, often under pressure, have helped her develop empathy, patience, and problem-solving skills that translate directly into her learning.

Choosing nursing felt like a natural fit for Cruthers, who has always been drawn to supporting others. She values the combination of science, compassion, and advocacy that pursuing nursing provides. Nursing gives her the opportunity to make a real difference, particularly in communities that need it most.

“Nursing has felt like a natural fit,” she said. “It gives me the opportunity to understand why things are the way they are.”

Cruthers’ proudest accomplishment during her time in the program so far has been returning to school, while raising her family on her own. She credits the College of Nursing with helping her develop resilience, confidence, and strong clinical skills.

Looking ahead, Cruthers plans to continue her education, with the goal of earning a master’s degree, and becoming a nurse practitioner and remaining in rural Saskatchewan. She hopes to give back to the communities that raised her and provide comprehensive, community-based care that patients can trust and feel comfortable with.

“I want to give back to the communities that raised me,” she said. “USask has made it possible for me to balance my education with work and raising kids while doing it.”



Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Vanessa Cruthers. Submitted.

USask Nursing



BE YOU.

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

Île-à-la-Crosse

Lloydminster

North Battleford

Saskatoon

Weyburn

La Ronge

Muenster

Prince Albert

Swift Current

Yorkton



admissions.usask.ca



Throughout 2025, the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing student recruitment strategist and academic advisors travelled to all corners of Saskatchewan, and occasionally into Alberta and Manitoba, to spread the word about USask Nursing programs. They wish to thank the communities they visited for their warm hospitality and eagerness to learn more about USask Nursing!

Northern Saskatchewan with Science Ambassadors

USask Nursing supports the USask Science Ambassador program, which provides opportunities for students to travel to northern Saskatchewan and teach middle and high school students about science. In May 2025, Student Recruitment Strategist Kelsey Wick (BComm'15, BA'16, MPA'19) travelled to Beauval, Buffalo Narrows, and Île-à-la-Crosse to speak to students in grades 6-12 about the importance of nursing and the career opportunities it offers. Students had the opportunity to interact with the ambassadors and learn how they can start their path to nursing close to their home communities at the Northlands College Île-à-la-Crosse distributed site.



USask Science Ambassadors Sravan and Mahesh, with Student Recruitment Strategist Kelsey Wick, after speaking with students in Buffalo Narrows. Submitted.

Custody & Caring and National Emergency Nursing Association Conferences

The Custody & Caring Biennial International Conference and the National Emergency Nursing Association Conference were hosted in Saskatoon in 2025. USask Nursing participated in both conferences, where nurses from across Canada had the opportunity to speak with our graduate advisors and learn about our graduate programs. Many conference attendees expressed interest in the distance learning available through our programs and were particularly interested to learn more about our new Master of Public Health Nursing program.



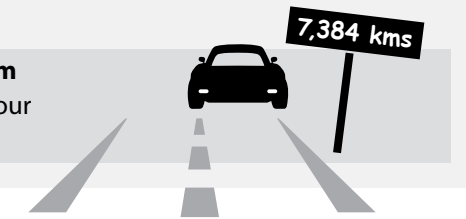
(l to r) Graduate Academic Advisor Amanda McDonald and Graduate Program Advisor Angela Ryde prepare to speak with healthcare professionals about USask Nursing graduate programs at the Custody & Caring Conference. Submitted.

Here are some of the places the USask Nursing recruitment team travelled to in 2025:

- Assiniboia
- Buffalo Narrows
- Balgonie
- Beardy's and Okemasis' First Nation
- Beauval
- Big River First Nation
- Birch Hills
- Brandon
- Cando
- Estevan
- Île-à-la-Crosse
- Kamsack
- Lac La Ronge
- Lloydminster
- Martensville
- Meadow Lake
- Melfort
- Mistawasis First Nation
- Moose Jaw
- Muenster
- North Battleford
- Onion Lake First Nation
- Patuanak
- Prince Albert
- Regina
- Saskatoon
- Swift Current
- Thunderchild First Nation
- Wahpeton Dakota Nation
- Warman
- Watson
- Weyburn
- Yorkton

THE FACT

Student Recruitment Strategist Kelsey Wick travelled **7,384 km** across Saskatchewan in Fall 2025 to share information about our undergraduate and graduate programs.



Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre Soup and Bannock Lunches

The Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre, located on the USask Saskatoon Campus, hosts soup and bannock lunches every Wednesday. USask College of Nursing proudly sponsored lunches in April and November 2025. These gatherings bring students, faculty, and staff together to share a meal and enjoy the feeling of community. During the lunches, Student Recruitment Strategist Kelsey Wick promoted nursing undergraduate and graduate programs.



Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre exterior. Dave Stobbe.

Touring with USask Colleagues

Throughout the year, our student recruitment strategist often travels with recruitment professionals from across USask to connect with prospective students. Joint recruitment travel strengthens cross-campus collaboration, supports the sharing of effective recruitment strategies, and fosters a strong community of practice. In 2025, USask Nursing participated in career fairs alongside the USask Student Recruitment team and recruitment colleagues from the Colleges of Agriculture and Bioresources, Arts and Science, Dentistry, Medicine, and Edwards School of Business.



Recruitment teams prepare to welcome students at the Assiniboia Career Fair. (l to r) Wendy Li (USask Student Recruitment), Ally Chertez (USask College of Agriculture and Bioresources), Kelsey Wick (USask College of Nursing), and Brayden Glynn (Edwards School of Business). Submitted.

Excellence in Nursing Education: Dean's Honour Roll

Students with a cumulative weighted average in the top 10 percent in years two and three of the University of Saskatchewan Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and Post-Degree Bachelor of Science in Nursing (PDBSN) programs were named to the 2024-2025 Dean's Honour Roll in October 2025.

"Earning the distinction of Dean's Honour Roll requires significant dedication, and those who achieve it, have shown exceptional ability, commitment, and resilience throughout their undergraduate nursing studies," said College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

"These students outstanding academic performance sets a high standard for their peers and brings immense pride to our college," said Dr. Richter.

Congratulations to the BSN and PDBSN students named to the 2024-2025 Dean's Honour Roll below.

Faiso Abdi-walli Abdullahi
Skylar Ackerman
Rihanna Ahmed
Delayne Aiken
Amy Anquist
Paris Appel
Genevieve Asare
Tomi Asiri
Oluwafunmilayo Awobiro
Ava Bahrey
Rayelle Bell
Callie Bennett
Kallie Buenneke
Erin Chary
Shyrelle Cheng
Mackenzie Chicoine
Sydney Crawford
Hanna De Peel

Jalene Dease
Téa DeMong
Brigit Duncan
Caden Dunn
Beate Felstrom
Braidon Ferguson
Sophie Fernandes
Kelsey Foy
Shallan French
Rae Friesen
Avery Gaudet
Camille Gauvin
Jayne Gisi
Eden Gosselin
Emily Gunson
Olivia Hagerman
Jaclyn Hallgrimson
Teghan Harvey

Mayank Jain
Haylie Kilback
Heidi Klassen
Testimony Laniya
Tabitha LaPointe
Alexandra Lappin
Katelyn Lasell
Kelsey Lepage
Sabrina Mainil
Macy Mayerle
Hannah McLellan
Erika Mourre
Tylor Muldoon
Nelbien Wryniell Murillo
Arzoo Nathani
Charity Ofoegbu
Favour Ojokutu
Excel Okechukwu

Kelsey Orenchuk
Maksym Pastukh
Carley Pidlisny
Neo Ramokate-Pindani
Wyatt Roach
Dale Marcus San Juan
Jolene Sibley
Berlin Siemens
Jessica Simpson
Simran Simranpreet Kaur
Brianna Tolley-Procyk
Amrita Tumber
Shem Vaughters
Kadence Vickers
Jennifer Whitford
Erin Willard



Calling degree-prepared RNs and RPNs
COME TEACH WITH US!

The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing is seeking nurses to join our contract teaching team.

✉ nursing.placementcoordinator@usask.ca



BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

From the Master of Nursing (MN) to the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD), the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing provides graduate students with opportunities to deepen their knowledge, expand their practice, and shape the future of healthcare. USask Nursing graduate programs support nurses who aspire to broaden their scope of practice, pursue new career pathways, lead change within their workplaces, or contribute meaningful research that advances health outcomes for individuals and communities.

With more than 235 graduate students studying across Saskatchewan and throughout Canada, the College of Nursing is home to a diverse and dynamic graduate student community. We are pleased to introduce you to four of these students.

Hayley Bobye-Magnusson

Hayley Bobye-Magnusson is a graduate student in the University of Saskatchewan Master of Nursing Thesis (MN) program, combining full-time professional practice with research that reflects her commitment to health equity and advocacy.

After graduating from Mount Royal University in 2020, Bobye-Magnusson built a diverse nursing career focused on children and youth. Her experience spans pediatric mental health, school nursing, summer camp nursing, and group therapy facilitation.

Outside of work, she remains deeply engaged in her community and personal interests, volunteering with Kids Cancer Care and spending time playing soccer, exploring the backcountry, rock climbing, travelling, and enjoying life with family and her cats.

Bobye-Magnusson was drawn to the USask College of Nursing because of the part-time, Learn Where You Live ideology, as well as the college's strong reputation.

She initially enrolled in the Master of Nursing Professional Practice program, but after completing the first course, realized she wanted to explore her interests in greater depth.

"I developed a strong interest in health equity, specifically within the school setting," said Bobye-Magnusson. "Transitioning to the thesis program allows me to conduct research that will support meaningful advocacy and system level change."

Now working full-time while completing her thesis, Bobye-Magnusson plans to research a topic that directly impacts the students she works with every day. She values the close connection between her research topic and her nursing practice, noting the process has strengthened both her research abilities and growth as a school nurse.

One of the greatest highlights of the program has been the growth in her academic writing.

"I have genuinely surprised myself with the improvement in my writing quality," said Bobye-Magnusson. "I am also proud of the breadth of research skills I have developed."

After completing her program, Bobye-Magnusson hopes to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing on a part-time basis, while continuing her work as a school nurse. Long term, she would like to transition into academia and pursue a teaching role at the university level.



Master of Nursing Thesis student Hayley Bobye-Magnusson. Submitted.



Master of Nursing Professional Practice student Jenna Cassan. Submitted.

Jenna Cassan

Jenna Cassan, a student from northern Saskatchewan, is passionate about equitable healthcare access, shaped by her commitment to rural communities. Cassan has spent her nursing career in multiple specialties, including obstetrics, emergency, and primary care.

"Three years ago, I was given the opportunity to teach in a practical nursing diploma program, which furthered my passion for nursing education and motivated me to pursue graduate studies to strengthen my ability to support both learners and our community," said Cassan.

Cassan chose the Master of Nursing Professional Practice program because it closely aligned with her long-term goals in nursing education and offered the option to complete it remotely. "The program's emphasis on evidence-informed practice, leadership, and educational development provided a strong foundation for advancing my role as a nurse educator."

Her research interests center on equitable healthcare access and providing high-quality nursing education ensuring students and faculty feel supported, prepared, and

confident in their roles. She finds passion in equitable healthcare, faculty development, mentorship, and simulation-based education.

"Exploring practical and sustainable approaches to healthcare and educational support has been especially meaningful, given the limited resources often available in rural and remote areas," said Cassan.

One of the highlights of her time in the MN-PP program was when a professor encouraged her to pursue publishing her work from a course. "That experience strengthened my confidence as a nurse educator and affirmed the relevance and applicability of my academic work beyond the classroom."

Following the completion of her program, Cassan plans to continue working in nursing education, focusing on strengthening mentorship, simulation-based education, and access to educational resources. Cassan is committed to contributing innovative, evidence-based solutions that support healthcare systems, healthcare providers, educators, and ultimately enhance student learning and patient care.



Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing student Jennifer Dunn. Submitted.

Jennifer Dunn

Jennifer Dunn (BSN'05) is a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing student whose academic journey began with a desire to bridge the gap between academic preparation and clinical realities.

Before beginning her studies at USask, Dunn spent nearly 20 years at Alberta Children's Hospital, working in high-acuity surgical environments. Throughout her clinical career, Dunn has taken on roles beyond bedside care; one of the most formative being with Project Outreach. Through this work, she provided perioperative care in low-resource settings, while mentoring local nurses and physicians.

Her decision to pursue graduate education was not about leaving clinical practice behind, but about deepening her capacity to lead within it. Seeking to reconnect with the ethical and relational dimensions of nursing, she returned to school to complete a Master of Nursing, an experience that reignited her sense of purpose and ultimately led her to pursue her PhD.

Dunn began graduate studies with a clear purpose; to build educational and research practices that are trauma-informed, equity-oriented, and relationally grounded.

"My research now centres around how perioperative nurses construct professional identity in contexts of moral distress, institutional silencing, and spatial

marginalization," said Dunn. "This topic is a direct result of the questions and tensions I carried with me from my work in the operating room."

Her research allows her to remain engaged with the foundational elements of nursing, such as lived experiences, dynamics, and tensions that shape nursing practice.

"What I treasure most is the trust, the nuance, and the slowness this research makes space for," said Dunn. "My research does not aim to extract or fix, it aims to witness, dignify, and reveal."

For Dunn, the highlight of her experience with the college has not been a single accomplishment, but collection of moments rooted in mentorship, scholarship, publishing, and relational expansion, that continue to shape her development as both a nurse and researcher.

When she completes her PhD, Dunn will remain intentionally open to emerging opportunities. She is drawn to roles that bridge scholarship and practice, including faculty positions, research leadership, and curriculum development. She is particularly interested in mentoring nurses in high-stakes environments and co-creating initiatives that address moral distress and trauma-informed education.

Become an NP Preceptor Today



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Nursing
NURSING.USASK.CA

Preceptoring allows nurse practitioners (NPs) to shape future healthcare, share knowledge, enhance leadership skills, stay sharp in practice, and contribute to patient care by mentoring confident, well-prepared future NPs.

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

maxine.newton@usask.ca for more information.

Graduate Students Successfully Defend Dissertations

Congratulations to the 16 University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing graduate students who successfully defended their Master of Nursing (MN) thesis and Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) dissertations in 2025.

All photos submitted.



