

SUMMER 2018

From left: Business Administration and Applied Counselling Skills alumna Sheena Houle (classes of '15 and '17) with Practical Nursing graduate (class of '11) Missy Malcolm

ALUMNI IN ACTION

PAGES 2-5

ACC DAY IN EBB AND FLOW MARKS A 'FIRST'

HOW COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

-
- » Keeping you connected
 - » Highlighting what's new
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-



COMMUNITY-BASED TRAINING

EBB AND FLOW FIRST NATION AND THE ASSINIBOINE EFFECT

Missy Malcolm and Sheena Houle graduated from Assiniboine without having to leave their home community. That's often taken for granted by students who live in Brandon, Dauphin or Winnipeg where the college's campuses are located. But it's more of a challenge when you're born and raised in Ebb and Flow First Nation, about 85 kilometres east of Dauphin.

"I am honoured to speak in my home community of Ebb and Flow First Nation about the experiences I've had with ACC, all of which have been positive and helped me grow into the person I am today," Malcolm says. After completing the College Preparation course in June 2009, Malcolm went right into the Practical Nursing program in July 2009.

"The nursing program was being offered in Ebb and Flow, which was an excellent opportunity for many students of Ebb and Flow and the neighboring community of Sandy Bay First Nation," she says. Malcolm is currently employed as a licensed practical nurse in McCreary, Man., with an interest in geriatric and palliative care. She is also featured in a Manitoba Nurses Union ad campaign. "This made my family and community very proud," Malcolm says.

Sheena Houle also took College Preparation in Ebb and Flow and then went on to graduate with an Applied Counselling certificate in her home community last year.

Those counselling skills have helped her work as post-secondary counsellor for the Ebb and Flow Education Authority, supporting students who wish to obtain post-secondary education.

"I notice when just having a conversation with someone, that I'm practising what I learned, even when I don't intend to. It's a good asset because I've become a better listener to myself, my family and others. You look at life, or things, differently than what you would have thought before," Houle says.

Both women did take some courses at other Assiniboine campuses; Malcolm took Pharmacology at the Brandon campus and Houle took Business Administration at the Parkland campus in Dauphin. Both of them encouraged school students to consider an education with Assiniboine during the 8th ACC Day event held in Ebb and Flow on April 25.



ACC Days engage communities through a day-long series of events for prospective students, alumni, and community members. Previous locations have included Virden, Dauphin, Neepawa, Portage la Prairie and Boissevain. ACC Day in Ebb and Flow marked the first time the event has been held in a First Nations community.

The day kicked off with Assiniboine President Mark Frison joining local DJ Dwayne Spence, a.k.a. Moody Blue, on the morning show on local radio station 101.3 The Flow. Frison, along with other college staff, then met with alumni and community leaders in the Elders' Room at Ebb and Flow school.

In the afternoon, students from grades 7 to 12 were welcomed to a bell-ringer session in the school gymnasium where local high school students could visit any one of six Assiniboine program stations set up around the gym. At the sound of the bell, they moved from one station to the next, learning more about the hands-on approach to education offered at the college.

Some of the programs and activities that were represented in Ebb and Flow included Social Service Worker, Police Studies, Carpentry & Woodworking, Business Administration, Practical Nursing and Cougars Athletics.

ACC Day in Ebb and Flow concluded with a soup and bannock feast that was open to the community, at which Missy Malcolm shared her story. The evening opened and closed with a prayer by elder Mary Houle and music from one of the local drum groups.

Assiniboine's relationship with Ebb and Flow dates back to 1997, according to Lorraine Johnson, Assiniboine's Chairperson of Contract Training. Many of the college's programs have been delivered in the community, including the College Preparation program combined with the Mature Student High School program. As well, the Construction Electrician, Practical Nursing and Comprehensive Health Care Aide programs have been delivered in the community along with the Business Administration certificate program that is currently being offered.

Last year, Assiniboine delivered programs in seven other First Nations communities across the province, including God's Lake Narrows, Waywayseecappo and O-Chi-Chak-Ko-Sipi. Typically, if students wish to enter the programs and do not have their high school diploma, Assiniboine will provide the instruction for them to earn one.



