

{ Broadening the Community of Inquiry }



2006
Profiles in Research

As Canada's Open University, Athabasca University is dedicated to improving access to post-secondary education for adult learners worldwide.

The University has met this mission by becoming a leader in distance and online learning since its inception in 1970. Currently, Athabasca serves more than 32,000 students who live throughout its home province of Alberta as well as Canada and the world.

With a focus on liberal arts, sciences, and professional programs, Athabasca University offers more than 700 courses as well as bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and undergraduate and graduate certificates and diplomas.

With a growing research enterprise, Athabasca University encourages investigation in all disciplines. The University has three Canada Research Chairs and is recognized as a world leader in e-learning and its application to the scholarship of teaching.

In June 2005, Athabasca became the first Canadian university to be awarded accreditation by one of the six regional accrediting bodies in the United States. Athabasca University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (3624 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA, 19104, 267.284.5000).

Athabasca University is also recognized by the Degree Quality Assessment Board in British Columbia.

Profiles in Research

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President's Message

"Today, knowledge rather than traditional skill is the main productive force." – DiFazio, 1994

In its *2005 Report on University Research and Knowledge Transfer*, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada states that a country's capacity for research and innovation is intimately tied to economic prosperity and the well-being of its citizens.

The same holds true for Athabasca University—it is one of the fastest growing post-secondary institutions in Canada, and as the University flourishes, so does its innovative research.

This third edition of *Profiles in Research* showcases the diverse research activities thriving in the wake of Athabasca's growing success. The researchers are both senior and new faculty. The subject matter informs teaching at the University and ranges from project management and online community-based learning to the analysis of values and the development of social policy.

Our research activities were just one of the many things that contributed to our accomplishment in 2005 of becoming the first Canadian university to be awarded accreditation by one of the regional higher education boards in the U.S.

I hope that in the following pages you will get an indication of the enthusiasm, excitement and vitality that constitutes Athabasca University's community of inquiry.

Frits Pannekoek, PhD

President, Athabasca University

Research Highlights

It is the role of universities to generate ideas, to innovate, and to explore opportunities for new knowledge. In recent years, Athabasca University has been exploring research opportunities at an unprecedented rate for the institution. As this third edition of Profiles in Research Shows, Athabasca is a source of research not only in its specialty, e-learning, but also in a great number of other disciplines.

Here are highlights of Athabasca University's recent research progress:

- The article, *Learner Use of Learning Objects*, authored by Dr. Mohamed Ally, Dr. Martha Cleveland-Innes, Natasha Boskic (Master of Distance Education graduate) and Sandra Larwill (Master of Distance Education student), received the award for Best Paper at the CADE (Canadian Association of Distance Education) 2005 conference.
- The University is planning to establish an Alberta Centre of Excellence in e-learning and e-research. As part of its mandate, the Centre will study m-learning, which means delivering education using mobile devices such as personal digital assistants (PDAs), cell phones, and palm-sized computers.
- To this end, Athabasca is seeking a Research Chair in mobile/wireless learning.
- In 2005, Dr. Martha Cleveland-Innes won an Excellence in Research award from CADE for her work on how students' identities change when they participate in online communities.
- Also in 2005, Dr. Janice Thomas was named a principal investigator in a \$2.5 million (US) study entitled "Understanding the Value of Implementing Project Management." The study is partially funded by the Project Management Institute. (See Dr. Thomas's profile on page 12.)
- Total external research funding exceeded \$2.3 million in 2004–2005, the first time funding has reached this level.
- Athabasca University is a lead institution in the Canadian International Polar Year initiative. As a member of the University of the Arctic, Athabasca University is participating in the development of a proposal for satellite-delivered wireless and mobile learning in the Polar region.

Research Growth

Athabasca University has experienced phenomenal growth in both its research funding and research activities. The first table below shows the growth in funding from industry and granting councils. The second table shows the growth in research activity as measured by the number of publications and presentations produced by faculty.

External Research Funding (*Three-Year Rolling Averages 2001–2005*)
(*in thousands of dollars*)

	2001–2003	2002–2004	2003–2005
Total sponsored research values	\$794.30	\$1,279.00	\$1,859.30
Support from council sources	\$178.70	\$321.00	\$469.30
Council support ratio (council sources/total sponsored research revenue)	22.49%	25.1%	25.24%
Support from community and industry sources*	\$615.60	\$958.00	\$1,390.00
Community and industry support ratio	77.51%	74.9%	74.76%

* Includes other federal, provincial, and industry funding from sources such as the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), Office of Learning Technologies (OLT), etc.

