

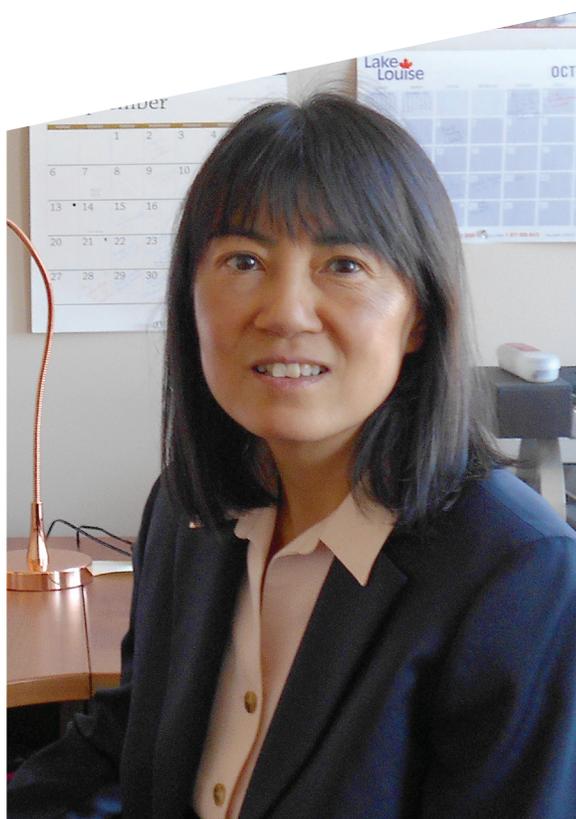
GAMBLING RESEARCH

ALBERTA
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New Executive Director **Glenda Wong** Seeks to Enhance Existing Research Partnerships

Glenda Wong provided the following answers to questions about her initial experiences in her new role as Executive Director of the Alberta Gambling Research Institute which commenced this past August.



What can you tell us about your first month in the role as the Institute's Executive Director?

My first month as Executive Director has been wonderful and a great learning experience! I've been warmly welcomed by the Board, Research Director, Research Coordinators and Chairs, Librarian... as well as people in organizations who

are working with AGRI and the past Executive Director Vickii Williams. I was fortunate to have had time with Vickii for orientation and she provided for me a wealth of knowledge, which led to this great learning experience. I knew that there would be a steep learning curve prior to stepping into this role but I've been provided with the information I need to find my way for which I'm grateful. After one month, I'm still very excited for this opportunity!

What background and experiences do you bring to the position?

My work background includes 12 years of senior management and administration for a continuing medical education unit within the University of Calgary. I developed the foundation required to perform senior level administration activities for AGRI from that experience. I've also collaborated and worked with other universities, provincial and national government health departments, and various health organizations. I believe those groups were similar to those I'll be collaborating and working with as the Executive Director of AGRI, albeit in

The primary aim of the Alberta Gambling Research Institute, a consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge, is to support academic research related to gambling.

MISSION

To facilitate evidence-based broad research that informs gambling public policy and educates Albertans and the wider audience about the effects of gambling.

a different field of study. Education-wise, I hold a Masters in Health Services Administration from the University of Alberta and a Bachelor of Commerce with a concentration in Finance from the University of Calgary. Most recently in my professional development, I've been taking courses on Lean. Lean is a customer oriented, continuous improvement process that aims to create more value to one's customers and stakeholders while using fewer resources. I've implemented and used Lean tools in the past with very good results and I believe the principles of Lean can potentially be useful for AGRI. I feel my work experiences, educational background in administration and finance and knowledge of Lean principles have provided me with a solid base in performing my Institute-specific duties.

Can you tell us a little bit about the recent relocation of the Institute's administrative office to the University of Calgary?

The new location of the administrative office is in the Social Sciences Building at the University of Calgary. AGRI occupies two offices on the 8th floor and I must say that when I first saw the offices I was very impressed with the space. I'm currently arranging the office as I work to determine an optimal layout. I was fortunate to have gone to the former office in Hub Mall at the University of Alberta before it was closed and I appreciate the enormous amount of work involved in its relocation. I must commend Vickii Williams for her work in transferring and moving files, furniture, and office equipment from Edmonton to Calgary -- certainly not an easy job! I hope to have the new space completely organized by the end of October with appropriate signage, reception, and offices set up for both myself and an administrative assistant.

