2018 COUPN AWARDS

11TH ANNUAL

Celebrating Excellence in Nursing Education & Scholarship
The 11th annual Council of Ontario University Programs in Nursing (COUPN) Awards Ceremony recognizes the hard work, innovation, passion and excellence of students, faculty, preceptors, and agency partners in Ontario's nursing programs.

COUPN is pleased to honour 12 award recipients in teaching and student excellence, scholarship, and contributions to nursing education by our individual and agency partners.

These awards demonstrate the role of Ontario’s universities as partners in a better future, through the delivery of high-quality health care that helps Ontarians lead healthier and longer lives.

Thank you for your support as we celebrate the accomplishments of the 2018 honorees.

Dr. Jennifer Medves  
Chair, COUPN
2018
AWARD WINNERS
Dr. Bernice Downey, an RN and medical anthropologist of Oji/Cree and Celtic heritage, has helped lead COUPN’s response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. She has helped create a partnership agreement between the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association and COUPN, organize and host a national think tank on nursing education and the TRC, support professional development activities for COUPN members related to TRC, and provide ongoing guidance to the COUPN-TRC working group.

Bernice is the Regional Aboriginal Cancer Lead for the Toronto-Central Regional Cancer Program, the Indigenous Health Initiative Lead for the Faculty of Health Sciences at McMaster University, and has held multiple leadership roles in Indigenous health organizations.
Sunnybrook has evolved from its origins as Canada’s largest veterans hospital into a world-renowned health sciences centre and a University of Toronto-affiliated teaching hospital.

Even as enrolment grows in York University’s Bachelor of Science Nursing Program, making it more challenging to provide high-quality clinical opportunities for nursing students, Sunnybrook is honored for its work in providing students with “excellent evidence-based practice experience in a caring and supportive environment.”

Students have also praised the hospital’s user-friendly website and student registration system, as well as the warmth and professionalism of the staff.

Today, with 1.2 million patient visits annually, Sunnybrook is home to Canada’s largest trauma centre as well as groundbreaking research.
Margaret Verkuyl’s colleagues call her “an outstanding educator.” She has pioneered innovative student learning experiences known as virtual gaming simulations, motivating students to think creatively and critically in preparation for real-life clinical environments.

Her body of research on the impact of virtual gaming simulation in nursing education has helped advance this exciting field.

Her colleagues in the Ryerson, Centennial, and George Brown Collaborative Nursing Program say Margaret “demonstrates a commitment to excellence in teaching through her continuous investment in high-performing partnerships across all three sites of the collaborative program,” adding: “Her innovations in teaching and leveraging state-of-the-art technology have inspired and changed the thinking and pedagogical practices of several course teams.”
Dr. Pierre Pariseau-Legault is being honoured for his dissertation providing new insights into the sexuality of people with intellectual disabilities.

His thesis has been described by faculty as “among the best dissertations [they] have read in [their] respective careers.”

In exploring this important but often ignored topic, Pierre’s work has been heralded for giving nurses the tools to better understand the sexual lives of people with intellectual disabilities, and to see them as more than just vulnerable people. His work advances the concept of care in clinical nursing practice, nursing ethics and nursing research.

Pierre has been published based on the findings of his dissertation and he is working with graduate students to further this area of study.
Brianna Decontie’s ethic of compassionate care, based on a mix of traditional Indigenous and scientific knowledge, inspired her to develop the Mothers Support Group Five-Week Program.

The program, based on the Give Your Child A Healthy Happy Smile Ontario Ministry of Health initiative, provides oral health-care guidelines, influenced by Medicine Wheel teachings, for new mothers accessing health care from Kitigan Zibi Health and Social Services.

Brianna, a fourth-year undergraduate nursing student who is Anishinaabe, is praised by her teachers for her “capacity and competence as a nursing student ... in applying both nursing and Indigenous knowledge practices when providing compassionate and professional care.”

Brianna says her nursing practice reflects her Indigenous ‘way of being,’ and believes it is important to keep Anishinaabe teachings alive.
Dr. Shelley Walkerley’s students describe her as “an invaluable asset clinically, academically, and through her research.”

She has been the Co-ordinator of the Nurse Practitioner stream in the graduate program at York for the past eight years, and, her colleagues say, she is “accessible, supportive, and an excellent example of a nurse practitioner.”

