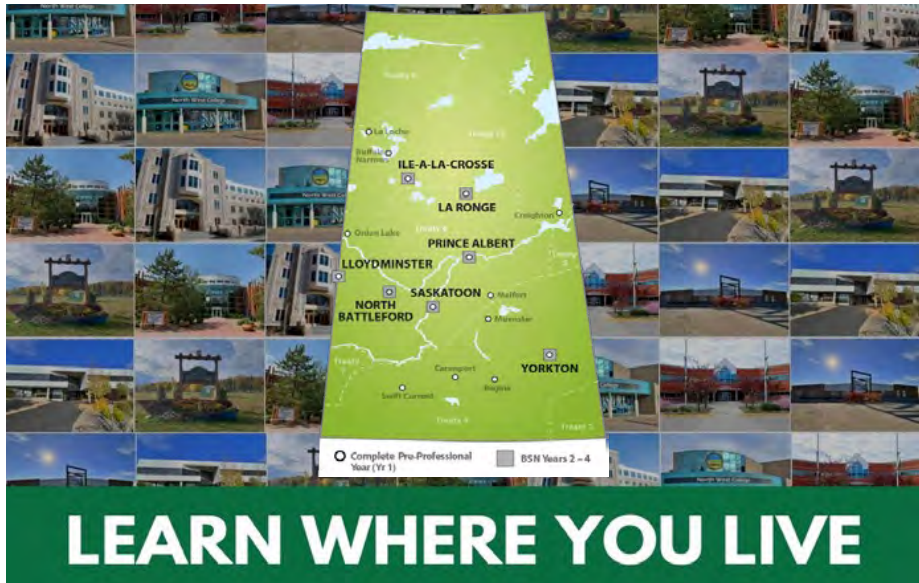


BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING PROGRAM EXPANDS TO LLOYDMINSTER AND NORTH BATTLEFORD



In January 2024, USask College of Nursing announced the expansion of the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program to two more sites in Saskatchewan: Lloydminster and North Battleford.

The expansion responds to the call for nursing education in these communities, where residents are familiar with the culture and people.

“By offering the BSN program at our distributed nursing sites, we are giving students the opportunity to learn where they live in La Ronge, Île-à-la-Crosse, Yorkton, Lloydminster, and North Battleford,” said USask College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

“We are decreasing the likelihood of these rural and remote communities experiencing a registered nursing shortage, as the students who complete their nursing education in these communities, will likely practice in the community once licensed.”

The province also has a significant Indigenous population, particularly in the northern regions.

“In order to provide quality nursing care, we must actively contribute to a representative nursing workforce that is responsive to the needs of the province.”

– DR. SOLINA RICHTER

“In order to provide quality nursing care, we must actively contribute to a representative nursing workforce that is responsive to the needs of the province,” said Dr. Richter.

“We have a long history of Indigenous student success and are recognized as having the highest number of self-declared Indigenous nursing students in the country.”

The College of Nursing “Learn Where You Live” model has been particularly successful at distributed sites in La Ronge, Île-à-la-Crosse, and Yorkton. Since the first students entered the BSN program in La Ronge and Île-à-la-Crosse in September 2012, 66 nursing students have completed their degrees in northern Saskatchewan. Since starting the program in Yorkton in 2014, 81 students graduated.

COLLEGE OF NURSING LAUNCHES MICRO-CREDENTIAL

USask College of Nursing introduced a micro-credential, Management of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) in Adults, near the end of 2024.

Informed by the 2023 Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT) guidelines, NURS M01A equips learners to assess, diagnose, and collaborate with the client and other members of the healthcare team to develop an individualized evidence-informed treatment plan and monitor treatment response and outcomes for individuals living with uncomplicated and complex MDD.



For many health and human service professionals, continuing professional development is a requirement for licensure and/or employment. This micro-credential satisfies ongoing professional development requirements for various health-related disciplines including nurse practitioners, registered nurses, registered psychiatric nurses, pharmacists, social workers, addiction counsellors, and other healthcare providers.

The first offering will begin January 2025.

PHD STUDENT SEEKS TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS’ MENTAL HEALTH



Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing student Barbara Twum-Antwi. Submitted.

Barbara Twum-Antwi, a USask College of Nursing Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Nursing student, is working with the USask Student Wellness Centre and a student research team to co-develop a project and campaign on coping strategies for international students.

Twum-Antwi’s interest in this area began while working as a research assistant with USask College of Nursing Associate Professor Dr. Geoffrey Maina (PhD) on a project on racialized immigrants. She realized the experiences of the international student participants closely mirrored her own, which moved her to delve into international students’ mental health issues in more detail.

She has since presented at nursing seminars on mental health coping strategies for international students, sharing her personal experience and the methods she adopted to feel better.

As she progresses in the research for her PhD, she intends to work on African international students’ mental health using a participatory action approach to explore their experiences and co-create resources to support their mental well-being.

College of Nursing Assistant Professor

Dr. Sithokozile Maposa (PhD) describes Twum-Antwi as “an emerging expert in African International Students and Mental Health.”

Born and raised in Ghana, Twum-Antwi completed her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Master of Public Health at the University of Ghana before choosing USask for her Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing program. Prior to joining USask Nursing, Twum-Antwi worked in clinical practice and nursing administration at the Zabzugu District Hospital in Northern Ghana.

Following a recommendation from a current student, Twum-Antwi said she chose USask for the affordable tuition for international PhD students, plus opportunities for scholarships, research assistantships, and teaching assistantships.

“The USask support system, especially at the College of Nursing, is great,” said Twum-Antwi. “This system is a very important aspect of graduate education, which sometimes gets overlooked. However, graduate students, like myself, need a school that actually cares and creates a supportive environment.”

“USask has a high international student population, which is very multicultural and diverse. I was not afraid to be in a new space because I was convinced I would meet people from my background.”

– BARBARA TWUM-ANTWI

FIRST NATIONS HOUSING SYMPOSIUM
COMBINES RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE
WITH ACTION AND ART



By Merle Massie

Building for the Future, a housing symposium dedicated to Indigenous housing and health took place November 21, 2023, at Wanuskewin, near Saskatoon. The one-day event drew participants from across the province, including representatives from First Nations communities, the building industry, NGOs, and government.