Have you had a chance to consider how you see the Institute moving forward over the next few years?

I'm glad to have this question posed to me after being in the position for a month rather than right when I started! Now that I've had a chance to meet people and gain some additional perspective, I believe I'm better prepared to answer it.

In today's age of social media, I see AGRI moving towards using these tools to let people know what the Institute is all about, create more public awareness and disseminate details of our funded

gambling-related research. Gambling research, while expanding, is, in my opinion, still a relative unknown for much of the general public. Even if only one person becomes aware of Institute research after reaching out to new people, I would still view it as a positive step forward.

I also see AGRI as a pioneering organization. I'd like to see the Institute continue to create innovative opportunities for researchers to become involved in gambling-related research and to ensure recognition of gambling research. One of the ways I can see doing this is developing partnerships with local, national and international organizations involved in this research area. These partnerships would gather information, collaborate on research activities and develop best practices. It's good to see the healthy number of existing partnerships AGRI has already established as it bodes well for creating additional innovation.

Administratively, AGRI is already very efficient in the administration of gambling-related research.

I see working within the current environment and, as things change, to create and develop new processes to ensure the Institute maintains that efficiency. And finally, I see implementing innovative methodologies to ensure my own administrative office operates effectively, efficiently and transparently into the future.

Is there anything else you'd like to mention?

As the new Executive Director, I want to be a resource for AGRI and anyone who is involved with or partners with the Institute. I know that it will take a bit of time before I'm able to be that resource and I sincerely thank the AGRI Board, Research Director, Research Coordinators, Research Chairs, Librarian and all whom the Institute deals with for their patience and sharing of information which has greatly familiarized me with the many aspects of the Institute.

Executive Director Glenda Wong invites researchers, graduate students, partners, stakeholders, and the general public to contact her by email (gfwong@ucalgary.ca), phone (403-210-9691), or in person (Social Sciences Building, Room 820, University of Calgary) to discuss the Institute and its initiatives.





Vickii Williams Retirement

The Institute's founding Executive Director Vickii Williams officially retired from the role as of Monday, August 31st. Vickii made a significant and lasting contribution to the development of the Institute from its earliest beginnings and helped establish its commitment to research excellence. She also garnered a sterling reputation from her peers as an expert administrator who collaborated with an entire generation of Albertan gambling researchers, government officials, graduate students and university administrators. Her friendly enthusiasm and sense of humour will be missed by all but certainly not forgotten! Best wishes to Vickii as she embarks upon new adventures with friends and family.

Smoke-Free Policies and Gambling Revenues

Dr. Dan McGrath (Gambling Research Chair @ U of Calgary) provided the following summary of a recent journal article that reviewed the scholarly research literature on the impacts of smoke-free legislation and gambling outcomes.

A large number of studies have identified high rates of co-occurrence between smoking and gambling; with epidemiological research suggesting that up to 60% of pathological gamblers smoke tobacco. Surprisingly, little attention has been placed on how the introduction of smoke-free legislation in gaming venues such as casinos could influence gambling behaviour. In my review of the existing literature, two primary outcome measures emerged, namely gambling revenues and surveyed intentions to gamble should a smoking ban be introduced. For example, many of the studies on smoking bans and gambling examined economic impacts in the form of lost casino revenues and decreased levels of taxation which occurred following the introduction of smoke-free legislation. Although some studies found no financial repercussions resulting from smoking bans, the aggregate of this research indicates both short- and long-term reductions in overall revenues, with immediate decreases as high as 30% seen in some jurisdictions.

In a parallel line of research, other studies have examined patrons' intentions to continue visiting casinos if smoke-free ordinances were introduced.



These studies indicate that smokers report being less interested in visiting a casino that bans smoking while non-smokers report they would visit more often, suggesting a possible replacement effect. Overall, it appears that the current evidence supports the notion that smoke-free environments may

reduce gambling participation and intensity among gamblers who smoke.