Research Activity (*Three-Year Rolling Averages 2001–2005*)

	2001–2003	2002–2004	2003–2005
Books authored or co-authored	37.7	44.0	47.0
Books edited or co-edited	4.7	4.0	5.7
Refereed articles	71.3	101.7	126.7
Non-refereed publications	39.7	43.3	33.7
Conference presentations	174.7	228.0	247.3

Note: Numbers from previous years have been amended to reflect granting council definitions. Books authored or co-authored include chapters authored or co-authored. Refereed articles include refereed journals and conference proceedings.



Dr. Alvin Finkel

{ Professor, History }

Growing up in Winnipeg's north end has influenced much of Dr. Alvin Finkel's research over the years. His observations at a young age of poverty, slums, homelessness, and the working poor have stayed with him.

“That experience shaped my views a lot. In the 1950s, there was an attitude that Canada never had it so good,” says Finkel, who has been a history professor at Athabasca University since 1978. “The middle class were moving up and out to the suburbs, to a better life. But if you lived in the inner cities, you saw a lot of poverty, both in terms of the working poor and people who had little option but to be on welfare. As an academic, I’ve been interested in how these issues have been addressed over the years.”

His recently published book, *Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History*, traces the development of social policy in Canada from the period of First Nations settlements to the present day, exploring the ways in which Canadians have organized themselves to deal with (or to ignore, Finkel suggests) the needs of the ill, the poor, the elderly, and the young.

He sees the issues in clear political terms. Canada’s current social policies are the result of power struggles and compromises among different social forces, reflecting shifts over time in the ability of various social groups to articulate and campaign for social changes.

“On the whole, big businesses have the advantage in setting the agenda because they control the media, operate well-funded think tanks to influence public opinion, and scare people into thinking that programs that redistribute wealth will result in more unemployment.

“But, at different times, particularly after recessions and depressions that call into question the wisdom of this approach, labour groups, farmers’ and women’s organizations, and veterans, among others, have been able to sway public opinion sufficiently that political parties have had to stand up to, at least to a degree, business interests that oppose social programs.”

Generally, however, these programs are shaped in ways that end up placating the wealthy by redistributing wealth negligibly, he states. In some cases such as regional development grants and mortgage guarantees, the wealthy have arguably been the main benefactors.

“There was a time when the term ‘welfare state’ did not have the negative connotation it now has, when it meant literally programs that were for the welfare of the citizens, programs that helped to create employment and prosperity as opposed to simply aiding the casualties of the economic system. After the Depression and the Second World War, there was general consensus around the idea of the welfare state. Programs such as

public health, social housing and equalization grants came out of this thinking. In the late 1970s, the growth of neo-liberalism brought a campaign to dismantle welfare programs and let the market correct itself. These programs, and programs such as day care, remain on the agenda to a certain extent today because of political attempts to win support from the labour movement and the working class.”

Finkel believes social policy in North America does not compare well with countries such as Scandinavia where governments provide a base of services that everyone can count on.

“The programs that work best, that create a more level society, are those where everybody draws the benefits. Universal entitlements such as health care, day care, housing, and post-secondary education are paid for with taxes collected by the state, and everyone benefits from them.

“The welfare state created in North America sets up a conflict between people who are working, and paying taxes, and people without work who may be receiving assistance. Working people feel they are getting ripped off—that they are getting nothing for their taxes.”

Finkel thinks the country’s social policies would better represent the needs of the citizens if more working people and labour activists were present in government. “It is no accident that policies are not created by the people to whom they apply,” he says. While noting that there is no simple solution, Finkel suggests that countries with proportional systems of voting tend to provide a better representation of their citizenry.

“The ‘first-past-the-post’ voting system we have, where the person with the highest number of votes wins a small, geographically designed seat, achieves a poor representation of women, the working poor and labour. A proportional system forces parties to seek candidates who better reflect the social composition of the country. It also gives a greater voice to smaller parties who don’t have the corporate contributions required to win many seats in a first-past-the-post system. A more representative parliament, one that is composed of more than corporate lawyers, is more likely to focus on social policies that will benefit the disadvantaged. It’s an important point of view in terms of shaping meaningful social policy.”

Finkel sees plenty of social activism today but notes there are not the feelings of hope and militancy that were widespread in the ’60s and ’70s.

Recent Work

{ Dr. Alvin Finkel }

- Book review editor, *Labour/Le Travail*, 2000 to present
- Author, “Labour and the Political Economy of Alberta,” *Prairie Forum*, Winter 2006
- Author, “1935: The Social Credit Revolution,” *Alberta Transformed*, 2005, University of Calgary Press / University of Alberta Press
- Author, *Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History*, 2005, Wilfrid Laurier University Press
- Co-author, *History of the Canadian Peoples: Beginnings to Confederation, Vol. 1; Confederation to the Present, Vol. 2*; 2005, Pearson Education
- Co-author, *Canada: A National History*, 2005, Pearson Education
- Author, “The State of Writing on the Canadian Welfare State: What’s Class Got to Do with It?” *Labour/Le Travail*, Fall 2004
- Co-editor, *Foundations: Readings in Pre-Confederation Canadian History*, 2004, Pearson Education
- Co-editor, *Nation and Society: Readings in Post-Confederation Canadian History*, 2004, Pearson Education
- Author, “The Decline of Jewish Radicalism in Winnipeg, 1905–1960,” *Jewish Radicalism in Winnipeg, 1905–1960*, 2003, Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada
- Author, “Welfare for Whom? Class, Gender, and Race in Social Policy,” *Labour/Le Travail*, Spring 2002
- Author, “Alberta Social Credit and the Second National Policy,” *Toward Defining the Prairies*, 2001, University of Manitoba Press
- Contributing author, *Canada: Confederation to Present* (CD-ROM), 2001, Chinook Multimedia