Ebb and Flow School students test their Carpentry and Woodworking skills



Alumna Sheena Houle and her grandmother and community elder, Mary Houle outside of Ebb and Flow School



Ebb and Flow School students cheering on the Assiniboine Cougars

This relationship with First Nations communities is part of the college's Indigenization strategy. "Our mission of transforming lives and strengthening Manitoba through applied education and research is central to the work that we do. One of the guiding pieces of our college's strategic direction is to contribute to First Nation, Métis and Inuit prosperity by having the highest college participation rate in the province," Assiniboine President Mark Frison says in an introduction to the document.

"Indigenization is a commitment to a process of instilling Indigenous worldviews, knowledge, beliefs, ways of doing and being from the diverse Indigenous cultures we are united with, into our organization at every level, in all things, including academics, organizational/operational structures, as well as within all our social/cultural aspects," the paper states.

The success of the strategy will be measured by its impact on:

- » **Student success:** Indigenous students will achieve their educational goals through self-determination and graduate with a vision for "a good life."
- » **Community engagement:** Assiniboine will "bring learning opportunities to communities for those who prefer to learn in the community."
- » **Social and economic impact:** "We will contribute to improved prosperity for Indigenous individuals, families, and communities."

Missy Malcolm says her experience should serve as an enticement to others from her community. "Throughout my experiences with ACC, I valued their commitment to their students, the standards they hold, the strong values they represent and the support that is given to each student individually. When I needed help, the instructors were always available and ready to hear my questions, concerns and worries," Malcolm recalls.

"Assiniboine taught me to dig deep for something I want, to have a strong work ethic and not to lose that passion for learning. It is an educational institution that I thank for the rewarding career I am in right now," she says.

Sheena Houle agrees. "My advice to others is Assiniboine Community College is the best school ever. The classes are smaller, just like high school. You will be able to get to know everyone, even when they are not in the same studies. Everyone is dedicated to support you, and wants to see you succeed," Houle says. "It's never too late to learn. We are young. We are the future."

To read Assiniboine's full Indigenization Strategy, visit assiniboine.net/publications.



Having the right ingredients to feed our economy

that's the **Assiniboine Effect**

Rebekah Roberts, Culinary Arts graduate 2014



Rebekah and her team opened Prairie Firehouse in Brandon's historic fire station. The restaurant is helping to revitalize the city's downtown.

Assiniboine's Culinary Arts graduates are growing Manitoba's economy through artistry, flavour and talent. Rebekah is just one example of The Assiniboine Effect—a quiet phenomenon that's having a big impact on the growth of Manitoba.

→ Watch Rebekah's film at AssiniboineEffect.ca



From left: Kyle Zalluski (Excellence in Teaching award), Wade Barnes (Distinguished Alumni award), Beny Mwenda (Community Service award) and Whitney Roberts (One to Watch award)



2018 ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS

CELEBRATING ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENTS!

Each year the Alumni Association board of directors presents awards of achievement to outstanding alumni as chosen based on nominations submitted by community members, staff, fellow alumni and/or employers.

The eight awards are presented at annual dinners held in Brandon and the Parkland Region (Alumni Advancement Dinner and Parkland Region Alumni Celebration) that provide an illustration—and opportunity to celebrate—the Assiniboine effect, the impact of the college and its graduates in communities across Manitoba.

“The Alumni Association’s board of directors are always excited when we can showcase ACC alumni, but our annual awards are even more special,” says Wayne Kirk, President of the college’s Alumni Association. “The recipients of these awards are typically nominated by their peers, employers or family, and it’s really gratifying to see how valued they are in their communities and work places.”

This year’s eight recipients are exceptional examples of Assiniboine’s graduates who are doing vital work to drive the economy of the province across many industries.

On March 8, the Alumni Advancement Dinner was held at the Manitoba Institute of Culinary Arts building on the college’s North Hill campus. Recipients included:

Wade Barnes (Class of ‘96, Agribusiness) co-founded Farmers Edge in 2005. Today, Farmers Edge has more than 450 employees who specialize in data science, precision agronomy, GIS, hardware engineering, software development, soil science and sustainability.

Beny Mwenda (Class of ‘98, Rural Development) traveled to Brandon from Tanzania to attend the dinner. As national vice-chair of the Tanzanian Society for Agricultural Education and Extension for 20 years, Mwenda has helped improve the lives of rural Tanzanians.

Whitney Roberts (Class of ‘07, Business Administration) is the owner of Tour Indoor Cycling, which offers exercise classes with stationary bicycles with weighted flywheels.