Shelley is the provincial course lead for Therapeutics in Health Care, which she teaches to all students across the consortium. She also led course mapping for the College of Nurses of Ontario on behalf of the COUPN NP Consortium.

She holds a nursing diploma from the Osler School of Nursing in Toronto, a BScN and a primary health-care nurse practitioner (PHCNP) certificate from York University, and a Master’s of Nursing and a PhD (Nursing) from the University of Toronto. Her doctoral thesis explored the factors that help or hinder the provision of smoking-cessation interventions by RNs and NPs in primary care settings.
During her graduate studies at Queen’s, faculty described Mary Coughlin as demonstrating “academic and professional excellence that far surpassed expectations.”

Mary is passionate about medication safety and health-care quality, and reflected this in her thesis work, focusing on metabolic monitoring in children and adolescents accessing outpatient psychiatry. Findings from this work have contributed significantly to nursing and interdisciplinary health-care literature, and have been accepted for publication in two reputable peer-reviewed journals.

She has received several academic awards, including the Ontario Graduate Scholarship, the Queen’s McLaughlin and Bracken Fellowship for Ontario Graduate Students and the A.J. Baumgart Outstanding Achievement Award for extracurricular achievements, and is a four-time winner of the Academic All-Canadian award for achieving above a 3.5 GPA while competing as a varsity student athlete.
Since she started work as a Clinical Course Director at York in 2011, Gemma Percival has earned a reputation among her colleagues and students as an exceptional clinical instructor. Her students say she has been instrumental in helping them integrate nursing theory with practice, and spurring the development of their nursing knowledge and skills.

She has taught in the Collaborative, Second-Entry, and International Educated Nursing programs, and is passionate about teaching and evidence-based nursing practice. She is dedicated to fostering student engagement and to creating a safe, equitable and inclusive learning environment.

Gemma holds a BA (Hons) in Psychology and BScN from the University of Alberta, and an MN with a focus in Nursing Administration from the University of Toronto. She currently works at Michael Garron Hospital in the Emergency Department and at Toronto General Hospital as a Nursing Administrative Co-ordinator.
Jamin Osachuk’s enthusiasm and dedication as a nurse and preceptor are praised by students and colleagues, who admire his focus on providing students with opportunities to learn and gain the confidence they need to become independent practitioners.

Jamin is a Registered Nurse who works on the Nursing Resource Team at London Health Sciences Centre. He also teaches groups of students in clinical practice in undergraduate programs at Western. He has been a preceptor for students in the Final Integrative Practicum of Western’s BScN Programs for several years.

One student says of Jamin: “Throughout the semester, I learned so much more than I thought was possible. Jamin was an outstanding preceptor and clearly had a passion for teaching as evidenced by his enthusiasm during our semester together. He was very student-centered, always standing by to help.”
Dr. Cindy-Lee Dennis is a researcher who is internationally renowned for her extensive work in the areas of breastfeeding, perinatal mental health and postpartum depression. Her commitment to research, practice and scholarship has driven improvements in these fields.

She is also a valued mentor to students in the Faculty of Nursing, using her research to inform her teaching to give students valuable insights into the intersection of research and practice.

Cindy-Lee received her nursing qualification from the University of Toronto, and earned her PhD in 1999. She then became an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Toronto and was promoted to Full Professor in 2012. Dr. Dennis has held two Canada Research Chairs: in Perinatal Community Health, and the Shirley Brown Chair in Women’s Mental Health Research. She is currently the Women’s Health Research Chair at St. Michael’s Hospital and the University of Toronto.
Dr. Claire Mallette and Dr. Don Rose worked with 14 Ontario university nursing schools to identify how they are developing compassionate care in their students. The results of this important study, which was supported by AMS Healthcare, will help to inform nursing curricula and enhance the well-being of patients and nursing students.

Claire is an Associate Professor and former Director of the School of Nursing at York University, whose diverse career includes roles in academia, administration, research and clinical practice in Quebec, Alberta and Ontario. Don is an Associate Professor in, and former director of, the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing at Ryerson University. He has held several positions in clinical practice, administration and education.
Thank you to this year’s COUPN Awards Selection Committee

Dr. Karey McCullough
Nipissing University

Dr. Linda Patrick
University of Windsor

Dr. Dawn Prentice
Brock University

Dr. Kirsten Woodend
Trent University
Ontario's universities are committed to partnering for a better future by helping students thrive, working to create healthy and vibrant communities, and driving sustainable prosperity in the province.