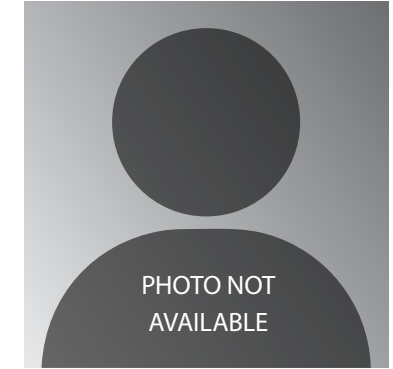
Emma Addai, MN
Exploring Parents' Communication Needs in the Disclosure of Congenital Anomaly Diagnoses: A Scoping Review



Lucy Mensah, MN
A Focus on the Oral Health of the African Child Immigrant in Canada



Elizabeth Moon, MN
New Graduate Nurses' Transition to Rural Emergency Practice: A Narrative Inquiry



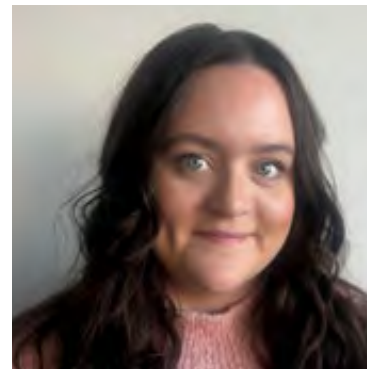
Sarah Pereira (BSN'16, BSc'14), MN
Exploring Access to Disease-Modifying Therapies and Support Services for People Living with Multiple Sclerosis in Saskatchewan



Hilda Kumoji Ayamsegna, MN
Effectiveness of Peer-Based Interventions Among Adolescents with Type 1 Diabetes: A Systemic Review



Jessica Burden, MN
Quitting Home Care: A Narrative Inquiry of Registered Nurses Experiences in Navigating the Changes to Home Care Over Time



Nicole Edmundson (BSN'18), MN
Improving Maternal Mental Health Services in Saskatchewan Rural Communities Via a Virtual Care Approach: A Qualitative Exploration of Womens' Experiences and Perspectives



Jordan Sherstobitoff, MN
A Community's Perspectives Of Harm Reduction Strategies



Krista Spence (BSN'14), MN
Saskatchewan Healthcare Providers' Experiences and Perceptions During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Descriptive Study



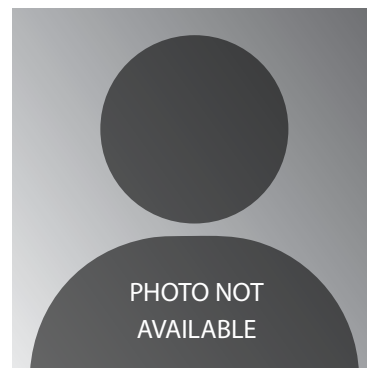
Dr. Geneveave Barbo, PhD
Virtual Reality Simulation Targeted on Access Needs of Migrants with Mental Health Difficulties for Undergraduate Nursing Students



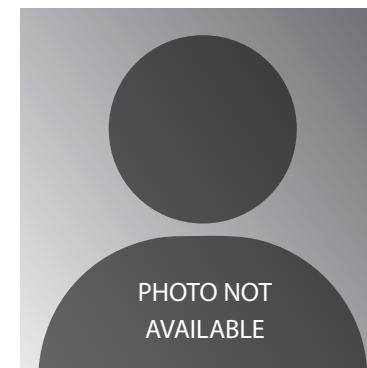
Kofi Junior Effah Frimpong, MN
Driven to Nurse in Rural Africa: A Scoping Review of the Experiences of Burnout



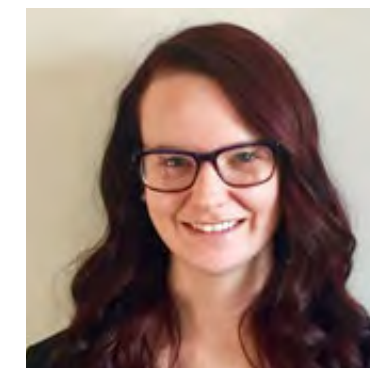
Kathryn Kazoleas, MN
How Young Adults Experience Grief Two or More Years Following the Death of a Spouse: A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study



Amanda McArthur, MN
Using Immersive Virtual Reality to Impact Clinical Reasoning of New Graduate Nurses



Dr. Steve Iduye, PhD
Reconstructing Care Processes in Long-Term-Care Homes: A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study



Dr. Megan Meszaros (BSN'15), PhD
#AMR: Mapping Digital Antimicrobial Resistance Discourses – A Complex Systems Approach Analysis for Leveraging Social Media in Antimicrobial Resistance Communication



Dr. Lindsey Vold (BSN'15, MN'17), PhD
Situational Analysis of Local Production in a Northern Setting: A Holistic Nursing Perspective



INNOVATORS

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

- Master of Nursing Thesis and Professional Practice
- Master of Public Health Nursing (NEW)
- Master of Nursing Nurse Practitioner
- Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing



grad.usask.ca



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Nursing
NURSING.USASK.CA

WE'RE SOCIAL!

Connect with @usasknursing



BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

NURSE Project Planning Room

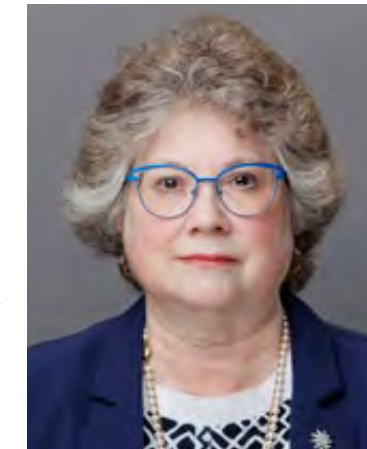


Looking for space to work on your research and scholarship projects? The NURSE Project Planning Room is an academic research space set up within the College of Nursing on the Saskatoon Campus to provide researchers, research support staff, and students with a welcoming and safe space for all to enjoy while working to achieve research and scholarship objectives.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

The University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing is committed to becoming a global leader in research by conducting studies that yield tangible, positive impacts and drive advancements in healthcare practices, both locally and globally. Our researchers are dedicated to creating equitable and sustainable solutions that enhance health experiences and outcomes for individuals, families, and communities on provincial, national, and international levels. Our highly influential nursing research is underpinned by a robust culture of exploration, innovative interdisciplinary collaboration, and dynamic knowledge exchange.



College of Nursing Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies Dr. Louise Racine.
© Dave Stobbe.

“Our researchers advance the science and scholarship of nursing with a specific emphasis on health equity, community engagement, and innovations in health systems and education research. In pursuing diverse research programs, our researchers develop, implement, and translate research findings to positively, inclusively, and equitably influence people’s health. Ultimately, our researchers aim to contribute to increasing accessibility to healthcare, improving the delivery of health services, and enhancing individual and population health outcomes in Saskatchewan, Canada, and globally.”

– DR. LOUISE RACINE (PHD)

College of Nursing researchers are responding to 14 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



SIGNATURE AREAS OF RESEARCH

In alignment with the University of Saskatchewan Plan 2025, College of Nursing strategic plan, and the College of Nursing’s philosophy statement, the College of Nursing will achieve its research mandate through three signature areas of research.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED HEALTH AND NURSING RESEARCH

HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH

INNOVATIONS IN HEALTH SYSTEMS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

The work in these areas is highlighted on the following pages.

The content of this publication has not been approved by the United Nations and does not reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials or Member States.



**SIGNATURE AREA OF RESEARCH:
COMMUNITY-ENGAGED HEALTH AND NURSING RESEARCH**

We work with communities to achieve shared goals of addressing health needs, building capacity, and promoting improved health outcomes. Our research aims to be responsive, respectful, and inclusive.

CURRENTLY FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS FOCUS ON:

- Immunization services and supports for children and families
- Healthy aging-in-place, caregivers, and geriatric assessment
- Knowledge exchange and people with lived experiences
- Homelessness in Saskatchewan
- Substance use disorders and harm reduction
- Sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections
- Maternal and child health
- Mental health, sexual health, and community youth wellness initiatives
- Cancer, exercise, and fall prevention
- Nursing profession, empowerment, and job retention

**RESEARCH IMPACT: MAKING A DIFFERENCE
(2022 to 2025)**



18%
Percentage of faculty articles that appeared in top ten percent of most-cited journals worldwide.

This highly impactful area of research has been recognized by the World Health Organization, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, and the RAND Corporation in the areas of Alzheimer's disease and dementia, opioid use, and noncommunicable disease management.

RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS (2022 to 2025)

\$1,435,428 in awarded research funding

51 successfully awarded grants

125 peer-reviewed journal articles

Top Published research topics:

1. Geriatric Assessment in Cancer Treatment Optimization
2. Support Systems for Caregivers of Dementia Patients
3. Delirium Management in Elderly Postoperative Patients
4. Interprofessional Education for Enhanced Patient Care
5. Psychosocial Dynamics in Childhood Cancer Care

36% of publications completed with international collaborators

(References: University of Saskatchewan; Scopus)



**SIGNATURE AREA OF RESEARCH:
HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH**

We embrace the notion of fairness. Health inequities occur when this notion is challenged, leading to poor health outcomes across social, demographic, and geographic groups of people. Through our research, we strive to identify, prevent, and remove these barriers to health.

CURRENTLY FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS FOCUS ON:

- Built environments and climate change
- Menstrual hygiene management
- Sexual and reproductive health services in Africa
- Harm reduction and homelessness
- Indigenous communities and co-created housing initiatives
- Witchcraft
- Spirituality and healing for Indigenous people living with HIV
- Intimate partner violence
- Family mental health
- Human rights and health
- Sex and gender considerations and women's health

**RESEARCH IMPACT: MAKING A DIFFERENCE
(2022 to 2025)**



22%
Percentage of faculty articles that appeared in top ten percent of most-cited journals worldwide.

This highly impactful area of research has been recognized by the World Health Organization and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies in the areas of health system foundations, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and chronic bronchitis, and noncommunicable disease management.

RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS (2022 to 2025)

\$1,435,113 in awarded research funding

21 successfully awarded grants

113 peer-reviewed journal articles

Top Published research topics:

1. Addressing Child Malnutrition and Nutritional Status
2. Enhancing Maternal Health Services and Outcomes
3. Access and Management of Antiretroviral Therapy in HIV Care
4. Innovative Approaches to HIV Care and Treatment
5. Antiretroviral Therapy for Pediatric HIV Management

22% of publications completed with international collaborators

(References: University of Saskatchewan; Scopus)



**SIGNATURE AREA OF RESEARCH:
INNOVATIONS IN HEALTH SYSTEMS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH**

We explore how innovation can lead to new or better ways to solve problems. Through this research, we challenge existing ideas and assumptions of current health and education systems to see how new solutions can provide the best outcomes for healthcare providers, patients, educators, and students.

CURRENTLY FUNDED RESEARCH PROJECTS FOCUS ON:

- Anti-racism in nursing education
- Enhancing chronic illness and virtual care for older adults with inflammatory bowel disease
- Exploring care experiences of transgender and gender diverse individuals
- Exploring the secrets of the Florence Nightingale Medicine Chest
- Family hope and children’s life-threatening conditions
- Older adults and aging-in-place
- Improving pain care through health networks
- Relational care for older adults in long-term care
- Nursing student experiences in becoming a nurse practitioner
- Supporting academic success in nursing students
- The history of Saskatchewan’s early hospitals, 1873 – 1920
- Using simulation to support NP student clinical competency development
- Validating screening tools for dementia in custody settings

RESEARCH IMPACT: MAKING A DIFFERENCE (2022 to 2025)



18%
Percentage of faculty articles that appeared in top ten percent of most-cited journals worldwide.

This highly impactful area of research has been recognized by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Government of Canada, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the RAND Corporation in the areas of telehealth, COVID-19, rural health, end-of-life care, and peer-to-peer support interventions for healthcare providers.

RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS (2022 to 2025)

\$447,716 in awarded research funding

17 successfully awarded grants

106 peer-reviewed journal articles

Top Published research topics:

1. Quality of Life in Inflammatory Bowel Disease
2. Pediatric Inflammatory Bowel Disease Trends and Impacts
3. Support Systems for Caregivers of Dementia Patients
4. Psychosocial Dynamics in Childhood Cancer Care
5. Mental Health Challenges Among Healthcare Workers During COVID-19

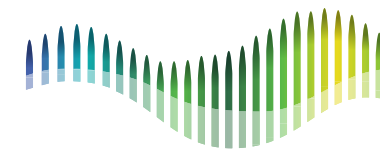
12% of publications completed with international collaborators

(References: University of Saskatchewan; Scopus)

Thank you!

The following funders have supported our researchers during the past four years!

- Abbeyfield Canada
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Government of Canada Producer Mental Wellbeing Initiative
- Association of Commonwealth Universities
- Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology
- Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- Crohn’s and Colitis Canada
- Dalhousie University
- Diabetes Canada
- Global Community Service Fund
- Government of Canada
- Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital Foundation
- Mental Health Research Canada
- Mitacs
- National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico)
- Saskatchewan Health Authority
- Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
- The Jane and Ron Graham Centre for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, University of Saskatchewan
- Thompson Rivers University
- University of Alberta
- University of Calgary
- University of Saskatchewan, College of Nursing
- University of Saskatchewan, Office of the Vice-President Research
- University of Saskatchewan, Office of the Vice-Provost, Faculty Relations
- University of Saskatchewan Faculty Association
- Western & North-Western Region Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing
- York University



nurse

NURSING UNIT FOR RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP EXCELLENCE

Supporting a Strong Research Environment

The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing is home to the Nursing Unit for Research and Scholarship Excellence (NURSE), which provides a continuum of research development and administration support services to advance research and scholarship priorities and build success for researchers from the beginning to end of the research process.

✉ nursing.research@usask.ca





Research is a vital part of the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing's work to improve health and advance nursing practice. Throughout the year, faculty, staff, and students achieved many research successes. The following highlights share a small selection of news stories that showcase the impact and reach of this work.

NURSING RESEARCH FACILITATOR ROBIN THURMEIER RECEIVES RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION AWARD

The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing congratulates Research Facilitator Robin Thurmeier (BA'02, MSc'11) on receiving the 2025 Innovation and Change in Research Administration Outstanding Individual Award.

Thurmeier's commitment in advancing research administration is being recognized as the inaugural recipient of this award from the Office of the Vice-President Research at USask.

"Robin's dedication to her role is unparalleled and her impact on our research community is significant," said College of Nursing Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies Dr. Louise Racine (PhD).

Thurmeier, who has worked with the College of Nursing for over 13 years, was instrumental in establishing the Nursing Unit for Research and Scholarship Excellence (NURSE), which has been truly transformative for the College of Nursing.

"Robin is thorough, enthusiastic, and dedicated to advancing the College of Nursing research agenda, while creating a culture of research excellence in our college, within the USask community, and outside of it," said Racine.