The collaborative effort involved a multidisciplinary team of researchers from USask, spanning various fields such as medicine (led by Dr. Shelley Kirychuk, PhD), engineering (led by Dr. Kerry McPhedran, PhD, Dr. Soltan Jafar, PhD, and Dr. Huiqing Guo, PhD), social and cultural design within engineering (led by Dr. Lori Bradford, PhD), nursing (led by Dr. Wanda Martin, PhD, and Dr. Charlene Thompson, PhD) and chemistry (led by Dr. Tara Kahan, PhD).

Throughout 2023 and 2024, communities across the province had been sharing stories of their housing strengths and successes with the USask research team through Zoom, on the phone, and during in-person visits. The practices uncovered during these conversations will be organized in a centralized hub based on four themes: governance and policy, transition and training, builds and procurement and asset management. In addition to showcasing community stories of housing strength, the hub will act as a portal to existing and new resources.

At the symposium, attendees at each table shared examples and engaged in lively conversations to develop the emerging themes. These discussions were captured live by a graphic recording artist from Fuselight Creative. The artist’s interpretation of the insights was projected for everyone to see and build on.

After the event, the visual rendering was converted into a video, showing the captured conversations and how the art was developed. The video was also set to music—Kahkiyaw Oskâyak (All the Young People), an original composition by distinguished Cree-Dene musical artist and creator Sherryl Sewepagaham. The version used was performed by the USask Greystone Singers, directed by Dr. Jennifer Lang (PhD).

Attendees praised the event, highlighting the discussion format and artistic elements. They commended the engagement, networking opportunities and the chance to connect with others grappling with similar housing challenges. They also urged USask researchers to collaborate with other First Nations communities, share resources, and maintain ongoing communication.

REMEMBERING
DR. SARAH STAHLKE



College of Nursing Associate Professor Dr. Sarah Stahlke.
© Dave Stobbe.

Dr. Sarah Stahlke (PhD), associate professor at USask College of Nursing, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, August 7, 2024, surrounded by the love of her family.

“Although Dr. Stahlke was only with the College of Nursing for a brief time, she developed strong friendships with those around her and brought a bright presence to the College,” said College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

Dr. Stahlke was a registered nurse with a Master’s degree in health services administration and a PhD in sociology. Her clinical background was mainly in the operating room, but she also worked in medicine/surgery and the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). After moving into administration, she worked in hospital management, professional regulation, policy development, and program planning.

Dr. Stahlke joined USask College of Nursing in July 2023; previously, she was an associate professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Alberta.

A lifelong learner, Dr. Stahlke loved to mentor and support others in their development. She was a sociologist, a tenured professor, a commercial pilot, a registered nurse, and someone who was filled with curiosity and a thirst for adventure.

Memorial donations can be made to the “Dr. Sarah Stahlke Memorial Graduate Award in Sociology” at the University of Alberta.

THREE NURSING STUDENTS RECEIVE USASK
INDIGENOUS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



Three College of Nursing students were honoured in March 2024 with Indigenous Student Achievement Awards that recognized and celebrated their academic achievement, leadership, research, resilience, and community engagement.

DANNIELLE BRASS is an Indigenous woman from Peepeekisis First Nation, who has navigated through the unique challenges of her cultural heritage, embracing resilience and determination.

A third-year student in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at the Prince Albert Campus, she was awarded the Academic Excellence Award.

She is grateful for the opportunity to serve as a registered nurse upon graduation, a role that will allow her to use her voice for equality in the healthcare community.



CHARLES DETTANIBA from Black Lake Band, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, received the Resiliency Award. A fourth-year student in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the Prince Albert Campus, Dettaniba juggles family life as a single dad, while excelling academically and volunteering in the community.

Upon completion of his program, he aspires to work in surgery, until he is experienced enough to enter the emergency department. He hopes to eventually take his experience back to the North to continue his practice as a registered nurse.



ALEX POND (BSN’20) from Métis Western Region Two, Big River, Saskatchewan was presented with the Academic Excellence Award. A graduate of the USask Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, Pond began her career as a registered nurse in her home community of Big River and subsequently transitioned to surrounding rural emergency departments. A position in her maternal grandmother’s First Nation community involving HIV management and harm reduction cemented her passion for community-centered care. This grew her desire to further her education in nursing.

Upon graduation from the nurse practitioner program, she hopes to return to Big River and the surrounding area as a healthcare provider.



“These students should take great pride in their successes that have led them to be selected as this year’s recipients. The College of Nursing is fortunate to have them as part of its student body.”

– DR. SOLINA RICHTER
COLLEGE OF NURSING DEAN

College of Nursing Indigenous Student Achievement Award recipients (top to bottom) Dannielle Brass, Charles Dettaniba, Alex Pond. © Submitted.

USASK NURSE PRACTITIONER GRADUATES EXCEED NATIONAL AVERAGE IN AANP EXAMINATION

USask nurse practitioner (NP) graduates who wrote the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) exam in 2023 achieved a 90 percent pass rate, a rate that exceeded the national average that year.

“College of Nursing Nurse Practitioner graduates continue to score well on NP licensing exams, which is encouraging,” said Janet Luimes, NP program lead with the College of Nursing. “Not only did the writers pass the examinations, but their scores also exceeded the national average in 2023.”

The AANP is one of the approved licensing programs graduates must pass before they can register and practice as an NP. Other exams include the Family NP exam with the AANP and the American Nurses Credentialing Centre (ANCC). The most common exam is the Canadian Nurse Practitioner Exam (CNPE) (Family All Ages). Required exams

