



GPRC

WISDOM 2018

GPRC history instructor Dr. Daryl White uses Open Educational Resources to teach his classes. He's one of a number of GPRC instructors using OERs to reduce costs for students and create customized learning experiences.

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OERs AT POST-SECONDARY

GPRC and the free textbook movement—why Open Educational Resources are having their moment to shine in post-secondary education. **Page 08**

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

A look at how technology is changing how we learn and teach. **Page 12**

DISTANCE LEARNING THAT WORKS

How distance education technology can put you on the pathway to a career of your dreams. **Page 26**

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

After a three-year hiatus, we're proud to see *Wisdom* make its triumphant return to GPRC. We couldn't have chosen a better time to revitalize this publication; this special issue of *Wisdom* comes just months after a Ministerial announcement that has changed the future of our institution.

Following the Government of Alberta's February 2018 announcement, GPRC is now on a path to becoming a university. This historic milestone did not come easily. It took a half-century of advocacy from past and present Boards, Executive teams, faculty, students, staff and community. As we look toward a degree-granting future, I find myself reflecting on the idea of "wisdom" and just what that means.

Wisdom to me is at the heart of post-secondary education. It is the intersection of intellect, understanding, and compassion. Our College has been fortunate to work with remarkable faculty, staff and community members over the past 50 years, individuals whose wisdom has enriched the College and the region.

Wisdom has never been more crucial to GPRC's success than it is today. We will need the wisdom of GPRC's communities to inform and guide our transition. We will need the wisdom of our faculty to continue to deliver exceptional post-secondary education to our students. Most importantly, we will need to cultivate wisdom in the learners of today, so they will have the intellect, understanding, and compassion to lead us into tomorrow.

This issue of *Wisdom* celebrates GPRC's successes with technology in the classroom. From cutting-edge work with solar energy to innovative accessibility services, GPRC faculty and staff are always looking for ways to improve the student experience. Anticipating the technological advances of the future is one way we keep students at the centre of everything we do.

After all, if the wisdom of our community is crucial today, the wisdom of our students will be indispensable tomorrow.

Students, know that it is your wisdom – your intellect, understanding, compassion and resilience – that this institution and this community will rely upon in the years to come.

Are you ready for the challenge?



DON GNATIUK
PRESIDENT AND CEO



IN OUR WISDOM: EDITORIAL MESSAGE

BY ANNA GILLIS, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER AT GPRC

The explosion of information available across the Internet and rapid changes in technology are continually affecting post-secondary institutions everywhere. The Internet has enabled access to formal and informal learning communities and free educational resources, and these have led to the constant global exchange of knowledge and ideas. As a result, supplementary learning resources are no longer solely the domain of print publishers, as students, faculty, and learning groups have begun to add their own knowledge and analysis to the growing digital library. The use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) and textbook-free courses has become a key element on Students' Association agendas worldwide. Faculty at GPRC, with the support of the GPRC Educational Technologies (Ed Tech) Centre, is embracing this student-centered movement.

OERs are freely accessible, openly-licensed teaching and learning materials available on the Internet. OERs can include textbooks, course modules, recorded lectures, homework assignments, software, quizzes, presentations, lab activities, pedagogical materials, games, glossaries, simulations, lecture plans and more.

The individuals or organizations that create OERs typically rely on ready-made tools like Creative Commons licenses to make their resources freely available. These licenses permit others to revise, reuse, remix, and redistribute the materials. Beyond providing cost-savings, OERs permit a higher level of flexibility and the freedom to innovate that copyrighted learning materials seldom offer. This freedom allows educators to better focus on the quality and engagement of the learning experience and to easily update these materials at any time, so content can be kept relevant and accurate for students.

OERs are most useful when educators redistribute their contributions to be used and shared freely. Through OERs, educators and institutions can harness the power of larger entities in their classrooms, and also provide their own contributions to a growing learning repository.

In 2016, in an effort to reduce the cost of study and overcome the limitations of textbooks, the Students' Association of GPRC began advocating for increased use of OERs in the classroom. The Ed Tech team, with the support of the GPRC Executive team, offered a financial incentive and full Ed Tech staffing support for faculty to develop or use materials that would replace conventional textbooks.

GPRC now proudly offers 45 courses that use high-quality OERs, including textbooks, simulations, virtual field trips, and quizzes. Thirty-seven of these courses are now completely textbook free. In addition, the Ed Tech Centre hosts a number of professional development courses including an OER awareness course that can assist faculty in use and development.

OERs improve virtually every aspect of the classroom experience. GPRC is excited to continue exploring this new way of empowering student success while providing our own contributions to this growing global movement.

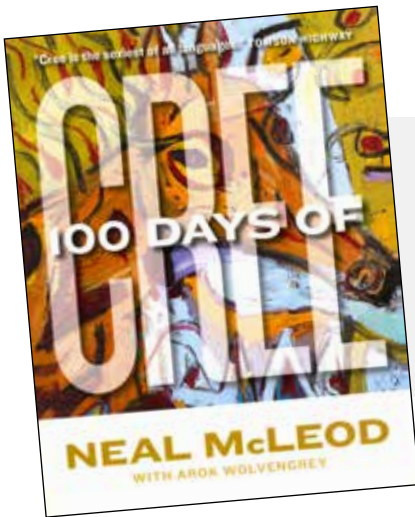




WHAT ARE YOU READING, GPRC?

You might already be putting in a ton of hours in the library preparing for exams, hunting down sources for research papers, or taking advantage of reference materials or academic support services. But are you making time for pleasure reading?

