



ALLENDRIA BRUNJES/AA

**ON GUARD**

Stage fighting choreographer Zakk MacDonald takes a swing at Grade 11 student Gracelyn Lovelace while teaching Edwin Parr Composite's drama club new combat techniques. For the full story, turn to Page 18B, in the *Town & Country*.

Op-ed

# Working together for Athabasca University

Athabasca University has a proud history – both as one of Alberta's most important universities and as an economic cornerstone for the Town of Athabasca. Over the last several months, there has been speculation on the future of Athabasca University and I understand how concerning this can be.

I have heard from many community members, staff, faculty and students about how important AU is to the broader Athabasca community. I want to take this opportunity to confirm that your government is committed to working with the board of governors and the AU administration to find a long-term solution that will bring stability to the institution. It is our intention to do everything possible to keep AU in Athabasca.

Recently, I met with the Board chair and president to

outline my expectations. It was a productive meeting and I have directed the board to develop, examine and assess options to move forward that consider the financial and academic impacts as well as the impact to students and the community. The board has been tasked with examining a number of options, including, but not limited to: the institution mandate, what steps can be taken to modernize AU's work and whether the institution should remain independent or partner with institutions the way other post-secondary institutions in Canada have already done to ensure their viability. None of these options have been decided upon. I have asked the board to provide an assessment of the feasibility and implications of each of these options so that government and the

board have enough information to make a thoughtful decision.

This work will depend on strong collaboration with partners. This is why I have also directed the board to engage with students, faculty, staff and community leaders in the coming weeks to gather input and ideas on a sustainable path forward. I have asked for a report back to me by September 30.

As a government, we recognize the importance of this institution to the community, students, faculty and the broader post-secondary system. We are committed to working with the board to find a long-term solution to improve AU's ability to deliver high quality, relevant learning opportunities for Athabasca students.

*Marlin Schmidt  
Minister of Advanced Education*

## Award goes to... the People of Canada

In 1986, the People of Canada were awarded the Nansen Refugee Award for extraordinary service to the forcibly displaced.

We are the only national group to receive this honour since its inception in 1954.

You'll find the stories of all the recipients on the website of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.

Other recipients include royalty from The Netherlands, Spain, and Nepal; Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish, and Jesuit religious leaders; international humanitarian organizations; European fundraisers; and women supporting female survivors in Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Somali.

Among the individual recipients you will find, the Italian opera singer Luciano Pavarotti for raising funds and awareness; Katrine Camil-

leri, a Maltese lawyer advocating for the rights of refugees; Akio Kanai a Japanese optometrist matching more than 100,000 pairs of glasses

with refugees who need them; and the British photojournalist Alixandra Fazzina who travels the world documenting and publicizing the consequences of war on individuals, one photo at a time.

The people of Canada have a long history and tradition for compassionately responding to humanitarian emergencies.

Like the other recipients of Nansen Refugee Award, this is achieved through individuals engaging in one small caring act at

a time.  
*Peggy Lynn MacIsaac is a doctoral student at Athabasca University, researching distance education in emergency contexts with a focus on refugees.*

peggy lynn **MACISAAC**



finding**REFUGE**

# COMING FEATURES

## The Athabasca Advocate



**PROFESSIONAL ADMIN WEEK**

Deadline Apr. 11  
Published Apr. 19



**TOTAL WELL BEING**

Deadline Apr. 14  
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Deadline May 12  
Published long weekends through summer

## Town & Country



**LIFESTYLE ADVANTAGE**

In Fort McMurray Today • Deadline Mar. 29  
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