"The number of grants submitted by principal investigators increased over 50 percent between 2024 and 2025, which is a testament to Robin's devotion to advancing nursing research, as the sole pre-award

research facilitator in the College of Nursing."

Thurmeier helps researchers from the College of Nursing obtain grants, including those from major funding partners like the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), and the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation.

"Not only has Robin worked with researchers on external grants, she has also been a major partner in creating internal grants and strategic initiatives within the College of Nursing to stimulate research," added Racine.

Thurmeier's efforts go above and beyond the College of Nursing, as she can often be found working interprofessionally with other research facilitators at USask.

"Robin has been a reviewer for the USask International Office, volunteered to review student posters in the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, and filled a research facilitator vacancy on a SSHRC committee," said Racine.

"She's reviewed new research-related software and provided feedback, delivered workshops and workshop series for the USask research community, and is often looked to as a role model for advice and leadership."

"I am deeply honoured to be recognized by my peers in this way—it is truly meaningful", said Thurmeier.

"I feel incredibly fortunate to be part of the College of Nursing, where I work alongside the remarkable NURSE team. Our efforts are continually supported by strong, visionary leadership that champions innovation, creativity, and meaningful engagement in research and scholarship. I am proud to contribute to such a vibrant and inspiring community."



College of Nursing Research Facilitator Robin Thurmeier. © Dave Stobbe.

CELEBRATING DISCOVERY: FOURTH COLLEGE OF NURSING RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP DAY

On October 22, the Nursing Unit for Research and Scholarship Excellence hosted its fourth Research & Scholarship Day, showcasing the impactful research and scholarly work being led by faculty, students, and collaborators across USask Nursing.

The day began with a powerful keynote address titled *"Reconciliation Research Pathways: Opportunities for DEBWEWIN (Truth) and Institutional ALLYSHIP,"* delivered by Dr. Bernice Downey (PhD), associate professor (adjunct) from the Faculty of Health Sciences, Indigenous Health Learning Lodge at McMaster University.

Alongside the keynote address, the event featured faculty and student poster presentations, two dynamic panel discussions, and a pair of PechaKucha sessions (fast-paced, time-limited presentations of ideas).

The first panel, *"Two Worlds of Health: Exploring Rural and Urban Challenges,"* featured College of Nursing graduate student Nicole Edmundson (BSN'18), and faculty Drs. Schroder Sattar (PhD), Anne Hyde (BSc'01, BSN'04, MN-NP'08, PhD'25), and Michelle Pavloff (BSN'05, MN'14, PhD'22).

The second panel, *"Unequal Beginnings: How Inequities Shape Maternal and Child Health,"* featured College of Nursing graduate student Rosina Darcha, faculty

Drs. Sithokozile Maposa (PhD) and Jodie Bigalky (BSN'02, MN'21, PhD) and Dr. Maryam Mehtar (MBBCh, FRCPC) division head, Social Pediatrics, Pediatric School-Based Health from USask College of Medicine.

The two PechaKucha presentations captivated the audience with their unique and thought-provoking topics. The first, *"Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) Overcoming RN Registration Challenges in Canada – A Case Study from the Context of Pakistan,"* and the second, *"Green Care Farms: Caring in Relation,"* both sparked curiosity and left attendees eager to learn more about these emerging areas of research.

With around 85 attendees, the event provided an excellent platform to spotlight nurse scientists whose research and scholarly work are shaping the future of healthcare and nursing education.

"The Research & Scholarship Day was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the impressive work being carried out by our faculty and students, while also fostering collaboration and innovation among researchers with the aim of addressing contemporary healthcare challenges in Saskatchewan, Canada, and around the world," said Dr. Louise Racine.

"This Research & Scholarship Day demonstrates that USask College of Nursing

nurses are at the forefront of bringing solutions to improve health outcomes and healthcare delivery within a diversity of populations and from community to acute care settings."

"The insightful keynote address, relevant poster presentations, engaging panel discussions, and fast-paced PechaKucha sessions collectively left me with a deep sense of inspiration and profound admiration for the work of my colleagues. The day not only strengthened my passion for research, but also extended my enthusiasm for the future of nursing practice, research, and education. It was a powerful reminder of how innovation, collaboration, and meaningful work shape the discipline and nursing profession today and in the years ahead."

The day wrapped up with the presentation of student awards for best abstracts in the Undergraduate, Master's, and Doctoral categories. Congratulations to the following award recipients:

Undergraduate Student Research Award

Ava Bahrey

Project: *"Exploring Motivating Factors in Postpartum Recovery from Substance Use: Implications for Nursing Practice and Care."*

Master's Student Research Award

Olubunmi Okunola (BSN'22)

Project: *"Exploring the Perceived Health and Social Concerns of Older and Retired African Immigrants in Canada and Their Considerations for Re-Migration: A Narrative Review."*

Doctoral Research Award

Emma Addai (MN'25)

Project: *"Parents' Communication Needs in the Disclosure of Congenital Anomaly Diagnoses: A Scoping Review."*



Attendees participating both in person and virtually at the fourth College of Nursing Research & Scholarship Day. © Vanessa Ellis Colley.



RESEARCH CONTINUES ON HISTORIC NURSING ARTIFACT AT USASK

Students at the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing generally become aware at some point during their studies that the college has an impressive artifact in its midst – a medicine chest that renowned founder of modern nursing Florence Nightingale used in her care for wounded soldiers.

While some students and alumni will drop by to spend a few minutes with the chest, imagining the instruments and medicine that may have rattled around inside, College of Nursing Professor Dr. Arlene Kent-Wilkinson (PhD'08) has spent significantly more time, verifying the chest's authenticity, tracing how it came to the university, and most recently, even connecting with the descendants of the original donors, who ensured its safety as a prized possession at USask College of Nursing.

Arriving in Saskatoon in 1912 and at the university around 1956, the Nightingale medicine chest has resided in many locations over the years, but is currently in a five-foot display case located on the fourth-floor of the USask Health Sciences Building E-Wing.

Made of dark brown wood, the case is lined with green baize and features double-opening front doors with compartments and a drawer along the bottom. There is also a secret compartment at the back, which would have been used to store hazardous medications of that time. Nightingale would have used chests like this to treat soldiers

in the Crimean War, 1854-56, when she developed a reputation not only for her nursing, but for reducing death rates among soldiers by improving hygiene.

Kent-Wilkinson said she has always been motivated by the sense of history and mystery surrounding the case, the latter of which has become much clearer thanks to her efforts.

"It's a piece of our history; it's nursing history. It really matches the trajectory of what was happening in society then and now, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, when we used all of the skills that Nightingale promoted: the hygiene, the distancing in overcrowded conditions, etc. She knew all of that and it became so important again when the pandemic happened."

By accessing genealogy databases, which contained immigration records and country census, Kent-Wilkinson was able to correct details that had been incorrectly recorded and provide additional validation for the case.

By tracing the medicine chest's movements from its origins in England to its current display case, Kent-Wilkinson has confirmed Nightingale's sister, Lady Frances Verney, gave the medicine chest to her gardener Isaac Milsom and his wife Mary Ellen. The Milsom family then immigrated to Canada in 1912 with their seven children. Isaac Milsom was hired as a landscaper for the City of

Saskatoon, where he also became friends with Dr. Hugh Dalton Weaver and his wife Alice. Milsom gifted the medicine chest to the Weavers around 1918. In the 1950s, the medicine chest was donated by the Weaver estate to the University of Saskatchewan.

For Kent-Wilkinson, a passion for history and genealogy led her not only to confirm these details, but also to add to the story. While the Weavers didn't have children, they did have a nephew, Lewis H. Thomas, who they raised as their own from the age of 14. He attended the university and eventually became the provincial archivist for Saskatchewan.

Through document searches on newspaper articles with the help of Tim Hutchinson, University Archives and Special Collection at USask, and Archivist Jeff O'Brien at the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix*, together they were able to show the connections with all the chest's custodians over the years. Kent-Wilkinson was also able to identify the living relatives of the last custodian of the chest, Dr. Lewis H. Thomas, through a genealogy website.

A faculty member at the College of Nursing since 2002, Kent-Wilkinson focuses her research and teaching on mental health and addiction, forensic nursing, and Indigenous health. While her busy teaching schedule had meant that the mysteries of the medicine chest had to be something she pursued in her spare time, in 2022 she received a USask Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Explore grant to finally gather some answers to the research project she titled, *Exploring the Secrets and Provenance of the Florence Nightingale Medicine Chest in Canada*.

"The question was, 'did this chest really belong to Florence Nightingale?' We had the research question for years, and no one thought of it as a research project," said Kent-Wilkinson, adding that a second question was around whether Nightingale had actually used this chest in the Crimea.

With the grant in place and questions set, Kent-Wilkinson hired history PhD student Letitia Johnson (PhD'23) as a research assistant to pursue these questions and partnered with fellow College of Nursing faculty member Dr. Helen Vandenberg (PhD), who has a focus on nursing history, to help validate what everyone thought they

knew about the chest.

Then Kent-Wilkinson took the extraordinary step of finding the living relatives of Alice Weaver and meeting them online. In 2024, with the help of a second research assistant, Leegay Jagoe (BSN'94, BA'94), they set up a meeting with the two children of Dr. Lewis H. Thomas, Jeannie and Robert.

"We had a couple of Zoom interviews with them, and it was amazing because what we found really validated the medicine chest, because it was a family story," said Kent-Wilkinson.

"The adult children recall their father bringing the chest into their house in Regina around two years after their aunt passed away and getting a plaque made to put on the top of the chest to commemorate the donation from Dr. and Mrs. Weaver. Robert remembers when he was about six years old, his father bringing the medicine chest home to their house in Regina, and it sitting

on the coffee table. He remembers opening the doors of the chest and seeing the green cubicles, and thought it was a neat old chest," said Kent-Wilkinson.

Jeannie, who was two years older than her brother when the medicine chest would have entered the house, does not remember it, but did recall lots of family conversations about Nightingale and that there was a family connection.

Kent-Wilkinson said Robert was also able to send her photographs from their family album, which were the originals of pictures from articles in the early *Saskatoon Daily Star* and *StarPhoenix*, that further validated the medicine chest and the families' whereabouts. In another serendipitous connection, Jeannie mentioned they happened to live next door to universal healthcare founder and provincial premier Tommy Douglas, who often visited their home.

While the official research project is now

complete, Kent-Wilkinson still has big plans for the chest.

She arranged for professional photographs to be taken and has created a standup banner for the project. She's planning a new display for when the chest is moved to its next place of honour in A-wing of the Health Sciences Building, something that would show its background more visually with a map and other cues.

As for future plans for the case, Kent-Wilkinson said there are many possibilities, including creating memorabilia around the artifact, student scholarships, getting the chest valued by experts and even loaning it to the Florence Nightingale Museum in London, England, where Kent-Wilkinson had noticed a smaller medicine chest that spurred her further research on the University of Saskatchewan artifact.

"I often say the medicine chest waited for us for over 100 years to do this research," concluded Kent-Wilkinson.



USask College of Nursing is home to Florence Nightingale's medicine chest. © Dave Stobbe.



FACULTY RECEIVE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Nursing Unit for Research and Scholarship Excellence at the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing was proud to announce the recipients of the inaugural College of Nursing Research Excellence Awards in May 2025.

Research Excellence Award in Community-Engaged Health and Nursing Research

Dr. Roslyn Compton (PhD), Associate Professor, College of Nursing

This award recognizes a faculty member in the College of Nursing who has shown the highest level of excellence and had a significant impact in community-engaged health and nursing research.

Research Excellence Award in Health Equity Research

Dr. Pammla Petrucka (BSN'93, MN'97, PhD), Professor, College of Nursing

This award recognizes a faculty member in the College of Nursing who has shown the highest level of excellence and had a significant impact in health equity research.

Research Excellence Award in Innovation in Health Systems and Education Research

Dr. Wanda Martin (PhD), Associate Professor, College of Nursing

This award recognizes a faculty member in the College of Nursing who has shown the highest level of excellence and had a significant impact in innovations in health systems and education research.



(l to r) Dr. Louise Racine, Erin Yakiwchuk (USask College of Pharmacy and Nutrition accepting award on behalf of Dr. Roslyn Compton), Dr. Wanda Martin, Dr. Roslyn Compton (on screen from the Netherlands), Dr. Pammla Petrucka, and Dr. Solina Richter. © Raeleen Wilson.



DR. CHARLENE THOMPSON CELEBRATED BY SASKATCHEWAN HEALTH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

In southwest Saskatchewan, families, healthcare workers, community partners, and researchers are coming together with a shared goal: to strengthen immunization programs in ways that reflect the realities of rural life. Dr. Charlene Thompson (BSN'01, MPH'16, PhD'21) and Dr. Jacob Alhassan (PhD'21) were invited by leaders in the South West Health Networks of the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) to join them in this work, seeking new ways to better understand the barriers families face and to collaborate on ways to improve care in their community.

Together, they applied for funding, and the project titled *"Improving Immunization Services for Children 0-6 Years of Age in Southwest Saskatchewan"* was co-funded by Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation (JPCHF) and Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) through the 2024-25 SHRF Child and Youth Solutions Innovation Grant. It was recognized as a top-ranked project in its category and was selected to receive a Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation Excellence Award. This honour was formally presented at the Santé Awards in January 2026.

Answering the call

Thompson and Alhassan saw the project take shape after being contacted by leaders of the South West Health Networks to collaborate on better understanding the factors influencing childhood immunization and strengthening services in ways that meet their community's needs.

"They reached out and said, 'We see what you're doing, and we think we could really use something like this down here,'" recalls Thompson. "So, while the data indicated room for improvement, this work was truly driven by the community itself."

For Alhassan, who had primarily concentrated on international research, the invitation was an opportunity to shift his focus closer to home. "This project reminded me of the importance of finding homegrown solutions right here in Saskatchewan, while also applying what I've learned globally to strengthen health services in our own communities," he explains.

Meeting rural communities where they are

The challenges for families in rural

Saskatchewan often differ from those in larger centres. Transportation, distance, and fewer clinic options can all make access more difficult. At the same time, communities are becoming more diverse, with families from different cultural, language, and social backgrounds whose experiences with immunization may be shaped by various factors.

"There's just less out in terms of appointments, clinics, and services [which is a common challenge in rural and remote Saskatchewan communities]," says Thompson. "And then there's the importance of creating opportunities to hear directly from families about the perspectives and experiences they bring to these conversations. We work with our partners to develop questions that really dive into what's going on, guided by their experiences." Inclusivity has been central to the approach. The research team works with the Newcomer Welcome Centre in Swift Current to offer surveys in English, Tagalog, and Spanish, and to provide interpretation support for interviews.