Reading for pleasure can build empathy, improve your interpersonal relationships, and contribute to your emotional and mental wellbeing. Check out (literally!) some of the GPRC library's most popular titles:

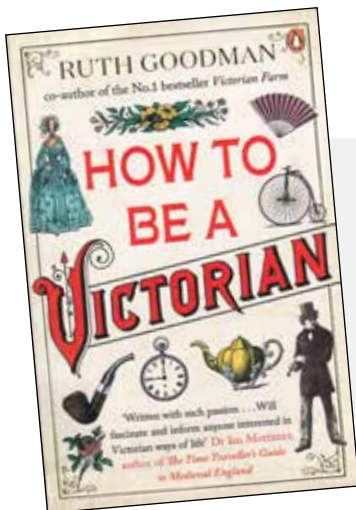


100 DAYS OF CREE BY NEAL McLEOD: “As an Elder once said, ‘Learn one Cree word a day for 100 days, and emerge a different person.’” See the world from a new perspective and find out why Tomson Highway called Cree “the sexiest” language in this funny, insightful introduction to Cree language and culture.

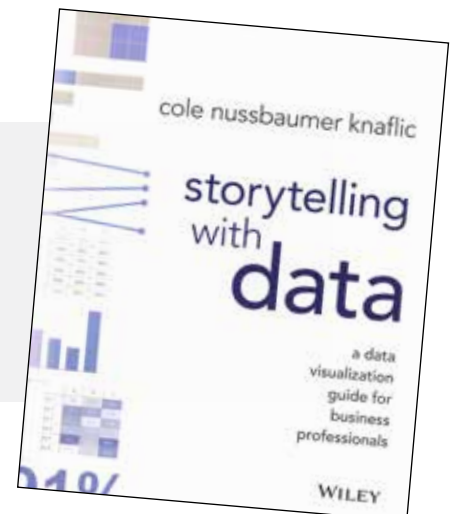
MILK AND HONEY BY RUPI KAUR: In this bestselling poetry collection, author Rupi Kaur takes readers on a reflective journey through pain, love, loss, and hope. Milk and honey is a heartbreakingly beautiful meditation on seeking sweetness in life’s bitterest moments.



HOW TO BE A VICTORIAN BY RUTH GOODMAN: What was day-to-day life like for an ordinary person living in nineteenth century England? What did they eat for breakfast? How did they dress for school? What did their social lives look like? Learn about the intricacies and peculiarities of this fascinating period of history with Ruth Goodman’s ultimate guide to living life in the Victorian era.



STORYTELLING WITH DATA BY COLE NUSSBAUMER KNAFLIC: Before all else, humans are storytellers. This guide helps you harness the power of storytelling to make your data come to life, so you can wow with your next graph or presentation. Use this guide to make your data jump off the page, captivate audiences and “rid your world of ineffective graphs, one exploding 3-D pie chart at a time.”



OERS AT POST -



SECONDARY



GPRC AND THE FREE TEXTBOOK MOVEMENT

If you have noticed your required reading textbook list seems to be getting shorter, you're not imagining it. GPRC and the rest of the post-secondary learning community have been making a push towards a much more accessible, versatile, and inexpensive type of learning material. Open Educational Resources (OERs) have become increasingly common on post-secondary campuses across Canada and the United States.

To learn more about this trend, we had a discussion with some of the key players in OERs at GPRC; the staff who manage them, the faculty who use them, and the students who learn from them.

WHAT IS AN OER?

An OER is a non-traditional learning material that is in the public domain and can be freely and legally used, copied and shared. Although open access textbooks are the most common example, GPRC also offers OERs in the form of videos, images, sound bytes, articles and interactive activities.

As OERs have matured, they have become available in multiple forms. "OERs are not just textbooks," said Librarian Sheena Gardner, who worked at GPRC until the summer of 2018 and helped grow the use of OERS in the classroom. "They're also the creation of peripherals for the textbooks. So a student could read the text and then go online and see videos or do the activities that have been created for that source to help reinforce that learning."

The OER trend is causing instructors and students alike to reimagine traditional teaching paradigms, creating a subtle shift in the way we think about post-secondary education.

WHY ARE OERS HAVING "A MOMENT" IN EDUCATION?

As increases in textbook costs continue to outpace the rate of nearly every other school-related expense (including tuition), instructors and students alike have begun to seek out other options. Nearly 65 per cent of students in one study reported not having purchased a textbook for a course because of the high cost, and about one-quarter of students routinely avoid purchasing pricey books.

OERs are free to use and share, but that is not their only benefit. Multiple styles and forms of OERs can accommodate students who have different needs and preferences when it comes to how they learn.

Dr. Daryl White has become the first instructor at GPRC to use OERs in all of his courses. White, who teaches history, said he is constantly adapting his teaching style according to student feedback. His students told him that not only were they unhappy



Third-year GPRC student Casey Caines uses an OER in the form of an interactive map of Canada to learn about Canadian history.

about the cost of their textbooks, but most also found that they did not end up using the book much anyway. White now tries to incorporate multiple sources of information (audio and visual as well as print) from as many free online sources as possible.

Many of White's students also reported struggling with a heavy reading load throughout the semester, and White has found providing sources students could absorb visually or audibly helped lighten the load.

Of course, not all students have the same preferences. White mentioned some of his students miss using textbooks – but that number has been surprisingly low. “I’d say it’s probably one or two a year who still want a textbook,” he said. Overwhelmingly student responses to the change have been “really positive.”

“OERs give me more flexibility. They are just as valuable as any other learning materials.”

Tyler Barr is one student who sees the introduction of OERs as positive. A first-year student pursuing his Bachelor of Education, Barr has completed two history courses with White and says he has not found himself missing the textbook at all. “Having all of the relevant materials available online has made it much easier for me to study,” said Barr. “Wherever I have an internet connection, I can access them.” Barr also pointed out the environmental benefits of reducing paper consumption and the benefit in reduced costs to students. “The cost for post-secondary students could be reduced significantly if there was a large migration towards cheaper or free online-based textbook resources,” he said.