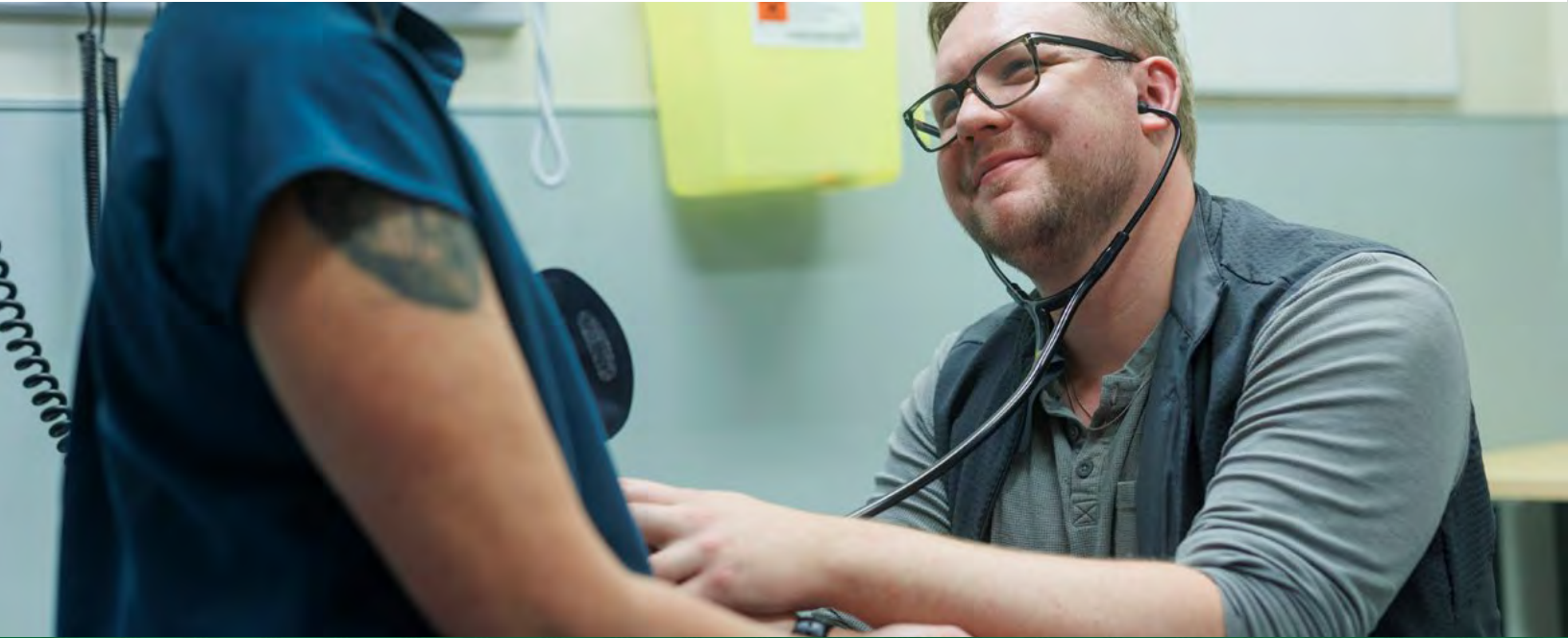
vary depending on where a graduate wishes to practice.

The College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan (CRNS) regulatory body periodically reviews the College of Nursing NP program to ensure graduates are learning to provide competent, quality care and can meet the criteria for licensure. In 2022, the program received a seven-year program approval—the highest possible level of approval from the CRNS.

Dr. Louise Racine, College of Nursing associate dean of research and graduate studies, said everyone in the program should be proud of these results. “The Master of Nursing Primary Health Care Nurse Practitioner program is our flagship graduate nursing program and is highly sought after. We have a large number of applicants from across Canada and applications keep increasing year over year.”



Nurse Practitioner Program Lead Janet Luimes with nurse practitioner students. Submitted.



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USASK PARTNERS WITH SOUTHEAST COLLEGE TO DELIVER NURSING PROGRAM IN WEYBURN



At the official signing event in Weyburn (l to r: Dean Loberg (Vice President of Academics and Teaching and Learning, Southeast College), Dr. Vicky Roy (President and CEO, Southeast College), Dr. Solina Richter (Dean, USask Nursing). Submitted by Breanna Pochipinski.

USask College of Nursing has partnered with Southeast College to offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at the Southeast College Weyburn campus, starting fall 2025.

Before this partnership, students in Weyburn and surrounding communities interested in nursing had to relocate to a USask campus or distributed site to pursue the USask BSN program. Now the four-year USask degree will be offered at the Southeast College distributed nursing site in Weyburn, meaning students can learn and study at home in southeast Saskatchewan.

“Entering this partnership with Southeast College in Weyburn is exciting, as it enables us to deliver degree-level nursing education in southeast Saskatchewan,” said USask College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

“Students in Weyburn and the surrounding area who may not have considered a nursing degree in the past will now have access to learn where they live as a result of our two institutions working together.”

The formalized partnership comes at a critical time as the demand for registered nurses grows, especially in rural and remote Saskatchewan.

“Southeast College has a proven history of offering healthcare programs throughout our region,” said Dr. Vicky Roy (PhD), president and CEO of Southeast College. “The ability to offer the Bachelor of Science in Nursing is a logical next step for the progression of healthcare programs at our College. We look forward to continued programming partnerships with USask in years to come.”

Students pursuing first-year pre-professional nursing classes at Southeast College will take virtual classes and attend in-person labs at the Weyburn campus. In years two to four of the USask BSN program, students will study at the Weyburn campus and have clinical placements in Weyburn and surrounding communities.

The first cohort of the BSN program is to begin in Weyburn in September 2025, and the pre-professional year of nursing courses became available in September 2024.

COLLEGE OF NURSING ATHLETES EXCEL ACADEMICALLY



(l to r) Rayne Butler-Siemens, Caitlin Clatney, College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter, and Tea DeMong. Submitted.

USask College of Nursing congratulates three nursing students who were honoured by Huskie Athletics in October 2024 for their academic achievements.

Rayne Butler-Siemens
Year 4 Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Sport: Women’s Cross Country

Caitlin Clatney
Year 3 Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Sport: Women’s Wrestling

Tea DeMong
Year 3 Bachelor of Science in Nursing
Sport: Women’s Basketball

“Rayne, Caitlin, and Tea have not only balanced the demands of their nursing program with their busy sports schedules, but excelled in their studies,” said College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur). “It was an honour to join all USask athletes at the Huskie Athletics U Sports Academic All-Canadians Breakfast, but a particular honour to celebrate alongside our incredible nursing students.”

The U SPORTS Academic All-Canadians are U SPORTS athletes who achieve at least an 80 percent average on a minimum of 18 credit units while using eligibility as a student athlete. In 2023-24, 121 USask student athletes achieved this high standard.

