**DCAA Board of Directors Bio Summaries**

**2023-2024**

Cassie-Jean Dillon

Cassie-Jean Dillon is currently serving her first term and is Vice-president 1. Cassie-Jean is no stranger to the college as she has been a lifelong learner with Durham College since the 1980s. In 2018, she graduated from the Fitness and Health program with Honours and, in April 2022, she graduated from Trent University with a dual major in Sociology and Indigenous Studies. Currently, Cassie-Jean works for FedDev Ontario supporting the Centre of Expertise by conducting complex qualitative and quantitative research and analysis. FedDev Ontario works actively to advance and diversify the southern Ontario economy through funding opportunities and business services that support innovation and growth in Canada’s most populous region. During her time at Durham College, Cassie-Jean volunteered as a mentor for Indigenous students and was a Culture Activities Assistant at Suswaaning Endaajig. She is currently the lead for the Indigenous Alumni Team.

Kyle Douglas

Kyle Douglas is currently serving his first term. Kyle graduated from the Business Administration Human Resources program in 2011 and is co-owner of CRCS DKI, a second-generation family owned and operated company that specializes in disaster restoration. Since 1979, CRCS DKI’s team of professionals have specialized in state-of-the-art remediation and restoration of buildings and contents damaged by fire, smoke, water, wind, oil spills, sewer contamination, and break-ins/vandalism. Kyle not only supports his community through the family business but he has committed his entire career to serving his community. He has been involved in community organizations such as the Oshawa Chamber of Commerce (past president and Board Director since 2011); community fundraisers for Lakeridge Health Foundation; Epilepsy Durham; and Police Appreciation Dinner & Awards Committee. Kyle is an avid cyclist and was the Canadian National Champion in 2006.

Paul Fritzsch\*

Paul Fritzsch is standing for election to serve his first term. Paul is a recent graduate (2023) from the Horticultural- Food and Farming program. After a 20-year career in software technology, he decided to follow a life-long passion for agriculture and return to college. Paul participated in the Student Work program where he gained invaluable experience in his role as Community and Edible Gardens Ambassador representing the Barret Centre of Innovation in Sustainable Urban Agriculture. During his last semester, he co-founded an urban agriculture company, Earth Cellar Farms, with a mission to help create holistic communities that are food sovereign and connected with the health of their own environments. By transforming underutilized urban greenspaces into productive and beautiful market gardens, much of the food grown can be donated to local food banks and care organizations.

Jesara Holla\*

Jesara Holla is standing for election to serve her first term. Jesara graduated from the Print Journalism program in 2006 and is Senior Manager of Corporate Affairs for Ontario Power Generation (OPG). During her time with OPG, she has worked on mega nuclear projects including the Pickering Refurbishment, Darlington Refurbishment and she currently oversees all external engagement on OPG’s Darlington New Nuclear Project and New Nuclear Growth in Ontario, Canada and internationally. In her role, she is liaison with all levels of government, various educational institutions, community, thought leaders and the public to educate, engage and foster support for new nuclear growth across the country and beyond. She is currently completing a B.P.A, Professional Communications at Athabasca University in Alberta.

ikra ijaz

Ikra Ijaz is currently serving her first term. Ikra graduated as an International student, highest ranking, from the Hospitality Management- Hotels and Restaurants Operations Management program in 2018. She is currently studying at Yorkville University with a goal of completing a Bachelor of Business Administration in 2023. Ikra made the life-changing decision to leave her home and family in Dubai, United Arab Emirates where she worked in the hotel industry to study at Durham College. She immersed herself in college activities including volunteering at events such as the Harvest Dinner and working at Bistro ’67 in various roles from server, hostess to bartender. Ikra is keen to give back especially with a focus of helping other International students and establishing an International Alumni network. Ikra is currently Contracting Manager for Hotelbeds Group.

BRENT LESSARD

Brent Lessard is currently serving his second term. Brent graduated in 2013 from the Mechanical Engineering Technology program and currently serves as the Managing Director of Canadian International Ventures, where he is reshaping the traditional incubator mold to provide tailored and immersive experiences for startups. He co-founded rLoop, an organization with a mission to address global challenges through technology. Under his stewardship, rLoop participated in Elon Musk’s SpaceX Hyperloop competition, where they won the Innovation Award for successfully demonstrating several new technologies with their Hyperloop prototype vehicle. On the international stage, Brent has been recognized with awards from the Dubai Future Foundation, IndieGoGo, SpaceX, and more. He is a 2017 Alumnus of Distinction award recipient and a 2017 Premier’s Award winner.