These findings could have important implications for public policy development. For instance, the current impetus for introducing smoke-free legislation is to reduce the harmful effects of second-hand-smoke (SHS) among employees and other patrons. This line of research suggests that smoke-free legislation may have secondary benefits, namely altering other addictive behaviours such as drinking and gambling. Ultimately, more targeted research studies

are needed to understand how forced smoking abstinence impacts gambling long-term. This line of research could have important implications when designing new smoke-free legislation especially in jurisdictions that have yet to implement smoking bans in public places.

Reference

McGrath, D. S. (2015). The influence of smoke-free policies on gambling revenues and intentions to gamble: A review of the literature. *Canadian Journal of Addiction*, 6(2), 78-86. <http://www.csam-smca.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CJAM-Vol6No2-Double.pdf>

Gambling and Personality Disorders

Dr. Darren Christensen (Gambling Research Chair @ U of Lethbridge) provided the following summary of a recent journal article that reviewed the scholarly research literature on the topic of gambling and personality disorders.



Dowling et al. (2014) systematically reviewed and analysed the prevalence of comorbid personality disorders among treatment-seeking problem gamblers in peer-reviewed studies published in academic journals from 1990 to 2011. They found that almost one half (47.9%) of problem gamblers reported comorbid personality disorders, where the most common were cluster B disorders (17.6%; anti-social, borderline, histrionic, narcissistic), with lower rates for cluster C (12.6%; avoidant, dependent, obsessive-compulsive), and cluster A disorders (6.1%; paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal). The most frequently endorsed personality disorders for problem gamblers were narcissistic (16.6%), anti-social (14.0%), avoidant (13.4%), obsessive-compulsive (13.4%), and borderline (13.1%) disorders. These personality

disorder prevalence estimates in problem gamblers are much higher than in the general community (i.e.; World Health Organisation World Mental Health Surveys: Huang et al., 2009; any personality disorder, 6.1%, cluster A, 3.6%, cluster B, 1.5%, and cluster C, 2.7%).

The authors suggest that these results require problem gambler treatment services to systematically screen and conduct comprehensive clinical assessments for co-occurring personality disorders. They also state that clinicians may need to set strong behavioural expectations for their clients with comorbid personality disorders, expect these clients to have lower motivation and be more resistant to treatment, be tolerant of poor treatment compliance, promote treatment adherence, and expect that these clients will require a greater number of treatment sessions. Dowling et al. (2014) suggest that a stepped care approach to gambling treatment may be required for gamblers with personality disorders where treatment intensity increases with increasing client needs.

References

- Dowling, N. A., Cowlishaw, S., Jackson, A. C., Merkouris, S. S., Francis, K. L., & Christensen, D. R. (2014). The prevalence of comorbid personality disorders in treatment-seeking problem gamblers: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality Disorders*, 28, 1-20. http://dx.doi.org/10.1521/pedi_2014_28_168
- Huang, Y., Kotov, R., de Girolamo, G., Preti, A., Angermeyer, M., Benjet, C., ...Kessler, R.C. (2009). DSM-IV personality disorders in the WHO World Mental Health Surveys. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 195, 46-53. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.108.058552>



FROM THE LIBRARY: Canadian Journal of Addiction Devotes Special Double-Issue to Gambling Research

Volume 6, Number 2 (September, 2015) of the *Canadian Journal of Addiction* is a special double-issue dedicated to gambling. Four articles from Institute-funded researchers appear in this issue (el-Guebaly / Swan & Hodgins / Christensen / McGrath). Editor-in-Chief of this journal is Institute Research Director Dr. Nady el-Guebaly.

URL: <http://www.csam-smca.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CJAM-Vol6No2-Double.pdf>

CONFERENCE 2015 REPORT: Highlights from Day Two of the Institute Conference



Morning sessions from day two of the Institute's 2015 Conference (March 27-28, 2015) highlighted investigations being undertaken by Albertan researchers. Afternoon sessions continued the main conference theme of "Critical Issues in Gambling Research."

All conference presentation materials are available from the Completed Conference 2015 Program web page.

