

# GAMBLING RESEARCH REVEALS

## Calgary symposium generates an increased awareness of institute research activity

AS AN ORGANIZATION focused specifically on gambling-related research, the Alberta Gaming Research Institute seeks to ensure that funded research findings are effectively communicated. Traditionally, academic researchers communicate their research results to peers by publishing articles in peer-review journals and presenting at scholarly conferences. When it comes to disseminating the implications of gambling research to public stakeholders, however, other forms of “knowledge translation” can be equally valuable. One such knowledge translation event was the City of Calgary’s “Analyze This!” research symposium which took place on May, 24th, 2007. Attending on behalf of the Institute was Audra Gross, a Research Assistant with the Institute’s Leisure, Lifestyle, and Lifecycle (LLL) Project.

The Institute’s Leisure, Lifestyle, and Lifecycle (LLL) Project was designed to look at gambling incidence focusing on the determinants of gambling and disordered gambling in the province. A prospective, multi-cohort longitudinal study, the LLL will study Albertans over a 5-year period, testing a biopsychosocial model of gambling. It is hoped that study results will inform effective educational and legislative initiatives to maximize the benefits of gambling and to minimize the harm. Also anticipated is that the richness of the resulting database will serve as a valuable resource for other non-gambling investigations by other research groups.

### Informing stakeholders

Professionals from a wide variety of backgrounds and with various research interests were present at the symposium. According to Gross, “Approximately one hundred professionals in the area of research and development visited the exhibit over the course of the one-day event. Highlights from the symposium were the numerous opportunities to network with other professionals in the area of research and development. This allowed me to tell people about the LLL project, which in turn

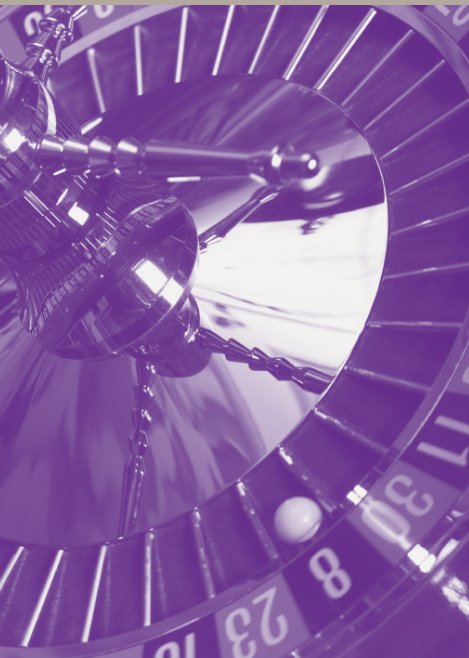
The Alberta Gaming Research Institute is a consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge. Its primary purpose is to support and promote research into gaming and gambling in the province.\*

#### OUR MISSION

To significantly improve Albertans’ knowledge of how gambling affects society



*Audra Gross, a Research Assistant with the Institute’s Leisure, Lifestyle, and Lifecycle (LLL) Project.*



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should help generate future contacts from interested parties.” Discussions with the individuals that stopped to talk with Gross proved to be both diverse and interesting. She noted that many individuals held strong opinions regarding gambling and the government’s role in it. There was also interest relating to whether this particular research would have any direct effect on the legislative and regulatory procedures surrounding gambling in the province of Alberta.

### **Themes of participant questions & comments**

Questions from participants were distinguishable into several major themes. The first dealt with the precise function of the Institute in regards to the LLL study. A second theme included general questions about the Alberta Gaming Research Institute (e.g., Does the Institute only do gambling research? Is the research taxpayer-funded? Do research findings have any influence on provincial gambling policies?). The third general theme pertained to how the LLL study was proposing to measure and examine relationships between gambling attitudes, addictions, and mental health issues.

“Feedback, comments, and suggestions in relation to the study and Institute were also given by many patrons,” said Gross. In general, the feedback regarding the LLL and the Institute was positive. A majority of people believed that

researching gambling-related topics was important and that it would potentially have a significant impact in terms of future provincial policies regarding gaming. Other comments dealt with how original the LLL research was and how the results of the study would be sought out by other interested parties. A few participants expressed concerns over a possible reluctance by government to implement any research recommendations if those recommendations reduced provincial gambling revenues.