Dr. Janice Thomas

{ Program Director, MBA in Project Management }

Project management as a discipline began in the 1950s with the development of the Polaris missile submarine. The complexity of that effort required completely new managing techniques. As important as these techniques are, they were not the only valuable outcome of that pioneering initiative in project management. Equally valuable was the emerging process of evaluating and enhancing the operation of projects continually. This process of learning is essential to ongoing project and organizational success.

Solid research into how to make projects run more smoothly, deliver greater benefits, and require less monetary and human investment has been limited in the past. This is where Dr. Janice Thomas steps in. She is an active and internationally recognized researcher whose research interests are grounded in almost 15 years' experience as an information technology (IT) project manager. She has been with Athabasca University for five years and is the program director of the Master of Business Administration in Project Management.

"IT projects do not succeed very often. I thought perhaps there was knowledge in the academic ivory tower that wasn't getting through to the front lines on the job. I decided to return and do my PhD in order to find that information and to get it out in the field so that project management could be done better.

"What I found was that the answers were not there. But I discovered there were better ways to ask questions that would help in working towards this goal. In general, resources are often wasted or underutilized in projects. I want to find solutions that are easier on people or organizations and that allow significant improvements through better project management."

Thomas has a wide and varied research program underway exploring issues related to: the professionalization of project management; the underlying assumptions in traditional project management guidelines; the role of personality, communication, and power in effective project management; the impact of complexity and chaos theories on our understanding of how projects function within organizations; and the ways that critical and post-modern theories expand our knowledge of project activities.

Currently, her largest research initiative is as one of the principal investigators in a three-year project called "Understanding the Value of Implementing Project Management." Partially funded by the Project Management Institute (PMI), the total value of the study is over \$2.5 million US, including the in-kind time and material contributions of all participating universities and organizations. The grant from PMI is one of the largest of its kind in the field of project management, Thomas says, and it demonstrates PMI's commitment to building the profession.

The research will enable a team of over 25 academics from more than 15 institutions on five continents to investigate the implementation of project management and the magnitude and nature of the value delivered

by project management practices. Cross-disciplinary research teams will address the question of project management value from diverse theoretical and organizational points of view.

The findings will provide the profession with the foundation necessary to better understand and quantify the value of implementing project management in organizations.

“It is true that project management is about rigorously managing time, cost, and quality, and understanding the impact on the project when changes are made in any of those areas. It is also about much more. It is about managing the organization and people interfaces. With this kind of management, projects are more transparent and people are kept aligned with the outcomes.

“It is about the execution of strategy and making sure the synergy amongst all the projects is operating,” Thomas says. “More and more, project management is being recognized as an important driver of economic growth and organizational health and well-being.”

During the economic downturn in the ’70s and ’80s, companies cut out what they saw as slack and overhead, Thomas says. When they wanted to do something new, they had to find additional resources for funding and staff and chose to do it on a project basis rather than from ongoing salaries. “As a result, there has been a tremendous growth in training programs and consultant certification because everybody wants to know how to make it work or work better. Project management is now considered essential in every kind of organization you can name.”

Thomas is a member of PMI’s Research Membership Advisory Group. She is also an invited member of a network charged with “Rethinking Project Management,” an initiative funded by the United Kingdom’s Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council. She holds adjunct appointments at the University of Calgary and the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. She has also worked with organizations such as the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, the Conference Board of Canada, Sun Microsystems, and Suncor to assist in understanding more effective project management practices.