Dr. Daryl White uses a range of different kinds of OERs in his classes, including print, audio and visual learning materials.

Casey Caines, a third-year GPRC student majoring in history and Indigenous studies, adds that OERs often deliver higher quality learning material than purchased textbooks. “In traditional classes, we generally get one textbook, and that’s where all our information comes from,” she said. “But with OERs, we can pull from 15 different textbooks and use only the best information from each source.”

GPRC Business Administration Instructor Cibylla Rakestraw began using OERs when she noticed students were struggling to afford the textbooks she assigned. She explained many textbooks have hidden extra costs attached to them. “Textbook publishers now tend to combine the textbook with additional online resources,” she said. “While this can be great, students purchasing a used textbook often have to separately purchase, at significant cost, access to those online resources, which often ends up costing more than buying a new text with an access code.” To help her students avoid this frustration, Rakestraw turns to OERs.

“OERs give me more flexibility,” she said. “They are just as valuable as any other learning materials.”

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING OERS AT GPRC

The OERs used by White, Rakestraw, and many other GPRC faculty members, are often developed in-house by GPRC’s own Educational Technologies (Ed Tech) Centre. When faculty need OERs developed, Ed Tech is where they can go for assistance.

Currently 37 courses at GPRC are taught using OERs, but Ed Tech is working toward growing that number. “We’ve partnered with the Students’ Association to organize events and advertise our services and resources,” said Anna Gillis, GPRC Instructional Designer and an active proponent of OERs in the classroom.

“We also offer an Open Educational Resource Awareness Course to GPRC staff and students. The course is free, and faculty who complete it can partner with Ed Tech to create or use OERs.” Faculty interested in the course can also access funding to complete the project.

“I feel like it brings us back to the whole point of an educational institution: to be creating and providing access to new knowledge and information.”

Gillis emphasized the role student advocacy has played in making OERs in the classroom a reality. “The Students’ Association began advocating for the use of OERs in 2016,” she said. “GPRC is student-centred and committed to supporting this very important initiative.”

IS ADOPT AND ADAPT THE ANSWER?

Although White, like many instructors at GPRC, has embraced the OER movement, he understands why some students and instructors shy away. “We’re fundamentally conservative,” he said. “We’re loath to give up something we see as functional. But when new ideas come into the system, there’s often a culture of, ‘everybody has to get on-board.’” Even as he puts OERs to use in his own classroom, White is cautious about prescribing OERs as a one-size-fits-all solution for all learners.

Nonetheless, Rakestraw thinks more instructors should give OERs the ‘old college try.’ She mentioned the library offers several free learning resources that work just as well as any purchased textbook. She acknowledges that teaching a class using OERs can require a bit more time and planning than other, more conventional class structures, but maintains “it’s worth it.”

Gardner is also encouraged by the OER trend. “The really nice thing about OERs and open access is that I feel like it brings us back to the whole point of an educational institution: to be creating and providing access to new knowledge and information.”

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TECHNOLOGY ////// IN THE //// CLASSROOM



For third-grade elementary school teacher Amber Schratl, there are no sweeter words than, “Mrs. Schratl, you make learning fun!”

Especially when those words are being uttered during a lesson that, were it not for the use of innovative educational technology, might otherwise be pretty boring, says Schratl, a fourth-year student in the Teacher Education North (TEN) program at GPRC.

“I’m surprised at how technology like the SMART Board draws kids into the lesson. They love to pick the answers and drag them into the right box,” she said. “They all have their hands up ready to participate and they’re having fun because they’re actively engaged—not just filling out worksheets or copying down answers.”

Technology is an important part of the collaborative TEN program, which offers the third and fourth years of the

University of Alberta’s Bachelor of Elementary Education degree at GPRC. The coursework prepares teachers to work in northern rural schools as well as with Indigenous students and includes a practicum in each academic year.

“The program started at GPRC in 1999 as a way to meet the needs of the local community and also remote areas that have a hard time recruiting teachers. TEN has helped alleviate some of those problems,” said program coordinator and instructor Jodi Peebles. “Our students are very successful in getting teaching positions after they graduate.

“We don’t have a specific course dedicated to educational technology; it is infused throughout the program’s coursework. This year, I contacted one of the technology specialists with Peace Wapiti School Division and asked, ‘How can I incorporate more educational technology into our program so our teachers can use it in meaningful ways?’”

As a result of that conversation, TEN instructors are now collaborating with the Peace Wapiti School Division district specialist, leveraging community expertise to teach GPRC students how educational technology can be used to enhance learning.





GPRC's Teacher Education North program incorporates technology right into its classroom to prepare future teachers for today's elementary students.



GPRC turns education apps and smart phones into interactive learning experiences for students.



GPRC Teacher Education North program coordinator and instructor Jodi Peebles.

In a typical lesson of her own, Peebles will incorporate up to 10 pieces of innovative educational technology as examples of what teachers can use in their planning and teaching.

She goes beyond PowerPoint and videos to use tools such as interactive cellphone apps for students to answer questions in class, SMART Boards for taking interactive attendance, and QR codes that are customized to every student and can be used as a pre-assessment tool.

“Nowadays Kindergarten students can teach you how to use a SMART Board, and they used iPads as toddlers. They are pros because they use technology at home so much, and they expect it in the classroom,” said Peebles. “Technology has opened up so many doors for us – we now know everyone learns differently and not every student can sit quietly for six hours and listen to a teacher’s voice while doing paper and pencil assessments. That might be a fit for less than 50 per cent of students.

“Between educational technology and assistive technology for students who wouldn’t otherwise be able to learn, we have been able to break down so many barriers.”

