Memorial and our alumni start local and think global – and their international stature puts MUN at the centre of the universe. (We knew it all along.)

Q&A
with Dr. Bruce Aylward, program director, WHO

AND

LUMINUS ONLINE
After 34 years, is it time to go digital? You decide.
This can be said about our alumni: they don’t lack ambition and they definitely don’t lack a sense of adventure. Whether through careful career planning or a combination of curiosity and happenstance, Memorial graduates can be found all over the world.

From the glaciers of Antarctica to an elite training facility in Argentina, from the marine investigations unit of the United States government to mining explorations in the jungles of Africa, our alumni have used their time at Memorial as a jumping off point for diverse and exciting endeavours.

Earlier this year, Luminus set out to connect with alumni, and through the power of social media, the response was overwhelming! From Facebook shares and posts to tweets and emails, we heard from alumni scattered literally across the globe. Of course, these eight stories are just the tip of the iceberg. There are thousands of others to tell.
Fifteen years ago, Torbay native Anita Tapper traded the icebergs in her backyard for kangaroos in her garden, winter snow banks for a much gentler climate and working as an accountant in the private sector for working with Australia’s national government.

Ms. Tapper’s husband, also a Memorial commerce graduate, was offered a one- to two-year contract in Australia at the time when its government was implementing a new goods and services tax. The opportunity coincided with the Sydney, Australia Olympics in 2000 – and so, after gathering professional experience in St. John’s, Conception Bay South, Moncton, and Vancouver, Ms. Tapper and her spouse packed up for an adventure on the other side of the world.

“The transition was easy,” Ms. Tapper said of the move to Canberra, Australia’s capital. “The lifestyle is similar – but no shovelling snow! So we decided to stay.” She characterizes Canberra as a cultural, garden city.

Since moving Down Under, Ms. Tapper has worked with the Australian Commonwealth Government in different departments – the Australian Communications and Media Authority, the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman and the Department of Agriculture – which have each offered different complexities, strategies and opportunities for development.

Ms. Tapper, who focused on accounting during her time at Memorial and went on to earn a Certified Management Accounting designation, attributes her early success in her field to Memorial’s co-operative education program. “When I started my first job in an accounting firm, I had that experience from a work term, so I think I was more easily able to convert book knowledge into real-world application.”

Dr. David Holland has an annual schedule of teaching, research and travel few could imagine: New York University-Abu Dhabi in the spring; NYU-New York in the fall, June and August in Greenland. July at home in St. John’s. December and January in Antarctica, during the austral summer.

Dr. Holland, a physical climate scientist who also holds a PhD from McGill University, is primarily interested in sea level change and the interaction of the big ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica with ocean waters. “Antarctica is especially important,” he said, “because it has a marine ice sheet, and should it disintegrate, it could raise global sea levels significantly.”

Dr. Holland’s work – he has published more than 60 peer-reviewed papers on environmental science – seeks to answer a broad range of questions, including: “Will the ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica collapse, and if so, when?”

How do we develop ways to get to these harsh, remote environments to get the data we need to run the models?”

Indeed, obtaining that raw data requires an immense amount of preparation and time in the field. Dr. Holland admits he was “awestruck” the first time he travelled to Antarctica and landed at the U.S. base of McMurdo Station – impressed by the landscape and the “sheer amount of co-ordination and effort that goes into allowing the science to happen.

“The only time I felt scared was when we went into the deep field on the Pine Island Glacier,” he said. “As the Twin Otter that dropped us off disappeared into the distance, the realization that you are 2,000 kilometres away from anything and anyone sinks in. But once you digest that fact, you get on with the science … the satisfaction comes from getting the data back that we work so hard to gather.”