Kyle Zalluski (Class of ‘01, Hospitality Tourism Administration) is an instructor in what is now called the Hotel and Restaurant Management program, where he coordinated the inaugural Wine & Food Festival and has developed many partnerships with local industry.

THE FOUR AWARD CATEGORIES PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO RECOGNIZE ALUMNI WHO ARE MAKING AN IMPACT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS ON FUTURE ALUMNI:

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI — presented to alumni of the college who have distinguished themselves in both their chosen profession and their community.

COMMUNITY SERVICE — recognizes an alumnus who has positively impacted the quality of people’s lives through the service of others.

ONE TO WATCH — honours a graduate who is 30 years of age or younger at the time of nomination and has made exceptional achievements and significant contributions to his or her profession and/or community.

EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING — honours a faculty member for extraordinary contributions to teaching and the student experience.



On April 26, the Parkland Region Alumni Celebration Dinner was held at the Parkland Recreation Complex. Recipients at that event included:

David Mansell (Class of '91, Motor Vehicle Mechanics and Class of '06, Applied Counselling Skills) has worked for Michif Child and Family Services for the past nine years, first as the child abuse coordinator/investigator and currently as childcare facilities direct service workers supervisor.

Nicole Yunker (Class of '06, Human Resource Management) is an employment advisor/team leader of Parkland Job

Opportunity Centre. She co-founded the Boxes of Love Ukraine Project and is a member of CARE (Committee Advocating for the Removal of Sexual Exploitation.)

Kevin Giesbrecht (Classes of '10 & 12, Land & Water Management and Agribusiness) is an ag/commercial lender at Catalyst Credit Union, and was recognized for his many hours of volunteering in the community for

organizations such as the Kinsmen Business Expo and Canada's National Ukrainian Festival parade.

Laura Chartrand (Business Administration instructor) graduated in 2000 from the program in which she now teaches. Laura was instrumental in the change from the Aboriginal Community Development program to the Social Service Worker program in 2015.

THANK YOU TO THIS YEAR'S SPONSORS OF THE ALUMNI ADVANCEMENT DINNER HELD MARCH 8 IN BRANDON

GOLD SPONSOR



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ASSINIBOINE OPENS USE-OF-FORCE SIMULATION LAB



Assiniboine has partnered with the Brandon Police Service (BPS) to develop a Use-of-Force Simulation Lab, which officially opened on May 4 at the college's Victoria Avenue East campus in Brandon.

The space allows for complete scenario training exercises to be deployed using a life-sized video screen, shoot-back cannon and a digital control room. The simulation technology makes it possible for trained officers and instructors to decide how the scenario plays out in real time, guided by the responses and actions of the trainee.

"This new space is a terrific addition to our existing Public Safety Training Centre on campus, which provides training and development facilities for a wide variety of organizations," said Karen Hargreaves, Dean of Health & Human Services at Assiniboine. "We're continuing to build on our already strong track record of program leadership in the area of public safety."

The computer system allows for more than 450 different scenarios to play out, all with the aim of training police officers and other public safety personnel on how to react quickly and appropriately in situations that range from routine to high stakes. Updates

are made to some of the scenarios every few months.

"The acquisition of this simulator will enhance officer and public safety for the Brandon Police Service and other public safety organizations," said Wayne Balcaen, Chief of the Brandon Police Service. "This technology is another tool that will better assist our officers and safely prepare them for situations they may not otherwise encounter. Police Service members will now be able to engage in dynamic and realistic situations that would not be possible until faced in a real-life situation."

No live ammunition is used in the lab. Instead, mock computerized firearms interact with the screen. The environment is large enough that vehicles and other props can be brought into the space through an overhead door, adding to the realism of the training exercises.

The specialized equipment housed in the simulation lab was purchased by the BPS through the province's Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund and amounts to just under \$90,000. An MOU between Assiniboine and BPS allows for the college to house the equipment and share the space with other public safety organizations for their training needs.

"We expect this training environment will be put to good use by many public safety organizations, in addition to the Brandon Police Service," said Hargreaves.

BPS and Assiniboine have a longstanding history of collaboration. The college's Police Studies program includes a seconded officer to teach and provides Phase A training for the BPS recruits.

This new simulation lab expands on the college's existing Public Safety Training Centre on campus, which opened in 2015. The centre allows for tactical and physical defense training, high-risk extraction exercises, classroom study and debriefing.