These types of technology have also enabled teachers to enjoy greater work-life balance, says fourth-year student Matthew Vavrek.

“For a lot of us who have a family, time-saving tools can be incredibly helpful. If I have to leave after class to meet my kids, I can still work on a group project at home, adding images to a slideshow or making up quizzes on online platforms like Kahoot,” he said.

“I’m in a Grade 2 classroom for my practicum, so students’ access to technology is not as intense as in a junior high class. But we’re still using computers every day and iPads for kids who need additional help with reading.”

“If I can’t help them one-on-one, they can still use them to read along, rather than stare at a book and not be able to do anything with it.”

ACCESSIBLE CLASSROOMS, ACCESSIBLE FUTURES



If it wasn't for the Accessibility Supports and Disability Services (ASDS) program at GPRC, Lyndsie McLeod would never have been able to crack open the pages of her math textbook.

In fact, the visually impaired student probably wouldn't have been able to take most of the courses she is currently acing.

"Even just with the logistics of getting from class to class, [ASDS] helps me so much by providing an educational assistant who leads me to where I need to go," said McLeod, currently in her second year in the open studies program.

"But at a higher level, it's awesome how much technology they offer students. I have a binder full of 3-D graphs that ASDS made from my textbook so I can study from it by touch. They've spent hours making that accessible for me, and I'm only one person.

"They really are dedicated to helping students succeed."

In the past decade, more than 885 students with disabilities like McLeod have been able to pursue their post-secondary goals at GPRC thanks to the Accessibility Services program. A recent \$100,000 donation from CIBC (\$25,000 a year for the next four years) is helping to further develop and deliver accessibility programs at GPRC, including assistive technology that is making a tremendous difference in students' lives.

Of these technologies, the three used most regularly at GPRC include the 3Doodler, a 3-D printer that creates tactile learning models for students like McLeod; the LiveScribe Pen, a customized notetaking tool and recording device; and Kurzweil, a computer software program that transforms text into audio.

"Technology has really changed the way we view accessibility and support—while we have a lot to keep up with, it's been nothing but positive for our students," said Kelsi House, Accessibility Advisor at GPRC.

"We help people who come here thinking they won't be successful because of their disability, but thanks to technology, anything is possible nowadays. And there's a technology out there for every person. All it takes is having a conversation to ask what works best for them and ensuring they are getting the support they need to use it."

As GPRC business student Elizabeth Vidrih navigates her way around campus in her first year of classes, the services and technology supports she has received have helped her immensely.

In addition to accommodations at exam time, such as a quiet setting free from distractions and more time to answer questions, Vidrih also makes good use of the Kurzweil app and LiveScribe pen.

"I get so much motivation and security knowing I'll be able to understand the information given to me in class. I definitely feel like it's going to have, and already has had, such a positive impact on my future."

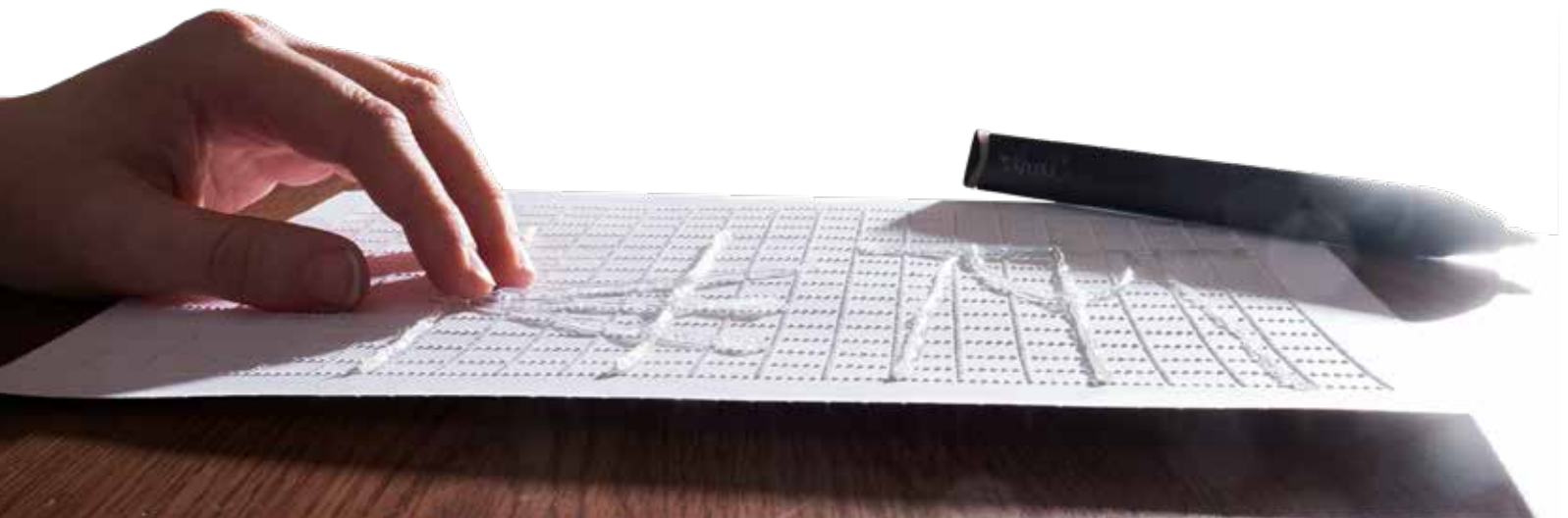
"Kurzweil allows me to focus on understanding the concepts, while the pen enables me to think about what the instructor is saying and focus on learning," says Vidrih.

"In elementary and high school, I would use a tape recorder to record everything. You might have eight hours of lectures on one tape and it was pretty much impossible to pin-point the one you needed. But with the LiveScribe pen, you can click on a letter and listen to that lecture from that point on. It saves a lot of time and lets you focus on what you need.