NURSE SCIENTIST FEATURED AT THE MYRTLE CRAWFORD MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

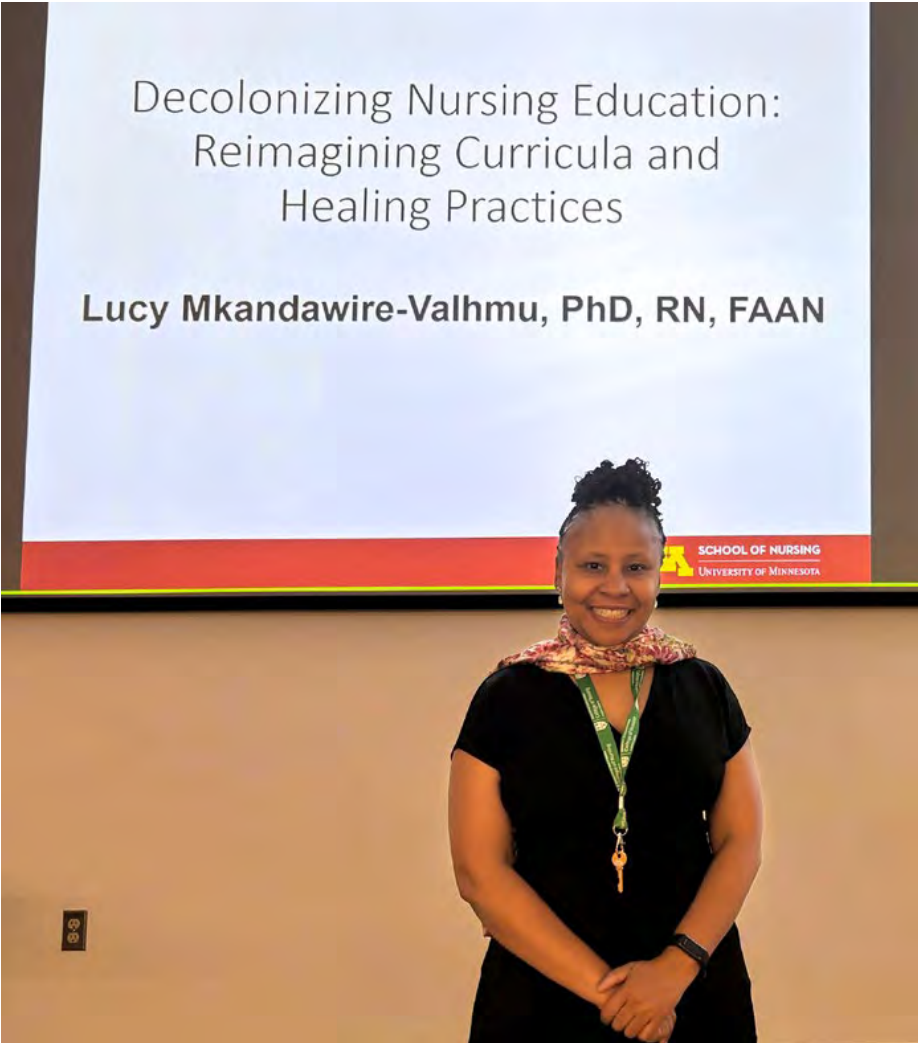


USask College of Nursing was pleased to welcome Dr. Lucy Mkandawire-Valhmu (PhD) from the University of Minnesota School of Nursing, as the featured speaker for the 2024 Myrtle Crawford Memorial Lecture Series.

Her lecture topics included Unravelling Colonial Legacies: Transforming Health Education for Equity and Inclusion, Decolonizing Nursing Education: Reimagining Curricula and Health Practices, and Decolonizing Research Practice in Nursing Academia.

Dr. Mkandawire-Valhmu’s work as a nurse scientist focuses on women disproportionately impacted by gender-based violence due to intersecting factors like racial/ethnic identity, socioeconomic status, and other factors. Her current research examines the violence experienced by American Indian and Black women, their access to healthcare and support during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the healthcare needs of refugee women experiencing gender-based violence in Malawi.

“Dr. Mkandawire-Valhmu is an incredible researcher whose work is advancing nursing science and positioning nurses as leaders in improving health outcomes for women experiencing gender-based violence intersecting with race, ethnicity, gender, social class, colonialism, and



Dr. Lucy Mkandawire-Valhmu from the University of Minnesota School of Nursing. Breanna Pochipinski.

“To have Dr. Mkandawire-Valhmu present her research and expertise to our faculty was an incredible opportunity for the University of Saskatchewan.”

– DR. LOUISE RACINE

neocolonial eras,” said Dr. Louise Racine (PhD), USask College of Nursing associate dean research and graduate studies.

The Myrtle Crawford Memorial Lecture Series was established in honour of Myrtle Evangeline Crawford (1923 –1989), a long-time faculty member at the USask College of Nursing. She played a prominent role in establishing the Master of Nursing program and influenced the education of hundreds of nurses during her 35-year career. Crawford was also actively involved in

the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association (now the College of Registered Nurses of Saskatchewan), Canadian Nurses Association, Canadian Association for University Schools of Nursing and Canadian Association of History in Nursing.

Past lecturers in the Myrtle Crawford Memorial Series have included Drs. Courtney Howard, Alexander Clark, Beth Phoenix, Dorothy Pringle, Marilyn Oermann, Gina Brown, Angeline Bushy, Wendy Austin, Judith Oulton, Sheryl Reimer Kirkham, and Ivy Oandasan.

DR. TANIA KRISTOFF AWARDED PROVOST’S COLLEGE AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING TEACHING



Purple Quill Beadwork by 4 Sisters Métis Beadwork.

Dr. Tania Kristoff (PhD), USask College of Nursing associate professor – academic programming and undergraduate program lead, received the 2024 USask Provost’s College Award for Outstanding Teaching. This award recognizes an outstanding teacher in each College at the University of Saskatchewan.

“The College of Nursing is incredibly fortunate to have Dr. Kristoff as both a professor and undergraduate program lead,” said Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur). “She is passionate about nursing education, in particular, the use of technology like simulation and virtual reality to improve teaching. Her enthusiasm to teach students is evident.”

Dr. Kristoff’s teaching philosophy is represented by a Métis flower.

“The centre of the flower represents my core belief that teaching should be learner-centred,” she said. “The surrounding petals symbolize my teaching values of creating psychologically safe learning environments, effective teaching, lifelong learning, aspiring to lead and mentorship.

