

NORTHERN PASSAGES

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INSPIRING COMPASSION
AND HEALTH CARE

EQUALITY FOR LGBTQ+

BEHIND THE SCENES

NEVER BORED AS
BOARD SECRETARY

#CAMPNOSM LEAVES A

LASTING IMPACT



Northern Ontario
School of Medicine
École de médecine
du Nord de l'Ontario
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NORTHERN PASSAGES

Newsletter of the Northern
Ontario School of Medicine



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Cover Photo: Pictured are Vincent Bolt (left)
and fourth-year NOSM medical student, Jenna
Webber (right).

INSPIRING COMPASSION AND HEALTH-CARE EQUALITY FOR LGBTQ+

The campus of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) spans all 800,000 km² of Northern Ontario with more than 90 communities hosting NOSM learners. Medical students work in family practices, clinics, and hospitals, enabling their curriculum to “walk through the door,” so to speak. As such, NOSM medical students are in the unique position to identify potential gaps in their education, both extra-curricular and curriculum-based. Jenna Webber, fourth-year medical student, says she noticed a gap with respect to the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ+) and other individuals—not just at NOSM, but with all medical curricula—as early as her first year at medical school.

Webber is working closely with Vincent Bolt, Project Coordinator with TGInnerselves in Sudbury. In his teen years, Bolt struggled with the fear and stigma transgender persons face and tried desperately to fit in. Webber says one in 10 people in Canada identify as LGBTQ+. “I began to question why LGBTQ+ health is disconnected from maternal health, teen health, etcetera. I was raised with Ghandi’s ‘be the change you want to see in the world’ ethic, so working with students to address these needs and potentials was a natural step for me,” says Webber. Together, Webber and Bolt have completed research and have developed and carried out the first Northern Ontario Trans Health Conference with a team of volunteers. They’ve also welcomed the opportunity to present workshops at both the Rainbow Health Ontario national conference and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health conference in Amsterdam, as well as training sessions for NOSM students.

Bolt has worked with a variety of individuals, from street-entrenched youth to physicians at an international conference. He says he’s honoured to have the opportunity to speak with NOSM medical students before they begin to practise. “It’s important to me



that physicians understand that transition related medical services are medically necessary services,” says Bolt. “This isn’t a psychological disorder. This isn’t something you can put on the back burner as a non-priority. With high suicide rates and attempted suicide rates for the trans population, this is life or death for many people. Some may say that patients with a specific condition are more important than trans individuals. No. They’re not more important—they’re of equal importance. That’s the number one thing I want medical students and already practising physicians to understand,” says Bolt.

“By training medical students early on in their career, we are engraining these concepts into the habits and foundations of their practices so that—hopefully—we can create a culture within medicine where LGBTQ+ health is woven seamlessly into curriculum and practise and not viewed as a specialized area of

medicine,” says Webber. Bolt and Webber also work independently in many respects to advocate for LGBTQ+ health. For instance, within Webber’s role as National Officer of Reproductive and Sexual Health with the Canadian Federation of Medical Students, she has worked with physicians and medical students across Canada to create the first national LGBTQ+ working group, of which Bolt is a valued member.

This year, within this role, Webber—along with three medical students from Taiwan, Brazil, and Spain—has worked to create and carry out the global campaign for the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) with the International Federation of Medical Students. Bolt and two other members of TGIInnselfs, Darlyn Hansen and Rita O’Link, delivered one of the global webinars for this campaign. Through this campaign, the IDAHOT organizers and student volunteers from all over the world were able to create an official publication for the International Federation of Medical Student Associations (IFMSA) titled *LGBTQ+ Health in Medical Curricula*. This document will be published in the near future and distributed to medical students and deans of all medical schools globally who are members of the IFMSA in order to encourage and guide the incorporation of LGBTQ+ health into medical teachings.

When Webber and Bolt were in Halifax last year for the Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health national conference, they received news that a student in the Maritimes was brutally beaten at school for being transgendered. “The statistics that we discuss in our presentations and initiatives have faces, families, friends, and lives,” says Webber. “They are people, not numbers. This youth is one of these faces. Sharing our knowledge doesn’t automatically change the world, but it can change attitudes so that the world is a bit safer and more loving. We are all people, equal in rights and freedoms, no matter our sexual orientations or gender identities.”

“Through our work at NOSM and around the globe, I hope new physicians will recognize and address the stigma that chains LGBTQ+ health to psychiatric and sexual health, and treat people holistically,” says Jenna Webber (pictured right) with Vincent Bolt.

HOMEGROWN DIETITIAN RETURNS TO NORTH

Kiera Mackenzie's goal in high school was not uncommon to that of many teenagers growing up in Northern Ontario—she wanted to move out of her little Northern Ontario town. It wasn't until Mackenzie's second year in university that she began to appreciate the beauty of small towns and how much those communities have to offer.

