

REFLECTIONS

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It's hard to believe that two years ago, we were in our first semester, meeting our classmates and trying to visualize how the program was going to be.

If we had known we wouldn't have the chance to experience all of our courses in person, I wonder how much more time we would have made for meaningful conversations and enjoying our time together. However, as good PR professionals, we found new ways to interact and build long-lasting connections in a virtual world.

One of the best things about the PR program were the many opportunities it provided to network, interview and write about fascinating people. We learned to see our interviewing assignments as great opportunities to discover and learn from others' experiences and get insightful ideas applicable to our own career paths.

In this issue, you'll find inspiring stories of perseverance, determination, visualization and adaptability. I'm sure you'll be reflected in many of the articles, and it's my hope that you also find inspiration for the projects you are working on and the challenges you are facing.

We invite the alumni community to share their stories and get involved in the different opportunities Durham College offers. I also encourage current students to build a strong DC community and join the networking events available.

We all know the value of having someone in your life that you can count on for career advice, insights, referrals or introductions. Positive energy attracts positive energy.

If we want the doors of opportunity to stay open, we must remain humble, grounded, and willing to learn, help and connect with those in our community.

On behalf of the management team of this issue of Reflections, thank you for your ongoing support, and we hope you enjoy the 100th issue of our publication.

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Brandon Nolan has succeeded in scoring his goals on the rink, at Durham College and in his professional career.

Scoring Your Goals

By Somiya Brown

Photo Credit: Brandon Nolan

What does professional hockey and Durham College (DC) have in common?

If you asked Brandon Nolan, former NHL player and DC alumnus, he would say the common ground between DC and professional hockey is learning to work in a team

atmosphere, developing leadership skills and giving a full effort. For Nolan, these are important lessons that have helped him score his goals in life.

Nolan is currently running 3|Nolans, a business specializing in reaching Indigenous youth through hockey camps, speaking engagements and an apparel line. His current work is exactly

what he has always wanted to do in life. Both professional hockey and DC played an important role in helping him get to this point.

After graduating high school, Nolan went straight to playing professional hockey. For five years, he played full time with professional teams until he was able to follow his dream. In 2007, he was asked to play in the NHL for the Carolina

Hurricanes. Although he was giving his full effort, he was forced to retire from the sport he loved in 2008.

"I received a career-ending concussion; so, I was forced to retire at the age of 25," remembers Nolan. "After getting healthy and dealing with post-concussion syndrome, I made the decision to go back to school."

Although hockey had taught

“I truly loved my time at Durham College. It was a great opportunity to interact one-on-one with teachers or to get in group projects with other students. I loved the projects that we were able to do for real companies and get actual feedback from the owners of the companies. ”

him valuable life skills, Nolan knew he needed further education if he wanted to reach new career goals. At the age of 27, Nolan began DC's marketing – business administration program. At first, he chose this program because he thought it would be the quickest way to receive education to get a job. But he soon learned to love his college experience and field of study.

“I truly loved my time at Durham College,” says Nolan. “It was a great opportunity to interact one-on-one with teachers or to get in group projects with other students. I loved the projects we were able to do for real companies and get actual feedback from those companies' owners.”

These interactions and experiences were some of his most valuable takeaways from DC. After graduation in 2013, Nolan began to work hard

toward his career. He started building experience by taking jobs as they came.

“I took opportunities to help build myself professionally,” says Nolan. “Later, I could transition to what I really wanted to do.”

Nolan's experiences with DC and former jobs have enabled him to reach the goal of starting the business he loves. Nolan, his father and his brother started 3|Nolans together to reach Indigenous youth across Canada. Although hockey camps are a primary focus, Nolan strives to teach the youth lessons that expand past hockey. He aims to share the importance of giving back to the community and working hard. On a daily basis, Nolan has also found himself applying the marketing skills he learned at DC to his business. He finds every day is different, but that is not the most rewarding part.



Brandon Nolan (right) standing with his father Ted (centre) and brother Jordan (left).

“The best part by far is just getting into the community. ”

“The best part by far is just getting into the community,” says Nolan. “Getting to be with the youth on a daily basis, talking with them, working with them—that’s the best part of my job.”

Over the past six years, Nolan has seen over 2,500 youth reached through the hockey camps and influenced by his family.

“The three Nolans are exemplary role models for First Nations children and families,” says Chief Ava Hill, former chief of Six Nations of the Grand River. “The pride that they have in each other is inspirational and encouraging for all of our people.”

What greater success can there be than knowing you have impacted other lives? Through professional hockey, DC and always giving a full effort, Nolan has been able to score the most important goal of his life. 🏒

Paying It Forward

By Meghan Tetford

Photo Credit: Manjula Selvarajah

Imagine being able to help complete strangers achieve their goals by shining a light on their lives—to help tell their story, celebrate their wins and move past their losses.

Manjula Selvarajah graduated from Durham College's (DC) journalism, print and broadcast program in 2014. Today, she works as a journalist, producer and tech columnist for CBC Radio One. She is currently focusing on the technology sector and the impact of COVID-19 on students' education.

Selvarajah credits DC for helping her build a foundation of success. Placements were a key learning experience at DC and having instructors available to help prepare before, during and after the placement were crucial to her success. In her first semester, Selvarajah gained valuable experience making cold calls to senior names in organizations to get over the discomfort of interviewing strangers. Knowing her

professors had her best interests in mind and were pushing her to do her very best made all the difference to her confidence.

"You want your placements to turn into jobs," Selvarajah explains. "It helped that when we had our internships, our instructors actually went in and sat down with our supervisor."

“People who go into journalism and stay in journalism are people who believe it's important for stories to be told to inform other people. If you believe people in power need to be held accountable for decisions they are making and translate it to the public in easy-to-read English, then I truly believe this is the profession for you.”

Her professor met with the placement supervisor and asked why they hadn't hired

her when they had given a great report on her work. They didn't have an answer, so they hired her on the spot.

What kept Selvarajah moti-

vated while at DC was the fact she told herself every day: she was already working in a newsroom. While raising a child and being in school full-time was



Manjula Selvarajah poses for a professional business photo shoot.



Manjula Selvarah posing for a photo shoot outside of a local library.

challenging, she prioritized where she focused her efforts. She believes you have to have a greater purpose as a journalist to do your best work.

“People who go into journalism and stay in journalism are people who believe it’s important for stories to be told to inform other people,” Selvarajah says. “If you believe people in power need to be held accountable for decisions they are making and translate it to the public in easy-to-read English, then I truly believe this is the profession for you.”

Selvarajah’s greatest accomplishment in journalism came from an unexpected situation. A group of immigrant mothers in a priority Toronto neighborhood wanted their children to have access to play ice hockey, since the nearest rink was an hour away by bus. After they struggled to get a fundraiser started, they had a friend of the community make a call to Selvarajah. The women came to her because she was working on a prominent Toronto morning radio show, *Metro Morning*. She says they found her through her work of trying to understand marginalized communities in the city. What started as a small story caught

the attention of multiple media stations and even Toronto Mayor John Tory. A small news story ended up helping them raise money.

“To me it felt like, ‘here is this little story,’” Selvarajah says. “As small as it may seem, that is one of my biggest accomplishments.” After moving to Canada from Sri Lanka, Selvarajah created the non-profit organization Tamil Women Rising, which helps anyone who identifies as a woman. The organization helps women through workshops, training sessions, networking events, negotiation, resume writing, conflict management and much more. It helps strangers achieve their goals by building their confidence and providing a network of support.

