

Reflections



INSIDE:

A PASSIONATE EYE

A MATCH MADE IN DURHAM:
The Region and the College

ALUMNI UPDATES

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello DC Alumni!

On behalf of the DC Alumni Association (DCAA), I have the great privilege to congratulate more than 3,800 students who recently graduated at convocation this past June. Well done!

As a college, we have grown and now have five convocation ceremonies, which were held at the GM Centre in Oshawa. Several wonderful days of celebration were enjoyed as we watched our new alumni members graduate and join over 73,000 alumni at Durham College.

As your president, I am pleased to share some of our accomplishments this past spring. Most recently, at our May board meeting, the following nominees were selected as 2016 Alumni of Distinction award recipients namely:

- Hannah Elkington, 2014 Police Foundations
- Anna Forder, 1971 Public Relations
- Melody Gaukel, 1998 Public Relations
- Philip Pritchard, 1985 Sports Administration

The DCAA Board and Durham College recognized this important achievement at a special dinner as well as at our convocation ceremonies. To learn more about our 2016 Alumni of Distinction winners, please visit the alumni website at www.durhamcollege.ca/alumniofdistinction.

We have participated in many activities this past spring including Open House and Countdown to Grad, School Cup Challenge and three Etiquette Dinners to help prepare our graduating students. We also had the pleasure of attending the Donor Student reception where we met with many of the students who received alumni scholarships and bursaries.

Our most exciting news is the launch of the new DC Alumni website. In a recent survey, we asked-you spoke-and we listened! Your alumni website now has a brand new look making it easier to navigate with more links to helpful sites and ways to stay in touch with the college and your former classmates. We hope you will take advantage of the many exclusive services



and benefits available to you as members of the DC Alumni. Check out your new alumni website at www.durhamcollege.ca/alumni.

Please stay tuned for more updates as we get closer to the college's 50th anniversary in 2017. Stay connected with us on Twitter @Alumni_DC, follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/durhamcollegealumni and join us on LinkedIn Durham College Alumni (for past and present students).

I encourage you to share any DC memories, career success or just update us with your contact information at alumni@durhamcollege.ca. We would love to hear from you.

Have a wonderful and safe summer.

Sincerely,



Chris Vale, Class of 2003
President, DC Alumni Association

REFLECTIONS

Published by the
Durham College Alumni Office

2000 Simcoe Street
Oshawa, Ontario L1H 7K4

T: 905.721.3035
F: 905.721.3134
E: alumni@durhamcollege.ca

CIRCULATION: 27,000

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

PUBLISHER: Lori Connor

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
Jacquie Hoornweg

PRODUCTION TEAM:

ART DIRECTORS:
Amy Nicholson
Maninder Chahal
Candace Darbyshire

COPY EDITORS:
Melanie Grant
Michael Playfair

*Reflections is written and edited by
Durham College second-year Public
Relations students.*

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50 Years of Excellence and 50 More To Come

BY ANGELA BOSILKOVSKI & SOFIA ESQUIVEL

PHOTOS BY SOFIA ESQUIVEL & DURHAM COLLEGE

In 1967 a lot of great things happened. It was the last time the Toronto Maple Leafs won the Stanley Cup (we're still waiting); it was when the Go Transit services began in the City of Toronto; and most importantly it was the year that Durham College officially opened. The college will mark its 50th anniversary in 2017. What better way to celebrate than to admire all of the accomplishments it has had in the past, present and the aspirations for the future?

Back when the college first opened its doors in 1967, there were only 16 portable classrooms, employing 14 staff members and serving 205 students. Today Durham College offers over 140 programs to approximately 11,200 full-time students. The school has grown tremendously over the past 50 years, and there is no sign of slowing down.

In order to celebrate the silver anniversary of the college a group of 30 faculty, alumni and retirees joined together and formed the 50th Anniversary Committee. The celebration will highlight past and current accomplishments and successes of Durham College, and also the next steps and goals for the future of the school.

"We're really going to impact our communities, our province, our country, the world in the next 50 years," says Carol Beam, executive director of Communications and Marketing. "We're innovative, we are a top education institution, we have an impact, and we make a difference."

Not only is Durham College celebrating its 50th anniversary, but most colleges across Ontario will be as well. This will be a perfect time for the college to send a unified message from a provincial point of view. It will demonstrate the college as a



Since 1967, Durham College's Oshawa campus (shown above) has opened its doors to over 73,000 Alumni.

part of a strong system and play a key role in educating and contributing to the province, the community, and Canada. From Durham College's perspective, Beam explains that the college wants people to know that great things were and will continue to be done here.


"It's a great opportunity for the college to showcase all the amazing students we've graduated, the great staff we have, what we've done and where we are headed," Beam says.