Recent Work

{ Dr. Janice Thomas }

- Author, “Problematizing Project Management,” *Making Projects Critical*, 2006, Palgrave Publishing
- Co-author, “Understanding the Lived Experience of Managing Projects: The Need for More Emphasis on the Practice of Managing,” *Frontiers of Project Management Research*, 2005, PMI Publishing
- Co-author, “Professionalization of Project Management: What Does It Mean for Practice?” *The AMA Handbook of Project Management*, 2005, American Management Association
- Co-author, *Professionalization of Project Management: Exploring the Past to Map the Future*, 2004, PMI Publishing
- Co-author, “Deconstructing Project Management: A Gender Analysis of Project Management Guidelines,” *International Journal of Project Management*, 2003
- Co-author, “Developing Team Skills and Accomplishing Team Projects Virtually,” *Handbook of Online Learning*, 2002, Athabasca University
- Co-author, *Selling Project Management to Senior Executives*, 2002, PMI Publishing
- Co-author, “Project Management Maturity Models: The Silver Bullets of Competitive Advantage,” *Project Management Journal*, 2002
- Co-author, “Selling Project Management to Senior Executives: The Case for Avoiding Crisis Sales,” *Project Management Journal*, 2002
- Co-author, “Selling Project Management to Senior Executives: What’s the Hook?” *Frontiers of Project Management Research*, 2002, PMI Publishing
- Author, “Making Sense of Project Management,” *Projects as Business Constituents and Guiding Motives*, 2000, Elsevier Press





Dr. Margaret Edwards

{ Professor, Nursing and Health Studies }

Dr. Beth Perry

{ Associate Professor, Nursing }

We seek to recruit and hire faculty who are exemplary online educators. In order to achieve this, we need to have your perspective on what makes online educators exceptional. Please tell us about an incident or interaction you had with a faculty member during your master's program that you would categorize as an exceptional moment of learning.

The above request was made to Athabasca University nursing and health studies graduates so that Dr. Beth Perry and Dr. Margaret Edwards could identify what makes an instructor exemplary in the online environment. The study was begun in 2003 and supported by mission-critical funding from Athabasca University and funding from the Western Region Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing.

Within most disciplines, there are those who are recognized as being extremely skilled practitioners. These people are sometimes called exceptional or exemplary. In the education field, students remember these individuals as the teachers who positively influenced their learning. The commonality of these exemplary practitioners is that they do their work in a remarkable way, and their teaching strategies and interpersonal interactions are regarded by their students as highly successful.

“There has been a tremendous increase in online courses and programs. All the courses at the Centre for Nursing and Health Studies are online. The Internet is revolutionizing how people learn,” says Edwards, a registered nurse and a professor of nursing and health studies at Athabasca University since 1999. “But studies on effective online instruction are lacking. We want our students to have the best education experience possible. Part of that is the experience with the instructors. Our research focuses on exemplary online educators with the goal of improving online teaching by discovering which of their teaching strategies were exceptionally effective.”

“Since Athabasca University is committed to excellence in teaching, it is important that we know how online teachers can improve their teaching to make it truly excellent. By focusing, as this project does, on those educators who are identified by their students as exemplary, it is anticipated that we can discover information that will assist us in the ongoing professional development of new and current faculty who are teaching online,” says Perry, a registered nurse and a professor of nursing who has been with Athabasca University since 2000.

Much of the mission-critical research at Athabasca focuses on the online learning environment, where students must adjust and develop certain skills to be successful. But what skills do instructors working in the online environment need to develop? How do they need to adjust to teaching online?

Believing that seeking the experiences of students was the way to capture the information they were looking for, Perry and Edwards used narrative inquiry as a research method. The result was narratives rich in description of how exemplary online educators had affected the learners.

“Narrative analysis allows us to attempt to communicate what the study participants experienced. In narrative analysis, elements of the narratives, or stories, are organized into common themes,” Perry says. “This approach gives us an understanding of exemplary online teaching in the context in which it took place.”

The major themes that emerged from the study showed that exemplary online educators were challengers, affirmers, and influencers.

Challengers

Students said they valued teachers who had high expectations for them, those who challenged them to perform at levels beyond their own expectations for themselves.

I had one instance where the instructor explained that a paper that I had submitted did not meet my “usual” standards. I had indeed had trouble with it, and she suggested a rewrite and a chance to submit it again. Initially, I was not looking forward to the extra work, but she challenged me to do a more professional job... I was grateful... Her feedback was so encouraging...

Affirmers

By recognizing their potential, treating learners with respect, and recognizing and taking actions to assist with potential problems, exemplary teachers demonstrated to the learners that they valued them as individuals. This affirmation seemed to have a positive influence on the learning experience.

The best part came when my instructor, whose expertise and wisdom I greatly admire, noted that she had learned something new from the means by which I had presented my understanding of the concepts of nursing theory. I also enjoy being asked to share my work with future students or having input for improving courses.

Influencers

Students recalled examples of how the expertise of the teacher in a particular subject area and the strong online presence of the teacher were specific ways in which they were influenced.

Professor X's feedback on my assignment—publication of an article—stands out as a “special learning occasion.” Her method of putting together feedback in a positive format will stay with me for the rest of my life. Although I received an exceptional mark, the feedback was so well-documented that I think Dr. X can instruct other instructors on how to give feedback.

