



**BARK**  
BUILDING ACADEMIC RETENTION THROUGH K9'S



Jessica

**B.A.R.K. Annual Report YEAR 3**  
2014-2015

a place of mind



**Faculty of Education**  
Okanagan Campus

## ◆ Message from B.A.R.K. Director – Dr. John-Tyler Binfet



The 2014-2015 academic year marked B.A.R.K.'s 3<sup>rd</sup> year in operation. Thanks to continued support from both the AVP, Students' Office, and the Faculty of Education's Innovative Learning Centre, B.A.R.K. offered Drop-In and Outreach programs. This year also saw B.A.R.K. conduct its second Randomized Controlled Study examining the effects of animal-therapy on university students' perceptions of stress. Over 2,500 UBC students participated in B.A.R.K. programs this year.

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## ◆ Introduction

Standing for “Building Academic Retention Through K9’s”, B.A.R.K. is a dog therapy program run under the direction of Dr. John-Tyler Binfet at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus. B.A.R.K. brings together university students and trained therapy dogs and handlers in an effort to reduce stress, combat homesickness, foster interpersonal connections, and promote the overall social-emotional well-being of students.



“I got a chance to laugh, calm down, love dogs, and forget about everything that was troubling me and be happy.”  
- B.A.R.K. Participant

## ◆ Mission Statement

B.A.R.K. (Building Academic Retention through K9s) is a research-driven programme designed to support the social and emotional well-being of university students, primarily first-year students grappling with challenges around homesickness, social isolation, and integration into the university community. B.A.R.K. programming consists of both intervention studies and a community drop-in service.

B.A.R.K. upholds the following core beliefs and values:

1. Community members play a key role in enhancing research initiatives on campus. B.A.R.K. volunteer dog handlers contribute enormously to both research protocols and to enriching students' experiences on campus.
2. B.A.R.K. research and Drop-in programmes provide a framework for mentoring student scholars and volunteers.
3. B.A.R.K. is committed to supporting diversity and strives to create working climates where everyone is welcome, recognized, and invited to contribute.
4. B.A.R.K. is committed to community partnerships and to this end supports the efforts of local animal-welfare groups (e.g., Paws it Forward, Kelowna SPCA).
5. B.A.R.K. is committed to upholding the highest standards of research. This includes adhering to both Human Behavioural Research Ethics Standards and to Animal Welfare Ethics Standards, using experimental designs that include the randomization of participants into treatment and control conditions, and including follow-up assessments of treatment effects as part of methodological designs.
6. B.A.R.K. is committed to giving back to the university community and pledges to have an active presence in student and university initiatives (e.g., CREATE, THRIVE).



◆ B.A.R.K. Volunteers



Dogs



Student  
Volunteers

562 Hours



Community  
Volunteers

296 Hours

Over 850 in-kind  
Volunteer Hours

# Programs

BAR2GO



Drop-Ins

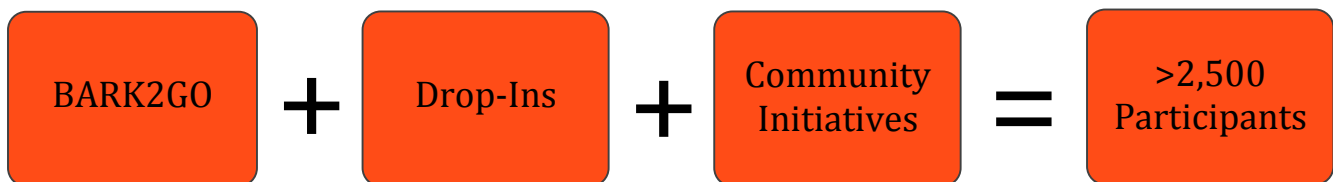


Community Initiatives



## ◆ BARK2GO

In response to the demand for access to B.A.R.K.'s therapy dogs and recognizing that not all students can make it to the B.A.R.K. Lab in EME 1123, we launched BARK2GO! BARK2GO strategically situates dogs throughout the university campus with teams consisting of a B.A.R.K. Dog Handler, trained therapy dog, and volunteer student facilitator. BARK2GO provides opportunities for students to connect with canines on campus and the response to date has been very positive with 893 students making use of this new program in the Winter II term of 2015. Dogs are situated in the Library, FIPKE, and EME buildings.