"Even that step of offering different languages shows families that their voices are valued," says Thompson. "It's about ensuring families feel included and that their voices help shape the conversation."

Alhassan emphasizes that no single approach will work for everyone. "We're really focused on creating a tailored suite of interventions that speak to different groups' contexts. It's about asking: what works, under what circumstances, and how can we amplify that?"

Working alongside communities

From the beginning, Thompson and Alhassan understood the importance of being present in the community. "Being present and showing up matters," says Thompson. "In public health, there's a saying that sometimes you walk behind, sometimes you walk beside, and sometimes you walk ahead. The key is knowing when each is needed, and that comes from listening to the community."

That approach has shaped how they connect with families and healthcare providers. Rather than leading from the outside, the project is guided by local voices. "Healthcare workers, in particular, are eager to have these conversations," adds Alhassan. "When someone shows up to ask, 'What else might work? What are you seeing?' That kind of knowledge sharing is a gift."

Support that makes it possible

Both researchers credit SHRF and JPCHF with making this work possible.

"Opportunities like SHRF's Solutions Grant are life-changing, career-changing, and community-changing," says Thompson. "We would not be able to do this without SHRF and JPCHF support." Alhassan adds, "The Excellence Award is a recognition of what's possible when community partners, healthcare workers, and researchers come together. Having local funding that allows us to address local problems makes a real difference not just for our careers, but for the communities we serve."

Looking ahead

While the study is still underway, Thompson and Alhassan are already seeing the power of community-driven research. "This type of research reinforces the value of community-based approaches to improving health outcomes," says Alhassan. "It's about preventing problems before they happen, by creating awareness and opportunities for families to access care." For Thompson, the project has been transformative. "I've discovered a real love for rural communities that I didn't know I had," she reflects. "There's a sense of connectivity, of people knowing each other, that makes the work especially meaningful."

As the project continues, one thing is certain: the solutions that emerge will be shaped not by outside experts, but by the voices of families, healthcare workers, and community partners who call rural Saskatchewan home.

This story was adapted from a piece written by Sarah Kasleder and originally published on the Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation website.



Dr. Jacob Alhassan and Charlene Thompson. © Sarah Kasleder.



NURSING FACULTY TRAVEL TO MALAWI FOR INTERNATIONAL OBSTETRICS RESEARCH COLLABORATION

University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing Assistant Professors Drs. Jodie Bigalky and April Mackey (BSN'13, MN'19, PhD'25) travelled to Malawi to conduct research for their project focusing on fistula repair programs and the support young women and girls receive post-surgery.

"We're working to uncover essential components of fistula repair programs worldwide, explore Malawi's unique approach and community outreach, and understand patients' needs for recovery, learning, and empowerment," said Mackey.

"During a trip to Lilongwe, Malawi in 2023, we had the privilege of meeting with patients and program director at the Fistula Care Centre. Touring the facility left us deeply humbled and inspired by the resilience of the girls and women facing the immense challenges of living with an obstetric fistula."

Obstetric fistulas are devastating conditions caused by prolonged labour, resulting in a hole between the urinary or gastrointestinal tract and the genital tract.

"In collaboration with our partners in Malawi, we recognized an urgent need to improve the quality of life for girls and young women affected by obstetric fistulas. Through understanding global programs and the existing efforts in Malawi, an

opportunity exists to identify specific needs of adolescents and young women as they reintegrate into their communities after fistula repair."

"By far our favourite memory from our trip to Malawi was while working with women at the Fistula Care Centre we attended a cooking class – which is one of the skills provided by the centre to help women reintegrate back into the community. We stood outside and watched the women make Mandasi, a delicious, deep-fried bread, while the women sang to us about how joyful they were to learn this new skill. Both of us were smiling ear to ear, inspired by their strength and humbled to have been a part of it."

Bigalky and Mackey hope their research helps them in the international mission to tackle global health challenges.

"As researchers from the global north, we are committed to building partnerships with our counterparts and community collaborators in the global south, in line with Sustainable Development Goal #17. Our aim is to tackle global health challenges, including obstetric fistula, through collaborative international efforts and shared expertise."

This project was funded through the USask Office of the Vice-President Research International Global Community Service Fund.



(l to r) Dr. April Mackey, Fistula Care Centre Director Margaret Moyo, Research Collaborator Dr. Annie Namathanga, and Dr. Jodie Bigalky. © Submitted.



USASK-LED INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT UNITES WATER WITH MATERNAL HEALTH

An international research collaboration led by a University of Saskatchewan water researcher is exploring the intersection of water, environment, social, and cultural systems with health for women and mothers in communities around the world.

Dr. Corinne Schuster-Wallace (PhD), a professor in USask's Department of Geography and Planning and the executive director of the Global Institute for Water Security (GIWS), is the principal investigator (PI) on a project exploring the connections between physical and social environments and maternal well-being in communities in Africa and at home in Saskatchewan.

The five-year project received more than \$1.3 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and aims to create a tool which can be used to evaluate the maternal well-being of Indigenous women in rural communities.

"Livelihood, housing, food security, safety—you can't get there without thinking about water and local water security," Schuster-Wallace said.

The research team will develop a measurement tool that will include a series of indicators and criteria developed over the course of the research project. The indicators of that measurement tool will be focused on areas of maternal well-being in communities, including water security, food security, social networks, agency, and healthcare.

The goal is that the tool can be used universally by communities or by local governments and organizations to assess maternal well-being. By using indicators developed within communities, Schuster-Wallace and her team hope their tool can help show communities where there are needs affecting maternal well-being that can be filled to improve community health and well-being, especially for women, girls, and their babies.

Schuster-Wallace highlighted the importance of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) for human health, as highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO). By focusing the idea of WASH from a maternal health perspective, Schuster-Wallace said issues



The team in Uganda visiting the Benet community that is participating in the study. Submitted.

around community water security become much more evident.

As an example, Schuster-Wallace pointed to the idea of women and girls having to fetch water for their households. If that water is further away, or if there are conflicts over accessing fresh water, that is a detriment to their health that can be measured. Limited access to water can also mean less food can be cooked safely, which is another indicator for health and well-being.

"It's about water and nutrition, water and sanitation, water and livelihoods," she said. "We started looking at maternal health outside of the healthcare system and realized there's a broader context of maternal well-being."

The research will be undertaken with Indigenous communities in both East Africa and Canada. Schuster-Wallace said the researchers wanted to make sure they were "nesting (the research) from the inside out," by centering the experiences and knowledge from women and mothers in their target communities and using those to build the framework for this tool.

"It's about the social and environmental determinants of health, but it's about those

determinants from women's perspectives, and then from men's perspectives, the community perspective and then from the health professional perspective," she said. "We're hoping that we'll be able to find core similarities to create a flexible tool others can use."

Schuster-Wallace's Saskatchewan collaborators on the project include co-PI Dr. Pammla Petrucka and Dr. Jodie Bigalky with USask's College of Nursing, Beverly Wise, the health director for Mistawasis Nêhiyawak First Nation, and RESOLVE SK. Schuster-Wallace is also working with the Health Sciences North Research Institute and co-PIs throughout eastern Africa from Moi University in Kenya, Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University in Tanzania, Makerere University in Uganda, and Uganda Christian University.

"It's an international team effort," Schuster-Wallace said. "We'll be able to not only identify if women and girls in each community have good maternal well-being, but if it isn't good, where are the priority places for intervention?"

This article is adapted from a piece written by Matt Olson, USask Research Profile and Impact.



CELEBRATING GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT FUND RECIPIENTS

The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing congratulates seven research teams, who were awarded 2024 College of Nursing Global Engagement Fund awards in January 2025.

"These awards were established to give nurse researchers the opportunity to build international research connections," said College of Nursing Director of Globalization Ana Carolina Maldonado (MPA'15).

"Their projects promise to be of impact to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the College of Nursing Signature Areas of Research."

Dr. Sithokozile Maposa

Project: "A Nursing Vision of Hope: Strengthening & Developing A North-South Academic and Research Community of Practice to Support People in Complex Life Situations."

Co-Investigators: Jose Diego Marques Santos

Partner Institution and Country: Federal University of Piauí, Brazil

Dr. Schroder Sattar

Project: "Bridging Borders to Advance Geriatric Oncology Research on Falls and Frailty in Older Cancer Patients: A Franco-Canadian Research Partnership"

Partner Institution and Country: OncoNormandie University Hospital, France

Dr. Roslyn Compton

Project: "Growing Green Care Farms for Persons Living with Dementia in Saskatchewan."

Co-Investigators: Hadiya Huijjer, Mariana dos Santos Ribeiro

Partner Institution and Country: Maastricht University, The Netherlands

Dr. Charlene Thompson

Project: "Innovative Rural-Driven Solutions to Improve Immunization Programs in South West Saskatchewan."

Co-Investigators: Drs. Jacob Alhassan, Wanda Martin, Christine Huel (PhD), Shelley Kirychuk (BSN'90, MBA'01, PhD'08), and Alejandra Fonseca (MPH'20)

Partner Institution and Country: Saskatchewan South West Health Network, Canada

Drs. Jill Bally (BSN'90, BA'93, MN'06, PhD'13) and Shelley Spurr (BSN'95, MBA'01, PhD'09)

Project: "Keeping Hope Possible: An International Collaboration to Develop Relationships and International Hope Research."

Partner Institutions and Countries: University of Brasilia, Brazil; University of Sao Carlos, Brazil; Catholic University of Portugal, Portugal

Dr. Geoffrey Maina (PhD)

Project: "Understanding and Responding to the Impact of Addiction on Families in Cape Town, South Africa: An Art-based Pilot Study."

Co-Investigators: Dr. Abukari Kwame (PhD'23) (Postdoctoral Fellow), Thea Herzog (BSN'15, BSKI'11, MN'19)

Partner Institution and Country: University of Western Cape, South Africa

Dr. Jodie Bigalky

Project: "Unveiling Menstrual Experiences: A Collaborative Study to Address and Advocate for Menstrual Equity in Sao Paulo, Brazil."

Co-Investigators: Drs. April Mackey and Pammla Petrucka

Partner Institution and Country: University of Sao Paulo at Ribeirao Preto, Brazil



(top l to r) Drs. Sithokozile Maposa, Schroder Sattar, Roslyn Compton, and Charlene Thompson. (bottom l to r) Drs. Jill Bally, Shelley Spurr, Geoffrey Maina, and Jodie Bigalky. Submitted.



Our alumni continue to shape the future of nursing through their leadership, compassion, and commitment to excellence.

From advancing patient care and education to strengthening communities and the profession as a whole, University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing alumni accomplishments reflect the values instilled during their time at the College of Nursing. We are proud to share just a few stories that highlight the impact our alumni are making and the many ways they inspire us all.



Steven Hall receives Canada's top doctoral scholarship

University of Saskatchewan alumnus Steven Hall (BSc'18, BSN'20, MN'23) completed his USask Bachelor of Science degree in 2018, Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) in 2020, and Master of Nursing (MN) in 2023. After finishing his MN at USask, he continued his graduate nursing education at the University of Alberta, where he is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).



Steven Hall. Submitted.

His contributions to nursing research and planned project for his doctoral program earned him a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship. The coveted scholarship is Canada's top award for doctoral students, valued at \$150,000 (\$50,000 per year for three years) and is jointly administered by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The scholarship is named after Major-General Georges P. Vanier, the first francophone Governor General of Canada, and recipients are selected based on academic excellence, research potential, and leadership.

Hall is a registered nurse with a clinical background in general internal medicine and is certified by the Canadian Nurses Association in the specialty of medical-surgical nursing. His research focuses on enhancing the quality of care older adults and their caregivers receive when accessing health and social systems. His doctoral work involves developing a tool to facilitate communication between nurses

and caregivers of older adults living with dementia.

Hall taught in the USask BSN program for three years before moving to Edmonton to continue his studies. Now, he is working as a lecturer in the University of Alberta's undergraduate nursing program. His tenacity also landed him a position serving on the editorial board for the peer-reviewed journal, *Dementia: The International Journal of Social Research and Practice*.

Hall's thesis work during his MN program at USask, "*The Saskatchewan Caregiver Experience Study*," has resulted in six peer-reviewed publications. He was supervised in his MN by College of Nursing Associate Professor Dr. Noelle Rohatinsky (BSN'02, MN'08, PhD'13). His committee members were College of Nursing Professor Dr. Shelley Peacock (BSN'95, MBA'01, PhD'09) and Emeritus Professor Dr. Lorraine Holtlander (BSN'85, MN'05, PhD'08). All six published manuscripts have been co-authored by his MN committee.

Bonnie Eklund is a family nurse practitioner and children's book author



Books co-authored by Alumna Bonnie Eklund. Submitted.

Growing up in Tisdale, Saskatchewan, USask graduate Bonnie Eklund (BSN'96) "always had a desire to help others." With the goal of making a difference in patients' lives, Eklund decided to study nursing after high school, earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in 1996. In 1998, Eklund went on to attend graduate school in Connecticut, USA. She now lives and works in British Columbia as a family nurse practitioner.

Outside of her work in healthcare, Eklund is a writer who has co-authored two children's books. The first, "*It's Great to be Different*," was co-written by Eklund and USask graduate Ashley Vercammen (BA'17). It was self-published in 2024 with Home Style Teachers. The second book, "*It's Great to be Adopted*," was co-written by Eklund and her son, Amel. That book was self-published in 2025, also with Home Style Teachers.

Why did you choose to study at USask?

It was the best university in Canada close to home.

You are now a family nurse practitioner in British Columbia. What do you enjoy about your career and providing care to your patients?

I love being able to make a difference and hopefully try to fill some of the gaps in healthcare we are having right now.

You have written two children's non-fiction books. What inspired you to write these books?

My son, whom we adopted from Ethiopia when he was a baby.

What is the focus of *It's Great to be Different*?

These short stories are perfect to spark the conversation of differences among friends. This book addresses skin colour, gender norms, and physical and mental abilities. These stories are based on real situations some children have faced and allow the learning to begin at home.



What is the focus of *It's Great to be Adopted*?

It celebrates the love, joy, and belonging adoption brings. It helps children understand families are built in many different ways—and being adopted is something to be proud of. My son wanted other kids to understand adoption and to not feel sad for him.

You wrote *It's Great to Be Adopted* with your son. What was that process like?