Although the findings parallel the study of exemplary classroom educators that Perry did in 1996, the way in which the online educators enacted these themes is somewhat different. By challenging, affirming and influencing the students, exemplary educators create an effective community of inquiry with the strong social, cognitive, and teaching presence necessary in the online environment. The findings will be useful both for instructors teaching online and institutions moving their curriculum online. They will also be included in the orientation for new faculty members at the University's Centre for Nursing and Health Studies.

“Based on our findings, we have a better understanding of the concept of exemplary online educators, and we are beginning to understand how to pass that knowledge on to teachers in the field of online education,” Edwards says. “Programs and delivery methods are not necessarily all that make an institution effective.”

In the end, the researchers say, the work is about increasing the learning moments and improving the educational experience for both student and teacher.

“We became teachers because we believe in lifelong learning and value education... An exemplary educational experience is joint transcendence,” Perry says. “Both the students and the instructor are changed by the experience.”

Recent Work

{ Dr. Margaret Edwards }

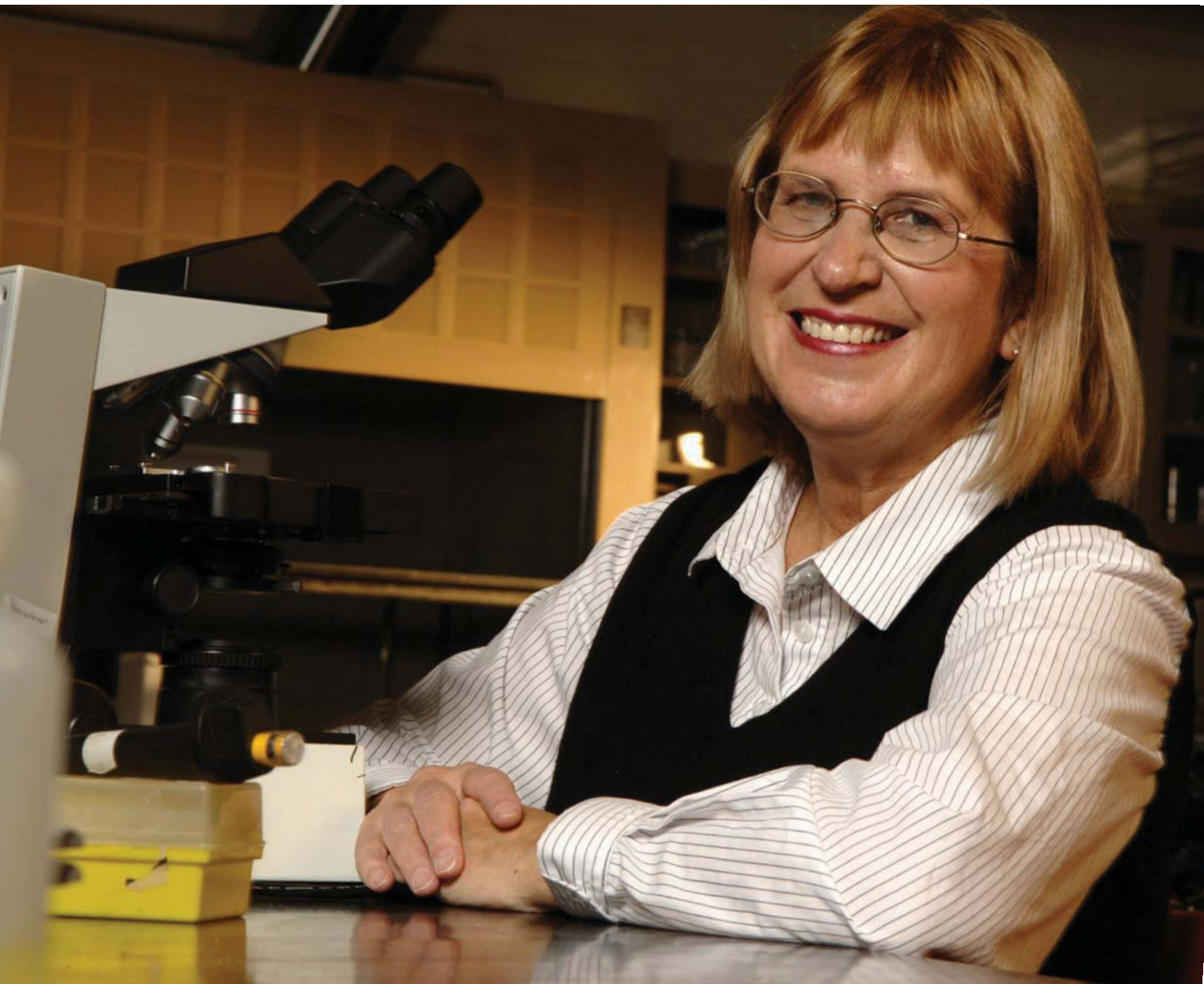
- Co-author/co-presenter, “Exemplary Online Educators: Creating a Community of Inquiry,” 17th Biennial Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia Conference, 2005
- Co-author, “Exemplary Online Educators: Creating a Community of Inquiry,” *The Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 2005
- Co-author, *Introduction to Nursing Informatics*, 2005, Springer-Verlag (Japanese and German editions of the 2nd edition of this book were published in 2002.)
- Author, “Nursing Informatics,” *Fundamentals of Nursing: Canadian Edition*, 2003, Prentice Hall
- Interviewee, “Creating a Positive Learning Climate,” *Online Classroom*, 2003
- Author, *The Internet for Nurses and Health Professionals*, 2002, Springer-Verlag