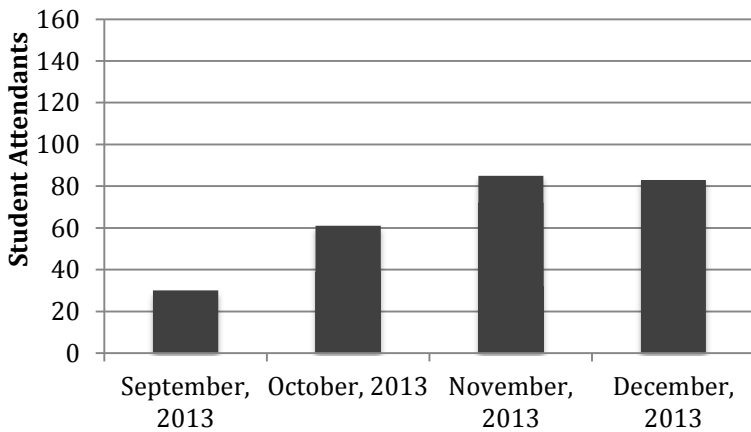


**“Petting the dogs lowered my stress and gave me the only thing I had to look forward to.”  
-B.A.R.K. Participant**

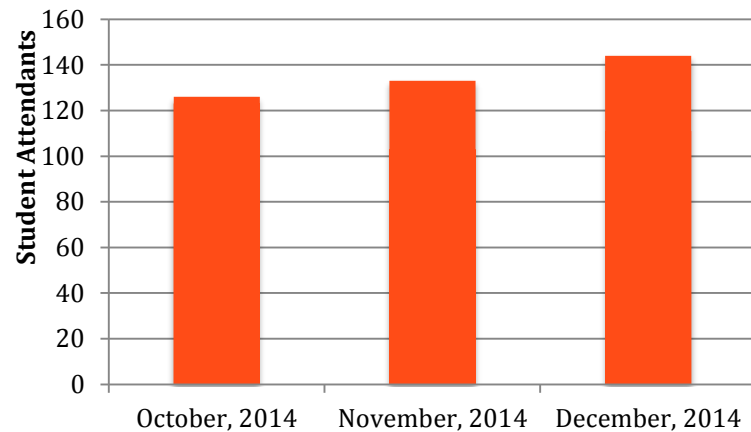
# ◆ Drop-Ins

In addition to conducting research examining the effects of animal-assisted therapy on university students' perceptions of stress, homesickness, and campus affinity, B.A.R.K. offers "Drop-In" sessions in EME 1123, the Faculty of Education's Innovative Learning Centre. Twelve to 15 dogs and handlers typically participate in each these sessions and sessions are scheduled on Tuesdays and Fridays throughout the school year. The intent of the Drop-Ins is to provide a relaxed atmosphere in which students may de-stress while visiting therapy dogs. Drop-In sessions are entirely volunteer-run with Dr. Binfet leading a team of up to 14 student volunteers who help with set-up, facilitating interactions, and cleanup. The B.A.R.K. team tracks how many students attend Drop-In sessions and asks students to complete a quick pre- and post-stress scale. In the 2014-2015 academic year, a total of 15 Drop-In sessions were held that saw a total of 1,528 students attend.