My teaching focuses on connecting with the learner, while weaving together experiences with new knowledge to produce meaningful and lasting learning.”

A registered nurse, Dr. Kristoff began her career at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon, followed by employment at One Arrow First Nation. She was also an assistant professor at First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) and taught with the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan. In 2016, she joined USask College of Nursing where she has supervised graduate learners and teaches in the undergraduate nursing program.

Colleague Lisa Duffield, a lecturer at the College of Nursing, has worked with Dr. Kristoff in the nursing skills and simulation labs in Prince Albert and notes that she demonstrates a genuine concern for students and an approachable, open-door policy, as well as a high standard for learning.

“She is highly motivated to strive for excellence in teaching by demonstrating mastery of the subject matter ensuring content is relevant and accurate.”



Associate Professor – Academic Programming and Undergraduate Program Lead Dr. Tania Kristoff. Submitted.

VISITING SCHOLAR SEEKS TO
EXPAND RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES



Dr. Flávia Gomes, Clinical Professor, University of São Paulo College of Nursing. Breanna Pochipinski.

In April 2024, USask College of Nursing welcomed visiting scholar Dr. Flávia Gomes (PhD) from the University of São Paulo, who shared her research on maternal mortality in Brazil and women’s sexual and reproductive health.

“My hope of presenting my research and meeting with USask faculty is that I can establish further research partnerships in Canada,” said Dr. Gomes (PhD). “During my visit, I am also hoping to open the door for my colleagues in São Paulo to find potential research interest alignments between them and researchers at the University of Saskatchewan.”

Dr. Gomes is an obstetric nurse and clinical professor in the Maternal-Infanti

and Public Health Department at the University of São Paulo at Ribeirão Preto College of Nursing. She is also the coordinator of the Graduate Program in Public Health Nursing, an interdisciplinary and multi-professional academic program. Her research focuses on maternal mortality and morbidity issues, breastfeeding, and homeless women, and her most recent work centres on women’s healthcare transition.

During her visit, Dr. Gomes toured the university campus in Saskatoon. She also met with faculty and staff from the Colleges of Nursing, Dentistry and Medicine, as well as the International Office and the Office

“Having the chance to visit the beautiful University of Saskatchewan campus and the city of Saskatoon to get reacquainted with colleagues and to meet new faculty with similar research interests was such a great opportunity.”

– DR. FLÁVIA GOMES

of the Vice-President Research.

Dr. Gomes completed her post-doctorate nursing education at the University of Alberta in 2007, where she met USask College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

“Dr. Gomes and I have had the opportunity to work together on several graduate student research projects, as we both have an interest in women and global health,” said Dr. Richter. “It was wonderful to see Dr. Gomes again and to hear about all the exciting things she is working on.”

COLLEGE OF NURSING HOSTS THIRD ANNUAL
RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP DAY



3rd annual USask College of Nursing Research and Scholarship Day. Caitlin Shrubsole.

In September 2024, USask College of Nursing hosted the third annual Research and Scholarship Day to celebrate the incredible initiatives at USask Nursing. With close to a hundred people in attendance, the event was an excellent opportunity to highlight the nurse scientists who are changing the future of nursing education through exploration and knowledge.

The keynote address *Comparing Virtual Reality to Traditional Simulation: Impacts on Students’ Clinical Judgment and Skill Acquisition*, was delivered by Dr. Cynthia Foronda (PhD), assistant dean for innovation and scholarship and professor of clinical at the University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies.

In addition to the keynote address, there were student poster presentations, two panel discussions and two PechaKucha presentations.

“The Research and Scholarship Day was a great way to share all the wonderful work that is being done by faculty and students

and to encourage collaboration among researchers,” said Dr. Louise Racine (PhD), USask College of Nursing associate dean research and graduate studies.

The day concluded with the presentation of student awards for best abstract in the undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral categories.

The Undergraduate Student Research Award was given to Zebib Araya for her submission Digitizing the Past: Preserving Saskatchewan’s Nursing Education Legacy Through Undergraduate Research.

Amanda McArthur received the Master’s Student Research Award for her work, New Graduate Nurses’ Perspectives on Using Virtual Reality to Impact Clinical Reasoning.

The final award, the Doctoral Research Award, was presented to Comfort Nsiah for her work, Experiences and Views of Older Adults Regarding Patient Advocacy in Acute Care Settings.

“After attending Dr. Foronda’s insightful keynote address and hearing from the panellists about all the innovative work being done with virtual reality and the scholarship of teaching and learning, I walked away with such a positive sense of excitement about the future of nursing education and the confidence in the discipline of nursing. Our College, in particular, is well positioned to educate nurses that Saskatchewan and the world needs.”

– DR. LOUISE RACINE

USASK AND GREAT PLAINS COLLEGE PARTNER FOR BSN PROGRAM IN SWIFT CURRENT

The University of Saskatchewan and Great Plains College have partnered to bring the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program to the Swift Current campus in fall 2025. This new partnership will allow aspiring registered nurses to complete their pre-professional year of study and the remaining three years of the USask BSN program at Great Plains College.

“The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing feels strongly about students being able to obtain degree-level nursing education, regardless of where they live in Saskatchewan,” said College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

“Offering the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in Swift Current, in partnership with Great Plains College, is an excellent opportunity for students to learn where they live in southwest Saskatchewan.”

As of fall 2024, students were able to complete the 10 required pre-professional courses at Great Plains College. This gives

them the credits to apply to the USask College of Nursing and complete years two, three and four of their nursing degree at the Great Plains distributed nursing site in Swift Current.

“Our community and partners have been asking when Great Plains College will offer a full degree nursing program, and today, we’re thrilled to announce this important partnership with the University of Saskatchewan that will bring the USask Bachelor of Science in Nursing to Swift Current,” said Brad Mahon, president and CEO at Great Plains College.

“Registered nurses are a vital part of the healthcare system, and we’re thrilled to provide a local option for future nurses to complete their education and prepare for a rewarding career in healthcare.”

Great Plains College will accept between 10 and 20 BSN students annually.