Recent Work

{ Dr. Beth Perry }

- Co-author/co-presenter, “Exemplary Online Educators: Creating a Community of Inquiry,” 17th Biennial Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia Conference, 2005
- Co-author, “Exemplary Online Educators: Creating a Community of Inquiry,” *The Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 2005
- Author, “Touched by a Nurse: The Imprint of Exemplary Oncology Nursing Care,” *Journal of the Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology*, 2005
- Author, “The Power of the Simplest Gesture When Caring for the Seriously Ill,” *Health Progress*, 2005
- Author, “Exemplary Care of the Palliative Patient: The Journey Shared,” *Dynamics: Journal of the Canadian Association of Critical Care Nurses*, 2005
- Author, “Core Values Brought to Life: Exemplary Nurses Share Their Stories,” *Nursing Standard*, 2005
- Award-winner, Schering Lectureship Award, 2005, Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology
- Author, “Living your Mission: Values Come to Life,” *Health Progress*, 2003
- Author, “Growth and Satisfaction,” *California Association of Healthcare Quality Forum*, 2003
- Editor, *99 Questions and More: A Handbook for Palliative Care Nurses*, 2002, Capital Health
- Author, “Growth and Satisfaction: The Human Connection and Finding Fulfillment as a Nurse,” *Canadian Nurse*, 2002
- Author, *Moments in Time: Images of Exemplary Nursing Care*, 1999, Canadian Nurses Association





Dr. Lisa Carter

{ Acting Associate Vice-President Academic }

Dr. Lisa Carter is committed to bringing people to science and science to people.

"I am passionate about science, and that's why I want to share it with others," says Carter. "Science is the basis of all things. Science is life—our fibre and makeup."

"Science is all about asking questions that challenge you to explore ideas in different ways. It's quite exciting when you come up with answers you were not expecting."

Carter has been with Athabasca University for 10 years and is currently the acting associate vice-president academic. Prior to this she held positions as chair of the Centre for Science and director of arts and science. With a background in immunology and microbiology, she has had long-standing research interests in exploring how nerves communicate with white blood cells. In recent years, Carter has turned her attention to community-based research in science and in science education.

Her research interests now involve community outreach programs in Athabasca and throughout Alberta, a reflection of her desire to inspire people with science. She currently holds two research projects funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC).

Carter is the co-director of Science Outreach – Athabasca, a community-driven project in the Athabasca region that provides individuals of all ages with avenues for appreciating and becoming more aware of science. Supported by community members, local industry, and teachers, the project gives children and adults enjoyable ways to learn about the scientific richness of the area, such as the geological history of the region, the Athabasca skies, the local flora and fauna, and many scientific facts. Events have included science camps, information sessions, and community displays. The project's scope extends beyond the region as well—the Science Outreach website (<http://scienceoutreach.ab.ca>) has attracted a global audience as people from other places seek scientific information about the Athabasca area.

“We have proven that there is a need for this initiative, and its sustainability is a legacy for the Athabasca community. The community awareness and involvement has continued to expand every year,” Carter says.

Her second project, with funding from NSERC's PromoScience program and the Alberta Women's Science Network (www.awsn.com), is designed to promote math, science, and engineering as careers for young women. Called Operation Minerva, the project is a job-shadowing and mentoring program that gives girls opportunities to try out careers considered non-traditional for women. The Operation Minerva project has been in existence for 15 years, with community participants from rural and urban communities throughout Alberta.

In order to provide substantive evidence of the success of such projects, Carter is embarking on a long-term study of girls from grades 8 to 12 to investigate how mentoring programs impact their career choices in science, math, and engineering.

“Women make up half of the world, yet we see very clearly that there are certain fields where women are under-represented. We need more women in decision-making positions in government, law, education, and business, to name only a few areas. Conversely, we need more men in fields where women traditionally dominate... Women ask questions differently. Because of this, we need their input to provide a balanced society for all Canadians.

“There is an innate tendency for some women to step back from confrontation and competition. We need to find out from women in senior management what it is that has driven them to advance to these positions.

“For myself, I have always felt that I could use my life skills and education to make a difference for those around me. I am keenly aware that in any profession, we require change to advance in any part of our lives. I think that coming from a scientific background, I have been able to use the skills of a scientist: creativity, vision and the ability to listen and learn. These skills have given me opportunities to participate in change and to advance in my own career.