Spotlight on Alberta Researchers – Morning Sessions

Dr. Robert Williams (U of Lethbridge) & Dr. Shawn Currie (U of Calgary)

Presentation Title: Low Risk Guidelines for Problem-Free Gambling Derived From Longitudinal Research

Dr. Gordon Walker (U of Alberta)

Presentation Title: Needs Satisfaction in Gambling

Dr. Darren Christensen (U of Lethbridge)

Presentation Title: Effectiveness of Gambling Harm Minimisation Policies

Dr. Haifang Huang (U of Alberta)

Presentation Title: Do Urban Casinos Affect Nearby Neighborhoods?

Carrie Leonard (U of Lethbridge)

Presentation Title: Characteristics Associated With Poker Playing Skill

Dr. Claudia Steinke (U of Lethbridge)

Presentation Title: Psychological and Behavioural Impacts of Casino Design

Dr. Bonnie Lee (U of Lethbridge)

Presentation Title: Embedding a Relational Focus in Gambling Treatment

Dr. Daniel McGrath (U of Calgary)

Presentation Title: Effects of Smoking Bans on Gambling Behaviour

Critical Issues in Gambling Research – Afternoon Sessions

CRITICAL ISSUE

High-risk stock market traders are gambling rather than investing.

PRESENTER

Jennifer Arthur

Arthur reviewed two Canadian gambling datasets that included questions about stock market trading. She found that, in comparison to traditional gamblers, high-risk stock traders engage in a wider range of gambling activities, gamble more frequently, have a higher frequency of problem gambling, and participate less in chance-based formats.

CRITICAL ISSUE

Erroneous beliefs often factor into the development of problem gambling.

PRESENTER

Dr. Paul Delfabbro

Delfabbro's preliminary studies found that borderline personality disorder (BPD) can be a source of vulnerability for erroneous beliefs and cognitive biases.

CRITICAL ISSUE

To understand Asian gamblers it is also necessary to understand Asian culture.

PRESENTER

Dr. Keis Ohtsuka

Asian culture emphasizes what Ohtsuka calls the illusion of secondary control and the cyclical tide of luck. In contrast, Western culture focuses on the illusion of primary control.

CRITICAL ISSUE

Multi-line slot machines are designed for maximum gameplay allure.

PRESENTER

Dr. Mike J. Dixon

Dixon discussed his research findings on features common to modern slot machines. Slot machine gameplay (e.g., sounds, animations and feedback) is similar for both wins and losses so that monetary losses are "disguised" as a win. His research confirms that "winning" sounds are preferred by slot players. In addition, multi-line slot play is attractive to gamblers who report gambling to "escape" from their problems by entering what they describe as "the zone."

CRITICAL ISSUE

Neuroscience studies inform our understanding of pharmacological and psychological treatments for problem gambling.

PRESENTER

Dr. Luke Clark

Clark indicated that data from imaging studies are highlighting the increasing disparity between neurochemistry involved in problem gambling versus drug addictions.





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Glenda Wong
Email: gfwong@ucalgary.ca

RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Dr. Nady el-Guebaly
Email: nady.el-guebaly@albertahealthservices.ca

INSTITUTE LIBRARIAN

Rhys Stevens
Email: rhys.stevens@uleth.ca

RESEARCH COORDINATORS

University of Alberta

Dr. Garry Smith
Email: garry.j.smith@ualberta.ca

University of Calgary

Dr. David Hodgins
Email: dhodgins@ucalgary.ca

University of Lethbridge

Dr. Robert Williams
Email: robert.williams@uleth.ca

RESEARCH CHAIRS

University of Calgary

Dr. Daniel McGrath
Email: daniel.mcgrath@ucalgary.ca

University of Lethbridge

Dr. Darren Christensen
Email: Darren.christensen@uleth.ca

Please forward any comments or inquiries to:

Email: agri@ucalgary.ca
Ph. 403-210-9691

Glenda Wong, Rhys Stevens, Dan McGrath, Darren Christensen & Katherine Aitchison
Writers

Glenda Wong & Rhys Stevens
Editors

North Design Group
Design/Layout

Media Inquiries
Ph. 403-210-9691

Photo Credit/Images:
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ISSN: 1911-8724 (Online)
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*The Institute is funded by the Alberta government.