From left: Dennis White, ACC Chairperson of Mechanical Trades, James McGhie, Assiniboine Welding Instructor, Henry Verner, Transportation Compliance at Koch Fertilizer, Paul Liddle, Koch Fertilizer's Plant Manager and Barry Gooden, Assiniboine's Acting Dean of Trades & Technology

KOCH DONATES \$200K OF STEEL TO ASSINIBOINE

Welding students at Assiniboine Community College are benefiting from excellent learning opportunities provided by Koch Fertilizer Canada's donation of nearly \$200,000 worth of steel.

"This donation helped students gain experience in welding a variety of different stainless steel products not normally welded in the school environment," Welding instructor James McGhie said.

Koch Fertilizer occasionally has material left over from other jobs or material where the markings become illegible or the supporting documentation is no longer available. This material cannot be used in the plant as it is not 100 per cent identifiable.

On approval from Paul Liddle, the Plant Manager, Henry Verner, the Transportation Compliance Coordinator, was tasked to clean up the material and have it removed from the site. He contacted McGhie to see if the material could be put to good use in the college's Welding program.

"I thought Jimmy (McGhie) could do good things with the material to aid in the development of our next generation of welders. I am pleased that our donation will assist the program for years to come," Verner said.

McGhie said the donation allows instructors to bridge the gap between college classrooms and shops with industry, so students feel confident and comfortable working in these environments upon graduating.

"It helps keep us current and provides us with the information we need on what is in demand from employers, including Koch," said McGhie. "It offers students a sample of the products currently used in industry that we wouldn't otherwise be able to fit into our budget."

2018 LEGACY GALA DINNER *Thank You to Our Supporters*

For more than 20 years, the Assiniboine Community College Foundation has hosted its Legacy Gala Dinner in support of students.

Held on March 22, 2018 at the Manitoba Institute of Culinary Arts, guests were treated

to an exquisite eight-course menu with each course expertly paired with wine. Proceeds went directly to supporting Indigenous students at Assiniboine.

Donor support furthers Assiniboine's strategic direction, which includes contributing to First Nations, Métis and Inuit prosperity by having the highest college participation rate in the province.

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CATCHING UP WITH...

DANA NAIRN

In this edition, we feature a Q & A with Dana Nairn, alumna from the college's Business Administration program, class of 2007.



Name Dana Nairn

Hometown Brandon, Manitoba

Where are you currently employed?

Viterra

What is your current job title?

Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) Analyst; I perform system maintenance and general day-to-day updates using our User Interface. I analyze and troubleshoot problems for the internal HR group and our clients, perform testing and implementation of new projects and regulatory changes as well as write reports for HR-related areas.

Why did you choose this career path?

I fell into it, actually. After becoming a subject matter expert in a number of areas in my previous position at Viterra, I used my experience and skills when we moved to our new HRIS. A new position opened up and moving into it was the perfect next step for me.

Did you find it difficult to find work in your field?

I did not, luckily. I got a job almost right away following graduation in 2007. Although only working 30 hours per week for 3 years in that first job, I was able to gain experience directly in HR, which I had gone to school for. I felt very grateful that I was able to secure a job in my area of expertise at the time, so I took advantage of it and stayed there until we moved to Regina.

Did you take additional steps to get you where you are today?

I am a quick learner and have a passion for computer systems and the technical parts of HR. I was able to use my personal skills in my previous payroll position at Viterra to become the subject matter expert. I knew I didn't want to do payroll forever, but I was pretty good at it and felt there were other opportunities for me at Viterra. Over time, I discovered that the things I enjoyed most about my current

job were more technical in nature, and that I wanted to move on to something more like a system specialist. Although I took payroll training for my last job, I now learn more on the job through workday-specific training related to my current position. Most days, we learn on our own as we go!

Do you have a career 'highlight' that you're most proud of?

I am most proud of learning how to be successful using a brand new HR system, and becoming more and more skilled, technically, over time. I am continually learning new things and helping my HR team be efficient and successful in their roles as well. I know I am in the right position for my abilities, and am always on top of how I can become even better to progress myself further.

Looking back to when you first started to think about getting a post-secondary education, what first attracted you to the program that you took at Assiniboine?

I actually started in the Hospitality program! I was intrigued by a career in the hotel industry and, being from Brandon, knew that ACC's training was second-to-none.

What advice do you have for people who may have similar interests in this field or a related one?