"I get so much motivation and security knowing I'll be able to understand the information given to me in class. I definitely feel like it's going to have, and already has had, such a positive impact on my future."

The GPRC Accessibility Services team is based at the Grande Prairie campus. It also coordinates services and accommodations for students on the Fairview campus, along with the four learning centres in Hinton, Jasper, Grande Cache and Edson.

Check www.gprc.ab.ca/services/accessibility for more information.





Elizabeth Vidrih uses the LiveScribe pen and gets the support she needs to succeed at GPRC from Accessibility Advisor Kelsi House.

SHARING WISDOM

PREPARING FOR A SOLAR FUTURE: RESEARCH, TRADES AND SUSTAINABILITY AT GPRC

Ongoing investments in sustainable energy technology at GPRC are leading to unconventional partnerships between trades while also bridging the gap with academia.

Thanks to innovative research collaborations between the school's electrical and plumbing programs, students are benefiting from interdisciplinary training on the power of natural sunlight. The mastery of solar energy and how it can be harnessed is essential to preparing the next generation of not just electricians, but plumbers too, say instructors.

"A lot of the concepts we talk about in solar water heating are exactly the same as in [conventional heating]," says Plumbing Instructor Brett Dillman, who built the solar thermal heating system at the plumbing and gasfitting laboratory on the GPRC Fairview campus in 2016.

He has regularly incorporated it into his coursework ever since. Each of the system's three four-foot by eight-foot panels produces up to 32,000 British Thermal Units (BTU) of heat energy daily in the summer, when the sun is highest in the sky. The energy collected by the panels then heats the water for the building, reducing the amount of time its gas-fired boilers need to operate.

The system's output and overall potential to lower utility bills in a northern Alberta climate is constantly monitored by an extensive computer network. Currently, Dillman is working with the electrical department at GPRC on ideas to maximize its efficiency, including combined solar thermal and electrical generation.

"When we say solar energy, most people think of producing electricity for their lights and motors," he says. "What we deal with is collecting solar energy for the heating of water. So what we're looking at is the merging of these two technologies to create a panel that generates both electricity and hot water."

As water helps to keep the panel's surface cooler, its efficiency in producing electricity increases. "The technology is evolving. I'm excited to see where it goes," says Dillman.

"Between increasing fuel prices and government rebate programs, people will have more incentives than ever to consider new ways of heating their homes," he adds. "This is not only from an environmental perspective but also from a money-saving standpoint. In turn, we anticipate more demand for trained professionals to install those heating systems.

"We're not looking to replace fossil fuels. But we're certainly looking more closely at sustainable or alternative energies. And we want to train our students to be prepared for all kinds of future scenarios."

The push for more sustainable technology to be incorporated in the classroom began with changes to the provincial curriculum back in 2013. And students' hunger for knowledge in this area is only increasing, evidenced by the lineups electrical instructor Charles Sanderson regularly finds outside his office door.





Technician Rick Sidoroff and plumbing instructor Brett Dillman have installed solar water heating panels on the roof of the gasfitting laboratory in Fairview. The system gives students hands-on experience with the technology while supplying the building with hot water.

“Because of the economy, we’re seeing individuals with jobs in oil and gas looking to upgrade their resume and move into a career that might be spent installing solar panels, doing maintenance on battery banks, or generally working with renewable energy,” says Sanderson, Chair of the Electrical Studies program at GPRC. “Renewable is going to become a very large chunk of our energy generation. Every one of those rooftop, ground-based and industrial solar panels is going to be installed by an electrician, and I’m excited by the possibility of putting more of our students on the path of green energy.”

Sanderson recently returned from a one-year sabbatical researching solar power efficiency – a topic inspired by his decade-long work with Dr. Weixing Tan, whose Pollutants to Products (P2P) initiative involves using natural sunlight to grow microalgae.



Charles Sanderson, Chair of the Electrical Studies program at GPRC, says today’s students want the skills and knowledge they need to install and maintain solar panels.



Plumbing Instructor Brett Dillman with the solar powered hot water boiler students use in the lab.

Like Dr. Tan, whose research aims to minimize the carbon footprint of technology, Sanderson has been investigating whether their solar energy work at GPRC can also be carbon neutral.

“The sun gives us about 1,000 watts per square metre, but our best solar panels are only about 18 to 22 per cent efficient. So if we could harness the thermal energy for all of our heating loads, that may be more efficient,” he says.

“We’re not looking to replace fossil fuels. But we’re certainly looking more closely at sustainable or alternative energies. And we want to train our students to be prepared for all kinds of future scenarios.”

“The scale at which we’re installing solar currently is just providing energy to the grid when the sun is up. We’re not going to lose our gas plants. But as our economy grows, we need to add more energy.”

Finding viable sources is a challenge both tradespeople and academics can work on together, says Sanderson, who notes a palpable shift in the role the trades now play in research and innovation.

“I’m seeing a big change. It used to be that if your grades weren’t good enough or you weren’t interested in research, you went on to a trade.

“But the students we’re seeing now versus ten years ago are planning for their futures earlier. They’re saying, ‘I want to go into a trade because I don’t want to be in debt. I can achieve something with this career and once I’ve established financial independence, I can move on to other things’ – maybe not always traditional research institutions, but perhaps in entrepreneurship for example.

“It’s all about finding the problem and creating a solution from different disciplines and ways of thinking; that’s how innovation occurs.”

Michael Boulos, a recent graduate from the plumbing program at GPRC, also values his training in the renewable energy sector.

“Sustainable technology is always something to consider,” he says. “Times are changing and in our trade especially, there are always new things, new equipment and regulations to keep ahead of. So looking at a challenge from different angles is essential.”