The alumni office is in charge of coordinating events, and serves as the link between the campus and the Alumni Association. The office is planning a number of themed events through the course of 2017, focusing on a month-by-month theme. Each month will have a different themed event; so that the college can focus the work that the students and staff have and will continue to do.

One major event that is already an annual occurrence is the "Harvest Dinner." The theme of October will revolve around the dinner that takes place at the Centre for Food Building at the college's Whitby campus. To incorporate Durham College's 50th anniversary, there will be emphasis on the programs' successes, and showcasing them to the public to make this one of the biggest Harvest Dinner events.

"There are many things to celebrate over the 50-year period but one of the unique features that sets Durham College apart from many other colleges, is the family culture that is enjoyed by many", says Scott Blakey, chief administrative officer at the college.

"People appreciated that culture and contributed to that culture while active at Durham College and we need to help find a way for all of those individuals to reconnect to their college. We have a population of approximately 70,000 alumni and if we can reconnect with them we will achieve something extremely beneficial for our college leading into the next 50 years."

With 2017 approaching, Durham College and the 50th anniversary committee are continuously working together to make this celebration an outstanding one. There are tens of thousands of alumni from the college grateful for not only the education, but also the friendships and experiences that this school has provided them. It's time to recognize all that Durham College has done for each and every one. 

An overview of Durham College's campus when it first opened almost 50 years ago. (Durham College)



Have you Heard?

BY SAMANTHA PENDER

PHOTOS BY GRANT MARTIN

All young professionals dream of making it to the top and getting recognized for their hard work. In the field of graphic design, you wouldn't usually think that would involve a major music award, but that is exactly what happened to Brandon Heard.

From graphic design to website and online branding, Heard and his wife, Sheila Hash, founders of Mediavandals, seem to do a little bit of everything. This includes designing album covers for country music stars. After being nominated three times previously for a Canadian Country Music Award (CCMA), Heard's latest album cover for The Boom Chucka Boys' *Ramble* brought him to the big stage at the CCMA's in 2015.

"We've been nominated a couple times before that, four times, and this [time] we figured, it's time; let's do it, let's win," Heard recalled. "It was the most nervous moment of my life, but we won and it's an amazing feeling."

Heard graduated from the graphic design program at Durham College in 2003, and has had a steady uphill climb of success. While Heard and Hash's established portfolio speaks for itself, breaking into the music industry has definitely helped put them on the map. Through their work with artists such as Chad Brownlee from MDM Recordings, a Canadian record label, word of Heard and Hash's success reached Royalty Records, who approached Mediavandals to design the album cover that would win them an award.


Heard's inspiration for the covers he designs comes from the overall theme of the album, and he works closely with the artists and photographers to deliver that theme and to reflect the artist and their music. With *Ramble*, a little more than theme was shining through – his talent and skill is just as obvious as the band's brand.

"When they call your name, it's surreal. The place is packed, everybody's dressed in suits, and there's spotlights everywhere," Heard explains. "They call your name, [and] it's a little scary to get up there; I felt like a deer in headlights, but once you realize that these are my peers, these are my coworkers, these are the



Brandon Heard addresses the crowd with excitement after winning his CCMA.

people I talk to everyday, you realize that it's not that scary."

Not originally the biggest country music fan, Heard's personal connection to the genre has given him an appreciation and special love for the music. When asked about his personal preference towards the genre, Heard says it's grown on him. Much like his spot in the music industry has grown through his recent success. 

Mediavandals And the CCMA's

Mediavandals is a graphic design company established in 2009 by Sheila Hash and her husband Brandon Heard. While this is their first Canadian Country Music Award (CCMA) win for album design, it is not their first nomination. In 2012, Mediavandals was nominated for Album Design of the Year for Chad Brownlee's "Love Me Or Leave Me," in 2013 for Hey Romeo's "Twist of Fate," and in 2014 for Jess Moskaluke's "Light Up The Night." In 2015, they finally took home the hardware for The Boom Chucka Boys' "Ramble," cementing their role in the Canadian country music design industry.

Both Hash and Heard are Durham College graduates and have stayed true to their hometown roots, keeping their growing business in Oshawa and representing Canadian country music's finest talent from their backyard.

Mike Peleshok finds himself on the other end of the lens after a great night shooting bands.



CHOOSING PASSION OVER POSSESSIONS

BY HALLIE ENTWISTLE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MIKE PELESHOK

Some call it fate, or destiny or even kismet, but regardless of what word is used to describe it, it all begins with a moment of comfort interrupted by something that sends you in an unexpected direction. Mike Peleshok, a graduate of the Durham College (DC) Advertising program and now a professional photographer, videographer and director for some of the biggest names in country music, is no stranger to this concept.

“You can’t find success in your car or house. So that’s when I asked myself, ‘what am I really passionate about?’”