Participants also provided input as to other initiatives that the Institute might consider undertaking in order to raise public awareness about the Institute’s activities. These included using radio or television news spots, press releases, community activities, public meetings with government representatives, and sponsorship of events related to gaming.

### **Conclusion**

When asked about the value of participating in the symposium, Gross stated that, “Overall, I believe that our attendance was productive in terms of helping the public become more aware of the LLL project and the Institute. There are now more individuals with knowledge that research in this area does exist, with more in depth understanding of what we are undertaking in this particular study, and are now informed of the existence, functions and achievements of AGRI itself.”

# Call for research proposals— The social and economic effects of gambling in Alberta

THE INSTITUTE IS COMMITTED to facilitating high quality research that is relevant to its mission of *'significantly improving Albertans' knowledge of how gambling affects society'*. In this regard, it is commissioning a socio-economic study to assess and understand the social and economic effects of gambling in Alberta. Researchers, either individually or as teams, are invited to prepare submissions for this very important area of gambling research. The call for proposals will be posted in late July with an 'Expression of Interest Letter' due date of Friday, September 28, 2007 (please see website for more details and complete timelines).

Gambling generates a variety of economic contributions for Alberta. Over one billion dollars in direct revenue is generated annually for the Province. Additional contributions to the economy come through employment and indirect revenue, such as income taxes paid by those directly employed by gambling-related businesses. However, there have been associated social and economic costs which have proven to be more problematic to measure. To date, these have not been comprehensively identified and assessed. At two meetings of The Alberta Gaming Research Institute stakeholders (in August 2005 and March 2007), this area of research was identified as being of very high priority.

## New institute-sponsored scholarship program

To ensure that a vibrant and robust research base is maintained and to rejuvenate the current pool of researchers, a two-tiered scholarship program has been proposed and developed by the Institute Board. Scholarships will be tenable at any of the Institute partner universities.

Two levels of graduate scholarship awards have been approved with the first application cycle being opened in fall 2007 with an anticipated commencement date of September 2008.

MA/MSc—maximum \$13,000 for one year, renewable for one additional year, plus a one-time \$3,000 research allowance

PhD—maximum of \$20,000/year for up to four years, renewable annually (dependent on research accomplishment), plus a one-time \$5,000 research allowance; assistance would be provided by senior Institute researchers to develop grant proposals for both Institute funding as well as other agency funding

All scholarship awardees will receive the additional expense costs related to attendance and participation (either presentation or poster submission) at the Institute's annual conference.

For scholarship guidelines and application package, please see the Institute website—[www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca](http://www.abgaminginstitute.ualberta.ca)



## Kate Diskin receives NCPG Dissertation Award

The Institute wishes to congratulate Kate Diskin for winning the 2007 National Council on Problem Gambling (NCPG) Dissertation Award for her Institute-funded research on motivational interviewing. Kate recently completed her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Calgary and currently has a position with the Addiction Centre, Calgary Health Region.

## From the Library...

Over the past few months, several scholarly articles and reports authored by Institute-funded investigators have been published. Examples include:

Robson, E., Edwards, J., Smith, G., & Newman, S. (2006). *Investigating the efficacy of the Gambling Decisions program in three Alberta communities: Report of the one year community trial*. Edmonton, AB: Capital Health, Public Health. AGRI GRANT #38

Wood, R. T., & Williams, R. J. (2007). Problem gambling on the Internet: Implications for Internet gambling policy in North America. *New Media & Society*, 9(3), 520-542. AGRI GRANT #30

Additional project details and information about accessing the full-text of these and other materials is available from the 'Research' section of the Institute website.

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Your comments and queries are welcome  
either by E-MAIL: [abgaming@ualberta.ca](mailto:abgaming@ualberta.ca)  
PHONE: 780.492.2856

Rhys Stevens, Audra Gross  
and Vickii Williams Writers

Vickii Williams  
and Eva Pang Editors

Epigrafix Design/Layout  
Media queries 780.492.2856

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