INNER SPACES

Here's an inner space you may not have seen before! You probably know GPRC has campuses in Grande Prairie and Fairview, as well as learning centres in Hinton, Edson, Jasper and Grande Cache. But did you know that, just outside of Beaverlodge, we also manage one of Canada's leading bee research facilities?

The GPRC National Bee Diagnostic Centre (known affectionately as NBDC) offers diagnostic services to beekeepers and apiculturists across Canada. If beekeepers notice their hives showing symptoms of pests, pathogens or viruses, they can send samples to be analyzed at NBDC, where a diagnosis can be made. This service helps beekeepers evaluate the health

of their hives and take steps to ensure their bees can survive and thrive. GPRC also leads and collaborates on national and international research initiatives to further the scientific community's understanding of bee health.

Take a look inside NBDC's new laboratory, which recently completed a \$6-million expansion. Now with 865 square metres of floor space, the laboratory is a shared collaborative space between NBDC and our partners at the Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Beaverlodge Research Farm's Honey Bee Research Program.

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FACULTY

ACHIEVEMENTS



GPRC faculty not only share their wisdom in the classroom but contribute to their professions and academic fields nationally and internationally. Here are just a few highlights from the past year.



ANNA LAPOINTE

In September 2017, GPRC English instructor Anna (Annette) Lapointe published her third book, *You Are Not Needed Now*. Lapointe's first published novel was *Stolen* in 2006, which won multiple Saskatchewan Book Awards, was nominated for the Giller Prize, and resulted in Lapointe being named the Canadian Authors Association Emerging Writer of 2007. In 2012 Lapointe published her second novel, *Whitetail Shooting Gallery*. It was a finalist for the McNally Robinson Book of the Year. Lapointe's most recent book, *You Are Not Needed Now*, is a collection of short stories connected thematically. The book explores the idea of people who find themselves unnecessary.



TIFFANY DUNCAN AND KARLEE WOROBETZ

Animal Health Technology (AHT) instructors Tiffany Duncan and Karlee Worobetz took skills training in the classroom to another level this academic year with the adoption of using non-animal forelimbs for students to practise venipuncture skills. Their work, originally adopted from Red River College in Manitoba, has allowed AHT students to get practical experience inside the classroom before working with live patients.



VANESSA SHEANE

In May 2018, nursing instructor Vanessa Sheane presented research at the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing Conference in Montreal. Her presentation covered findings from an integrative literature review conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of the use of institutional theory in higher education research. This research will inform future research in nursing education.



EDWARD BADER

Fine Arts instructor Edward Bader showcased his art for a wide variety of audiences this year having been asked to showcase his talent at multiple different exhibitions. In March 2018, Bader had his work selected for a group exhibition in Seattle, Washington organized by SLAM: Seattle Leather Arts Media while in June 2018, Bader displayed two of his pieces at Vancouver's Queer Arts Festival 2018 Community Show. In April 2019, Bader will be showing his work in a group show at the Dencker+Schneider Gallery in Berlin, Germany. Bader teaches art history, drawing and digital media at GPRC.



MICHELLE RIOS

Broadway veteran and 2017-18 sessional GPRC Drama instructor Michelle Rios, whose theatrical credits include supporting roles in multiple Tony Award-nominated productions, was nominated for Outstanding Performance by a Supporting Actress at the 2018 Helen Hayes Theatre Awards. Rios has taught in various academic institutions, including the University of Alberta, and has led theatre workshops across the continent, from Juilliard in New York to the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton.



CHARLES BACKMAN

Business Administration instructor Dr. Charles Backman successfully defended his second doctoral thesis in June 2017. He now holds two Doctor of Philosophy degrees (PhDs): the most recent in strategy and global management. Part of Backman's study involved examining the policies, behaviours and management practices of a large sample of firms in Europe and North America. Dr. Backman is a long-standing member of the GPRC family, having started in August 1998. He has held many roles within GPRC and the Academic Staff Association.



TINA MARTEL

GPRC Fine Arts instructor Tina Martel was recognized for her years of tireless volunteerism and contributions to the College with the Distinguished Volunteer Award at the 2018 President's Award Luncheon. This prestigious award honours exceptional contributions of time and energy dedicated to the advancement of GPRC. Tina's involvement with the Alumni/Foundation Board, her support of the annual President's Ball, and her work coordinating volunteer student-artists are just a few reasons she was selected. This summer Tina also showed her new exhibit Not in the Pink: The Creative Process at The Works Art & Design Festival, an annual international art festival that takes place in Edmonton.

DO THE RIGHT TH

Doug Morris says he has GPRC in his DNA.

The 2018 Board of Governors' Award of Distinction recipient has consistently contributed to the College financially and given countless hours of his own time to help make GPRC the place of opportunity it is for local students.

Most recently, he completed two terms on the Board of Governors in 2017 and was Title Sponsor of the Canadian Collegiate Athletics Association Women's Volleyball Championship, which GPRC hosted March 2018.



Doug's wife Laurie captures him receiving his Board of Governor's Award of Distinction at the 2018 President's Award Luncheon on March 13.

That's in addition to being a former student-athlete, coach, Wolves Wall of Fame inductee, Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference Hall of Fame member, founder of the Wolf Pac Booster Club and director on the Alumni/Foundation Board. In fact, the Board of Governors' Award of Distinction presented at the 2018 President's Awards Luncheon in March marks a record fourth time Morris has been inducted into the GPRC President's Council.

While his family had roots in Grande Prairie, Morris grew up in Red Deer. His first connection to GPRC was in 1975 when he took a truck driving course after his mom encouraged him to look at what the College had to offer.

"That was the first time I wrote a cheque to GPRC and that's never stopped," he joked, adding, "They've been all for good reasons."