“We know many students stay where they



At the official signing event in Swift Current (l to r) Dr. Solina Richter (Dean, USask Nursing) and Brad Mahon (President and CEO, Great Plains College). [Breanna Pochipinski](#).

learn, so we’re optimistic that this program, in addition to the Continuing Care Assistant and Practical Nursing programs, will help meet the needs of our local healthcare facilities,” said Keleah Ostrander, vice-president, programs and students at Great Plains College.

NURSING STUDENT GRATEFUL TO STUDY IN PRINCE ALBERT

Desiré Hoare, a fourth-year USask College of Nursing student, always wanted to be a nurse, but as a single mother, moving away from Prince Albert to complete a nursing degree was unrealistic.

“I was working as a massage therapist, but I knew I wanted to do something more,” said Hoare. “I didn’t know USask offered the full Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in Prince Albert until I heard an ad on the radio, and the rest is history.”

Hoare said her experience at the Prince Albert Campus has been very positive and encourages anyone who is thinking about doing their nursing degree with USask to apply right away.

“The smaller class sizes create a more personal experience. My instructors know me by name, and I’ve had the chance to get to know them on a different level than I would have on a bigger campus,” noted Hoare. “Our classes at the Prince



College of Nursing student Desiré Hoare at the Prince Albert Campus. [Submitted](#).

Albert Campus are more intimate and we know most of our peers, which gives us, as students, the opportunity to share our individual strengths with each other.”

Hoare plans to work in either med-surg or the emergency room after she completes her degree and passes her national licensing exam. “I look forward to working in my home community as soon as I become a registered nurse,” said Hoare.

Once she gains some experience practicing as a registered nurse, Hoare plans to further her education to become a nurse practitioner.

“My big goals include taking the NP program and eventually opening a private practice and/or teaching alongside the amazing instructors who taught me!” said Hoare.

“I am so grateful for the opportunity to study nursing in Prince Albert.”

COLLEGE OF NURSING LAUNCHES AMBASSADOR PROGRAM



Alumni and Student Nursing Ambassadors (top l to r: Celise Hack, Brooke Zwozdesky; bottom l to r: Maria Allan, Justine Capilitan). [Submitted](#).

USask College of Nursing has launched a new initiative to share the diverse stories of its community. Beginning January 2024, the communications team interviewed interested graduates and current students about their experiences during and after their studies.

Featured ambassadors include alumna Celise Hack (BSN’12), alumna and current USask nursing clinical instructor Brooke Zwozdesky (BSN’19), Maria Allan, a fourth-year BSN student in Saskatoon, and Justine Capilitan, fourth-year BSN student from the Prince Albert Campus.

“For alumni, being a College of Nursing ambassador is a great way to stay connected with the USask Nursing community,” said Breanna Pochipinski, College of Nursing digital marketing and communications specialist. “It’s an opportunity for alumni to show current nursing students what they can expect when they enter the nursing profession.”

The ambassador program also allows prospective students interested in joining the profession to glimpse at the life of a nursing student and the different

career paths registered nurses can take.

“A lot of people only think about providing care at the bedside when they think about nursing,” said Pochipinski. “But nursing is so much more.”

“The profession is so diverse and the videos and stories shared through the USask Nursing ambassador program will give an insight into what a career as a nurse can really be like.”

– BREANNA POCHIPINSKI

The ambassadors’ stories are featured in advertisements and across College of Nursing social media channels.

EARLY ADMISSION OPTION NOW AVAILABLE FOR BSN PROGRAM

USask College of Nursing introduced an early admission option for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program 2025 intake. In addition to the regular admissions schedule, the early admission process aims to give prospective nursing students notice of acceptance in February or March, four to five months earlier than in the past.

“The way our admissions have traditionally worked, qualified applicants for the BSN program receive their acceptance letter in July or August for a September start of classes,” said College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

“This is often a tight timeline for incoming students to plan, especially if they are relocating to one of our ten campuses or distributed sites throughout Saskatchewan. They need time to look for housing, find jobs, and get organized for the start of classes.”

The 150 seats reserved for early admission applicants were available at almost all campuses and distributed sites across the province. The application process used the same eligibility and selection criteria as the regular admission to the BSN program, and spots were competitive.

“We encourage all students who meet the eligibility criteria to apply early and not wait until later in the application period,” added Dr. Richter.



USask College of Nursing students Lawrence Abogado and Saryn Leson at the Yorkton distributed nursing site. [LF Photography](#).

USASK FORMALIZES PARTNERSHIP WITH ST. PETER’S COLLEGE TO OFFER BSN IN MUENSTER



The University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing and St. Peter’s College formalized their partnership and welcomed the first Bachelor of Science in Nursing cohort to St. Peter’s College in Muenster in September 2024. The partnership allows students to complete their undergraduate nursing degree without relocating.

Previously, when they completed their pre-professional classes and were accepted into years 2-4 of the BSN program, students transferred to the main USask campus in Saskatoon or other distributed nursing sites to complete their studies. Now, students will take their first-year of pre-professional classes through St. Peter’s College, then apply to USask College of Nursing to complete years 2 to 4 of the nursing program also at the College.

“This partnership expands USask Nursing’s “learn where you live” philosophy, giving students from east-central Saskatchewan the opportunity to study nursing closer to home,” said USask College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter (DCur).

“It is an exciting day to see the collaboration come together and to welcome our first nursing students in Muenster. We look



At the official signing event in Muenster (l to r front: Dr. Lynn Jansen (Interim Associate Dean, Academic, USask Nursing), Dr. Solina Richter (Dean, USask Nursing), Rob Harasymchuk (President, St. Peter’s College), Dr. Jim Dosman (Board of Governors, St. Peter’s College), and Jim Wasserman (Council Member, Village of Muenster); back: University of Saskatchewan College of Nursing 2nd-year nursing students. 📷 Breanna Pochipinski.

forward to celebrating the Class of 2027 Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates from the St. Peter’s College distributed nursing site!”

St. Peter’s College President & Vice-Chancellor Rob Harasymchuk echoes this enthusiasm for the program. “St. Peter’s has long been known for its mission-

centred focus on academic excellence and support for student wellness and success, and our environment will contribute positively to nursing students who study here. This collaboration is an important contributor to our provincial healthcare system’s need for more registered nurses in the future and will provide significant direct benefits to our region.”

COLLEGE OF NURSING FACULTY CELEBRATE PROMOTIONS



The College of Nursing congratulates the following faculty members on their promotions in 2024.