Selvarajah is helping pay it forward. Her DC professors helped her develop the skills to get her dream job as a journalist at CBC. As a journalist, she is helping her community by telling their stories, giving them a voice and helping them achieve their goals, and that’s something to celebrate. 🙌

She Believed She Could, So She Did

By Milana Gladilina

Photo Credit: Paulina Callaghan

What do people consider to be some of the biggest accomplishments in their life? Maybe it's the opportunity to achieve a top-level position in a desired company or receive multiple certifications in various fields. Maybe it's a chance to turn their passion into their profession. What about supporting different charities on a regular basis and contributing to society with constant, outstanding volunteer work?

It's hard to imagine one person doing all of that in their lifetime, but Paulina Callaghan has achieved every single thing on that list! Her energy and desire to learn, meet and help people has set her up for success within various fields as an accredited professional and valuable member of different organizations and charities.

Starting her journey at Durham College (DC) in the graphic design program, Callaghan eventually built her career in communications while working for a call

centre. The vice-president of marketing within the centre noticed her design skills and offered her an opportunity to receive communications training, which grew Callaghan's interest in the private and public communications sector.

This experience led her to the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC), where she received accreditation. With almost a decade of volunteering at IABC, Callaghan occupied several senior positions on the board of directors for a couple of different terms. As a vice-president of membership, she travelled to post-secondary schools to share her career journey and give students some insight on how they can succeed in their future fields.

Callaghan is currently working as the senior manager of strategic communications and culture for the infrastructure technology services division in the Ontario Public Service organization. She manages a multitalented team of writers, editors,



Paulina Callaghan (middle) and her team are giving back to the community as public servants by volunteering at the Yonge Street Mission in 2019.

web designers, strategic communications planners and employee experience analysts.

"I was in the private sector for approximately 15 years," says Callaghan. "However, I was interested in joining the public service where communications are structured a little differently with respect to planning and inclusivity."

Callaghan is also an

employee communications campaign leader in the Ontario Ministry of Government and Consumer Services for the non-profit organization United Way. She manages a small team in addition to her regular duties to promote fundraising and generate awareness for the charity.

Some of her areas of focus include the oversight of



Paulina Callaghan poses in front of her alma mater, Durham College.

large, high-profile strategic communications plans for the division and the ministry while ensuring staff have the information and knowledge on how to work remotely during

these unprecedented times.

"Becoming a recognized mentor is one of the biggest accomplishments in my career," states Callaghan. "When I was a kid, one of

my dreams was to become a teacher. I guess it makes a lot of sense now. As a manager, I am teaching and providing inspirational guidance to my team as well as a variety of student programs, so there are a lot of similarities."

Some of Callaghan's biggest passions besides work are photography and animals. She has been a World Wildlife Fund supporter for more than 20 years and regularly supports Federated Health Charities.

A couple of years ago, Callaghan came back to DC to obtain a certificate in photography. Now she does professional photo shoots as a hobby in addition to her full-time job.

"It has always been a lifelong passion of mine," says Callaghan. "I wanted to make sure that I had some technical skills to go along with my creativity."

She believed she could achieve all of her dreams and goals, so she did. After the long and impressive journey building a career as a professional communicator and effective team leader, Callaghan agrees that practical experience, constant learning and post-secondary education

“Post-secondary education is critical to put young professionals on the right path. If they don’t end up in the field they studied, at the very least it gives eagerness, appreciation and sometimes even networking skills that can help them to become successful in the workplace.”

are the major components of her success.

"It's hard to say where I would be without Durham College," says Callaghan. "Post-secondary education is critical to put young professionals on the right path. If they don't end up in the field they studied, at the very least it gives eagerness, appreciation and sometimes even networking skills that can help them to become successful in the workplace. Volunteerism is also essential, whether it's volunteering for your local community or being a part of a professional association. I think that mix will set anyone up for success." 🍀

Inspiring The Next Generation

By Scott Armstrong

Photo Credit: Scott Armstrong

At one point in your life, there will always be someone or something that will inspire you to become a better person. Jessica Lott, alumna of the Durham College (DC) child and youth worker program (CYW) has that opportunity to inspire youth and children every day.

As a graduate of the CYW program in 2013, Lott has been working non-stop with children all around the City of Kawartha Lakes, Durham Region and many more localities!

"I just knew I liked to work with kids," says Lott. "I wanted to work with kids that don't always have the easiest life by just making it normal for them."

Before Lott attended DC, she worked odd-end jobs to earn her position in the program. After over seven years in the hospitality and cleaning industry, Lott felt like she needed a change.

As a local resident from Little Britain, Ont., DC was the best option since it was close to home and the CYW program

had a high reputation. During her time at the college, Lott knew she was receiving the best education possible to be successful in her career. Along with having in-class sessions, Lott was able to apply her skills to the real world through multiple placements.

"Jess was able to apply the

concepts from our CYW course to her placements and eventually jobs in the field," says Emma Martens, a peer from Lott's CYW program. "Her application of concepts as well as her interpersonal skills made her be the successful CYW she is now".

Today, Lott is working for

Enterphase Child & Family Services based out of Oshawa, Ont. while earning her degree in social work. One thing that Lott loves about her job is getting to see her clients in their own homes.

"I love it when I get to introduce a new activity to a child that they've never experienced before that we often take for granted, such as bowling or Canada's Wonderland," says Lott.

"I have learned so much from every child I have worked with. They show me their strengths and talents such as drawing and comics and teach me important interpersonal skills such as patience and humility."

“I wanted to work with kids that don't always have the easiest life by just making it normal for them.”

Since graduating in 2013, Lott still continues to bring her excitement and enthusiasm when she's working with her clients. With the goal in mind of impacting each and every child she works with, Lott can say she has an amazing job. 🌱



Jessica Lott, alumna of the Child and Youth Program at Durham College.

A Durham College Firefighting Graduate's Secret To Success

By Kristin Michel

Photo Credit: Hayden Whayls

Like many graduates before him, Evan McMillan is eagerly awaiting the day he gets to suit up and ride in that big red truck. Having obtained a graduate certificate from Durham College's (DC) firefighter pre-service, education and training program in 2018, he may have yet to score a job in his desired field, but McMillan remains motivated to do so. What's his secret to keeping such positive momentum? Continuous learning.

"Firefighting is so broad," says McMillan. "There's so many different skills that can make you a good firefighter. When

variety of skill sets on the team and that's why continuous learning is so important. The additional life experience you get after graduation might be what sets you apart from the rest of the candidates." For most, an ideal post-secondary scenario would include good grades, graduation and immediate employment thereafter. Despite not securing a firefighting role right away, he's since learned that his training at DC prepared him for other jobs he wasn't yet aware of. Currently working as an emergency medical responder (EMR) for Rebel Night Club and on highway



Proudly dressed in his uniform, Evan McMillan stands in front of the fire house doors located on Durham College's North Oshawa campus.

“There's so many different skills that can make you a good firefighter.”

they look to hire, they look to hire for a certain role. They want to be able to see a

patrol for the 407 Express Toll Route, McMillan recognizes that the skills he's using daily while on duty translate directly

to those needed of individuals in pursuit of careers in the firefighting industry.

"You're doing a lot of radio work, responding to collisions and hazards," McMillan explains while speaking to one of his current position. "So even if the job isn't necessarily

fire-department related, you can still use the skills you take away from it to boost your resume."

When reflecting on his time spent at DC, McMillan fondly looks back on the day he and his classmates got to participate in an extreme-



Walking through Toronto's Union Station, Evan McMillan has his eyes open for new opportunities.

“I gained a lot of positive personality traits by taking this program.”

weather workshop. This event was held on campus at the climatic wind tunnel in the Automotive Centre for Excellence. Students were able to get a glimpse of what real-life experiences awaited if they were to work in the field as first responders.