It was wonderful to be able to do it together. He did all the writing. He is 10 now. We started the process when he was eight years old.

What responses have you received from readers about your books?

We have had a wonderful response on Amazon USA and it has been sold internationally. People love the stories.

What advice do you have for other USask alumni who may also want to write and publish a book?

Don't give up your dream of writing a book. It takes time and perseverance, but it's worth the outcome.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

I just hope others enjoy reading it and the messages we convey are shared and spread around the world.

This story was originally prepared for the USask Green & White Alumni Book Nook.



From undergrad to PhD: Alumna Lindsey Vold's story

From not being convinced she wanted to be a nurse, Dr. Lindsey Vold (BSN'15, MN'17, PhD'25) has come a long way to earning a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing in 2025, with a focus on public health.

With no nurses in her family, Vold didn't know much about nursing before she enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. All she knew was that she was about three years into an Arts and Science degree that really wasn't grabbing her attention, and maybe another option would be a better fit.

But still, even once entering the BSN program, Vold was reluctant about nursing.

"I was ready to drop out in my first year, and thankfully I had a clinical instructor who told me, 'this isn't all that nursing is, so just wait, stay in'. Thanks to her wise advice, I have completed my PhD, which is crazy," said Vold.

Her passion really ramped up during her fourth year in the BSN program when she started learning about the social determinants of health.

Before landing on public health, Vold tried several pathways in nursing to find her fit; first in rural medicine, then in maternity and neo-natal intensive care unit (NICU). But the pace and routine did not suit her. Where she did find herself more engaged was working at Saskatoon Sexual Health, a non-profit focused on sexual and reproductive health.



Lindsey Vold. Submitted.

"I just loved my job there because I had coworkers who weren't only nurses, but people who were so committed to a core mission and vision and did things differently, not like a traditional clinic," said Vold.

From there she went to work in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, which was another good match.

"I really love northern nursing. It's so much of a team effort and everyone's there to support each other," she said.

After completing her undergraduate degree in nursing, Vold decided to go all in and do her USask Master of Nursing degree.

"I knew higher education might give me more job opportunities, especially if I wanted to not only work at the bedside, but in public health."

During her MN program, she applied for the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship and gained some international experience, while completing a term in East Africa.

After completing her MN, College of Nursing Professor Dr. Wanda Martin (PhD) reached out to Vold to see if she was interested in taking a course in situational analysis, which prompted Vold to apply to the PhD program under Professor Martin's supervision.

She circled back to her interest in northern nursing to focus her PhD research on a community greenhouse project in the Northwest Territories. The greenhouse was a project in partnership with a technology startup in Whitehorse, to retrofit a trailer for hydroponic growing using water as the growing medium to sidestep the frozen ground. Vold's focus was on how a community-based organization navigates implementing a tech solution.

"I came from a community health perspective to know that pre-assessment is really important, and also quality assessment of what's working, what isn't, and next steps," said Vold, noting that she hopes her work can help other communities be better prepared for similar projects.

She found the project was a good initiative, but some challenges made it difficult along the way. Finding certified technicians to handle the technical element and even finding niche replacement parts was difficult in such a remote community, so the development was more unstable than expected.

"It might have been too uncertain for a community-based organization to spearhead that kind of project," said Vold, noting the greenhouse is still going, but now runs only in the winter when vegetables are scarcer rather than the summer.

The path to completing her PhD was also interrupted as she was preparing her doctoral research proposal when the COVID-19 pandemic happened. Vold had to pivot to remote data collection initially, but she also threw herself into the pandemic response effort, landing a job as a public health nurse in the Northwest Territories.

"There were six of us trying to do COVID response for the Northwest Territories in the beginning," said Vold.

"I had a great supervisor, Stephanie Gilbert, an Inuk nurse, and such an advocate for us and Indigenous people, a great role model of leading with empathy and expertise," said Vold.

When she was able to safely continue her research, Vold stayed in the Northwest Territories to finish her data collection and has since been back often to work on a variety of projects, including those with a focus on youth and sexual health education.

Vold says that both the research and her experience working in a community compel her to continue to find new ways to do public health research in her future.

"I want to be focused on something that's going to have an impact, not only theoretical, but community-based research."

She also aspires to continue working in harm reduction and toxic drug supply.

Calling herself "a Saskatchewan girl, born

and bred," Vold also aspires to continue contributing to her home province, crediting the support from the College of Nursing for helping her find her path.

"I've met some great faculty that literally changed my life."

Vold successfully defended her Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing dissertation, "*Situational Analysis of Local Food Production in a Northern Setting: A Holistic Nursing Perspective*," April 2025.

"I was ready to drop out in my first year, and thankfully I had a clinical instructor who told me, 'this isn't all that nursing is, so just wait, stay in'. Thanks to her wise advice, I have completed my PhD, which is crazy."

— DR. LINDSEY VOLD



Alumnae Dr. Karen Juckes and Megan Hewson publish children's book

Inspired by the lived experiences of participants from the Improving Pain in Saskatchewan (IPSK) community-based participatory research project, "*Rikki's Invisible Pain*" is a children's book that showcases the experiences of children living with complex (also called chronic) pain.

Among the research team behind the book are University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing alumna and Assistant Professor Dr. Karen Juckes (PhD) (BSN'84, MN'21) and nursing alumna Megan Hewson (BSN'18).

In addition to Dr. Juckes and Hewson, the book is authored by others from IPSK including Nikki Cooke, a person with lived experience (PWLE) and an inclusive education teacher from Regina, Heather Lewis, a hospital school teacher with Regina General Hospital, Ross McCreery, a PWLE from Regina, and Alex Schmidt, a Grade 3/4 teacher in Regina. The illustrator is Chad Geran.

Juckes says the team was inspired to write the book after hearing repeatedly from children, parents, and young adults that one of the hardest parts of living with complex pain is the feeling of missing out and the lack of understanding from others, particularly at school.

"Our overall goal in writing the story was to give children with complex pain a voice," said Juckes.

"Given that one in five children live with chronic pain lasting three months or more, we

hope that children and teens with complex pain will receive validation from the book and find it helpful in explaining their pain to others. It is also hoped the book will create increased awareness and understanding about complex pain in childhood among peers, teachers, and healthcare providers," adds Juckes.

Since publication, the book has been shared through numerous presentations and conferences, including the 2023 International Symposium on Pediatric Pain, the Canadian Pain Forum in 2024, and the Canadian Pain Society Conference in 2025.

The book has also been shared at a teachers' conference in Regina and with USask Nursing students during their pediatric clinical rotation.

The team has plans to distribute the book across the province to teachers, healthcare providers, child life specialists, and people with lived experience.

The book will eventually be available in schools, hospitals, outpatient clinics, and community agencies so it can be passed along to children and families.

Rikki's Invisible Pain is available online in both English and French.

This project received funding through a Saskatchewan Health Research Foundation (SHRF) Sprout Grant, a partnered funding opportunity between SHRF and the Saskatchewan Centre for Patient-Oriented Research.



(l to r) Dr. Karen Juckes, Alex Schmidt, and Megan Hewson. Submitted.

Meet Rikki. Rikki is an elementary school student who loves horses, riding bikes and collecting rocks. Yet Rikki has a secret: they are also someone who lives with complex pain. While Rikki may be a character in the new children's picture book, the struggles that Rikki feels are very real. The book reveals the challenges of living with complex pain, from the physical limitations to judgement from classmates, who are unaware. As the story progresses, Rikki's teacher creates a safe space for sharing about the condition, and Rikki feels better for the chance to improve understanding about their world. As the book's ending notes, Rikki finally feels seen and heard.



Finding joy on the trails: How running inspires Caitlin Schindel

University of Saskatchewan graduate Caitlin Schindel (BSN'12) could teach a master class in discipline, perseverance, and time management.

The wife and mother of three young children stays busy raising her family, while also working as a registered nurse in the emergency department at Saskatoon's Royal University Hospital. In her free time, she trains as an elite runner who takes part in competitions around the world, including the Ultra-Trail du Mont-Blanc (UTMB) marathon in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, where she won in the women's 50-kilometre category in 2023. Schindel finished the race with an outstanding time of 5:40:11—more than 33 minutes faster than her closest competitor in the female 50km division.

"It's my stress reliever and my time to think," she said of running.

Schindel, who was born in Saskatoon, graduated from RJC High School in Rosthern, SK., before starting her post-secondary studies at USask's College of Arts and Science in 2007. In 2008, she enrolled as a student in USask's College of Nursing, later earning her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in 2012.

"I'd always been interested in healthcare," said Schindel, who grew up seeing her mother and her grandmother work as nurses. She



Caitlin Schindel, a member of Team Canada, is pictured at the finish line at the World Mountain and Trail Running Championships in Spain in September 2025. Submitted.

later realized that nursing would be the right career for her, too.

"I love it. There are so many opportunities."

Just as nursing is in her blood, running has always been a natural fit for Schindel, who took up the sport as a child and hasn't stopped running since.

"My parents somehow noticed that I could keep running and running, even when I was six or seven, and they put me in children's triathlons," said Schindel, who also played soccer throughout her youth and spent Grades 11 and 12 running cross-country and track at RJC.

"I ended up getting one of the top places in provincials in Grade 12," she recalled. "So, the Huskies coach at the time was at those races and he recruited me."

Schindel said joining USask Huskies as a cross-country and track athlete "turned out to be a great decision." She thrived as a student-athlete; while working toward her nursing degree she also became a four-time Canada West All-Star who won the 2010 Canada West cross-country women's championship title.

"It was amazing," she said of her time as a student athlete. "It was a great community, and I still have so many lifelong friends from it. I just progressed as an athlete so much, too."

After graduating from USask, Schindel ran an impressive 2:45:58 at the Chicago Marathon in 2014 before taking an eight-year break from competitions to focus on starting a family. After Schindel gave birth to her third child in 2021, she felt the time was right to get back into the competitive racing scene. She chose the 2022 Beaver Flat 50—a challenging and hilly trail run in Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park—as her first foray back into competitions. It marked both her first trail race and her first competitive race as a mother.

"It's the biggest trail race in Saskatchewan, and I'd just heard stories about how awesome it was," she said. "I'd always wanted to try trail races because I love going out in nature and I've always loved trails. It's just always a new adventure and you see new things."

Schindel won the 2022 Beaver Flat 50 in a new course record. She followed up that impressive win in 2023 with a third-place finish at the Squamish 50 in British Columbia, followed by wins at the Queen City Marathon and Puerto Vallarta UTMB 50k race.

"That spurred on my love for trail running," she said. "I feel like trail running's my main love now, but I haven't shut the door on road racing, either."

Schindel's most recent race was at the World Mountain and Trail Running Championships in September 2025—an event she described as "the Olympics of trail running." As a member of Team Canada, Schindel competed against runners from about 70 other countries in Canfranc-Pirineos, Spain. "It was such a cool experience," she said, noting it was an extremely challenging course due to the 5,500 metres of elevation gain.

Despite heading into the daunting 82-kilometre race with a recently sprained ankle, Schindel finished as the 74th female and 210th overall. She was pleased with the outcome, particularly since just two days before her flight to Spain she remained unsure whether she could compete.

"It was a miracle," Schindel said of crossing the finish line, adding that her ankle is still "pretty weak."

"I was just so grateful that I was even there and doing it. When I crossed the finish line, it was a crazy good victory for me."

Schindel was the only Saskatchewan representative on Team Canada, which included herself and five other women. Despite her injury, Schindel placed fourth among the six Canadian women.

"I was very happy with how it turned out," she said.

While there are many things that can be unpredictable about trail racing, such as the weather, Schindel is unphased as a competitor. When it's hot outside, she will dump water on her head or drink extra water to stay hydrated, but beyond that she doesn't make specific racing plans or employ

specific coping strategies.

"Ignorance is bliss. I'm not going to obsess over the weather or obsess over the trail map. I'm like, 'You know what? It will be what it will be. When I see it, I will run up it.' I'm not going to review every nook and cranny of this trail ahead of time. Let's just go."

Schindel receives ongoing support from her family, friends, and her husband, fellow USask Nursing graduate Chris Schindel (BSN'13), who was also a member of the Huskie cross-country team while studying at USask.

"One of the main reasons I love running is because of the community of people that I get to run with as well," said Schindel.

She finds it easy to stay motivated to train for big events, even when the winter weather dips down to -40 C in Saskatchewan. A self-described "very high-energy person," Schindel believes running brings her focus and helps her to be the best parent, wife, and nurse she can be.

"I love running," she said. "Even a daily random run, it's just my daily me time. It's just so refreshing and fills my cup."

This article is adapted from a piece written by Shannon Boklaschuk, USask Green & White.

“Even a daily random run, it's just my daily me time. It's just so refreshing and fills my cup.”

– CAITLIN SCHINDEL

Alumni find love in the emergency room

Tracy Gabriel (BSN'05, MN'16) may be an integral part of the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing as an instructor at the Yorkton distributed nursing site, but it seems USask has close ties to her personal life as well.

Both she and husband DJ Gabriel (BSN'04) are graduates from the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan (NEPS).

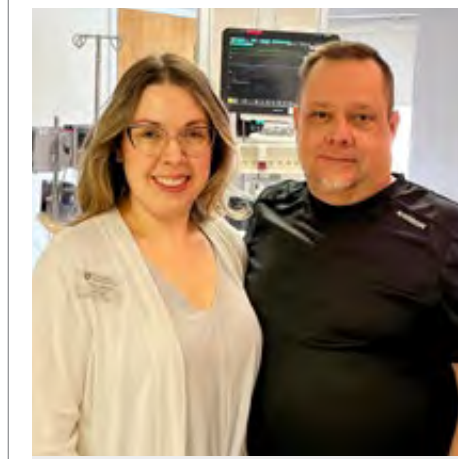
"We completed NEPS at the Regina Campus," said Tracy.

"DJ was one year ahead of me in the nursing program, and we got married while we were both USask Nursing students—we had student friends from years 2 and 3 at our wedding reception and we used to share textbooks!" she said with a laugh.

The couple was introduced by a coworker when DJ was a paramedic earlier in his career, prior to studying nursing.

Now they both spend their time together at the Yorkton Regional Health Centre; her teaching USask Nursing students and working casual as a utilization coordinator and DJ as the clinical care coordinator for the emergency and intensive care unit.

Although not in the same unit now, previously Tracy and DJ used to work many



Nursing alumni and married couple Tracy and DJ Gabriel at Yorkton Regional Health Centre. Submitted.

shifts together in emergency!