Think really hard about what you really want to do at the time. I thought I wanted to work as an HR Generalist, but that first three years simply catapulted me into finding what I truly love today. Go 100% with what you choose, learn everything you can, then find the bits and pieces you love the most and become the best at them. If you can get to the point in an organization where replacing you would be very difficult, that is what I consider a success. Whether you move on or not, continue to learn and grow and be the best.

Note: Since the initial interview, Dana has taken a new position with Farm Credit Canada out of Regina, as HR Technical Analyst

ON-CAMPUS EARLY LEARNING CENTRE TO EXPAND

The Assiniboine Early Learning Centre (AELC) is expanding and relocating this year, allowing for up to twenty more licensed spaces, including toddler and infant spots.

"The province of Manitoba is pleased to be a partner in this project that will create more quality and accessible childcare spaces in the Brandon area and shorten wait lists for families," said Families Minister Scott Fielding.

The AELC, located at the college's Victoria Avenue East campus in Brandon, is currently licensed for 34 preschool spaces. The learning centre will remain on campus but is relocating to the second floor in space that is currently unoccupied.

"Safe, available childcare continues to be a pressing issue across Manitoba, and we're pleased to partner with the province to invest in more spaces available for families," said Assiniboine president Mark Frison. "This is an exciting, worthwhile project that we look forward to completing later this year."

The new space will allow for an additional 20 spots, for a total of up to 54 licensed spaces: 34 pre-school, 12 toddlers and eight infant.

Those additional spaces are "significant," said Erin Ariss, board chair of the Assiniboine Early Learning Centre.

"With this expansion, the benefits will be seen and felt beyond the walls of Assiniboine Early Learning Centre. The centre's children, staff and families will see the change, but it will also benefit the students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education diploma program to increase their exposure to more 'learn by doing' opportunities," Ariss said.

"Students and staff within the college will have more access to childcare spaces and there will be the creation of new job opportunities for Brandon and the Westman area," she said.

The estimated \$800,000 cost of the project is being paid for by both the college and province of Manitoba. A provincial grant will cover one-third of project costs, up to \$267,000, with Assiniboine Community College covering the remaining two-thirds. The project is expected to be completed by fall 2018.

Assiniboine has supported the operation of an early learning centre at its Victoria Avenue East campus since 1982. The AELC operates separately from the college and is managed by a volunteer board. The college provides space and custodial services at no cost to the centre.

For more than a decade, in addition to the provision of childcare, the AELC has linked to the college's Early Childhood Education program. This includes activities through interaction with children, observation and practicum opportunities.



ASSINIBOINE IN THE NEWS!

15 MEDALS FOR ASSINIBOINE STUDENTS AT SKILLS MANITOBA

Fifteen Assiniboine Community College students celebrated the end of their academic year with provincial medals following the 21st annual Skills Manitoba. The competition took place April 12 in Winnipeg at Red River College, the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology and Tec-Voc High School.

Twenty-nine Assiniboine students from a range of skilled trades and technology programs competed this year, winning a total of five gold, six silver and four bronze medals.

“Team Assiniboine rose to the occasion again this year and we couldn’t be more pleased with the outcome,” said Barry Gooden, acting Dean of Trades & Technology at Assiniboine. “For students, Skills Manitoba is an incredible opportunity to be challenged in their areas of study and see that their hard work pays off.”

New this year was the 3D Digital Game Art competition, which had Assiniboine students filling the podium with gold, silver and bronze wins. This competition will also be introduced at the national Skills Canada competition later in the year.

“The 3D Digital Game Art contest challenges that rare mix of artistic and technical skills required to create 3D models that are used in games, apps, and virtual reality,” said Derek

Ford, Interactive Media Arts instructor at Assiniboine. “We are proud and excited to represent the college, Manitoba and our Interactive Media Arts program at Skills Canada in Edmonton later this year.”

Skills Manitoba is an annual event that brings together more than 500 secondary and post-secondary and apprenticeship students from across the province to showcase their talent in more than 43 different time-limited, hands-on contests.

The event celebrates and rewards students, while connecting with employers to stay current with the changing needs of industry. Competitions are designed and judged by industry professionals and educators.

Gold medal winners will have the opportunity to join Team Manitoba in Edmonton on June 4 and 5 to compete at the 24th Skills Canada National Competition. This multi-trade and technology competition brings together more than 500 students and apprentices from across the country to participate in more than 40 competitions.

For a full list of Assiniboine’s medalists, visit the Assiniboine website at assiniboine.net/blogs.