“It was really cool,” McMillan shares. “I was excited because I know it’s training that not every college gets.”

So did the firefighter pre-

service, education and training program prepare him for the real world?

“I gained a lot of positive personality traits by taking this program,” McMillan laughs. “For example, they truly do treat it like a real fire service. If you’re not 15 minutes early, you’re late.”

McMillan attributes his personal success to hard work, discipline and the guidance provided by professors, Rick

“I was excited because I know it’s training that not every college gets.”

Bowler, Ken Percy and Ted Morrison.

“There’s a lot that goes into being a firefighter,” McMillan says confidently. “The program really does give you all the tools you need to succeed. Even if you don’t become a firefighter afterwards, there’s still a lot you can take from it and translate into real life.”

McMillan will be utilizing the unexpected yet invaluable experience he’s gained

working as an EMR and on highway patrol until the day he gets to suit up with a team. If continuous learning is what it takes to stand out to employers, he’ll do just that. Determined to succeed, Evan McMillan is confident he will accomplish all he sets out to do in his career with positive momentum on his side. 🚒

Beneath the Surface of Today's Marketing

By Christine Jermakowicz

Photo Credit: Veronica Trask

Marketing and advertising are well-known industries in which most people can visualize the general tasks of its professionals, but there's more to it than what meets the eye. Take Durham College (DC)—to be engaging for current and future students, the college must portray itself effectively across a variety of platforms within each of its sectors. While most people know the basics, how is marketing really run in today's progressive world and who is behind the ideas? The person to ask is Veronica Trask, a DC graduate now working as the marketing manager for Durham College Students Inc. (DCSI).

Trask received her diploma in the advertising and marketing communications program in 2016, as well as her certificate in digital media management in 2017. Her role with DCSI includes all digital marketing implementation, maintaining the group's social presence within the college community

and planning events for students to participate in. To provide the best content, Trask must stay updated and relevant.

Advertising and marketing are fast-paced services that have changed dramatically in the past 10 years. Now people are absorbing information through social channels like Facebook, Instagram and websites, whereas 10 years ago, the focus was on reaching traditional mass media communication outlets, like television, newspaper and radio.

“Working on orientation week with DCSI this year was so different and unique. With this online digital space, we were all adjusting to how things work and catering to different audiences, because not everyone is on social platforms.”

However, that doesn't mean marketers shouldn't be prepared to cater to both channels. The changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have made organizing campaigns and reaching the public more challenging, but that hasn't stopped Trask from reaching out to the new students of DC.

“Working on orientation week with DCSI this year was so different and unique,” Trask says. “With this online digital space, we were all adjusting to how things work and catering to different audiences, because

not everyone is on social platforms.”

Within the industry, it's common to see more men than women working in the creative departments, brainstorming, copywriting and directing campaigns and initiatives. Women tend to choose roles like account and client management, campaign marketing and advertising. This normalized division can make a creative position seem daunting for women entering the marketing and advertising world, but Trask was confident in her abilities to go after the



Veronica Trask (left) with Luis Estevez (right), CEO of Oeste Marketing, the agency in Spain where she accomplished her college placement in 2016.

“I like seeing what’s popular and following trends to pull off a campaign with a twist to make it fun, relevant and engaging for students.”

roles she wanted.

“My program co-ordinator Dawn Salter instilled into us women in the program that this is a tough industry; you have to plant your feet and stand up for what you believe in,” says Trask.

Salter has been co-ordinating the advertising and marketing communications program at DC for 14 years. One of her best-known marketing projects involved working on the Philadelphia Cream Cheese Little Taste of Heaven campaign in the ‘90s, a program that won many awards and was adapted globally. The Philly Angel is a global icon, and after an 18-year hiatus, it’s making a comeback due to its effectiveness. With over 25 years of experience, she has many words of wisdom for new students pursuing this industry.

“I try to encourage women to go after the creative fields

because statistically, women control 90 per cent of consumer spending,” Salter relays. “Most campaigns are targeted towards women but created by men.”

The encouragement was well-received, as Trask directs the visions of DCSI’s campaigns and events. Her natural drive to become a knowledgeable, stand-out employee was matched by her program’s comprehensive content. From print and digital design, photography, image editing and campaign development to copywriting, online analytics, media planning and budgeting, the program offered everything she’d need to know in the field.

“The program was a double-edged sword; while we did learn the business aspect, the creative side is my favourite,” adds Trask. “I like seeing what’s popular and following trends to pull off a campaign with a twist to make it fun, relevant and engaging for students.”

The double-edged sword also applied to mixing her passions. Trask loves spending time outside, listening to music and travelling. She loves travelling so much that she accomplished her program placement at a marketing

agency in Ourense, Spain. The idea of doing an international placement came from her experience of teaching English in Spain during the summer prior. Salter helped her arrange the placement.

Adapting and embracing the changes and realities in the marketing world is the key to success in this progressing industry. Trask is excelling in her creative role at DCSI and using the digital environment

to her advantage, always passionate to produce the best promotion possible for the school community. With new techniques in advertising and marketing being discovered every year, Trask will always be breaking the surface of what’s possible. 🌱



Veronica Trask (left) and Estevez (right). By the mid-2010s, marketing on social networks was widely normalized

So, You Want to Work in Tech?

By Rebecca Pilkey

Photo Credit: Kelley Scales

Kelley Scales always knew she wanted to work in technology and learn more about the programs we use in our daily lives. After setting her sights on Durham College (DC), she was quickly accepted into the three-year computer programming and analysis-advanced diploma program and never looked back.

Throughout her time at DC, Scales worked within the college to strengthen the skills she was learning in her courses. She appreciates the time management skills her professors instilled in her through balancing tests, course assignments and working at the college. She believes that this is the most practical skill she was able to carry into her career.

"I learned how to time manage," Scales shares. "There are so many assignments and tests and learning different things at one time. Time managing really made my life easier and it's a good skill I carried into my

career."

Since graduating in 2018, Scales began her career in programming at Scotiabank as a junior agile developer and was promoted to intermediate agile developer within a year. Every day when she goes into work, she enjoys the challenge of problem-solving issues that come up in code or bringing forward a more efficient way to complete a task.

"I'm able to continue to learn new things," says Scales. "Even in entry-level positions, I had to continue to adopt new expertise and grow skills I learned throughout my time at DC."

While Scales has experienced many successes in a short time throughout her career, she acknowledges that it's normal not to feel prepared for every aspect of the field; how you react and deal with the unknowns is what matters.

"Advice I would give to new or future students is to not compare yourself to those with more experience," she says. "It's OK if you come into the program with no previous

experience because if you are determined, it will pay off. In an entry-level position, you will learn and continue to grow your skills."

Scales hit a significant roadblock within her short time working in her field. Like many others, she had to adapt in early 2020 to work from home due to the global pandemic. While she was grateful that she could successfully work from home, it changed a lot about how she did her job.

“Advice I would give to new or future students is to not compare yourself to those with more experience. It’s OK if you come into the program with no previous experience because if you are determined, it will pay off. ”

"COVID-19 has allowed me to work more independently,"



Kelley Scales (left) at her DC graduation in 2018.

explains Scales. "When I was working in the office, it was easy to turn to someone next to me and ask their opinion, but now I am making decisions by myself."