“We should not underestimate the impact that outreach programs can have on girls’ future career decisions. Opportunities for hands-on experience in various fields of science and engineering have to be available for girls so they can try out different things.”

Carter brings new meaning to the word “infectious”. She can inspire those who still shudder at memories of high school science class to want to know more about the beautiful mosaic that is the world around us. And she is instilling in young minds the desire to ask questions and see what answers they discover.

Recent Work

{ Dr. Lisa Carter }

- Program coordinator for participation of Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) Chairs for Women in Science, 11th Conference of the Canadian Coalition of Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology (CCWESTT), Calgary, 2006
- Contributor, “Women in SETT (Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology) – Building Communities,” an initiative by CCWESTT, funded in part by Status of Women Canada, 2003–2004
- President, CCWESTT, 2002-2004
- Author/presenter, “The Recruitment and Retention of Men and Women in Science, Engineering, Trades and Technology,” 10th Conference of CCWESTT, Brock University, Ontario, 2004
- Co-author/co-presenter, “Mentoring Activities of the Alberta Women’s Science Network,” International Conference of Women in Science, Engineering and Technology, Ottawa, 2002
- Co-author/co-presenter, “Operation Minerva: The Alberta Experience in Urban and Rural Centres,” Conference for Engineers, Scientists, Technologists and Mathematicians, Vancouver, 1998





Dr. Bruce Morito

{ Associate Professor, Philosophy }

Picture this scenario: a drought prevents a farmer from growing the usual crops. Government policies and programs help the farmer adapt by installing an irrigation system or by changing jobs.

But what other parts of the farmer's life are at stake in this scenario?

What if the drought has disrupted the family? What if the children move away because they don't see a future on the farm? What if the stress of the drought and change has led to family violence? Can the government assist stakeholders with these other consequences of the drought?

“Have the decision-makers looked at all the relevant perspectives and stakeholders?” asks Dr. Bruce Morito. “Are there government policies and programs in place to deal with all the effects of the drought?”

Morito, a professor of philosophy at Athabasca University since 1997, is currently a member of an interdisciplinary research team trying to understand stakeholder vulnerabilities to climate change and the capacities of institutions to adapt accordingly. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the project includes geographers, engineers, climatologists, sociologists, and others. Morito’s role is to identify and analyze the underlying values that shape stakeholders’ sense of vulnerability and the values that operate in institutions dealing with climate change issues. His approach is based on his book, *Thinking Ecologically: Environmental Thought, Values and Policy*.

Morito calls this work value analysis. It’s a different take on the cost benefit analysis of the business world. A value analysis examines values from as wide a perspective as possible, including ethical, religious, aesthetic, social, and economic perspectives. It is a research tool developed from a philosophical perspective and applied to the social sciences; it could help institutions develop more comprehensive and responsive policies and decision-making procedures, says Morito.

“Institutions need to be aware of the values underlying their policies and programs. They need to know what values are operating and how they operate in policy- and decision-making in order to understand the whole spectrum of needs... Farming is typically not just about making money. It is about people’s sense of who they are. When they have been farmers for generations and part of a farming community, vulnerabilities to drought are also vulnerabilities to their whole sense of identity.

“By applying a philosophical analysis to climate change, we can help determine whether institutions are operating according to appropriate and just policy- and decision-making schemes.”

Another situation Morito has examined is the decision to stock the Great Lakes with salmon. The value of the recreational fishery to the local economy is high. But the local indigenous people, the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, have an interest in maintaining the native fishery that depends on indigenous whitefish and lake trout, not salmon.

“The money isn’t all that matters to the Chippewas, since they believe that stocking exotic species violates the Creator’s intentions,” Morito says. “How appropriate is it for the government to take into account only the economic benefits of this decision? How good will the decision be for the aboriginal stakeholders?”

“The more I study environmental and aboriginal issues, the more I feel certain value systems are being imposed on people... I’m interested in how such impositions shut out voices and how this shutting out is made to appear justified.”

Along similar lines, Morito has just completed research on an SSHRC-funded project called “Cross-Cultural World View and Valuational Linkages: Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian.” Like his other research, this project engages value analysis in an attempt to identify and structure a cross-culturally respectful relationship.

The intent of these projects is to develop a new way to understand policy- and decision-making processes that would enhance the ability of institutions to be aware of and respond to stakeholder values.

