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Local nurses create scholarship for registered nurses

In keeping with this year’s theme for National Nursing Week from May 6 to 12 — Changing Lives. Shaping Tomorrow. — the efforts of a group of local nurses continue to change lives and shape the future of registered nurses who want to pursue graduate studies at the University of Lethbridge.

The [Dr. Shannon Spenceley Legacy of Nursing Scholarship](#), named after professor emerita and former dean of the ULethbridge Faculty of Health Sciences, is intended for registered nurses or nurse practitioners members in good standing with the College of Registered Nurses of Alberta (CRNA) who are pursuing a graduate degree in any faculty at ULethbridge. Fundraising began in 2016 when the Lethbridge Legacy of Nursing Committee was formed. It coincided with the 100th anniversary of registered nursing in Alberta.

“We discussed the future of the profession and how that future is supported by enabling registered nurses to advance their education,” says Spenceley, adding that the committee wanted to raise funds to support advanced nursing education focused on addressing local health and health-care issues. “That was how we came up with the notion of a scholarship specifically for registered nurses who want to pursue graduate studies at ULethbridge.”

The committee held an annual nursing gala for several years to raise funds, although the pandemic resulted in one cancellation and one virtual event.

“Our local business community and local donors and sponsors were incredibly generous,” says Spenceley. “We set a goal to raise enough money to endow the scholarship so it could be awarded every year just from the interest earned on the invested principal. We reached that goal in 2022.”

The scholarship has been awarded to seven recipients so far. One of those recipients, Shannon Vandenberg (BN ’08, MSc Nursing ’13), is an RN and instructor in the ULethbridge nursing program. She is pursuing a PhD in Population Studies in Health.

“This award has enabled me to continue with my PhD studies and develop a research program of my own,” says Vandenberg. “My research aims to understand practice

preparedness of Canadian RNs in emerging vector-borne diseases, and I hope this knowledge will promote improved patient outcomes.”

The scholarship is administered by the [Alberta Registered Nurses Educational Trust \(ARNET\)](#).

This news release can be found online at [Dr. Shannon Spenceley Legacy of Nursing Scholarship](#).

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Our University’s Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.