Even with the significant changes from this past year, she's been able to adapt quickly and effectively to work virtually. Although new to her career, Scales is determined to succeed in the tech industry. She wants to continue to learn from those around her and excel in what she knows best. 🌱

Being a Durham College Leader During COVID-19

By Maria Morales

Photo Credit: Janine Knight-Grofe

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit Canada, Durham College's (DC) international students faced several challenges, such as the changing of immigration rules, travel restrictions and in-person class constraints. In response to these unprecedented times, Janine Knight-Grofe, DC's international education manager and the entire team, recognized they had to adapt to serve the student community.

for international students. Sometimes obstacles can awaken creativity, and that was exactly what DC's international education office experienced. "This has been an extremely challenging time for everybody, yet we knew we had to keep going," says Knight-Grofe. "We saw opportunities to adjust and innovate how we do our work and enhance our services to students."

With partnerships in 12 countries and international

"This has been an extremely challenging time for everybody, yet we knew we had to keep going. We saw opportunities to adjust and innovate how we do our work and enhance our services to students."

Knight-Grofe proved to be an empathetic leader who was able to recognize the difficulty of the situation

students from 72 different nations, the leaders in DC's international education office, such as Knight-Grofe, reacted



Janine Knight-Grofe positive attitude reflected in a big smile to the camera.

quickly. The office evolved in different ways to give more personalized and immediate responses to students. It added new online services such as one-on-one virtual meetings, opened twice-a-week drop-in virtual sessions, initiated real-time live chats and increased

its social media presence.

The office's empathy and passion to serve international students comes from a team that is internationally-minded. Most of the members have diverse backgrounds, cultures, languages and educational experiences. Knight-Grofe is a

clear example of the talent that comprises DC's international education office team. She studied and worked in Jamaica, the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain. Originally from Ottawa, she has made an impact on many lives, not only in DC but across Canada.

“Knight-Grofe is an insightful, thoughtful and inspiring leader.”

“Knight-Grofe is an insightful, thoughtful and inspiring leader,” states Phuong Anh Pham, international education office co-ordinator. “I appreciate how she brings out the best in me, inspires me to be innovative and supports my ability to grow.”

Early in her career, while working in the Canadian Bureau of International Education, her talent led her to lead the creation of the Regulated International Student Immigration Advisers certification. This credential allows education institutions to have on-campus specialists qualified to advise students on immigration matters.

Knight-Grofe has made a positive change in many

international students' lives who reach out to seek her advice. She remembers one student from a Caribbean country who struggled with financial problems and academic issues.

“I admired his focus, perseverance and

vulnerability,” says Knight-Grofe, remembering fondly how the student overcame his problems and graduated from DC at the top of his class. “It's hard, but it's vital to be vulnerable so people can actually understand what difficulties you are going through.”

Knight-Grofe encourages international students to be resilient and seek a peer-support system during these difficult times, reminding them that the international education team is there for support. She also recommends that international students embrace their backgrounds and share them with others, because that is what makes Canada and DC unique. She invites domestic students to

participate in the international education office's peer mentoring and volunteer programs and in the Durham College Students Inc. (DCSI) cultural clubs. Knight-Grofe is convinced that the international students bring substantial cultural capital to DC and getting involved in intercultural experience helps students think differently.

COVID-19 has shown us that we need leaders with intercultural competencies and people that can adapt fast to the changing environment.

Fortunately, leaders at DC such as Knight-Grofe are determined to keep reinventing their work to deliver international experiences and contribute to the world with international talent, even during a pandemic. 🌱

DC International Education Office Facts & Figures

- Around ten per cent of DC's student population is international.
- DC has international students from 72 different countries.
- The top five incoming students are from India, Sri Lanka, Jamaica, Nigeria and China.
- DC's international education office has partnerships in Ireland, Germany, Belgium, the U.K., the Netherlands, Kenya, Guyana, Vietnam, Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

Dream Until You Make It Big

By Navdeep Kaur Narula

Photo Credit: Guneet Kaur

One feels a sense of achievement when their dreams come true, but the rush of emotions one feels when they fulfill their parents' dreams is unexplainable. At the age of 18, Guneet Kaur had one primary goal in her life — to fulfill her parents' dreams of her receiving higher education and seeing her shine in her career. They always envisioned their daughter as a successful and independent woman. For Kaur, that meant working hard, day and night, to turn their dreams into a reality in just two years.

Kaur is originally from Chandigarh, India. She was just 18 years old when she decided to move to Canada in 2019 to pursue her diploma in the occupational therapist assistant and physiotherapist assistant (OTA/PTA) program at Durham College (DC) in Oshawa, Ont. Before moving to Canada, Kaur had never travelled to a different city without her family, yet moving to another

country all by herself was the most challenging decision she has made so far in her life. Kaur always had the support of her family; her parents' courage, motivation and faith in their daughter made Kaur see herself as a successful individual.

“I never wanted to settle for less in my life. Since my childhood, I was the one kid in the class who would always think outside the box when working on projects. I knew my capabilities, and of course, my parents always made sure that I never doubted myself and was always motivated to achieve the best in life.”

“I never wanted to settle for less in my life,” says Kaur.



Durham College occupational therapist assistant and physiotherapist assistant alumna Guneet Kaur is currently working as an assistant therapist at Guildwood Physiotherapy.

“Since my childhood, I was the one kid in the class who would always think out of the box when working on projects. I knew my capabilities, and of course, my parents always made sure that I never doubted myself and was always motivated to achieve the best in life.”

“I was on the Dean’s List twice. My family was so proud of me. This might sound like a small thing, but for me, it was a big achievement. You can also call me a bookworm.”

Kaur had a wonderful experience at Durham College. The one main reason she chose it over other colleges in Ontario was for its placement opportunities. Kaur was highly impressed with her professors’ professionalism and the medical equipment she got to use during her labs. Another highlight came when she got her article published in a Durham College magazine. Her article was selected because it was one of the best



Guneet Kaur is waiting to receive her permanent residency and planning on becoming a registered nurse after.

descriptions of OTA/PTA for the community.

“I was on the Dean’s List twice,” says Kaur. “My family was so proud of me. This might sound like a small thing, but for me, it was a big achievement. You can also call me a bookworm.”

Kaur always knew that she wanted to be a physiotherapist as she has always seen her mother suffer through joint pain. She wanted to help her and serve the community at the same time. Currently, Kaur is working as an assistant therapist at Guildwood Physiotherapy in Scarborough. She is also waiting to receive her permanent residency approval, after which she is planning to work towards becoming a registered nurse. 🇨🇦

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Getting Involved Opens the Door

By Jenna Peace

Photo Credit: Peter Garrett

How many people take advantage of an opportunity when it comes knocking at their door? That's what Peter Garrett did in 2017 when he graduated from the Durham College (DC) paralegal program. From the classroom to the office of DC president Don Lovisa, Garrett is now the strategic reporting and government relations officer at DC. How was he able to land such a sweet gig? His passion for getting involved as a student leader paved the way to his success.

“When I was finishing my BA, it was all hands on deck trying to figure out what I was going to do.”

Like many young adults who complete their undergrad, Garrett found himself stumped on what his next steps would be. His bachelor of arts (BA) in history was a great accomplishment and stepping-stone for his life, but the job options were limited.

After asking mentors, professors and family for career advice and most of them recommending obtaining a master's degree, one professor finally gave him an original idea—go to college and get a paralegal graduate certificate.

“When I was finishing my BA, it was all hands on deck trying to figure out what I was going to do,” says Garrett. “I didn't have too many options when I came home. We were looking at welding, the military, just anywhere to go. A history professor of mine, Dr. Clark, who specializes in material history, took the time to talk it over with me and recommended college as a great next step.”

When he started at DC as a mature student, he knew what was necessary this time around—he had to get involved. Not only does one find a sense of belonging when getting involved on campus, but it also gives students the opportunity to network. Building lasting relationships and connections are the fundamentals of a successful

career. As a student leader in the paralegal program, Garrett always helped his professors, assisted with orientation and volunteered with mock trials, which didn't go unnoticed.