Tracy has been an instructor with USask College of Nursing since 2014 and is also a student in the cross-departmental Doctor of Philosophy program at USask College of Education, with a focus on the scholarship of teaching and learning. Her teaching in the nursing program has primarily been as an instructor in the simulation, skills and assessment labs, but also taking clinical groups to long-term care, medicine, surgery, and pediatrics.

While Tracy and DJ were newcomers to the Yorkton area, they love it. Seeing firsthand the experience of USask offering the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in Yorkton, Tracy said, "having options to study locally is something she recommends to all Yorkton and area students."

"The Learn Where You Live option gives students the opportunity to complete their studies to become registered nurses, while being in or close to Yorkton. It can be difficult to relocate, especially with small children or a spouse, to somewhere new with limited supports."

Now considering themselves local, both Tracy and DJ say they like being close to both work and nature.

"We came here as a result of a bursary for new nursing grads, but Yorkton has many services and that was important for us when considering where to live and work," said Tracy.

As a graduate of the Master of Nursing program, also through USask, she adds the program's online delivery is such a benefit, one that allowed her to pursue further advanced nursing education without leaving Yorkton.

"For any graduate-level studies, it is important course delivery is conducive to work/family balance. I would not have been able to pursue a Master's nor PhD if it wasn't online and asynchronous."



Jade Houmphanh represents Canada in FIFA World Cup

While many students juggle school and part-time work, University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing alumna Jade Houmphanh (BSN'25) spent her undergraduate degree years balancing a busy nursing course load while training, travelling, and competing as a Huskie student athlete.

That balancing act ultimately took her far beyond campus, leading to an opportunity to represent Canada at the first-ever FIFA Women's Futsal World Cup – the five-player indoor version of soccer – in the Philippines in November 2025.

"It's been a whirlwind," said Houmphanh.

"If you told me at the start of the year that I'd be playing for Team Canada and going to the World Cup, I would've said you were crazy."

Houmphanh is a recent USask graduate, completing her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in spring 2025.

She looks back fondly on her time at USask. She appreciated being exposed to many different nursing specialties during her clinical placements, which helped her determine the path she wanted to follow.

Just as memorable were the relationships she built. "Nursing school gave me some of my closest friends, who continue to be a key support system in my life."

Houmphanh appreciated that USask allowed her to continue her athletic pursuits at a highly competitive level, while working toward her nursing degree. "It gave me the chance to pursue both my passions without having to choose between them," she said.

Houmphanh's time as a Huskie athlete taught her lessons in discipline, organization, and communication. "It taught me how to thrive in a demanding and fast-paced environment," said Houmphanh.

To manage both athletics and academics, she became proactive in communicating with professors and clinical coordinators, particularly when planning around competitions or travel.

"By working collaboratively with those involved with the BSN program and Huskie Athletics, I was able to align my commitments, avoid conflicts, and create the support I needed to reach my full potential."

Time management became second nature. She often squeezed study sessions between practices and dedicated her weekends to staying ahead.

Her efforts paid off as she was named a U SPORTS Academic All-Canadian three times, an honour awarded to student-athletes who maintain an 80 percent or higher academic average. "I'm proud of it, as it reflects the dedication I put into both my studies and my sport," she said.

Her journey to the international stage was fast-paced and unexpected. "It was a journey filled with hard work, dedication, and sacrifice from the players and staff," said Houmphanh.

"I remember making multiple trips to Montreal to train with the team, while also finishing my preceptorship and studying for the national nursing licensing exam. Looking back, it was all worth it."

Houmphanh credits Huskie women's soccer head coach Jerson Barandica-Hamilton, her teammates, and the Saskatchewan soccer community for helping her prepare. "It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of history," she said. "To represent not just Canada, but Saskatchewan, was an incredible honour."

While she remains open to future professional soccer opportunities, her focus for now is on her nursing career. This past summer Houmphanh started at Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon and is looking forward to developing her career as a registered nurse.



Jade Houmphanh. Submitted.

“ I remember making multiple trips to Montreal to train with the team, while also finishing my preceptorship and studying for the national nursing licensing exam. Looking back, it was all worth it. ”

– JADE HOUMPHANH

Become a USask Nursing Ambassador



Become a USask Nursing Ambassador and share your story as a USask College of Nursing community member across the globe. Whether you are a student, faculty, staff, contract teacher, or preceptor, we invite you to become a USask Nursing Ambassador. Be featured in a short story on our social media feed, attend a student recruitment event with our student recruitment strategist, give a campus tour, or take part in a brand shoot. The opportunities are yours to choose from!



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Nursing
NURSING.USASK.CA

nursing.usask.ca/community/usask-nursing-ambassadors.php

Throughout 2025, University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing alumni came together to reconnect, celebrate shared experiences, and strengthen their ties to the college. Four alumni reunions offered meaningful opportunities for graduates to reflect on their time at the University, share professional journeys, and renew lifelong connections with classmates. Together, these gatherings highlighted the lasting impact of a USask Nursing education and the continued engagement of alumni long after graduation.

- May 3, 2025 – 2015 Class Reunion **10th Anniversary**
- October 3, 2025 – 2000 Class Reunion **25th Anniversary**
- September 26, 2025 – 1985 Degree Class **40th Anniversary**
- September 11, 2025 – 1975 Degree Class **50th Anniversary**



The 2015 class celebrates their 10th anniversary with some College of Nursing faculty. Kayla Buchanan.



The Class of 2000 comes together at the University of Saskatchewan Saskatoon Campus to celebrate their 25th anniversary. Lucinda Proulx.



Returning to the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing, the Degree Class of 1985 celebrates their 40th anniversary. Brenda Lashyn.

Celebrating 50 Years: Class of 1975

The room was full of vibrant energy as the Class of 1975 gathered to celebrate an extraordinary milestone – five decades since earning their nursing degrees. The reunion was filled with warmth, joy, and heartfelt connection, the kind of celebration that lingers in one’s memory long after the reunion ends.

Laughter echoed down the halls as classmates shared stories, reminisced about their college days, and rekindled friendships formed half a century ago. The strength of their community was undeniable; the bonds they built in 1975 remain as genuine and unbreakable today.

On September 11, 2025, the group came together over coffee and sweets, filling every corner of the room with lively conversation and cheerful chatter. Many members of the class stay connected throughout the year, with some planning a trip to Vancouver Island to continue the tradition of togetherness.

The classmates also enjoyed hearing updates about the College of Nursing’s ongoing research initiatives, with special interest in Dean Dr. Solina Richter’s (DCur) research in Africa. Their pride in the evolution of the profession – and in one another – was palpable.

A celebration of friendship, legacy, and lifelong connection, the Class of 1975 reunion was truly one to cherish.



Alumnae from the Class of 1975 with Dr. Solina Richter. Miren Luczka.



Class of 1975 Reunion at University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing Saskatoon Campus. Miren Luczka.



Class of 1975 alumna receiving a certificate and alumni pin from Dr. Solina Richter. Miren Luczka.

Are you a Parent with a Student Considering Nursing?

Helping your student evaluate which post-secondary education is best for them can be difficult. We are here to help you learn more about the University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing.

How much is tuition?
 Are there scholarships?
 When and how does she apply?
 Does he have the right classes?



BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS

Find the answers to these questions and more:
nursing.usask.ca/programs/undergraduate/bachelor-of-science/parents.php



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Nursing
 NURSING.USASK.CA

Where Generosity Becomes Tomorrow's Care

A Message from Miren Luczka (BA'05), Development Officer, College of Nursing

Every day in this role, I see how generosity becomes momentum – how individual acts of giving shape the future of nursing and transform the lives of students, patients, and communities. As the development officer for the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing, I have the privilege of working with donors, alumni, and supporters who share a deep passion for advancing nursing education. I'm continually reminded the college is shaped not only by our students, staff, and faculty, but by the people who believe in what nursing makes possible.

Often, a donor's story begins with a single moment – a memory of a nurse who made a meaningful difference, a gesture of care that stayed with them, or a reflection on what compassionate support meant to them or someone they love. For our alumni, it's often a sense of gratitude – an appreciation for the education and support they received as students, and a desire to help the next generation succeed just as others once helped them.

From these experiences, generosity grows. It's an honour to walk alongside individuals and families

as they bring their philanthropic goals to life by connecting their personal motivations with the college's priorities: supporting students, advancing research, and strengthening healthcare.

Across Saskatchewan and beyond, donors from all walks of life step forward because they see nursing as a powerful force for good. They give not for recognition, but because they know supporting nursing education strengthens the health and well-being of our communities. Their gifts open doors for aspiring nurses, spark innovation in teaching and research, and help us respond to the evolving needs of the people we serve.

In 2025, the College of Nursing continued to feel the impact of this shared commitment. Each contribution, large or small, became part of a much bigger story, one of care, connection, and collective strength. Our donors remind us that progress is never achieved alone. It happens when people choose to invest in others.

Whether you're an alumni, a grateful patient, or simply someone who believes in the value of nursing, I'm here to support you in making a meaningful and lasting impact. Your generosity and trust in nursing education fuel change reaching far beyond our classrooms. Together, we are not only supporting nurses, but we're also shaping the kind of healthcare future we want to inherit here in Saskatchewan and beyond.

This section of our annual report honours the individuals, families and organizations whose support brings our mission to life. Their commitment is helping to build the future of the College of Nursing, and more importantly, the future of healthcare for generations to come.

I look forward to connecting with you and supporting you in achieving your philanthropic vision within the College of Nursing.

— Miren Luczka, Development Officer



Miren Luczka. © Dave Stobbe.



Love and generosity surpass a lifetime

Honouring Wanda Krauss's compassion by supporting the next generation of nursing advocates.

Ken Krauss (BComm'80) met his late wife, Wanda Krauss (BSN'80), when he was just 13 years old in their Grade 9 English class. Looking back, Ken says he knew instantly she was the one. For him it was "love at first sight", a feeling he connected to the Kenny Chesney song "You Had Me From Hello."

Ken and Wanda were high school sweethearts, Ken proposing to her just before he turned 18. Their love supported them through the highs and lows of post-secondary education. Whether they were up late together studying for exams or celebrating the end of a successful term, they were there for each other. They married on August 25, 1979, the summer before the fourth year of their degree programs.

"We often reflected and agreed our first year of marriage, while we completed our degrees, was the best year of our marriage," said Krauss. "It didn't matter that we lived on \$3,000 for eight months. We were together and that was all that mattered."

Ken and Wanda built their lives on a foundation of mutual support, being there for each other academically, financially, and emotionally. After graduation, they moved to Regina, where Ken worked as a chartered accountant at Deloitte and Touche and Wanda worked as a registered nurse in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Regina General Hospital.

"Being a nurse was a defining part of who Wanda was," said Krauss. "She wanted to be there for her patients at what was often the worst time of their lives."

Wanda was a strong advocate for others. In both her clinical practice and personal life, she went above and beyond to ensure everyone was treated with respect. She was deeply committed to making sure people received the care and attention they needed and would never allow anyone to be dismissed or overlooked.

As a registered nurse, her advocacy extended beyond clinical excellence. She challenged outdated practices, championed nurse-led medication administration, and emphasized the importance of bedside care essential to patient assessment.

In her personal life, Wanda always put herself second to others.

"She sacrificed promotions in her career, so I succeeded at mine," said Krauss.

When their children were young, Wanda was asked several times to become the head nurse of the ICU. She always declined, so she could continue working half-time, raise their two sons, and support Ken as his accounting career progressed.

After Wanda retired from Regina General Hospital, they moved to Guelph, Ontario, where they lived happily until her passing on July 9, 2021.

"Wanda and I were together for 47 years," said Krauss. "Not a day, nor rarely an hour, goes by when I do not think about her and remember everything we shared."

After Wanda passed, Ken honoured her in quiet, but heartfelt ways, through making gifts to the College of Nursing on holidays and special milestones. Over time, he looked for a lasting way to reflect not only her memory, but also the generosity and compassion she showed throughout her life. Creating an endowment in her name felt like a meaningful continuation of those earlier gestures and a way to ensure her legacy would support future nursing students.

Ken established the Wanda Marie Krauss Patient Advocacy in Nursing Memorial Award in September 2025.

"I have been told that gift giving is my 'love language'. I took every opportunity to give Wanda gifts," said Krauss. "This endowment gives me the opportunity to continue giving her gifts on her birthday, our wedding anniversary, Ukrainian Christmas, and other dates that were important to her."

Generosity has always held deep meaning for Ken. From the kindness that he and Wanda received as young newlyweds and university students, to the daily generosity Wanda embodied throughout her life, he has always felt profoundly blessed. Having experienced Wanda's giving spirit firsthand for nearly half a century, Ken felt it was important to "give something back" as a gesture of gratitude for all they had been given.

Supporting nursing students now feels like a natural extension of that gratitude. Knowing that others may benefit from the successes that he and Wanda shared brings him great fulfillment.

"I hope being a recipient of an award in Wanda's memory will encourage students to pay it forward and be as generous as Wanda," said Krauss. "It is that nurse's way of caring, compassion, and helping that I hope permeates these students' lives the way it did Wanda's."

Just as Ken and Wanda supported each other through every stage of life, their legacy now supports future nurses. The Wanda Marie Krauss Patient Advocacy in Nursing Memorial Award will honour Wanda in perpetuity, carrying forward the compassion, strength, and advocacy that defined her career. Through this endowment, her impact will continue to uplift students and inspire the same empathy and dedication that defined Wanda's life and career.

“ I hope being a recipient of an award in Wanda's memory will encourage students to pay it forward and be as generous as Wanda. It is that nurse's way of caring, compassion, and helping that I hope permeates these students' lives the way it did Wanda's. ”

– KEN KRAUSS



Ken Krauss holds photo of his late wife Wanda Krauss.
Submitted.

For those interested in establishing an award to honour the memory of a loved one, or in contributing to the Wanda Marie Krauss Patient Advocacy in Nursing Memorial Award, please visit the [Donors and Friends](#) section of the College of Nursing website.





Generous gift boosts rural healthcare in Saskatchewan

The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing and philanthropist Mr. Ron Belsher (BComm'68) share a common passion: ensuring communities in rural Saskatchewan have access to high-quality healthcare.

Thanks to extraordinary gifts from Belsher to USask College of Nursing, nurse practitioner students, as well as Bachelor of Science in Nursing students, will be one step closer to achieving their goal of providing care in rural Saskatchewan.

Belsher may have left the family farm in southern Saskatchewan and moved to Saskatoon to pursue a Bachelor of Commerce degree, but even after building a successful 32-year career as a chartered accountant in Calgary, Alberta, he never forgot his roots in a small rural community.