Recent Work

{ Dr. Bruce Morito }

- Chief editor, *The Trumpeter*, 1998 to present
- Author, “Value and Ethical Analysis in Vulnerability to Climate Change: Establishing an Analytic Framework for Identifying, Classifying and Evaluating Vulnerability Issues,” 2005, Institutional Adaptations to Climate Change
- Chief researcher, “Cross-Cultural World View and Valuational Linkages: Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian,” 2001–2004
- Author, “Intrinsic Value: A Modern Albatross for the Ecological Approach,” *Environmental Values*, 2003
- Author, *Thinking Ecologically: Environmental Thought, Values and Policy*, 2002, Fernwood Books
- Author, “Language, Sustainable Development and Indigenous Peoples: An Ethical Perspective,” *Ethics and the Environment*, 2000





Dr. Kam Jugdev

{ Assistant Professor, Project Management and Strategy }

In the cutthroat marketplace, companies are constantly looking for ways to increase their competitive advantage so they can beat the opposition and improve financial performance. A company's competitive advantage stems from its strategic assets, many of which are intangible, or knowledge-based. Knowledge-based assets are hard for rivals to copy because they are culturally embedded and contextual.

Dr. Kam Judgev, an assistant professor of project management and strategy at Athabasca University since 2003, is using this approach to study project management as a source of competitive advantage.

“It takes more than tangible assets such as tools, techniques, or methodologies to gain a competitive advantage through project management. The concrete or tangible assets in project management may help a company achieve competitive parity, whereby the company is in the running with its rivals, but to achieve a competitive advantage through project management, companies need to invest in knowledge-based or intangible assets.”

Jugdev has applied for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant to fund this research and is excited that the pilot study findings support her line of investigation.

“This is an important topic because few academics have researched project management using the competitive advantage lens, let alone the relationship between tangible and intangible assets in project management. Companies that capitalize on their knowledge-based assets in project management stand to be more successful. The research will also result in an assessment tool for companies to use.”

Jugdev is also researching knowledge-sharing in projects through project reviews. “Project reviews are generally not planned or budgeted for. With the high turnover of personnel on many projects, and the length and complexity of many projects, the team wrapping things up at the end is rarely the same team that started the project. Yet project reviews, throughout the project life cycle as well as at the end, are invaluable in helping to avoid previous mistakes and to draw from earlier best practices.”

In collaboration with industry and the University of Calgary, where she is the sole adjunct professor in the project management specialization in the Department of Civil Engineering and the Schulich School of Engineering, Jugdev is applying for a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada grant. The study focuses on engineering, procurement, and construction projects. The implication of this study is that it will help the construction-engineering sector reduce the high costs of prior project mistakes.

“When we involve practitioners in our research and solicit their input, we strengthen both our ties to industry and the development of theories,” says Jugdev.

In addition to academic publications, Jugdev believes in contributing to other fields through technical and practitioner papers, as these reach other audiences. She has done several such papers on innovations in online learning with professional staff at the University's Centre for Innovative Management (CIM).

“When I started at Athabasca University, Lindsay Redpath (CIM's executive director) mentored me on balancing my time between teaching, research, and service. Research starter grants from Athabasca University allowed me to build confidence in my abilities. I am meeting wonderful colleagues at the University and have been blessed to have several seasoned academics mentor me both at Athabasca and within the broader academic community.”

Jugdev's PhD in Project Management (University of Calgary) was a joint degree between the Civil Engineering department and the Haskayne School of Business. She also has a Master of Engineering in Project Management (University of Calgary), a Master of Health Services Administration (University of Alberta), two undergraduate science degrees, and over 15 years' experience as a senior project manager in public and private sector organizations.

Recent Work

{ Dr. Kam Jugdev }

- Co-author, “Distance Education MBA Students: An Investigation into the Use of an Orientation Course to Address Academic and Social Integration Issues,” *Open Learning*, 2005
- Co-author, “A Retrospective Look at our Evolving Understanding of Project Success,” *Project Management Journal*, 2005
- Contributing author, *Innovations: Project Management Research 2005, Vol. 1*, 2005, Project Management Institute
- Contributing author, *The AMA Handbook of Project Management, Vol.1*, 2005, American Management Association
- Author, “The VRIO Framework of Competitive Advantage: Research Implications for Innovation Management,” Portland International Conference on Technology Management, 2005
- Author, “Project Management as a Strategic Asset: An Empirical Investigation of the Relationships Between Tangible and Intangible Assets in Project Management and the Project Management Process as a Source of Competitive Advantage,” Western Academy of Management, Las Vegas, 2005
- Author, “Through the Looking Glass: Examining Theory Development in Project Management with the Resource-Based View Lens,” *Project Management Journal*, 2004
- Author, “Research Issues: A Conceptual Look at Project Management as a Source of Competitive Advantage,” Administrative Sciences Association of Canada, Quebec City, 2004
- Co-author, “Using the Debate as a Teaching Tool in the Online Classroom,” *Online Classroom*, 2004
- Co-author, “Online MBA Orientation Program: Some Best Practices,” *Distance Education Report*, 2004
- Author, “Book review: Implementing Virtual Teams: Guide to Organizational and Human Factors,” *International Journal of Project Management*, 2004



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