As he prepared for graduating a second time, the college recognized his hard work and passion for

student life. His education and performance opened the first door: Garrett was recognized for his student involvement and was given a chance to sit on an advisory committee to form a new DC student association after the previous joint association of Ontario Tech University and DC parted



Peter Garrett is a strategic reporting and government relations officer at Durham College.



Peter Garrett and Naqi Hyder standing beside the new Durham College Students Inc. banner beside their offices in the Student Centre.

ways. When the advisory committee completed its task of assembling a new student government, Garrett was asked to become a director and general manager of Durham College Students Incorporated (DCSI) alongside his partner Naqi Hyder.

In the early stages of development, Garrett attended a DC board of governors meeting to provide DCSI updates to its members. Shortly after meeting the DC leadership team and building on his internal connections, he learned of a new government relations job opening in the president's office. Hello, door number two.

"When the government relations job opening came up, I put my hat in the ring," recalls Garrett. "I've done international relations, government relations and business planning. I took that and said, 'why not do it for the college now.'"

By his success, he landed the job and continues to hold the title of strategic reporting and government relations officer. He found an unexpected job that turned into the career of his dreams. Garrett got involved on campus and was

able to open his first door without hesitation because of the network he built himself. Opportunity knocked on his door again, and it was just what he had been looking for—a career that he's happy doing for the rest of his life. 🍀



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Restarting a Career During COVID-19

By Samantha Jones

Photo Credit: Ashley Abbs

Who would have thought a worldwide pandemic would hit, causing two million Canadians to be out of a job since April 2020? Ashley Abbs, a highly motivated and enthusiastic individual, was not one of those that tragically lost their job due to closures. However, it still slowed her police training down by at least a year.

Abbs graduated from the police foundations program at Durham College in 2010 and has been working two jobs — she's a nighttime security guard for schools in Durham Region and works with the Durham District School Board (DDSB) as a full-time custodian throughout the week.

“I left high school thinking I wanted to be a police officer, not realizing how hard it is to get into policing,” says Abbs. “Ten years later, I am starting it all over again with a fresh mindset and even bigger goals. When I get into the police force, it will train me to keep better health mentally and physically.”

“Working during COVID has been very easy; all the kids have been out of the school, so it's very quiet,” explains Abbs. “When the kids are in school, it's twice the work to keep up with all the COVID-19 precautions, so it really depends whether or not kids are learning remotely or coming into the school to learn in a classroom.”

Abbs was lucky enough to be in a higher position to keep both of her full-time jobs while working towards becoming a police officer. Being a security guard means she is on-call, which benefits her training since she is already used to the demand of having to get up and leave whenever needed.

“I left high school thinking I wanted to be a police officer,



Ashley Abbs with her dog Guinness on their way to work by snowmobile in Winter 2021.

not realizing how hard it is to get into policing,” says Abbs. “Ten years later, I am starting it all over again with a fresh mindset and even bigger goals. When I get into the police force, it will train me to keep better health mentally and physically.”

Abbs is currently training and working towards getting back into the police force by doing mandatory workouts, training with officers and gaining more knowledge in the field now than she ever could have imagined back in 2010.

When asked what advice Abbs would give someone who is just graduating, her answer was simple.

“You don't just get handed your job,” she says. “I expected to come out and immediately get hired by the Durham Regional Police. You have to apply and jump through hoops to get into the position that you want.”

Abbs is hoping to continue her training throughout 2021 and get into the police force to expand her career within the upcoming years. 🍀

PR Grad Takes On the Industry

By Kristen Del Duca

Photo Credit Kristen Del Duca

Taylor Tully, a graduate of the public relations program at Durham College (DC), has carved a path for herself within the PR industry. Her time at the college opened the door for her to get into the entertainment industry. For Tully, a 14-week placement with Sony Pictures was essential to her learning. "My placement helped me develop the skills needed to jump-start my career in the PR industry and show employers that although I was a new graduate, I had experience in the field," says Tully.

"My placement helped me develop the skills needed to jump-start my career in the PR industry and show employers that although I was a new graduate, I had experience in the field."

Tully has faced new kinds of challenges while working through the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic.



Taylor Tully working in her office pre-pandemic with Bell Media.

However, during the tumultuous year, she was promoted and had to learn a new position with a new team while working from home.

Tully's favourite part of the PR program was that 14-week placement and the opportunities that stemmed from it. Employers are looking for people with real-world experience who can show they have the ability to produce quality work.

The two mandatory

placements within the PR program help students create a professional portfolio before graduation.

After her placement, she was hired as a publicist at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), which is one of her proudest accomplishments in her career to date. Following her TIFF experience, she began working in a contract position with Bell Media's TSN.

Soon thereafter, she was able to secure a permanent

position at CTV as a national sales co-ordinator. Being promoted within 10 months of working within Bell Media is a testament to her hard work and dedication to her job. Life happens extremely quickly after you graduate, and being in an accelerated program helped Tully jump into the career of her dreams quickly.

"I am happy DC has given me the tools and experience to be successful in the entertainment industry."

When you graduate, many students are stressed about beginning their career, but the public relations program at DC gives you real-world experience at two different organizations before you even graduate. "I am happy DC has given me the tools and experience to be successful in the entertainment industry," says Tully. 🍀

Living Life To Help The Community

By Valentina Suarez

Photo Credit: Elaine Garnett



Elaine Garnett, a successful DC alumni from the advertising and marketing communications program.

When you're able to help the community while enjoying your job and experiencing what you love most, life turns into a fun journey that you never want to end. That's what Durham College (DC) graduate Elaine

Garnett gets to experience every day!

Merging her passion for helping others and the advertising world is what makes Garnett a successful and exceptional professional. Her commitment to the community started when she graduated in 1990 from the two-year advertising and marketing communications program at DC. Since then, Garnett has dedicated her life to motivate and support other's dreams.

"I see the sales world as an opportunity to guide people toward their business dreams," says Garnett. "We have two-way conversations to be clear on what they want to achieve. Then, I do my best to help make it real, and sometimes the concepts I offer extend beyond professional advice."

After working for more than 20 years in broadcast media advertising at CHEX TV Durham as the general

sales manager, Garnett decided to move from TV into recreation and culture

and becoming part of this community—all important parts of my career success."

"I see the sales world as an opportunity to guide people toward their business dreams. We have two-way conversations to be clear on what they want to achieve. Then, I do my best to help make it real, and sometimes the concepts I offer extend beyond professional advice."

by being the community partnerships manager for the City of Oshawa. Her main goal is to continue to connect with the community by creating engagement and interaction opportunities for local companies.

"Every job is a new opportunity to learn," says Garnett. "I dare to say that I'm living my dream job because I get up every morning with a new motivation to work. All those years of living and working in Oshawa, making connections and building relationships, networking

For Garnett, DC was the foundation of her professional success. The Chronicle is one of her most impressionable experiences. It is a newspaper purely created and produced by DC students of the journalism program.

"I pleasantly remember those meetings after publishing the newspaper where we had to be a part of a mock business meeting," says Garnett. "It is an excellent tool that DC provides to be immersed in the real business world."

Besides being a community

leader, Garnett is also recognized for having a distinctive personality; her ability to turn any event into a positive experience is one characteristic that makes her stand out in the community. She is always looking for the sparkle in everyday life, especially by doing what she likes most: cooking.

"I know her to be kind, intelligent, thoughtful, supportive, patient and funny," says Debby Allbon, director of the academic IT and communications department at DC. "I also have to mention; she is an incredible cook and welcoming hostess who has prepared and shared some of the most incredible meals I've ever enjoyed. As cliché as it sounds, she is beautiful inside and out."