ACC: THE LEGACY

Who's your daddy?



THE FINAL COUNTDOWN, ASSINIBOINE PARTNERS ON COLLEGE ESCAPE ROOM EXPERIENCE

Puzzle-lovers and investigative minds in the Westman region can now channel their inner Sherlock Holmes or Nancy Drew to solve the mystery of a long-forgotten college romance.

Assiniboine Community College and Escape: The Final Countdown have partnered to bring the province's first post-secondary escape room experience to the public.

"Even though we design all of our full-hour and portable escape rooms ourselves right here in-house, we have never been challenged with designing one like this," said Michelle Budiwski, owner of Escape: The Final Countdown.

Groups of six to 12 players have only 60 minutes to solve the mystery inside the storyline of their first-day orientation at college. The task at hand? Players must unlock a series of challenges to uncover the identity of their father, an Assiniboine alumnus.

Creative thinking, problem solving and communication are all put to the test in this entertaining, light-hearted storyline.

"As a college, we're always looking for new, creative ways to be out in the communities we serve and celebrating students

and graduates, all while having a lot of fun," said Danielle Adriaansen, director of public affairs at Assiniboine. "We had a terrific time working with Michelle and her hardworking team as they took the lead writing the storyline from start to finish and building the room."

And true to the college's 'learn by doing' mantra, a few students pitched in to help the Escape staff build the room, with Carpentry & Woodworking students painting the space and Piping Trades students constructing and installing one of the room's puzzles.

"They have been amazing to work with and actually having things in the room that were built by current students as well as highlighting some of their actual alumni and our game itself is priceless!" said Budiwski.

The room was launched in early March and will be available for bookings over the coming months. Those interested in learning more or booking a group time to play can visit thefinalcountdown.ca.

UPCOMING EVENT

COUGARS CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Assiniboine Cougars Classic Golf committee is actively planning the 4th annual tournament, scheduled for June 21st, 2018 at Shilo Golf & Country Club. Each year we work hard to build on past successes to generate funds for student-athlete scholarships.

Being an Assiniboine graduate myself, I am honoured to be the chairperson of the planning committee for the 3rd year in a row and a tournament participant for the 4th year. The opportunity to reconnect with a wide range of college alumni while supporting current students makes this a "must attend" event for me. The local business community—many of them employ or are owned by Assiniboine alumni—has embraced this tournament from its inception and continue to support it through sponsorship and participation.

Last year over \$17,000 was raised from a combination of sponsorships, registrations and an ever-increasing list of auction items. Past items have included a trip for two to Las Vegas, a signed Winnipeg Jets jersey, a Bud Light fridge, the Viewing Lounge for the Brandon Wheat Kings and tickets to events held at the Manitoba Institute of Culinary Arts.

Thank you again to all past golfers and sponsors for supporting Assiniboine student athletes. I encourage you to join us on June 21st.

Wayne Kirk, Agribusiness class of '03
President, Alumni Association

COUGARS CLASSIC

4TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

SAVE THE DATE!

June 21, 2018

Shilo Country Club

\$100 to register as an individual or
\$400 to register as a foursome

FOR MORE INFORMATION contact
alumni@assiniboine.net or visit assiniboine.net/cougarsclassic





FIRST AMERICAN COLLEGIATE HOCKEY ASSOCIATION NATIONALS FOR THE COUGARS

The Assiniboine Cougars women's hockey team qualified for Nationals in their first season as full-time members in Division 2 of the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA). The Cougars went into the tournament ranked third in the West with a 19-4-0-4 record this season.

The 12-team tournament was held March 14-18 in Columbus, Ohio with four pools of three teams each, with each team also playing a crossover game against a team in another pool. The Cougars had a terrific start to the tournament, opening with a 6-1 win over the North Dakota State University Bisons. Their next match-up was an intense game against Bishop's University, which they knew would be their most challenging game.

Ultimately, Bishop's University won that game 2-1 which disqualified the Cougars from any semi-final action. However, the Cougars did go on to play their last game of the tournament against Adrian College, ending off with a 6-2 win.

One of the main highlights of the trip to Columbus for the Cougars, was attending a Columbus Blue Jackets NHL practice and meeting fellow Brandonite, Matt Calvert. "Meeting Matt and the Blue Jackets was an awesome experience. We got to see their practice and their locker room," said player Mariah McCue. "It motivated a lot of us because even guys from a small town can make it to the highest level possible in hockey."

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