Now retired, Belsher is committed to giving back to the University of Saskatchewan and supporting rural communities like the one he grew up in.

The Ron Belsher Rural Nurse Practitioner Award provides financial support and recognizes good academic standing to registered nurses who are entering or continuing in the USask Master of Nursing – Nurse Practitioner program in a rural community in Saskatchewan.

"I believe nurse practitioners play a vital role in addressing the primary care needs of underserved communities," said Belsher.

"I've seen firsthand the challenges those in rural communities face when trying to access healthcare and in many cases the healthcare team is limited, especially in areas without a physician. With their advanced nursing education and extended scope of practice, nurse practitioners are an invaluable part of providing quality healthcare in rural Saskatchewan."

The Ron Belsher Rural Nurse Practitioner Award is a gift of \$400,000, awarding two \$5,000 awards per year starting in the 2026-2027 academic year.



(l to r) College of Nursing Assistant Professor - Academic Programming Kelly Hughes, Associate Professor - Academic Programming Cheryl Besse, Ron Belsher, and Dr. Solina Richter. Breanna Pochipinski.



"I am a proud USask alumnus, and I wanted to give back to the university that shaped my path and make a meaningful impact on the province I once called home," said Belsher.

"Giving back to the community is a value my parents deeply instilled in me."

In addition to the nurse practitioner award, Belsher has also committed \$100,000 to establish the Ron Belsher Rural and Remote Placement Awards for undergraduate students.

Two awards of \$2,000 per year will be given starting in the 2025-2026 academic year to provide financial support for undergraduate students in their fourth year of study, who are participating in a placement in a rural or remote community. These awards will help cover travel, food, and accommodation expenses to increase the accessibility for urban students to do rural and remote placements.

The College of Nursing and Belsher share a commitment to the belief that students should have the opportunity to learn where they live, so they stay and practice in their communities where they complete their nursing program.

"We know if our students do their nursing education in a rural community and become a registered nurse, they are also likely to practice in the community afterwards," said College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

"We are incredibly grateful for the generous support Mr. Belsher is providing with these awards," said Dr. Richter. "His generosity is truly transforming the lives of our students. These awards help ease financial burdens, allowing students to focus on their studies and clinical practice."

At the heart of Belsher's gift is not only the desire to give back to the University of Saskatchewan and to make a meaningful impact on healthcare in rural communities, but to show his deep support for the nursing profession. His sister, Pat (BSN'67), was a registered nurse who retired in 2008 and often spoke with great pride about her education, the profession, and the rewarding career she had as a registered nurse. Ron's daughter Heather has worked as a licensed practical nurse for 30 years, specializing as an operating room nurse.

"I truly believe these awards to the College of Nursing will benefit students who will go on to be wonderful registered nurses and nurse practitioners, strengthening the health and well-being of Saskatchewan's rural communities," concluded Belsher.

“ I truly believe these awards to the College of Nursing will benefit students who will go on to be wonderful registered nurses and nurse practitioners, strengthening the health and well-being of Saskatchewan’s rural communities. ”

– RON BELSHER



Ron Belsher with sister Pat. Submitted.

Opportunities to Create Lasting Impact in the College of Nursing

Every donor has a unique motivation for giving. The College of Nursing offers a wide range of meaningful opportunities to support student success, advance nursing research, and strengthen healthcare across Saskatchewan and beyond. Whether the goal is to create immediate impact or build a legacy for future generations, donors may choose from the following giving options.



Annual gifts

Annual gifts provide flexible support that allows the College of Nursing to address urgent and emerging needs as they arise. Donors may direct their gift to priority areas, such as student awards, clinical learning experiences, research initiatives, or innovative academic programming. Donors also have the option to designate their contribution to an existing award or fund within the College of Nursing, ensuring their support aligns with an area of personal significance, while making an immediate and meaningful impact.



Corporate matching

Corporate matching programs allow donors to amplify their support for the College of Nursing – often doubling or tripling the value of their contribution when an employer matches charitable gifts. Many companies match donations made by employees, spouses, or retirees, helping expand impact in areas, such as student financial aid, research, and clinical education. Donors are encouraged to check their employer’s matching gift program to maximize support for nursing students and initiatives.



Tribute and memorial gifts

Tribute gifts offer a meaningful way to honour or remember a loved one, mentor, or healthcare professional. These gifts may support student bursaries, named awards, or specific areas of the College of Nursing that reflect the honouree’s contributions to nursing and community care. They serve as a lasting tribute, while supporting the next generation of compassionate and skilled nurses.



Endowed gifts

Endowed gifts create a permanent source of funding for the College of Nursing. The principal remains invested, and annual earnings support long-term priorities, such as scholarships, research programs, faculty development, and innovative teaching. Endowments ensure sustained support that will benefit nursing students and the profession for generations to come. All endowed gifts are subject to a minimum investment requirement, ensuring the fund is sufficiently robust to generate meaningful annual support.



Legacy gifts

Planned gifts allow donors to make a transformative impact on the future of nursing education. By including the College of Nursing in estate plans – through a gift in will, life insurance, retirement funds, or other planned giving vehicles – donors create a lasting legacy that supports future students, strengthens academic programming, and upholds personal values.



Stocks and securities

Donors may choose to support the College of Nursing through gifts of publicly traded stocks, bonds, or mutual fund units. These contributions offer substantial tax advantages, including a tax receipt based on fair market value at the time of transfer and the elimination of capital gains tax when securities are donated directly. Such gifts are liquid, low risk, and can be used immediately to advance priority needs within the College of Nursing.

YOUR IMPACT

Connect with us

To learn more about these giving opportunities, or to explore which option best aligns with your philanthropic goals, please contact us.

Miren Luczka

(306) 966-5653

miren.luczka@usask.ca



The College of Nursing is grateful for the support of our community of donors and friends.

Together, we are empowering nursing students and advancing clinical research that strengthens our healthcare system in Saskatchewan and beyond. Your generosity supports scholarships, bursaries, clinical placements, and innovative research initiatives promoting health equity, enhancing communities, and transforming nursing practice. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our donors, past and present. The names below acknowledge contributions made from May 1, 2024 to December 31, 2025.

*Those who have passed away are gratefully acknowledged and marked with an *.*

Gifts of \$500,000+

One Anonymous Donor

Gifts of \$200,000 - \$499,999

Ron Belsher
One Anonymous Donor

Gifts of \$100,000 - \$199,999

Jo Bannatyne-Cugnet
Theresa & Dr. Hung-Fook Ma

Gifts of \$50,000 - \$99,999

Stella Swanson

Gifts of \$25,000 - \$49,999

Evelyn & Joe Klein
Kenneth Krauss
St. Paul's Hospital Foundation Inc.

Gifts of \$10,000 - \$24,999

Fay Puckett
Kramer Ltd. Foundation Fund
Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation
Shauna Ives
The Donald and Claire Kramer Foundation

Gifts of \$5,000 - \$9,999

Barry Brown
Betty Minifie
Jacqueline Sims
Nancy & Charles Weisdorff
Saskatchewan Union of Nurses
Wendy & Alex Campbell

Gifts of \$1,000 - \$4,999

Ardis Janzen
Blanche Richards
Cindy Peternelj-Taylor
Crystal Procyshen
Jacqueline Sims
Janet McKenzie

Jill Bally & Erick McNair
Joan & Bill Turner
Karen & Ray Bodnar
Karen Shaw
Lorraine Hill*
Mary Matiko Fund
Michelle Gingara
Mrs. Emily Peacock and Family
Myrna Klein
Phyllis & James Goertz
Rouse Family Fund
Shelley & Gregory Peacock
Solina Richter
Trudy Jaskela
Three Anonymous Donors

Gifts of \$500 - \$999

Al & Marjorie Veroba
Bill & Rita Nell
Bruce Kluey
Donna Brunskill
Edith May Forrest Fund
Jan Guidinger
Joan Litzenberger
Linda & Pat Landine
Marga Cugnet
Marjorie Becker
Merle Kisby
Nancy Kot
Nancy Steward
Pat & Dwayne Dietrich
Ron Bigsby & Judy Walker
Ruth McKenzie
Wendy & Tom Duggleby
Three Anonymous Donors

Gifts of \$25 - \$499

A.D. Marks
Alice McBride
Alice Nycholat & Byron Christopher
Alice* & Bill Reynolds
Ann & Rich Burton
Ardyth Nestegard Alexander
Arlene Franko
Arlene Wolff
Arlette Spencer
Arliss Nadeau & Carlo Stuglin
Audrey Miller
B. Dyck
Barbara Link
Betty Lou Agnew

Bill Reynolds
Blondina Matheson
Bob & Vi Jacob
Bonnie Rushowick
Braden Davie
Brenda & Gerald Lashyn
Brenda Dyck
Bryan & Eileen Harvey
C. M. Miller
Carol Fowke-Burns
Carole & Paul Bakule
Carole Schriek
Catherine & Michael Close
Cecile M. Hunt
Cindy Manderscheid
Colleen Vassos
David Piska
Dawn McKenzie-Weinhandl
Diane Dodds
Donna Thompson
Dorothy Korol
Dorothy Miller
Dr. Linda Ferguson & Les Ferguson
Elaine Jamison
Elizabeth & Ronald Richardson
Ethel Harmel
Eunice Patterson
Gail Laing
Grace Iverson
Grand Chapter of Saskatchewan Order of the Eastern Star
Greg Smith
Gwen McDonald
Heather & Daniel McAvoy
Helen Willison
Henda & Maynard Olson
Hildegard Wieggers
Irene MacDonald
Jean Sencal
Jo-Ann Herle
Judith O'Shaughnessy
Judith Wiens
June L. Blau
Kathleen Chisholm
Kaz & Ruby Shikaze
Linda & Grant Bachiu
Lois O'Brien
Lorraine Cowan
Louise Racine
Lydia Mayerle
Margaret J. Holt
Margaret Olfert
Margaret Seto-Chan

Margery & Dana French
Marian Moore
Marjorie Piska
Marjory Gammel
Mark Tomtene
Marla Daniels
Marsha Jerred
Marusia Ladanchuk
Miren Luczka
Miriam Chiduku
Nancy Knorr
Norma Wallace
P. Susan Wagner
Patricia Peterson
R & Donna Quinney
Reita Palmer
Rosalind Giffen
Rosanna Loughlin
Rosemarie Baum
Roxanne Bagnall
Ruth Warkentin & James Hawrishok
Sarah Carter
Sheila & Don Ragush
Sheila McKay
Sylvia L. Acton
Tammy Swank
Tania & Dale Kristoff
Terry Budd
The Loreen Campbell Murray Fund
Thomas & Mona-Jill Eremondi
Toni Christopherson
Tony Korol
Tracy Gabriel
Valerie Dennis
Valerie Klusa*
Vernon Slipetz
W. Smith
Walter Nicholaichuk
Wanda Bryce
Thirty-four Anonymous Donors

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this report. If you have questions about the donor list, please contact Miren Luczka at (306) 966-5653 or miren.luczka@usask.ca.

Celebrating Some of our Best and Brightest

Outstanding student achievement was celebrated November 15 in Saskatoon, as the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing hosted its annual awards ceremony.

Students, families, friends, donors, and members of the College of Nursing faculty and staff gathered to celebrate the presentation of 97 awards, totaling \$447,743 in scholarships and bursaries.

“Receiving these awards is a powerful testament to the dedication and perseverance these students have shown during their nursing education,” said Dr. Solina Richter (DCur), dean of USask College of Nursing.

“Our undergraduate and graduate programs are rigorous and demanding, requiring not only academic excellence, but also a deep commitment to wanting to serve as future nurses. These award recipients have demonstrated exceptional ability, resilience, and sincere passion for their studies and we are incredibly proud of their accomplishments.”

The day not only celebrated students’ achievements, but also honoured the extraordinary philanthropic efforts of College of Nursing donors, whose support is vital to the students receiving scholarships and bursaries.

“These awards have a profound impact; they truly transform the lives of our nursing students, one individual at a time,” said Dr. Richter.

“Thanks to the incredible generosity of our donors, nursing students are able to focus on achieving excellence in their studies and clinical practice without the added stress of financial burden. This support makes all the difference because without these awards, some students might not be able to complete their program.”

“Every generous donation to the College of Nursing, no matter the size, matters deeply and is used to support students and important initiatives essential for success of our nursing programs,” said College of Nursing Development Officer Miren Luczka (BA’05).

“Donor kindness is more than a lifeline for students—it fosters a spirit of generosity and reciprocity, inspiring these future nurses to serve their communities and give back, as they advance in their careers. Celebrating the student award recipients and connecting with the generous College of Nursing donors at the award ceremony was a truly meaningful experience for me.”



Donor Jo Bannatyne-Cugnet (BSN'74) with The Influence of Educators Award recipient Morgan Christensen (BSN'09). © Dave Stobbe.

Congratulations

TO THE 2025 COLLEGE OF NURSING AWARD RECIPIENTS!