After completing her undergrad at Brescia University College, an affiliate school of Western University in London, Ontario, Mackenzie was ready to return to the North. "When I was looking at dietetic internships, I was drawn to the Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program at NOSM. What I found most appealing was that I would be able to travel around Northern Ontario and build relationships with multiple organizations."

"At that time, I wasn't sure where I wanted to settle down or what type of dietetics I was interested in," says Mackenzie. Meeting Denise Raftis, the Program Manager of NOSM's Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program (NODIP), at an internship seminar allowed Mackenzie to finalize her decision. "I knew with Denise's personality, she would make a wonderful internship coordinator."

Throughout her time with NODIP, Mackenzie completed a variety of placements in Timmins, North Bay, Sudbury, and Fort Frances. Mackenzie says each organization with which she has had the opportunity to work has contributed a wealth of knowledge that has helped her grow as a dietitian. "I am fortunate to have met so many wonderful people this past year. I really enjoyed my time in Fort Frances, as I was able to spend a few weeks in a beautiful town and travel to many of the smaller surrounding communities," says Mackenzie.

On Thursday, July 28, Mackenzie and her classmates celebrated their successful completion of the Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program. A ceremony was held at both NOSM at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay and NOSM at Laurentian University in Sudbury, and was connected by videoconference.

Now practising as a Registered Dietitian in the small Northern Ontario community of Manitouwadge, Mackenzie says she's happy to finally be enjoying the rewards of her education. Manitouwadge had been without a dietitian for over a month before Mackenzie began work. "Now that I have completed my studies, I am very happy to be staying in a small Northern community," says Mackenzie. "I have great colleagues from my year with NODIP. I look forward getting to know them better and sharing our knowledge as we grow throughout our careers as Registered Dietitians."

Kiera Mackenzie is a Registered Dietitian and is one of the 74% of NOSM-educated dietitians choosing to live and work in Northern Ontario.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Never Bored as NOSM's Board Secretary

Each issue of Northern Passages features a "behind the scenes" look into the Northern Ontario School of Medicine. This edition features NOSM's Secretary to the Board of Directors, Academic Council, and Joint Senate Committee—a position which oversees the function of the bi-cameral governance system at NOSM. Gina Kennedy has been with the School in this role since January of 2006 and says she has "never been a 'bored' secretary, that is for sure!"

Some may think that the role of Secretary to the Board, Academic Council, and Joint Senate could be fairly mundane, however Kennedy says working at NOSM and building 'a medical school like no other' motivates her to achieve more. "It's a privilege to make a difference in people's lives, and in my role I work with a variety of people in different ways—it's humbling," says Kennedy.

A key responsibility of the Board is to establish and periodically review NOSM's mission, vision, and core values. Since its inception, NOSM's Board of Directors has had a deep appreciation for strength in diversity and a hands-on role in shaping the School's goals. With the input of Northern Ontarians and valued partners, the Board and Academic Council work collaboratively in their roles to aid in developing the strategic plan that guides NOSM's vision.

"Over several years, the Board of Directors and the Academic Council worked independently in their roles in governance of the School—that is, until recently," Kennedy explains. "In 2015, both groups came together to cultivate a deeper understanding of the relationship with each other, governance, and NOSM's host universities. For me, what sets both groups apart from the regular mechanics of operating boards is their dedication to continuous learning, engagement, and the School."

Kennedy says that when working with such enthusiastic individuals, there are bound to be interesting stories. "I will always remember when I was at an Academic Council retreat and the Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs at the time, Dr. Bill McCready, referred to his presentation as being 'Gina-fied.' It was the first time I was considered a verb," laughs Kennedy.

Kennedy is committed to lifelong learning on and outside the job, and sometimes they mix. "One of my greatest personal achievements is working my way through the Toastmasters International program for the past seven years," says Kennedy. "Toastmasters has had such a positive impact on my life—although public speaking was important, the leadership and confidence building has made a huge impact for me both personally and professionally. Achieving a Triple Crown Award and attaining my Distinguished Toastmaster—the highest award an active Toastmaster can earn under the organization's educational program—this year was the pinnacle of my achievements."

Gina Kennedy is NOSM's Secretary to the Board of Directors, Academic Council, and Joint Senate Committee.



#CAMPNOSM LEAVES A LASTING IMPACT

Each summer, NOSM hosts youth (ages 14-16) from across the North during the School's week long Health Sciences Summer Camp in Thunder Bay and Sudbury—a week that encompasses so much more than traditional campfire songs and typical summer camp fare.



During the Health Sciences Summer Camp, high school students are offered a glimpse into medical education and research at NOSM, and what it takes to become a health-care professional. Each student has an opportunity to engage in educational curriculum; participate in team building activities; explore Indigenous and Francophone culture, health, and traditions; learn about a variety of health professions; and build lasting friendships—all while having fun.