Peleshok took this feeling of uncertainty and ran with it – literally – until he found elation in something he was truly passionate about. After graduation he was immediately hired by one of the top advertising agencies in Toronto, where he was exposed to all of the perks associated with a creative, city-based industry. Later, he was offered a more secure job at the Oshawa Hospital Foundation and jumped on the opportunity to begin building an admirable – yet taxing – lifestyle.

It was not long before the enthusiasm of having a house,

car and other amenities began to wear off and an unsettled sensation took its place in the form of an unshakeable urge for adventure.

“There is no essence in objects,” says Peleshok. “I love records and other things, but to find your success in those objects will not help you at all. You can’t find success in your car or house. So that’s when I asked myself ‘what am I really passionate about?’ and that’s when I went back and thought of how much I love music.”

Within days of this realization, there was a one-way ticket to New Zealand with Peleshok’s name on it. During the nine months he spent finding — and leaving — bits and pieces of himself throughout the corners of the earth, Peleshok had truly uncovered his vocation in music, but more surprisingly, a seemingly serendipitous connection to photography occurred as well. While collecting over 4,000 pictures of the rugged mountains of New Zealand, pristine beaches of Australia, colourful markets of Southeast Asia, and contrasting metropolises of Europe, Peleshok mustered enough talent and inspiration from his voyages to begin developing his updated plan for the future.

“You just have to let yourself go and be where you are.”

“When I talk about music and when I go to shows I feel so connected to this source that I could light up a town,” says Peleshok. “The energy is like a firecracker. I felt if I could connect with that and explore it, I could find my personal success.”

Peleshok paid his dues by taking family portraits and subsequently working for Snap'd Oshawa, a gig that turned out to be the turning point of his career. During his time there he was given the opportunity to take photos of some of the world's greatest music makers at the General Motors Centre, which allowed him to begin weaving his vibrant tapestry of contacts in the music industry.

Through the threads of his ever-growing networking circle and the magnitude of his raw talent, he has been able to create a life rich with excitement and possibility. Over the last few years Peleshok has made himself quite a travelling act, as he bounces back and forth to Nashville, the nerve centre of country music, to work with some of the most renowned figures in the industry, such as Canadian country music duo, The Stellas, and fellow Canadian artist, Brett Kissel. Additionally, one of his most distinguished experiences to date has been travelling worldwide with acclaimed singer songwriter, Johnny Reid, to direct and produce a behind-the-scenes mini documentary of the making of his album, 'Fire It Up'.

Although the road to success for Peleshok was at times



Band members share laughs in the studio during the shooting of Johnny Reid's "Fire It Up" tour.

a maze of uncertainty, he followed it nonetheless and was rewarded with a life of creativity and passion that most only dream of.

“When I shoot a show, I try to wait for the moments of back-tingly things. I don't know how to sum it up into words, which is probably why I'm better at taking pictures of it,” says Peleshok. “It's just about being in the environment and reacting to it. There are so many things that are out of your control. You're not controlling the artist, you're not controlling the lighting, you're not controlling anything. You just have to let yourself go and be where you are.”

alumni UPDATE

1991

KENNETH WEIR,

Graphic Design

lives in Whitby and has two daughters; Ashley, 22, and Kaitlyn, 20. He is currently a senior service platform technical specialist for SCIEX in Concord.

1996

SHELLY LACHAPELLE,

Legal Administration

is currently a lecturer for Mianyang Normal University located in China.

2008

KIMBERLY BEER

Dental Reception and Administration,

lives in Port McNicoll with her husband Jeff and is currently an office manager for Barrhaven Crossing Dental Care in Nepean.

2011

KYLE LARGE

Sports Management

lives in St. Catharines and is a management assistant for Enterprise Rent-a-Car.

MICHAEL MCELROY,

Business – General – UOIT Transfer program

lives in Bowmanville with his wife Jenna and is an account manager for TD Commercial Banking.

2012

JORDAN FLEMMING,

Internet Application & Web Development program

lives in London, Ontario.

JEFFREY SERES,

Chemical Engineering Technology

lives in Whitby and is currently a project manager for Patheon Inc.

VANESSA SHEBEC (nee Shertzberg),

Business Administration – Operations Management

lives in Scotland, Ontario with her husband Clayton and is an office manager for Walking Floor International Canada.

REDEFINING 'BACK TO SCHOOL'

BY LISA PRESTA & BEVERLEY KERR

PHOTOS BY LISA PRESTA & BEVERLEY KERR

Imagine holding a leadership position at the college you once attended as a student. For Linda Marco, this was a reality. Marco joined Durham College as the associate vice president, Office of Development and Alumni Affairs in November 2015. In her role, Marco's responsibility is to fundraise for the college, including for scholarships and bursaries, as well as connect with over 70,000 alumni.