The following year he enrolled in full-time studies and joined his first of many sports teams.

"I just fell in love with the place. I've been honoured to know Henry Anderson as president when I was a student and I got to meet Douglas Cardinal when I was on the Alumni/Foundation board so I just feel connected to the history," said Morris.

Now Morris is leading GPRC's Vital fundraising campaign alongside fellow President's Council inductee Bridget Hennigar. The campaign has been connecting with business and community leaders to help build the future of post-secondary education in northwestern Alberta. That future got a lot bigger and brighter for the region on February 22, 2018 when it was announced GPRC would start on the pathway to becoming a university.

"That feels like the culmination of 50 years of hard work, lobbying, wishing and hoping," he said. "Faculty and staff already do the work now to deliver degrees; now it will be a GPRC degree at some point and that's really exciting."

Granting university degrees has been a goal of the College since it opened its doors in 1966. Now, the Vital campaign will help propel GPRC to that goal and Morris is encouraging others to get involved.

"I like to have fun and it's always fun to be involved in decision-making and helping something progress and succeed. I'd encourage anyone to do what I did. Just sign up and join the club—be an Alumni-Foundation board member, be a committee member," he said.

"I don't understand people who don't because if you can, you should. If you have time to give but no money, give some time. If you have money and no time, give some money. If you have both, you should do both because it's just the right thing to do."

ING



Longtime GPRC supporter Doug Morris is leading the College's Vital campaign along with fellow President's Council member Bridget Hennigar.

DISTANCE LEARNING THAT WORKS:

HOW ONLINE LEARNING IS CHANGING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION



After many lonely years on the road, it took Keith Rowe some adjustment to feel comfortable in social settings again.

A single father of two, Rowe had been earning a living as a truck driver before deciding to return to school. Initially paralyzed by fear and insecurity, the decision to switch careers was one he grappled with for some time. But since graduating from GPRC last May with a one-year certificate course in office administration, Rowe, 41, has never looked back.

“It took me a couple of years to take the leap as I wasn’t sure if I could handle it financially,” says Rowe, who is now in his first managerial position as the club house manager at the Grande Cache Golf and Country Club, where he oversees a team of six employees.

“I was scared of being too old to go back to school, of failing, of losing my house and everything else. It was a huge strain, but we got through it.”

Most significantly, he says, his instructors gave him confidence he never knew he could have in himself. “They pointed out that I had some good qualities like charisma - something I never knew I had before coming to GPRC.”

Emboldened by his newfound abilities, Rowe has also become an active member of his community. He is currently in his second year as the vice-president of the Grande Cache Learning Society, sits on the board of directors for the Grande Cache Daycare Society, and was nominated president of the local figure skating club Akasaka, to which his two young daughters belong.

“Sometimes it’s a bit overwhelming and I ask myself what I’m doing, when I could still be driving a truck,” he says.

“But I am embracing the challenge and I’m starting to believe in myself a lot more. I’m taking the opportunity to be more involved in what my kids are doing, and I’m learning how to do things like chair meetings – which goes back to what I learned in my business communications courses at GPRC.

“I think it’s where I should have been years ago.”

Many students like Rowe are going back to school after an interval of 10, 20 years or longer, says Chris Murphy, the distance education liaison for the GPRC library.

This often results in a steep learning curve.

“In the past few decades the need to be adept with computer technology has gone up exponentially; back then, students didn’t even have to type their papers,” he points out.

Murphy played an integral role in helping Rowe not only conquer his struggles with researching oil field terminology, but also ace his class. It was all done from a distance as Rowe’s home is located 180 kilometres away from Grande Prairie. Thanks to a tool available through GPRC’s learning management system, faculty and staff can log on remotely and share their screens with students

Left: Chris Murphy, distance education liaison, connects with Grande Cache student Keith Rowe using GPRC’s technology resources.

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GPRC Grande Cache student Keith Rowe used GPRC's technology to access the supports he needed to succeed.

in real time, whether for research sessions, virtual tutoring or workshop presentations.

The Skype-like tool is one of the videoconference options the College has for faculty and students to connect. It allows instructors and staff to send a link to participants, who simply click to get into a closed chat room online. For distance learners like Rowe, it has been particularly invaluable.

"I find these online tools are the most visual and expedient way to connect and get your point across. Students can see exactly how things work, and that also helps with memory retention," says Murphy.

"It's like getting help from an IT person who can log in and take over your screen. Once they log in, they can see my computer screen and I can see theirs, but it also has videoconferencing ability like Skype or Zoom.

"With this tool, I can show the student visually how to navigate a library database to find research articles. They can also show me what they are looking at. It's much easier to share knowledge and do troubleshooting this way, and it is a very common tool in business circles, libraries and schools.

"In fact, we use it all the time for staff meetings with our campus in Fairview."

Rowe says he wouldn't have been able to finish his report for the class if it wasn't for Murphy's help, and the use of video-conferencing.

"I didn't know how to use citations or the library databases, and Chris helped me through all of that," said Rowe, who got an 87 per cent in the class.

Rowe plans to continue his education at GPRC next winter with the goal of obtaining a second certificate in business administration.

"Hopefully that will prepare me even more for the managerial side of things and for eventually getting an office job," he says. "But the best side effect of my education is that the relationship between me and my kids has gotten stronger, because I can stay home in Grande Cache and raise them. When I was driving a truck, I barely even saw them.

"Being able to raise them myself, and to be there for them as their dad, has got to be the most important thing to me."

"...the best side effect of my education is that the relationship between me and my kids has gotten stronger, because I can stay home in Grande Cache..."