Promotion to professor

- Dr. Jill Bally (PhD), Saskatoon Campus
- Dr. Shelley Spurr (PhD), Saskatoon Campus

Promotion to associate professor

- Dr. Tania Kristoff (PhD), Prince Albert Campus



(l to r) Drs. Jill Bally, Shelley Spurr, and Tania Kristoff. 📷 Dave Stobbe.

“These promotions are important milestones recognizing the commitments Drs. Bally, Spurr, and Kristoff are making to their careers,” said College of Nursing Dean

Dr. Solina Richter (DCur). “These faculty have worked incredibly hard on their research, teaching, and scholarship activities. On behalf of everyone at the

College of Nursing, I wish to congratulate and thank them for their dedication.”

COLLEGE OF NURSING RECOGNIZES FACULTY AND STAFF FOR YEARS OF SERVICE



At the annual College of Nursing retreat, the following faculty and staff were recognized for their years of service:



Associate Professor Cheryl Besse (left) and Instructor Tish King (right) are recognized for 30 years of service by College of Nursing Dean Dr. Solina Richter. 📷 David Stobbe.

5 YEARS

- Raissa Berry (Clinical Coordinator, Regina)
- Michelle Patterson (Lecturer, Saskatoon)
- Carrie Pratt (Instructor, Prince Albert)
- Dr. Schroder Sattar (PhD) (Associate Professor, Regina)

10 YEARS

- Tracy Gabriel (Instructor, Yorkton)
- Sherri Haleschuk (Administrative Support, Prince Albert)
- Dr. Hua Li (PhD) (Associate Professor, Saskatoon)
- April Mackey (Instructor, Regina)
- Dr. Wanda Martin (PhD) (Associate Professor, Saskatoon)

10 Years continued

- Kathy Rodger (Associate Professor – Academic Programming, Regina)
- Zennon Slowski (Student Information Systems Specialist, Saskatoon)

15 YEARS

- John Allison (Educational Technology and Project Developer, Saskatoon)
- Bruce Atamanenko (Senior Support Specialist, Saskatoon)
- Lori Boen (Instructor, Saskatoon)
- Cheryl Cummings (Instructor, Saskatoon)
- Bonnie Kraska (Operations Manager, Prince Albert)

15 Years continued

- Tammy Morrison (Financial Analyst, Saskatoon)
- Heather Wolch (Instructor, Saskatoon)

20 YEARS

- Dr. Jill Bally (PhD) (Professor, Saskatoon)
- Dr. Jodie Bigalky (PhD) (Assistant Professor, Regina)
- Dr. Lynn Jansen (PhD) (Interim Associate Dean Academic, Saskatoon)
- Dr. Pammla Petrucka (PhD) (Professor, Regina)
- Mark Tomtene (Director of Operations and Strategic Planning, Saskatoon)
- Raeleen Wilson (Administrative Coordinator – Research and Graduate Studies, Saskatoon)

25 YEARS

- Dr. Shelley Spurr (PhD) (Professor, Saskatoon)

30 YEARS

- Cheryl Besse (Associate Professor – Academic Programming, Undergraduate Program Lead, Saskatoon)
- Tish King (Instructor, Saskatoon)

The College of Nursing is thankful to the faculty and staff for the countless hours they have committed to making the College what it is today and what it will be in the future.

USASK GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCHES CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING WITH 2SLGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY



Dr. Melissa Dykhuizen (BSN’04, MN’14, PhD’24) enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing (PhD) program at USask to pursue research with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

“I was inspired by the different opportunities having a PhD in nursing could provide in both helping people and my career development,” said Dr. Dykhuizen. “I worked at a sexual health clinic for many years and realized I did not know a lot about transgender health. I was inspired to learn more, so I did a lot of reading only to discover there have been a lot of missed opportunities to include transgender, Two Spirit and gender-diverse people in related health research.”

Dr. Dykhuizen successfully defended her PhD in April 2024, after completing her dissertation, *A Narrative Inquiry into the Experiences of Cervical Cancer Screening for Transgender Men*. She saw a gap in

the literature concerning this topic and wanted to rectify it.

“Taking into consideration my personal, nursing, and educational experiences, I was exploring transgender health research topics for my dissertation when I decided I wanted to look at cervical cancer screening and transgender men in the Canadian context, as I found nothing was being looked at in our Canadian, and particularly, Saskatchewan context.”

Dr. Dykhuizen hopes to present her dissertation internationally, publish an open-access manuscript, and translate her research to start breaking down barriers.

“I would love for individuals who hear or read about my work to take an interest in making healthcare access – particularly cervical cancer screening – better for transgender, Two Spirit, and gender-diverse individuals,” Dr. Dykhuizen said.



Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing graduate Dr. Melissa Dykhuizen. Submitted.

NURSING STUDENT GRATEFUL TO STUDY IN HOME COMMUNITY



Justine Capilitan, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing student, is thankful for the chance to study at USask in Prince Albert (PA): it allows him to stay in his home community and experience the USask PA Campus.

Prince Albert is one of several locations throughout Saskatchewan the College of Nursing has offered the BSN program since 2012. “The opportunity to complete my entire nursing degree in Prince Albert has meant so much to me,” said Capilitan.

“Coming to university can be intimidating, but in Prince Albert classes are small, so you get to know your classmates, and the instructors and professors know your name. If you need help, they’re there to help you right away. The faculty are approachable, and it’s a very supportive, team-oriented student community.”

These factors lead Capilitan to recommend USask College of Nursing in PA. “It’s a great opportunity, the perfect environment to learn from your peers, and if you’re not from Prince Albert, it’s the ideal place to move to when starting out on your own, as it’s not a big city,” he explained.



Nursing student Justine Capilitan at the USask Prince Albert Campus. Dave Stobbe.

Capilitan plans to continue living in PA upon graduation.

“I will be writing my national licensure exam as soon as possible, and once I become licensed as a registered nurse, I plan to stay in Prince Albert and work at the Victoria Hospital,” he said.