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN STUDENT AWARDS 2025

University of Saskatchewan Scholarship
Shyrelle Cheng, Erika Mourre, Nelbien Wryniell Murillo, Wyatt Roach, Dale Marcus San Juan, Kadence Vickers

University of Saskatchewan Undergraduate Scholarship
Skylar Ackerman, Paris Appel, Tomi Asiri, Sydney Crawford, Eriza Custodio, Caden Dunn, Rae Friesen, Testimony Laniya, Excel Okechukwu, Carley Pidlisny, Neo Ramokate-Pindani, Andre Unahan

The University Prize in Nursing
Danika Osterwalder

COLLEGE OF NURSING GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS 2025

Norman and Alice Caplin Scholarship
Mariam Adam Al-Hassan, Monique Muosieyiri

College of Nursing 85th Anniversary Graduate Program Scholarship
Stephanie Bajus, Tanya Huber, Monique Muosieyiri, Omotade Shorunke

College of Nursing Graduate Student Award
Lindsay Demers

Myrtle Evangeline Crawford Scholarship
Gloria Vukey

CRNS Nurse Practitioner Award
Maja Jakic

Annie I. Earle Award for Nurses
Mackenzie Kent

Ernest and Isabella Forsman Bursary
Luri Hayen Chei

The Judy Gajadharsingh Award for Graduate Student Excellence in Dementia/ Alzheimer Research
Mariana dos Santos Ribeiro

The Influence of Educators Award supported by Jo Bannatyne-Cugnet (BSN'74)
Morgan Christensen, Jennifer Freeman

Margaret Inglis Graduate Bursary in Nursing
Lisa King

Marion Ruth Jackson Quality of Patient Care Fund
Kristy Tang

Muriel E. Kavanagh Memorial Fund
Augustina Adekoya, Abbie O'Neill

Claire Kramer Award in Nursing
Stephanie Braithwaite, Chantelle Zelensky

Mavis Kyle Evans Nursing Leadership Scholarship
Vivian Ly

Master of Nursing Thesis Bursary for Indigenous Students
Britt Rousseaux

The Nurse Practitioner Continuing Education Bursary for Indigenous Students
Tamara Mirasty

Nurse Practitioner Entrance Award for Indigenous Students
McKenzie Hamilton, Denise Mirasty

June Peterson-Barber Nurse Practitioner Award
Mary Dittrich, Kirsten Kotylak

Mrs. Jane Pinkney and Dr. George H. Peacock Memorial Scholarship in Cancer Care or Research in Nursing
Kofi Junior Effah Frimpong

Stephanson Cooke Award in Nursing
Carolyn Laurin, Amanda Miller

Lucy D. Willis Scholarship
Christian-Lee Masuskapoe

COLLEGE OF NURSING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS 2025

The David and May Anderson Memorial Scholarship in Geriatric Nursing
Braiden Ferguson

Elaine Barnhart Memorial Scholarship
Braiden Ferguson

Alice Bittner Resilience Award
Patricia Logan

Karen Knapp Bodnar Nursing Award in Public Health
Anika Takach

Margaret & William Brewster Memorial Award
Kimberly Weber

CRNS Yvonne Brown Award for Nursing Excellence
Emma Mickelson, Danika Osterwalder, Gillian Studer

Danny Browning Award
Cassidy Alcrow, Georgia Bruce

BSN Class of 1971A Student Award
Brooklyn Mattila

College of Nursing 75th Anniversary Award for Excellence in Leadership
Njemile Wickham

College of Nursing Undergraduate Scholarship
Esther Obisesan

Custody and Caring Scholarship in Forensic Nursing
Alexandra Lappin

Degree Class of 1965 Nursing Student Bursary
Laney Hancock

Katherine Doyle Macphee Scholarship
Erika Mourre

Marjorie and Guy Duncan Award
Celeste Vazquez-Gomez

Elsevier Canada Health Sciences Award
Abby Shiers

Guy and Joyce Evans Memorial Award in Nursing
Brooklyn Mattila

CRNS Jean Goodwill Award
Dakota Laliberte, Brandy McDonald

The Mary Hader Scholarship in Nursing
Kellen Dreger

The Health and Wellness Nursing Bursary for Indigenous Students
Amy Ferris, Kelsey Orenchuk

Shirley Hewko-Parkinson Nursing Award in Community Health
Oluwafunmilayo Awobiro
Hazel B. Keeler Scholarship
Nelbien Wryniell Murillo

The Jean Klymyshyn Meenaghan Entrance Bursary in Nursing
Leah Van Koughnett

Lange Medical Publication Award
Skylar Ackerman

Mrs. Jean A. Leech-Porter Prize in Obstetrics
Avery Gaudet

The W.S. Lindsay Gold Medal in Nursing
Danika Osterwalder

The Theresa Ma Bursary in Nursing
Mackenzie Romanowicz

The Theresa Ma Scholarship in Nursing
Kaydence Siegel

Mae Marcoux Mature Student Scholarship
Skylar Ackerman, Amy Anquist

The Brenda McCormick Weber Memorial Bursary
Paulis Pulido, Sakshi, Celeste Vazquez-Gomez

Eleanor Marie McKay Reichardt Endowment
Njemile Wickham, Ifunanya Obidalo, Carissa Pfneisl, Brandy McDonald

The Mitchell Scholarship
Gabrielle Facey

Nursing Degree '60 Bursary
Maria Blackmon

Betty Anne Ohrt Entrance Scholarship
Jorja Kroeker

The Cindy Peternelj-Taylor Award in Mental Health Nursing
Ava Bahrey

Dr. Darlene Pollock Forrest Award in Nursing
Justin Beaulieu, Ifunanya Obidalo

The Gladys Procyshe Bursary in Public Health
Aidyn Ladd

Vi Reaman Memorial Award
Aidyn Ladd

The Margaret B. Rouse Bursary
Kylie Berg

Julia Alice Saddington Memorial Scholarship
Ifunanya Obidalo

Charles W. Sampson Scholarship
Nelbien Wryniell Murillo

Barbara Elizabeth Scott Memorial Bursary
Wendy Gareau

Douglas Scott Memorial Bursary
Georgia Bruce

James Nelson Scott Memorial Bursary
Georgia Bruce

Catherine Grant Sigmore Memorial Bursary
Brandy McDonald

Andrew and Olga Stefaniuk Memorial Award in Nursing
Cassidy Alcrow

Olive G. Sutor Entrance Scholarship
Jorja Kroeker

Saskatchewan Union of Nurses Trust Award
Maria Blackmon

Catherine R. Sutherland Scholarship in Nursing
Bayli Focht, Benita Boboh

Sutherland First Nations Student Award
Kadence Vickers, Cassidy Alcrow

Sutherland First Nations Student Graduation Prize
Kelly Tolley-Procyk

Undergraduate Nursing Award for Indigenous Students
Maria Blackmon, Leah Quewezance, Madison Matschke, Patricia Logan, Danielle Strongarm, April Campbell

Weisdorff Annual Award in Nursing
Madison Matschke

Throughout 2025, the University of Saskatchewan (USask) College of Nursing marketing and communications team played a key role in promoting the college's mission and strategic plan, celebrating achievements, and connecting with audiences across Saskatchewan and beyond. The team supported student recruitment efforts, shared success stories, and strengthened the college's presence through strategic communications and creative storytelling.

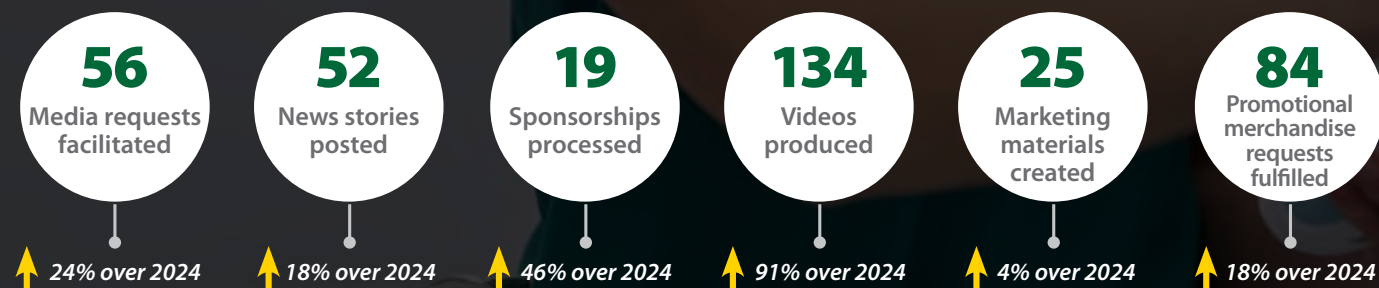
From digital campaigns and content creation to advertising, branded materials, ambassador initiatives, and a website redesign, the marketing and communications team delivered a wide range of projects that supported engagement, visibility, and pride in USask Nursing.

At a glance, here are some of the team's key accomplishments and initiatives from 2025.

NEW projects introduced in 2025

- ✓ College of Nursing Brand Guidelines
- ✓ Expansion of USask Nursing Ambassador Program
- ✓ Development of faculty, staff, and student PAWS channels
- ✓ Recruitment for new Master of Public Health in Nursing program and Management of Major Depressive Disorder micro-credential
- ✓ Contract Teacher starter packs and manual
- ✓ 2024 Annual Report – Nursing Matters
- ✓ Provincial student photoshoots
- ✓ Graduate student lectures on using social media and media interviews for research dissemination
- ✓ Development of brand shoot production book and photoshoot essentials kit
- ✓ Complete website redesign began, with the majority of sections completed in 2025 and remaining projects leading into early 2026

Activities completed



Social media



Top social posts

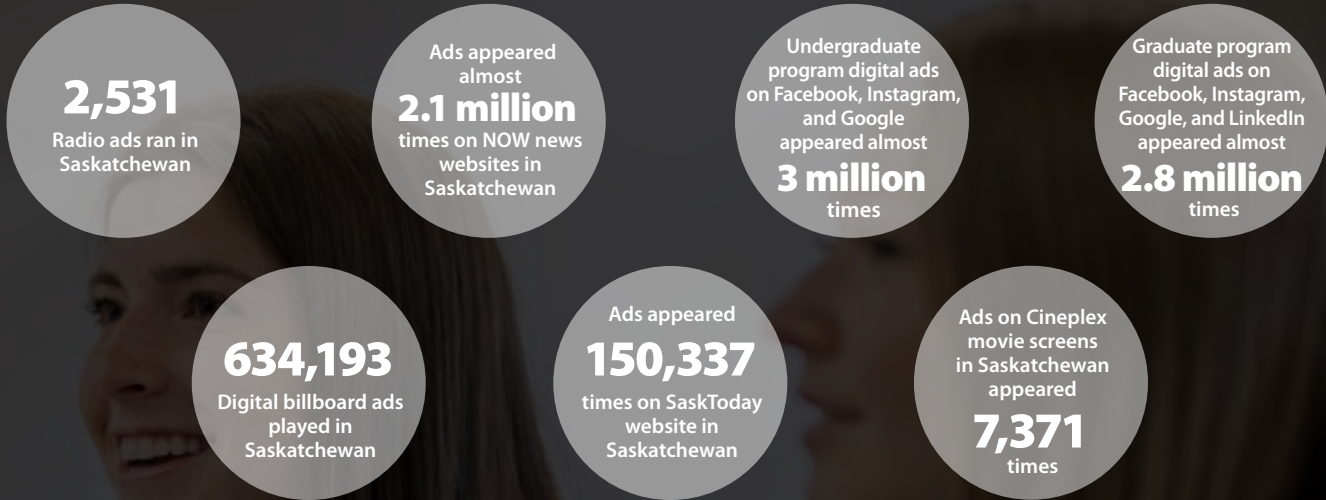
- Facebook: Nurse practitioner student feed feature Calle **47,924 views**
- Instagram: Neuro clinical student group photo **10,075 reach**
- X: Associate dean academic appointment news story **1,217 impressions**
- TikTok: All Paths Lead to Nursing video of BSN student Jholan **1,811 views**

THE FACT
Did you know USask College of Nursing has the 2nd highest number of combined social media followers of all USask colleges and units? AND the highest number of followers on Facebook!

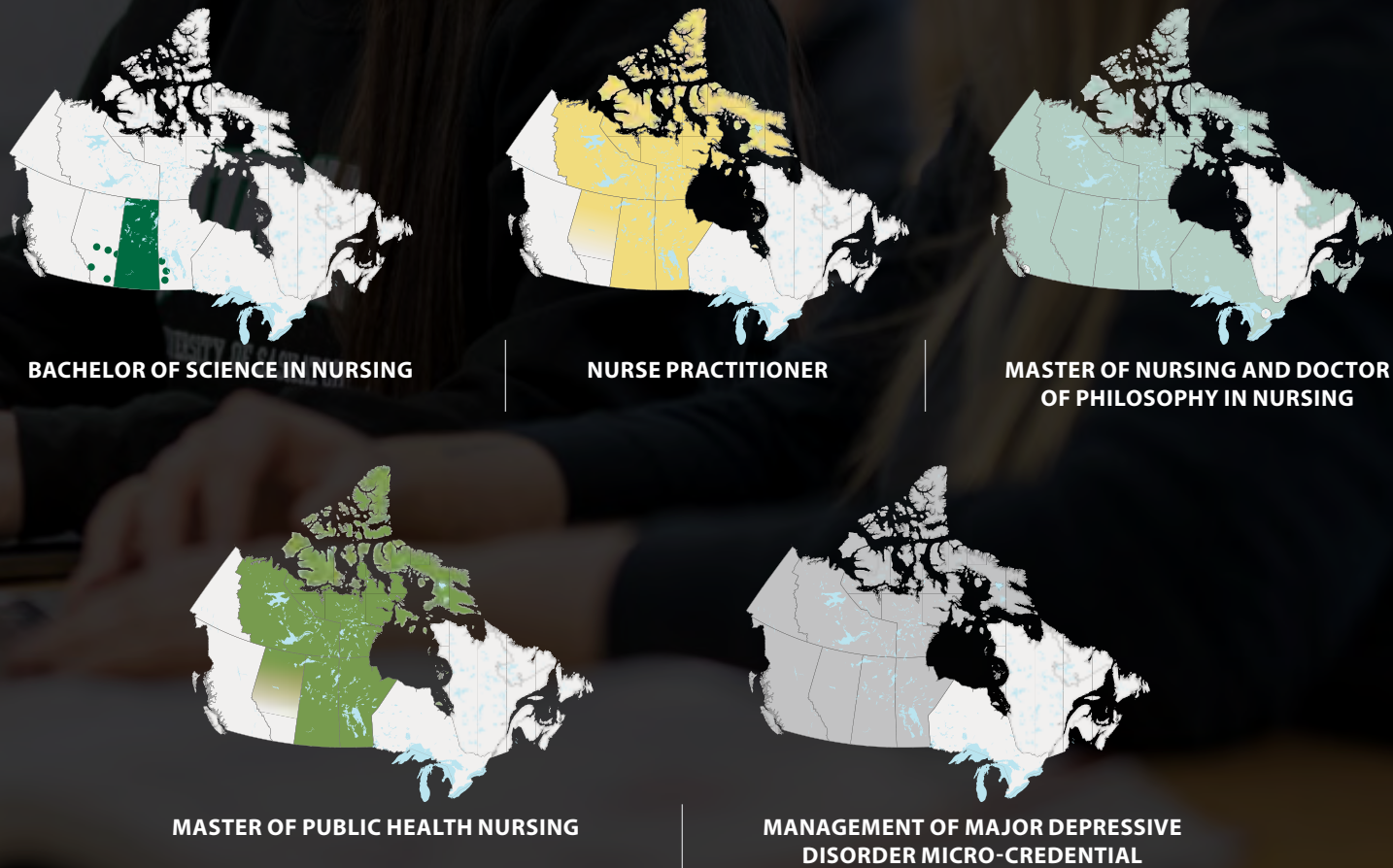
Social media metrics



Advertising



Our geographical advertising footprint



STAY UPDATED ONLINE!

nursing.usask.ca

BE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS



UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
College of Nursing
NURSING.USASK.CA



@usasknursing