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

CHANGING NOTIONS OF COMPUTERPHOBIA

Education and technology have always been natural companions, as this article from 1986 can demonstrate. Back then, one of the biggest obstacles to tech savviness was “computerphobia,” the sense of intimidation a lot of people experienced when learning how to use computers. Libero Ficocelli, who pioneered the first computer course at GPRC and who still teaches in our computer sciences department today, had this to say about how far we’ve come since then.

“At that time, my colleague Franco [Carlacci] and I were doing presentations on the Internet and what the heck that was! The fact that everyone’s got tablets and smart phones now certainly means ‘computerphobia’ is a lot different. I find people nowadays are more excited about changing technology. We’ve always tried to be in touch with the community and offer what they need.”

We might smirk at the notion of “computerphobia” now, but it makes us wonder... what will people think about videoconferencing tools, LiveScribe pens and SMART Boards in another 30 years?

New course takes on computerphobia

Many attracted to regional college offering

By DAVID HOWELL
Herald-Tribune staff

“It’s the basic thing: ‘I beeped, I destroyed something’ that people fear.”

Libero Ficocelli, a Grande Prairie Regional College instructor, is talking about the phobia many people have about computers.

A new course at the college is designed to help people overcome that anxiety and of course, teach them how to use computers.

“The course was put together to be non-threatening, because, let’s face it, computer technology is threatening,” he says. Ficocelli is head of the department of Computer Systems Technology at the college.

The spring session computing course has attracted a large number of students intent on self-directed learning.

The course, called Introduction to Computing Concepts (CT112), has been designed as a series of 17 lesson/exercise modules.

Students — 65 of them are enrolled — move through coursework and examinations at their own pace.

Instructor Dorothy Madryk is in charge, but instead of sitting through lectures, students receive their instruction directly from the computer programs they are learning how to use.

There are no scheduled classroom hours. Students are on their own but can call for help from lab assistants, available from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. each weekday.

“It’s our attempt to meet community needs so people can progress at their own pace,” says Ficocelli.

“In conjunction with the 20th anniversary, the college was looking to put on (an extensive) spring session. It seemed like the ideal time to try something like this. And it looks like it is being very well accepted.”

The course is geared for students who have no computer experience.

Coursework exposes them, through hands-on experience, to microcomputer-based, business oriented software applications such as spreadsheets, editors, graphics packages and data management.

Most students started the course May 15, but as they have until August 15 to complete it, some have not started yet — and it’s up to them when they do.

CT112 is only one current project of Computer Systems Technology, a department which has been on the move — just like the rest of the computer industry — since its inception in 1961.

Its two-year program of computing and accounting courses, has produced two small groups of graduates, trained as computer programmers — five in 1980, and nine more at this April’s convocation.

Of those 14 grads, about half are working in computer-related jobs.

“The kinds of jobs we think our students would fit into would be in a good-sized small company, or a low-end medium-sized company,” says Ficocelli. “I think we’re seeing a sophisticated market: small businesses are going to get into computers in a big way, and I see our students filling positions.”

Instructor David Gregg has monitored the program’s progress.

“This year was better than last year — I think

this year was our most successful,” he says. “Originally, when the program was started we had to model ours after NAIT (the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology in Edmonton). Since then we’ve been able to streamline it, by fine tuning.”

“In terms of facilities,” adds Ficocelli, “we are superior (to NAIT), no doubt about it. And our smaller class size provides a more personal environment.”

The department won’t be idle this summer. A computer camp for children is in the works, and will go ahead if enough interest is shown.

A similar camp last year had about 80 children, ages eight to 13, participating.

“They start off with playing educational games and learning programming with Logo,” says Gregg, who was the instructor of last year’s camp.

“The games improve their thinking ability, reasoning and logic.”

Local school boards are distributing questionnaire/response forms to students’ parents.

And in the fall, full-time business people will mix with full-time college students in Systems Analysis and Design (CT211).

Ficocelli says mixing the two groups as they learn will benefit all in the class.

The course teaches students to analyze information needs of businesses and then design information systems for them. The systems designed are not necessarily computer-based.

Ficocelli will step aside as department chairman in the fall as he plans a return to university. Computing instructor Evans Forsyth will take Ficocelli’s place.

ARTICLE FROM THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER DETAILING GPRC’S FIRST COMPUTER COURSE OFFERING IN JUNE, 1986.

GPRC computing science instructor Libero Ficocelli, who pioneered the first computer course at GPRC, has seen a lot of change in how GPRC stays connected to the community in the use of technology in education.



ALUMNI CLASS NOTES

Brigitte Benning | Open Studies/University Transfer BEd | 2010-2013

Brigitte Benning, who completed her MA in sociology at the University of Victoria, now lives in Grande Prairie and works for Peace Wapiti School Division No. 76 as the Indigenous Educator. For her 2018 Master's thesis, Benning used GPRC's On-Campus Friendship Centre to investigate how post-secondary institutions can best support Indigenous students.

Ashley Richards | University Transfer BA | 2012-2015

After two and a half years, Ashley Richards left her position at HIV North running the LGBTQ youth program to pursue her passion of community-wide education on gender and sexual diversity. Ashley finished her degree at the University of Calgary and was chosen as the outstanding graduate at her convocation.

Emily Friesen-Peters | University Transfer BA | 2013-2015

Emily Friesen-Peters graduated from the University of Alberta in 2017 with her BA in Psychology. She received the 2017 Certificate of Academic Excellence for her undergraduate thesis on the psychology of relationships. She examined the effects of what she called "relationship education" and its capacity to change people's perceptions about their own romantic relationships or those of others. Emily was "ecstatic" upon hearing the news that her thesis had been selected. "It made all those hours of hard work worth it."

SHARE YOUR NEWS AND PHOTOS WITH GPRC ALUMNI!

Where have you been since you attended GPRC?

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