COLLEGE OF NURSING KNOWLEDGE KEEPER AND INDIGENOUS STUDENT ADVISOR COMPLETES DOCTORATE PROGRAM



Dr. Kathleen McMullin (BEd’88, MEd’95, PhD’24) is not only the Knowledge Keeper and Indigenous Student Advisor at USask College of Nursing, but also a proud alumna. Ten years after beginning her PhD program through the Department of Health Sciences with the College of Medicine in 2014, she completed her Doctor of Philosophy with the successful defence of her PhD dissertation *Kewetan: Walking in the Ancestral Footsteps of Our Woodland Cree Grandparents*.

“I was denied the opportunity to finish high school when I was only 14 years old so I could go to work to support my family,” said Dr. McMullin. “This decision hurt me deeply, as I loved school. Eventually, when I was 28 and had two young sons, I decided to return to school to pursue a degree in teaching.”

McMullin completed her Bachelor of Education and Master of Education degrees at USask in 1988 and 1995, respectively. Ten years later, she started community-based health research with the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology and the Canadian Centre for Rural and Agriculture Health. The research projects she was involved in there inspired her to further her education. When deciding to return to university for a third time, she knew USask was the right choice.

“I chose the University of Saskatchewan for my PhD program because it feels like home after successfully completing two degrees at this institution,” said Dr. McMullin.

“I was inspired by the professors I worked with on various health-related projects and was motivated to pursue advanced studies so I could continue working with them in some capacity.”

McMullin plans to use her PhD in her current position at USask Nursing as



College of Nursing Knowledge Keeper and Indigenous Student Advisor Dr. Kathleen McMullin. Dave Stobbe.

a resource for College of Nursing students writing papers on holistic health in Indigenous communities.

“During my doctoral research, I interviewed 13 Elders and Knowledge Keepers of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band regarding the values and customs of their families,” said Dr. McMullin. “In essence, their stories were a portrayal of holistic health, and this helped me understand how they became Elders and Knowledge Keepers of their communities. This knowledge will help me as the Knowledge Keeper at the College of Nursing.”

“The University of Saskatchewan is such a beautiful campus, in both Saskatoon and Prince Albert, and I feel proud when I stand on its grounds.”

– DR. KATHLEEN MCMULLIN

NURSING STUDENT GRATEFUL TO STUDY IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

Leandra McLeod wanted to earn her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree, but relocating to complete a program was not an option.

“Staying close to home while studying in La Ronge was important for me because my support system was in place, especially since my two youngest children attend daycare and are just starting to go to school,” she shared, noting that she’d previously worked as a waitress, educational assistant, and family support worker.

“Financially, everything made sense to stay close to home. Not to mention, I love the nature in northern Saskatchewan and driving in the city is not something I like to do, so La Ronge is perfect for me!”

McLeod has thoroughly enjoyed her nursing education thus far. “The small class sizes in La Ronge and the additional

help you get from instructors when needed means there is a lot of one-on-one time if there is a concept that needs further explanation,” she said.

“I would recommend the BSN program to anyone who has an interest in healthcare.”

When completing her degree and becoming licensed as a registered nurse, McLeod aims to work in acute care in hospitals or public health within the community.

“I always try to get friends and family to either apply into nursing or go back to school and further their education in a field that interests them,” added McLeod.

“I found this to be such a great opportunity to attend the University of Saskatchewan and have access to the complete nursing program right in my community of La Ronge.”



College of Nursing student Leandra McLeod from the La Ronge distributed nursing site. © Megan Heyhurst Photography.

STUDENT WINS SCHOLARSHIP AND PREPARES FOR ADVENTURE STUDYING ABROAD



Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Queen Tayab at the USask Saskatoon Campus. © Breanna Pochipinski.

USask College of Nursing congratulates fourth-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing student Queen Tayab for winning the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Program Metropolia UAS scholarship.

Completing her first three years at the University of Saskatchewan Saskatoon Campus, Tayab initially chose USask because it allowed her to stay close to her immediate family in Saskatoon.

But now in her final year of the nursing program, with the Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Program Metropolia UAS scholarship, she has decided to spread her wings and study abroad in Finland.

“I applied for the scholarship because I am eager to expand my nursing knowledge and gain experiences within Finland’s renowned healthcare and education system. I want to learn

new approaches to nursing, build international connections, and acquire insights that I can apply to my practice upon my return or in future international work endeavours.”

She’s also keen to immerse herself in a new culture and is looking forward to her adventure.

No matter where her future studies and work take her, Tayab will take with her the reasons why she decided to enter the nursing profession.

“Nursing allows me to bring together my passion for caring, teaching, advocacy, and holistic healthcare, while giving me a hands-on way to be there for others when it matters,” she said.

Tayab will leave for Finland at the end of January 2025 and return home in June after attending the International Council of Nursing 2025 Congress in Helsinki.

USASK ALUMNUS WELCOMES NURSING STUDENTS AT NORTH WEST COLLEGE



Bachelor of Science in Nursing students at the North Battleford distributed nursing site. © Kris Jones.

Dr. Eli Ahlquist (EdD) (BSN’04) is president and CEO of North West College, a registered nurse, and a USask College of Nursing alumnus. He was pleased to welcome the first students pursuing their entire Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree in North Battleford in September 2024.

“The partnership between North West College and USask Nursing to offer the complete Bachelor of Science in Nursing program in North Battleford is a significant step forward in the North West College mission to provide educational opportunities that meet the unique needs in our community,” Dr. Ahlquist said. “It is a win-win situation for both students and the region’s healthcare sector.”

Students take their pre-professional year of arts and science classes through North West College, then apply to USask College of Nursing to complete the remaining three years at the North West College distributed nursing site in North Battleford.

“Our campus and community offer unique opportunities for these students, including more affordable housing and smaller class sizes,” said Dr. Ahlquist. “These nursing students will be learning in a recently renovated modern, state-of-the-art lab with enhanced technology, ensuring students receive a high-quality education that supports the development of the required entry-level competencies for registered nurses. The students will benefit from the teaching of experienced faculty from both institutions dedicated to providing quality nursing education and mentoring.”

Most graduates who complete their degree in their community stay and practice there.

“By expanding access to registered nursing education, we aim to address the increasing healthcare needs of the region and contribute to the growth and stabilization of the nursing workforce.”

“By offering the BSN program in North Battleford, we are not only giving students the opportunity to learn where they live, but we are increasing the chance these students will work as registered nurses in our community afterwards.”

– DR. ELI AHLQUIST