If you have ever been to summer camp, you know the profound impact that time had on your life. For some, the cost of participating in the camps, particularly for those traveling from across the region, can be high. This year—for the first time—generous donors sponsored high school students to ensure that the cost of registration did not deter them from participating.

One student considers himself very fortunate to have been selected for sponsorship. Dominic Roy from Sioux Lookout was subsidized by NOSM Board Member Ken Boshcoff to attend camp in Thunder Bay from July 11-15, 2016. Roy wrote a thank you letter to Boshcoff, but felt it doesn't sum it up how thankful he truly is. "Without his help, this would have been such an expensive trip to Thunder Bay for me, including the camp tuition, travel, and hotel," says Roy. "My parents are grateful because I had such an awesome sponsor. It's amazing that people like Mr. Boshcoff help give opportunities to youth."

"When the Board was approached to support NOSM's Health Sciences Summer Camp, my mentor—Dr. George Doig—thought it would be a good idea to show that Board Members are keen to support the School's initiatives," explains Boshcoff. "After visiting the students, and meeting Dominic Roy, I have to say it was a most gratifying contribution! The future is in excellent hands with the young people participating in this camp."

Roy says he applied to NOSM's Health Sciences Summer Camp as someday he hopes to have a career in the medical field. "You can't really get experience from just anywhere," says Roy. "No matter how many books you read or how many television shows you watch, you never really know what it's going to be like [to be a health-care professional] until you have real life experience. I wanted my eyes opened to what it would really be like."

Campers had the opportunity to visit the simulation lab in Thunder Bay where NOSM learners spend some time during their studies. "We played doctor on a simulation mannequin," says Roy. "Wearing scrubs and doing CPR let us actually feel what it would be like to be a doctor. With simulation, I thought to myself that this could be a real person and I could actually save someone's life and make a positive impact."

Camp memories last a lifetime for students like Dominic Roy!

We invite you to sponsor a youth in your community next summer. Your investment will provide an opportunity for a high school student to start pursuing their dreams of becoming a health-care provider. For as little as \$400 per year (which covers the cost of registration), you can positively impact the life of a youth and—quite possibly—the future of health of your community.

Kathy Needham
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Katie Biasiol
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Pictured left: Dominic Roy (left) from Sioux Lookout was subsidized by NOSM Board Member Ken Boshcoff (right) to attend camp in Thunder Bay from July 11-15, 2016.

Pictured right: Participants in the School's Health Sciences Summer Camp engage in curriculum similar to that of NOSM medical students.



ICEMEN 2016 WARMS UP IN SAULT STE. MARIE

You may have heard the saying, “No man is an island.” At NOSM, we believe that no medical school should exist in a vacuum. Many schools around the world are working to develop and deliver community-engaged, socially accountable health professional education in order to improve the health of underserved communities. Idea sharing allows schools to learn from each other’s successes and mistakes—all in the pursuit of improving the health of the communities they serve.

From June 20-25, 2016, NOSM partnered with Flinders University School of Medicine to host the fifth in a series of biennial conferences jointly hosted by the two schools. Aptly named ICEMEN 2016 (International conference on Community Engaged Medical Education in the North), this five-day conference in Sault Ste. Marie attracted more than 300 participants from around the world. With the theme of *Putting Communities in the Driver’s Seat*, ICEMEN encouraged participants to investigate how community-driven health education and research builds healthy communities around the globe. Participants engaged in lectures, workshops, and debates on topics such as: community engagement, Indigenous health, Indigenous research, health professional education, social accountability, and more.

ICEMEN 2016 was preceded by a three-day bus excursion called Conference on the Move. Travelling to Sault Ste. Marie via Manitoulin Island, Conference on the Move delegates participated in strawberry and wild rice teachings, sharing circles, and wilderness medicine training. Delegates also experienced a performance by the Global Savages, and stopped at a residential school to learn about the history and impact of colonization in Canada.

Held concurrently with ICEMEN 2016 were two partner events: the Northern Health Research Conference and the Indigenous Research Gathering. Held annually, the Northern Health Research Conference provided yet another exciting opportunity for researchers in the region to present their research about health-related topics investigated in Northern Ontario. Also focused on research in Northern Ontario, the Indigenous Research Gathering was an opportunity for Indigenous community members to come together to discuss the history of research with Indigenous peoples, and design a path forward in developing relationships with Indigenous communities that facilitate research for healthier communities.



Pictured left: Dr. Rachel Ellaway, Professor of Medical Education at the Cumming School of Medicine at the University of Calgary, spoke about social accountability during a keynote address.

