

Bugle-Observer

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TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2008

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Tuesday, April 8, 2008

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Mount A students attract Northern Research Funding

Former Jacksontown resident wins monetary award to travel to the north

While most Maritimers are looking to head south this time of year, a group of Mount Allison University students are setting their sights above the permafrost line.

Four Mount Allison students are the first award recipients of the recently formed Mount Allison Northern Studies Committee, which provides grants to help students travel to northern locations in order to conduct their summer fieldwork.

The campus committee is a newly accepted member of the Northern Scientific Training Program (NSTP) which supports scientific training in Canadian universities, encouraging students to experience research in the north. This Indian and Northern Affairs program aims to increase the number of graduate and senior undergraduate students in Canadian universities who have specialized in some aspect of northern scientific studies and who have gained northern research experience.

Two senior undergraduates and two graduate students on campus have each received funding from the program. Undergraduate students Felicia Pickard, of Jacksontown, N.B., and Hannah MacDonald of Marion Bridge, N.S., along with graduate students Peter Nishimura of Halifax, N.S., and Ben Phillips of Moncton, N.B., have each won monetary awards to travel to the north.

Third-year biology undergraduate student Felicia Pickard received a grant to conduct her honours research in northwestern Labrador.

"The rugged remoteness of Labrador was what drew me to be interested in research in the north, but it was also what was holding me back from getting up there. By receiving the grant, I am now able to offset one of the major costs of conducting my research, flying commercially as far as I can north, and then flying by float plane to my study sites," said Pickard.

The grants have far-reaching implications, not only for the students, but



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Jacksontown's Felicia Pickard is one of four first award recipients of the recently formed Mount Allison Northern Studies Committee.

also for their supervisors. Felicia's supervisor, biologist Dr. Jenn Baltzer commented "This is fantastic news for Felicia in so many ways. To study in such a remote location will be a valuable and exciting field experience and will be a great start to her research career. Felicia's NSTP funding is enabling her to conduct her honours research in a location that would otherwise be inaccessible; in essence it helps stretch my research budget into new and interesting locations."

Anna Sheridan-Jonah, manager of Mount Allison's Research Services, said, "This is an important new avenue

of funding that the Mount Allison Northern Committee has tapped into. It is very difficult to find small programs that will assist students in their research and this program sponsored through the department of Indian and Northern affairs does just that."

Applications for funds to travel, accommodations and for interpreters in the north are accepted on campus each fall and submitted to Ottawa by the Mount Allison Northern Studies Committee.

To be eligible for a grant, students from the south must travel and stay north of the discontinuous permafrost line in Canada.