



March 22, 2024

Spring Awards Selection Committee, College of Medicine
University of Saskatchewan
Box 19, 107 Wiggins Road
Saskatoon SK S7N 5E5

Dear Awards Selection Committee,

It is with great honour and humility that I nominate my esteemed colleague and friend, Val Arnault-Pelletier for The Louis Horlich Spirit of the College Award. As I understand, this award is meant to be given to an individual who has 'contributed service over and above the call of duty' and exhibits the spirit, dedication, and enthusiasm that is Dr. Horlich's legacy. It is not enough to express in words the impact Val has had upon the countless students, staff, and faculty she has worked with over the span of her 30-year career at Usask.

As the Senior Lead of Indigenous Initiatives and Programming in the College of Medicine, Val has been instrumental in creating and sustaining an environment in which cultural experiences, innovation, inclusivity, and reciprocal relationships can thrive within the college. She has an incredible drive and passion for working with and supporting First Nations and Métis students, staff, and communities. This has been made evident through the countless initiatives she has spearheaded including:

- The establishment of the Indigenous Admissions Pathways, a program meant to ensure 20 seats per year are allocated for Indigenous medical students.
- The Indigenous Admissions Circles: a key component to ensuring the CoM is allowing an evaluation process that is holistic in manner for Indigenous applicants.
- Cultural safety training that includes language competencies, making communication more accessible for rural and northern Indigenous patients.
- Promoting community involvement & interest in the CoM through organizing a group of students to participate at the FSIN Spirit of our Nations Cultural Celebration and Powwow in 2018. This allowed for students to offer basic medical assessments, share stories, and engage with Indigenous community members. It also stimulated interest from SK First Nation communities to learn more about the college.
- A one-day orientation for new students in which they had access to Elders, upper year students and physicians.
- Ensuring Indigenous concepts and culture have become embedded into college ceremonies and events.
- Providing countless opportunities for learners of all different walks of life to learn more about Indigenous culture.
- The establishment of the new Department of Indigenous Health and Wellness-the first of its kind in Canada-could not have come into fruition without the work Val has contributed through her years at the College of Nursing and College of Medicine.



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- The creation of the Val-Arnault Pelletier Award erected in her honour to recognize the development of culturally competent clinicians and the relentless commitment and servant leadership of Indigenous medical students.

As Riley Plett, a 4th year Indigenous medical student has stated, “to know Val is to love her,” and I could not agree more. While her accomplishments are a testament to the ways in which she has displayed her willingness to go above and beyond, it is her character that stays with all those she crosses paths with. There are countless Indigenous physicians, nurses, and practitioners who will tell you that Val’s support during their time as a student was a key component to sustaining their resiliency, going on to lead successful careers as health professionals. Val’s legacy of work is miyo maskihkiy/’good medicine’ in practice and there is no other individual I feel is more deserving of receiving this recognition.

Sincerely,

Janet Tootoosis, BSc, MD, FCFP
Vice Dean Indigenous Health
Clinical Associate Professor
College of Medicine