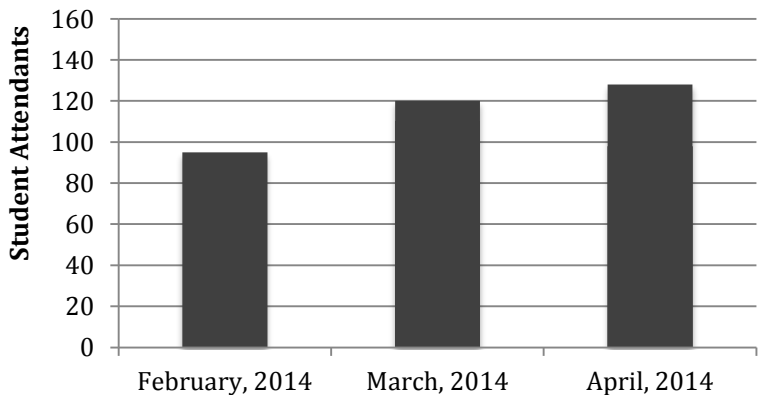
### Fall 2013



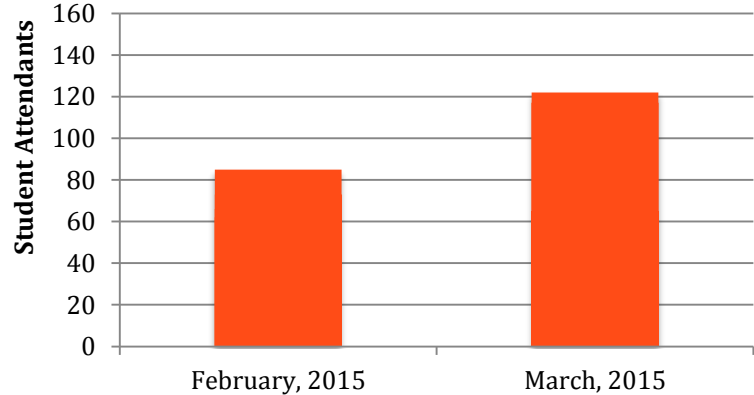
### Fall 2014



### Winter 2014



### Winter 2015

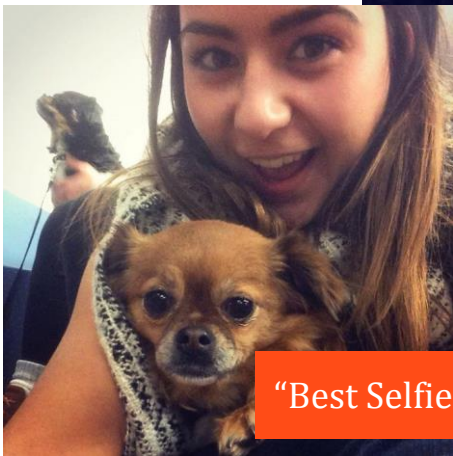
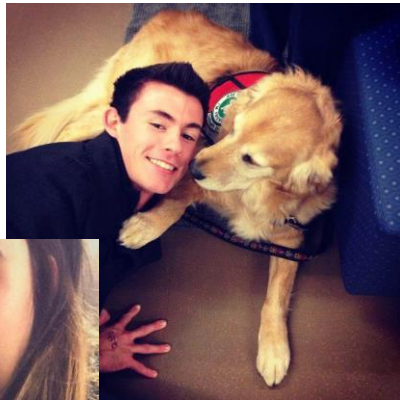




## ◆ 2014/2015 Community Initiatives

September 2014	CREATE (UBC Okanagan) Faculty Mentor for 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year MGMT Students
November 2014	Facebook Best Selfie Contest
January 2015	Faculty Mentor for 3 <sup>rd</sup> Year HMKN Students
February 2015	Skaha Lake Middle School Presentation
March 2015	3 Minute Thesis Finalist and Faculty of Education Winner Kathryn Struik
April 2015	Relay For Life  Exam Jam (UBC Okanagan)
May 2015	Mt. Boucherie Senior Secondary Presentation

## ◆ Social Media



“Best Selfie Contest” Entries

Website  
[www.barkubc.ca](http://www.barkubc.ca)  
(12,698 Views this year)

Facebook  
BARKUBC  
(1,411 Likes)

Instagram  
@barkubc  
(144 Followers)

Youtube  
BARK UBC Okanagan  
(8 Videos, 1,987 Views)



“The dogs gave me a quiet, comforting, and stable place where I can regroup and deal with my problems in a calm way.”