In the end, Garnett considers her path through DC as one of the most important steps of her professional life, and that is why she continued to work there as a part-time professor teaching promotion and sales management in 2010. Three years later, she played an integral role as a part of the DC Alumni Association for six years, where she held the title of president towards the end



Elaine Garnett and her three fellow DC board members pose for a group photo at the 2019 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

“The experience in the Alumni Association was memorable. It was fantastic meeting people with similar love and passion for the college. We worked as a team to create networking possibilities for the board, alumni and students. It was an opportunity designed to bridge all those elements and reinforce what makes DC remarkable: inclusiveness.”

of her tenure. She was happy to give back to DC what it gave her at the beginning of her career.

"The experience in the Alumni Association was memorable," says Garnett. "It was fantastic meeting people

with similar love and passion for the college. We worked as a team to create networking possibilities for the board, alumni and students. It was an opportunity designed to bridge all those elements and reinforce what makes DC

remarkable: inclusiveness."

Garnett doesn't regret any moments of her life. Every challenge and every job were stepping stones to achieve success in a life centred on helping the community. 🌱

A Cup of Coffee Could Change Your Life

By Preeti Beniwal

Photo Credit: Angela Thomas

After investing two years in the business administration-accounting program, Nick Cowling switched his focus to PR and strategic communications. It happened one afternoon while he was having coffee with a friend that had a background in PR. During their conversation, she mentioned how much she loved the PR program at Durham College (DC), which inspired Cowling to also enrol. Fast-forward to post-graduation, and Cowling is an established name in the PR industry. Meeting up for a simple cup of coffee ended up changing his life.

“During the program, I learned practical skills that I still use to pitch to my clients and even my colleagues.”

DC played an important role in helping him achieve this success. He loved the fact that DC offered a compressed public relations course with

various classes on editing, writing and photography, each taught through hands-on learning. He believed DC had the best teachers because they were industry professionals with guidance to give and years of experience.



Nick Cowling, Global President of Citizen Relations.

"During the program, I learned practical skills that I still use to pitch to my clients and even my colleagues."

Over time, the PR industry has rapidly changed and become more diverse. Now you need expertise in technology and should always be ready to take on new, unexpected challenges. Luckily, DC provides students

with real-world assignments and placements that sharpen their skills, ultimately working towards becoming experts in their field.

"It's very important to make a connection between you and the person you are conveying

your message to; it could be your boss, your client or maybe your team," says Cowling. "If you are unable to express your thoughts or key messages to your audience, it will backfire."

Cowling is the global president of his firm, Citizen Relations, which has office hubs in the U.S., Canada, Asia and the U.K. To Cowling,

his team is his strength and he supports them in any way he can. So when it comes to business, he has to identify and make those tough decisions when it comes to employees not giving 100 per cent to the team and causing others to struggle. Nevertheless, he loves watching his team members grow during their time with him and celebrates any campaign or goal they achieve after putting in the hard work.

“As the head of the company, you are always the centre of attention.”

"As the head of the company, you are always the centre of attention. Your actions set rules for your team members. If you're not fair while making decisions, then your employees will imitate you, and for me, setting the wrong example is a complete failure."

Cowling's successful PR journey started with a conversation over a cup of coffee, and so could yours. ☕

Durham College Alumni Says Thanks to SALS

By Gurkeerat Singh

Photo Credit: Gurkeerat Singh

It is always a challenging journey to be thousands of miles away from your family and home. These are the biggest hurdles when someone moves to a country with a different culture and, of course, a foreign language.

Lovepreet Singh Purba came to Canada to complete his chemical lab technician diploma at Durham College (DC). He completed his diploma in medical lab technology (DMLT) in Mukatsar Sahib, Punjab, India.

“Thanks to Student Academic Learning Services (SALS), I was more confident than ever. I went to SALS and followed their instructions, and I ended up seeing improvements in myself.”

He is the youngest son of Punjabi parents and was born and raised in the Punjab village of Faridkot. After completing high school, he got accepted



Lovepreet Singh Purba.

to Adesh Medical College in Mukatsar Sahib to complete his medical science diploma.

“Thanks to Student Academic Learning Services (SALS), I was more confident than ever,” says Purba. “I went to SALS and followed their instructions, and I ended up seeing improvements in myself.”

Purba learned basic English grammar rules in school, but English is still very much his second language. He completed the International English Language Test System (IELTS) to fulfill the embassy

requirements to enroll in a Canadian college for his further studies. But it wasn’t enough when it came to other aspects of the English language.

“I passed the IELTS exam to fulfill the visa requirements,” says Purba. “But it didn’t fully prepare me to speak and understand English as a second language.”

He tried to learn English back in his home country, and now in Canada he continues to boost his learnings through a variety of sources. He took his professors’ advice to go to

SALS for help. “SALS is the place where everyone should go to and use their services. The staff is nice and ready to help. Even COVID-19 could not stop them from serving students.”

“SALS is the place where everyone should go to and use their services. The staff is nice and ready to help. Even COVID-19 could not stop them from serving students.”

When he talks about Durham College, he focuses on its commitment to student success. He says that it’s easy and efficient to reach the faculty at any time, and they are always ready to help students.

Purba has a lot of suggestions for international and domestic students at the college.

“DC is always ready to help according to the situation and time,” says Purba. “It always gives you more than you think, so keep working hard and acquiring knowledge as much as you can.”

With Great Grades Comes Great Career Opportunities

By Nikhil Manohar Telge

Photo Credit: Laryssa Hulcio

Laryssa Hulcio, a former Durham College (DC) student, proves that great grades can lead to a great career.

Hulcio was awarded DC's in-program scholarship for first-year marks in the PR and strategic communications program, which hinted at the job opportunities and new adventures to come her way. In fact, Hulcio was the highest-ranking graduate of the class of 2011, finishing with a 4.75 GPA. She was chosen among her peers to be the magazine editor for DC's alumni publication, Reflections, which is sent to over 30,000 alumni. She likes to be challenged and was named "Female Athlete of the Year" two years in a row in high school. These accomplishments reflect her agility, comprehension and strong work ethic.

Hulcio decided to go to DC because she always knew that they had a great reputation and a wide range of courses



Laryssa Hulcio working on her laptop for General Motors.

that interested her. Before entering the public relations program, Hulcio didn't know much about the industry, but when she looked at the wide range of classes in the program and the different types of career paths she could take, she came to the conclusion that PR & strategic communications was a perfect fit for her. Hulcio knew that she would be able to blend her love for photography, writing, social media and digital design

to help create an actual career.

"Joining DC was the ideal choice for me since I've always wanted to stay close to home to complete my post-secondary studies," said Hulcio "But it was also a great decision because they believe in providing hands-on learning to their students. The public relations program helped me gain a wide range of skills for the workplace."

“Joining DC was the ideal choice for me since I’ve always wanted to stay close to home to complete my post-secondary studies. But it was also a great decision because they believe in providing hands-on learning to their students. The public relations program helped me gain a wide range of skills for the workplace. ”

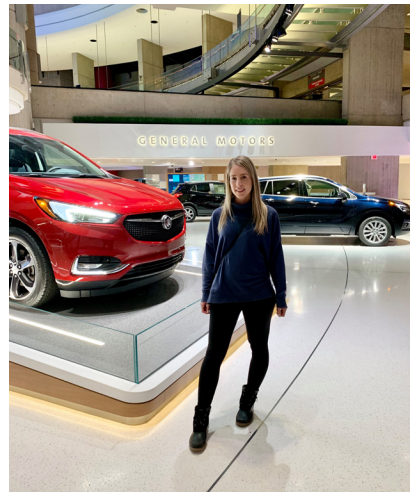
After graduating from DC, the program helped her earn a great job. By having a corporate placement at the end of the program, Hulcio was hired full-time by a well-known publishing company called McGraw Hill. Her skills grew stronger and her hard work was appreciated. Every job or role she has worked in since the program has helped

her grow her skills and experience, for which she has always been grateful.