Patrick Lyver\*

Patrick Lyver is standing for election to serve his first term. Patrick graduated from the Graphic Design program in 2002 and is Founder and President of Kleurvision Inc., a boutique digital brand design agency. Patrick founded his company nearly twenty years ago and has helped hundreds of businesses, from small to enterprise, solve brand communications problems. He is known for being a creative director and marketing experimenter and together with his talented team (including several DC graduates) they grow businesses. Patrick co-founded Startup Durham Region in 2016 which helps entrepreneurs navigate the ecosystem to speed access to investment, support, resources, mentors, networks, information, talent, and customers. He is also co-founder of Access IO, an invitation-only, high-energy, and high-impact event series focused on sourcing new technologies, investing, supporting innovation, and growing the Canadian economy.

jennifer mccool-closs

Jennifer McCool-Closs is currently serving her first term. Jennifer describes herself as a life-long learner as she first earned a Bachelor of Science, Biomedical Science from the University of Guelph in 2005 and went on to obtain her Primary Care Paramedic Diploma in 2007 from Durham College (DC). She continued with DC and was the highest-ranking graduate when she received her Advanced Care Paramedic Graduate Certificate in 2011. In 2020, she obtained a Master of Science, Healthcare Quality from Queen’s University. She continues to take courses to expand her knowledge and is currently studying Indigenous history. She has been involved with the Paramedic program at DC for nine years holding various roles including teaching courses, clinical and practical capacities and contributing to the program’s success by reviewing KPIs and aligning delivery. Jennifer received the Alumna of Distinction award in 2014 and is currently an Advanced Care Paramedic for The Regional Municipality of Durham.

ezinne obayagbona

Ezinne Obayagbona is currently serving her first term. Ezinne graduated as an International student from the Human Resources Management program at Durham College in 2016. Her diverse education includes a Bachelor of Laws (L.L.B.) from the University of Lagos and Master of Business Administration from Boston University. Ezinne left her family and home in Nigeria to study at Durham College and through a career-defining journey has transitioned to the software industry where she is currently working as a Customer Success Manager for Klue Inc. Ezinne recently moved back to Durham Region and since becoming a Canadian citizen, looks forward to the opportunity to give back to her community as well as support International students and help establish an International Alumni network.

Drew Samuels

Drew Samuels is currently serving his first term and is Vice-president 2.  Drew graduated from the Paralegal program in 2011 building on his education from Carleton University where he earned a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) degree in Criminology, Concentration in Law in 2010.  He returned to Carleton University to earn a second Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, Minor in Law in 2012. Drew has been a part-time professor in the Paralegal program at Durham College since January 2016 and enjoys educating students as well as equipping them with the skills to use in their career after graduation. In particular, he has had the opportunity to directly supervise field placement students assisting them in fulfilling their requirements with the Law Society of Ontario and has hired numerous graduates from Durham College.  His volunteer work includes Ottawa Crisis Centre, Mental Health Crisis Line and in April 2021, he was elected Chair of the Durham Community Legal Clinic Board of Directors.  Drew is currently the Director, Litigation and Administration at DMA-DuCharme, McMillen & Associates, Inc.

Christy stone-curry\*

Christy Stone-Curry is standing for election to serve her first term. Christy graduated from the Human Resource Management program in 1997 and is an entrepreneur and proprietor of the Piano Inn & Café in Port Perry. Over the past twenty years, Christy has developed her business into one of the top-rated restaurants in the area with an inn that is especially popular among tourists. As an entrepreneur, Christy has developed a second business working with the film industry using her restaurant as a backdrop and location for filming television shows, commercials, and movies. Working with a Durham College Project Management class, she provided students with an opportunity to gain business experience and find ways to increase filming at her location recognizing the important economic impact this industry also brings to the Port Perry community. Christy is a dedicated community leader serving as three-time president of Port Perry BIA and Rotary Club and is a recipient of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee award for volunteerism.

\*Standing for election