- B.A.R.K. Participant

## ◆ In the News

### News Print

Castanet (2015, Feb. 17th). UBC Okanagan Animal Therapy Program Expands with BARK2GO.

Kelowna Now (2015, Feb. 17th). UBC Okanagan Animal Therapy Program Expands with BARK2GO

Okanagan Life Magazine (2015, February). UBC Okanagan Expands Animal Therapy Program.

### Television

CBC News Vancouver - Therapy Dogs (2015, Feb. 19th)

CTV News Vancouver - UBC Okanagan Using Puppy Love (2015, Feb. 27th)

Shaw TV Okanagan - B.A.R.K. (2015, Mar. 2nd)

### Radio

CBC Daybreak South - UBC Okanagan B.A.R.K. Expansion. (2015, Feb. 20th).

AM 1150 - More Puppy Love at UBC Okanagan (2015, Feb. 22nd)

### Web-Based

TEDx Talk (2015, Mar. 29th)

Talk Title: Anchors and Allies: Creating Opportunity

Allotted minutes: 17

Central Okanagan Foundation (Fall, 2014)

Primary Kindness Research featured in their video profile of success stories<sup>1</sup>

<http://www.centralokanaganfoundation.org/>

UBC Your Evolution Alumni Annual General Meeting

(Sept. 16th, 2014) - B.A.R.K. was recognized as one of the top three most visible programs across both UBC campuses and invited to UBC Alumni AGM, Vancouver, BC.

## ◆ Sources of Support

- Academic Vice President, Students Office (Dr. Ian Cull): \$8,000 toward operating costs
- Innovative Learning Centre (Dr. Susan Crichton, Faculty of Education). Lab space use 6 hours / week + Storage of B.A.R.K. materials
- SSHRC UBC Okanagan Internal Grant, \$5,000. Project: B.A.R.K. Year 3 Randomized Controlled Trial of the Effects of Abbreviated Therapy on Stress and Well-being.
- Tuum Est Student Initiative Fund, UBC Okanagan Internal Grant, \$1,000
- UBC Start An Evolution Campaign: \$3,450.00 Donated.

## ◆ Research Completed

### B.A.R.K. Study Completed

1. B.A.R.K. Year 3 Randomized Controlled Trial (Jan.-Feb., 2015),  $N = 167$ 
  - included pre-test, post-test, and follow-up survey administration
  - awarded students SONA participation creditsAnimal Ethics Certificate: A14-0134-A001  
BREB certificate: H14-00474-003  
Data Collection Completed February, 2015

### Conference Presentations

Binfet, J. T. (2014). *The effects of animal-assisted therapy on university students' social-emotional well-being: A feasibility study*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the *International Society of Anthrozoology*, Vienna, Austria (July 19-21).

Binfet, J. T. (2014). *Holistic assessment of therapy dogs: Dog selection for the University of British Columbia's Building Academic Retention through K9s Program*. Poster presented at the annual conference of the *International Society of Anthrozoology*, Vienna, Austria (July 19-21).

## Employment of Undergraduate Research Assistants in 2014-2015

1. Varenka Kim
2. Megan Trotman
3. Carson McKay
4. Alex Cebry
5. Avery Sapoznikow
6. Camilla Enns
7. Charlie Drummond
8. Christy Hui

## Employment of Graduate Research Assistants in 2014-2015

1. Kathryn Struik
2. Holli-Anne Passmore
3. Bruno Carturan

## Graduate Students Studying in B.A.R.K.

1. Michael Hagan (M.Ed.)
2. Kathryn Struik (M.A)



“Thank you so much, you showed me that UBCO can be a place where I feel at home.”

- B.A.R.K. Participant

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