Hulcio is currently working as the talent social lead for General Motors (GM) within the recruitment marketing team. She loves being there because the workplace is extremely inclusive. Hulcio is happy that she gets to work with promising leaders who are always open to hearing ideas, regardless of what job or level you are at in the company. She's also proud to be part of a company with a strong vision that will truly help change the world.

"Our vision is to create a world with zero crashes, zero emissions and zero congestion," said Hulcio. "It's a really big goal, but it's something that I'm really proud to stand behind as an employee of the company."

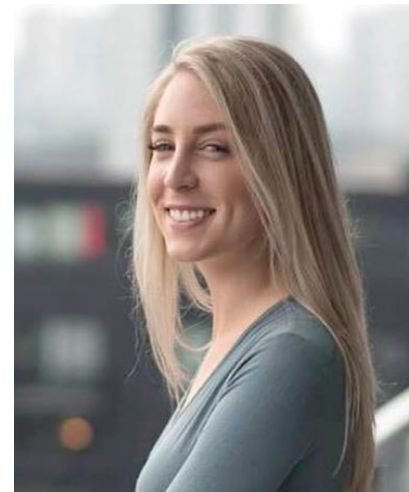
One of Hulcio's many strengths is photography. Growing up, she would spend hours editing photos she took on her camera. It wasn't until DC that she got her hands on a DSLR camera and learned how to use Adobe Photoshop. She valued the photography course and learned so much



Laryssa Hulcio at General Motors' headquarters.

that it convinced her to invest in her own camera. With this, Hulcio does small photoshoots on the side as freelance work. She also started her own Instagram page four years ago, which has steadily grown over time.

“Our vision is to create a world with zero crashes, zero emissions and zero congestion. It's a really big goal, but it's something that I'm really proud to stand behind as an employee of the company.”



Laryssa Hulcio on a break from her busy day at work.

As a health-conscious individual, she also works as a representative for Ziya, a fitness clothing company that she came across about a year and a half ago. Working for Ziya has helped her stay active and live a healthy lifestyle, especially throughout the pandemic.

One of the biggest tips that Hulcio has for students is to never underestimate the power of networking.

"Getting involved and networking while doing your corporate and non-profit placements is so important," says Hulcio. "Getting out of your comfort zone and networking will allow you to

build new relationships that will truly help you grow in your career and open doors that you never knew existed."

“Getting involved and networking while doing your corporate and non-profit placements is so important. Getting out of your comfort zone and networking will allow you to build new relationships that will truly help you grow in your career and open doors that you never knew existed.”

The personality of an achiever has multiple traits. Keeping in mind the knowledge she gained in college, her chosen career path, her love for photography and her outstanding achievements, her story isn't over. Hulcio has many more adventures to unravel and explore. 📷

Dirt, Grit and A Three-Piece Suit

By Griffin O'Handley

Photo Credit: John Ragusa

Normally, walking up two flights of stairs does not seem like a daunting task. Carrying a large container filled with 50 pounds of liquid nitrogen up those stairs, however, starts to change the equation. Hearing the receptionist chuckle once you reach the office, finally realizing there was an elevator right beside you: now that is priceless. This scenario is not hypothetical, but an experience John Ragusa had on one of his first days as a business unit manager at Cryogen Nitrogen Deliveries.

Ragusa didn't begin his education in the field of science, or liquid nitrogen handling, but rather in the crane operation, rigging and construction program at Durham College. At the time, his passion wasn't in sales or business. The passion he had was in working with his hands, and after graduating from the program, he found that at Delpark Homes as a general labourer. Through the few years there, he worked his way up to the position of machine

operator.

"It was a lot of draining work. Physically draining," Ragusa said. "Work, then I get home and get ready for bed to get ready for work again. It was a cycle I didn't want to continue."

“Now when I meet with clients, whether it is once a day or once a week, I’m always early.”

Ragusa quit his job as a machine operator at Delpark Homes and decided to transition his career into sales instead. He found work as a car salesman at Loan Arranger. In the next year and a half, he worked his way up in a few different car dealerships in Durham Region before being recruited as a territory sales representative at Culligan Water, a major water treatment company. After two years and aggressive job searching, Ragusa was hired by Cryogen Nitrogen Deliveries as a business unit manager.

"There were some small hiccups on the way. It was



John Ragusa takes a selfie while filling up containers with liquid nitrogen from the back of his truck.

a completely different atmosphere," Ragusa says. "The major difference is working with your head and not your hands. Having to learn fundamentals such as the sales cycle. It's easy to say you want to sell something like, 'hey, I want to sell this car,' but there's a whole cycle in the backend that you don't think about."

He went from hauling drywall and selling water systems, to becoming a business unit manager that not only signs up medical clinics and completes billing and paperwork, but also supplies and hooks up

the liquid nitrogen personally across the Greater Toronto Area.

The socialization and underlying habits that he picked up during his time at Durham College have made an impact on how professional he is, and how he conducts business at the workplace.

"The work ethic gained by going through college, like needing to be punctual, wasn't really there when I was in high school. Now when I meet with clients, whether it is once a day or once a week, I'm always early." 🍀

The Importance of Participation

By Akshay Verma

Photo Credit: Erin Helmer

Erin Helmer's successful journey of entertainment administration began in 2000 after graduating from Durham College (DC). During that time, she made the choice to focus on entertainment administration, something that would have a huge payoff after graduation.

“It was the courses that I specifically took while I was in my program; they made me realize what I enjoyed about the business world.”

Before deciding to attend DC, Helmer had already experienced college life at George Brown College in downtown Toronto. Yet, her experience wasn't enough to help her choose what career she wanted, so she decided to enrol at DC since it was close to home.

“It was the courses that I specifically took while I was in my program,” says Helmer.

“They made me realize what I enjoyed about the business world.”

In the last semester of her program, she worked at a record label called Loggerhead Records Inc., where she worked continuously in a cutthroat environment and realized she didn't want to spend the rest of her life there. However, working in the music industry had its perks, as she got to attend the JUNO Awards and Canadian Music Week.

“When you're in school, it's not just about going to class and finishing the assignments. You need to get out there and try to experience different things so that it gives you an idea. I was very lucky to have all the opportunities I gained from consciously participating.”

The most valuable thing

that Helmer learned during her time at DC was to be involved. Helmer held the vice-president of public relations & promotions position with the DC Student Association during her second year. DC even asked her to participate in the college's rebranding and planning of their marketing strategy. She had the opportunity to sit with the executives of DC and share her opinions from a student's perspective.

“It was the foundation that has helped me spur my career throughout the years—it was a very solid foundation that I received through my education at Durham College.”

“When you're in school, it's not just about going to class and finishing the assignments,” says Helmer. “You need to get out there and try to experience different things so that it gives you an idea. I was very lucky



Erin Helmer attending the JUNO Awards and Canadian Music Week.

to have all the opportunities I gained from consciously participating.”

Following graduation in 2002, Helmer began applying for entry-level event planning positions and has been in the non-profit sector ever since. Her work has spanned across many different areas of the non-profit industry including the arts, health and social services fields.

“It was the foundation that's helped me spur my career throughout the years,” says Helmer. “It was a very solid foundation that I received through my education at Durham College.”