Pictured centre, top to bottom: Dr. Paul Worley, Dean, Flinders University School of Medicine; Joe Osawabine of Debajehmujig Storytellers on Manitoulin Island; and, Drs. Marion Briggs and Leesa Walker, ICEMEN 2016 Conference Co-Chairs.

Pictured far right, top to bottom: Dr. Ed Hirvi, NOSM Assistant Professor and Sault Ste. Marie Site Liaison Clinician; Björg Pálsdóttir, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Training for Health Equity Network; and, Dr. Frank Sullivan, Keynote Speaker for the Northern Health Research Conference.



"What I draw away from this conference is the sense that I am connected with other learners around the world who complete community placements. Even though we are from different countries, we all have the same priorities and lived experiences. Sometimes placements can seem isolating, so I am empowered by the fact that we are not alone in our pursuits. I think that coming together biennially at ICEMEN/ Muster allows new learners, those who are just experiencing what social accountability means and why it is so important, to form anchoring points in their own environments."

Caitlyn Vlasschaert, Second-Year NOSM Medical Student



"At ICEMEN, I learned interesting ways to conduct research with Indigenous peoples that allows for full consultation and engagement. I loved that there was an Elder present at the Indigenous Research Gathering—something I want to start doing in Alice Springs, Australia, the remote town where I work. I have already made contact with an Elder in my community to discuss how we can make sure we work together to maintain cultural safety in every aspect of what we do."

Kath Martin, Lecturer in Indigenous Health for the Centre for Remote Health, Australia



"ICEMEN inspired me to think about how I reflect on my institution's community engagement activities. I have many new ideas from the conference that I plan to use to improve community engagement at home. At the top of my list is to devise more avenues to listen to the community directly, in order to reduce gate keeping from 'community representatives.' I hope this will help my institution be more attuned to what goes on at the community level, in addition to the service providers' level."

Dr. Brahm Marjadi, Western Sydney University School of Medicine, Australia

INTENTIONAL INTERPROFESSIONAL LEARNING

As a means to fulfill the School's vision of *Innovative education and research for a healthier North*, NOSM weaves seven academic principles into its education and research programs: interprofessionalism, integration, community orientation, inclusivity, generalism, continuity, and dedication to inquiry.

NOSM's Rehabilitation Studies program incorporates the principle of interprofessionalism in their education experiences across the North for learners from several Ontario universities. NOSM's Interprofessional Education (IPE) Leads are key facilitators of these learning experiences—opportunities which involve any health professional students on placement at a similar time in the same community or organization. Using a community-engaged approach, NOSM IPE Leads connect as many health professional students as possible, including learners studying audiology, dietetics, occupational therapy (OT), physiotherapy (PT), and speech-language pathology (SLP), as well as NOSM medical students.

Born of a need to recruit quality rehabilitation professionals to Northern Ontario, the Rehab Studies program encourages learners to stay in the region upon completion of their studies. In existence for roughly 25 years, the program has been a part of NOSM for the past 10 years. A recent study reported a 34% recruitment rate of professionals to Northern Ontario¹, which begins with the recruitment of students for Northern Placements by providing fall information sessions at their home universities.

Students from the University of Toronto, Western University, University of Ottawa, Laurentian University, McMaster University, and Queens University have an opportunity to learn about the program—providing a unique learning experience that prepares them for rural, remote, and Northern practise. These unique experiences rely heavily on providing Indigenous, Francophone, and Interprofessional learning opportunities.

Jackie Hummelbrunner, NOSM IPE Lead in Kenora, says interprofessional learning is too often characterised by shadowing others. "Intentional interprofessional learning aims to go deeper, and be more focused by setting practice-based learning goals that stem from the Interprofessional Competencies from the Canadian Interprofessional Health Collaborative and the CanMEDS 2015 framework set out by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Three health sciences learners completed intentional interprofessional clinical placements this past spring in Kenora. Paula Tactay, an OT student, says she had excellent preceptors and worked with a great rehabilitation team (SLPs, PTs, Rehab Techs) at her clinical placement at the Lake of the Woods District Hospital. "I was introduced to other professions and encouraged to learn from others. This—all together—allowed me to have an amazing learning experience and helped me develop better clinical reasoning," says Tactay.

1. Winn CS, Chisholm BA, Hummelbrunner JA, Tryssenaar J, Kandler LS. Impact of the Northern Studies Stream and Rehabilitation Studies Programs on Recruitment and Retention to Rural/Remote Practice: 2002-2010, *Journal of Rural & Remote Health*, 2015.



A recent Intentional Interprofessional Education Placement in Kenora involved PT, OT, SLP, and medical, nursing, and paramedic students. Pictured are participants Ian MacDowell (left), a PT student from Queen's University, and Paula Tactay (middle) and Carrie Hall (right) from Western University, studying OT and SLP respectively.