Events and Coronavirus

By Kristen Del Duca

Photo Credit: Kyle Sanders

American singer Marc Anthony said the famous quote, "If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life." Well, that's exactly what Kyle Sanders is doing. He gets to attend live concerts and sports events while getting paid for it. Seeing Brantley Gilbert in concert and watching hockey games for the Mississauga Steelheads and Toronto Marlies are just a few perks of Sanders' career.

Sanders has been an event co-ordinator with the City of Mississauga for two years and attends all concerts, sports and events at the Paramount Fine Foods Centre. When working in events, every day is different and exciting.

"I can't do the 9-5, so that's why I love working in events, because every event and every day is different and new."

Sanders began his sports management career with an internship at Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment (MLSE). He was initially hired part-time, but successfully worked his

way up to a full-time position, eventually advancing in roles to become the assistant manager of suites and catering. He worked at MLSE for a total of six years, was a fan services manager for hospitality firm called Spectra, then accepted his current role with the City of Mississauga in 2018 as a co-ordinator of events. There are general working days, pre-production days, event days, and post-event days. For him, seeing and managing events from start to finish is very rewarding.

"I can't do the 9-5, so that's why I love working in events, because every event and every day is different and new."

"Returning to Durham College for sport management was a great addition to my educational background and has helped me advance in the sports industry."



Kyle Sanders with the Raptors 905 championship trophy at the Paramount Fine Foods Centre.

Some advice he has for DC alumni is to not be afraid to return to school for more education. He received his B.Comm at Ontario Tech University before attending Durham College (DC) to specialize in sport business management. For Sanders, it was an easy transition as he was already familiar with the campus and knew his way around. He remembers all of his professors and how helpful they were with getting him to where he is today.

“Returning to Durham College for sport management was a great addition to my educational background and has helped me advance in the sports industry.”

All of Ontario began a complete lockdown in early March of 2020, and nothing has returned to normal since then. The last event Sanders worked on happened March 11, 2020, and then the city was forced to cancel all remaining events of the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This has



Kyle Sanders at the Paramount Fine Food Centre, working an event.

impacted the events industry immensely.

While thousands of people in Canada have been temporarily laid off due to the pandemic, Sanders is one of the lucky individuals that has been able to continue working. While

thinking of these last eight months, Sanders describes the pandemic as ‘basically killing the industry.’

Sanders went from receiving 15 to 20 event requests per month to absolutely none. Groups have already

cancelled for next summer, and he continues to receive cancellations for dates in the foreseeable future. There is no timeline for when events are expected to return, but professionals say it will be a tough year for the industry and all employees involved.

Despite the challenges COVID-19 has brought, Sanders is grateful to be working and is seeing a different side of his job with the abundance of virtual events. He looks forward to the day that in-person events can safely return around the world after the pandemic is over.

As an event co-ordinator, there’s no greater feeling than seeing the culmination of successful events after weeks of hard work and effort. Thanks to DC and the education it provided, Sanders found a rewarding career doing what he loves every single day.

Follow Paramount Fine Foods Centre and The City Of Mississauga on Instagram and Twitter for updates on the return of sport and entertainment events in the future. 📺

Where There's a Will, There's a Way

By Simranjot Kaur

Photo Credit: Shiv Yemulvar

We all have individual desires and goals when we are young, but how many of us achieve them? Does life happen the way we want? For those who try hard and are focused in one direction, many will achieve their goals. Nidhi Prajapati proves that if you're committed enough, you can accomplish your goals. She wanted to become a makeup artist, but due to a lack of certified courses in her home country of India, she came to Canada to pursue her dreams.

Due to her background in pharmacy, Prajapati first enrolled in the Chemical Laboratory Technician program at Durham College (DC). While it wasn't the program she wanted, she accepted this path and focused on her education, all while not knowing where destiny was going to take her. Then, a new program called Cosmetic Techniques and Management was introduced at DC. It would teach students about beauty

items, makeup application and marketing. She realized then that through this program she could pursue her dream career.

“No one is going to do it for us, only we can do it for ourselves.”

All the seats in the cosmetic techniques and management program were booked when Prajapati tried to enrol. This was upsetting because she didn't want to wait for the next intake, but thankfully someone cancelled their registration which opened a spot for her. Destiny was aligning.

She loved the program, although at first she was confused because she knew little of the industry terminology, and her classmates knew much more than her. Yet she had the will to succeed and make strides in her studies by the end of the course.

The final test was an exam in their last semester in which they had to do makeup on



Interviewing Nidhi Prajapati about her successful life.

their classmates. Whoever did the best makeup would be deemed the winner, and their photos would be shared throughout DC's social media accounts. Prajapati did not get first position in the competition but still did very well, proving her growth.

“No one is going to do it for us, only we can do it for ourselves.”

In addition, DC held mock-job interviews to give students an outline of how they should present themselves in the job

market. This helped her get her job in the industry. She was quickly employed as a makeup assistant at Shopper's Drug Mart. In her role she continues to follow the tips and tricks offered by the program's professor. For her next steps, Prajapati has her sights set on being a manager for Mac or Sephora. With her drive, dedication and the tools she learned at DC, she will find a way. 🍀

The Golden Boy of Bay Street

By Ashi Padmakumar

Photo Credit: Shanta Kilborn

Ian Ball, the golden boy of Bay Street, graduated from Durham College's (DC) marketing-business administration program with a clear agenda for a successful career. After graduation in 2002, Ball started his career in investor relations, which expanded it and allowed him to become the youngest vice president of a publicly traded Canadian company at the age of 23.

According to Ball, he chose DC because it was an easy commute, and he found the marketing-business administration program to be a good fit.

“If you do the same as everyone else, don't expect to be more than average.”

“Whether you are in an operational role or sales, you are selling an idea to somebody. I saw my potential to handle a group

and communicate an idea effectively in a very short time period. I developed skills that I still apply today.”

With his interpersonal skills, networking skills and savvy business skills, Ball was able to impress a well-known businessman, Robert McEwen, who then became his mentor. In a short period of time, McEwen helped Ball achieve his goals and become the vice president of Lexam Explorations Inc.

“In the second year at DC, there was a course called Simulation where you ran a shoe company against other teams in the class. Each week, the moves you made would be calculated to see who gained the most market share over the semester,” says Ball. This simulation foreshadowed what he would go on to accomplish in the working world.

After graduation, Ball became the head of investor relations at Goldcorp Inc. He completed several mergers and acquisitions, which positioned him as a key player in the creation of McEwen Mining.

In 2013, he was named the president of McEwen and during his time he helped it grow to a \$750 million market capitalization publicly-traded company on the New York Stock Exchange.

This much success by the age of 30 gives Ball high-status in Toronto's financial district, but he never forgets his time at DC before he became the golden boy of Bay Street. Ball continues to return to the campus, inspiring more students to challenge their limitations and reach for success. In 2014, he addressed the graduating class during their spring convocation ceremony. In 2016, he again returned to DC to speak to the third-year marketing students and presented each student with the book *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* by Michael Lewis. Inside each book, he left a personal note that had taught him a valuable lesson: “If you do the same as everyone else, don't expect to be more than average.” He also established the Ian Ball scholarship at DC



Ian Ball smiling for a photo.

that ran for 10 years.

“One of the things I liked the most about DC were the connections I made,” says Ball. “Back in college, there were situations where the people that I met outside of the classroom or even outside the campus had big impacts on me.”

Ball advises DC students to be focused, but not rush their career path. He knows students have ample time to decide what they really want to do in life and although it doesn't feel like it, you will never have more flexibility than you do right now to explore what you truly want to become. 🍀