Having previously worked at Children's Wish Foundation, Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, and most recently, Lakeridge Health Foundation, Marco's impressive work history will no doubt help her in this role. What she ultimately brings, however, is credibility and a personal connection to the college, as an alumna herself. Hoping to use that common ground to better connect with her audience, Marco's main goal is to connect alumni to her fundraising efforts.

Marco never expected that she would be back at Durham College, but having a desire to remain local and work in the community in which she lived, when the position became available she thought it would be a great fit. When asked how it felt coming back to Durham College in a role like this, "nostalgic" came to mind.

"Nostalgic is a really good word, but it's really fun, too," says Marco. "There are people that work here that were students when I was a student. As much as the job is new, it feels very familiar in some ways. This is where I started preparing for my career; hopefully this is where it will end."

While her career has come full circle, Marco looks back on her time as a student fondly.

"I seem to remember it was really easy to make friends. We had this big lounge on the second floor and couches and tables that students hung out in," Marco says. "There were only two buildings back then - the main building and the Simcoe building. We spent a lot of time in both."

As a student, Marco may have done her homework in the Simcoe building, but now in her new role, Marco will be working on a campaign to rebuild it.



Linda Marco stands in front of the Simcoe Building, showing her excitement to begin working on the rebuild. (Kerr)

"I used that building when I was a student, but it's near its end of life. It is time. I look forward to seeing that [come together]."

While the Simcoe building rebuild is just in the planning phase, Marco is excited for what's to come. She and her team will be looking at starting a fundraising campaign, celebrations by school, as well as a multitude of other activities throughout the year. Marco wants alumni to know that she is excited to hear from them. "I would love to encourage them to get in touch. I would love to chat with them and hear what they are up to and let them know what's going on here. Phone me, email me and join me for lunch. I'd be happy to meet with them." ☎

The Simcoe Building Project

The proposed Centre for Collaborative Education (CFCE) will become the new home to many of DC's most innovative and ground breaking programs, including:

- Centre for Success
- Aboriginal Student Centre
- Global Class
- Entrepreneurial Centre
- Health Science Facilities

But more than a new home, the CFCE will be a place where the next generation of education, business development, and community health and prosperity will unfold.

Linda Marco working on upcoming changes to Durham College. (Presta)



FROM DC TO DEEP SEA

BY MICHAEL PLAYFAIR

PHOTO BY SUSAN WELSBY

Durham College professor Paul Welsby is wrapping up his final teaching year and flying south with his scuba gear. In the Public Relations program, he has made a lasting impression on both students and colleagues. Welsby's resumé prior to joining the college roster reads like a wish list for aspiring public relations professionals looking for interesting employment experience. That being said, after years of working in a variety of different areas and honing his craft as a writer, the thing Welsby is most excited about is his future as a retiree.

"My Dad once told me that time flies more and more as you get older, especially after you retire," says Welsby. "So I decided, I guess I'll have to retire early then."

At the beginning of his career, Welsby worked as a reporter for the Toronto Sun, but ultimately made the decision to branch out and found an opening as features editor for TV Guide. There, he gained the experience needed to get published in an assortment of magazines and newspapers. It was during his tenure at TV Guide that Welsby began working with Lynn Gough, co-ordinator of the Durham College Public Relations program. Over the course of their respective careers, the two have crossed paths in several work environments (most notably CBC), and have worked together at the college for 11 years.

"When I left CBC, I began my teaching career at Durham College and we needed a strong copy editor for one of our courses and I immediately thought about Paul," says Gough. "He has the best copy editing skills of anyone I know in the industry and he was the best editor I personally ever worked with over the years. He has amazing patience, a very easygoing

style, and his keen and sharp sense of humour make Paul a natural teacher. To say that I am going to miss him is an understatement."

As Welsby moves onto the next phase of his life, he still plans to spend time on his writing. He already self-published one book, titled *Scouse and Back Bacon: Adventures of a Liverpoolian Canadian* in 2009, which was a collection of

“ I always have tanks in my car. Scuba diving is so peaceful, we love it; it's completely stress free, which is funny because it's the only sport I can think of where you're basically on life support.”

non-fiction personal stories. He recently put the finishing touches on a new novel, *Miller's Hay*, a ghost story set in rural England. He also has plans to write one more book over the next year.

Although he has worked hard over the course of his career, the next step for Welsby is far more focused on leisure. An avid scuba diver, Welsby and his wife, Susan, plan to venture down to Costa Rica to test the waters, both literally and figuratively, with the intention of moving there for good.

"Most days you'll find me with dog biscuits in my pocket, scuba tanks in my car and a guitar in my hand," says Welsby. "I always have tanks in my car. Scuba diving is so peaceful, we love it; it's completely stress free, which is funny because it's the only sport I can think of where you're basically on life support." 🐾



Paul Welsby scuba diving while on vacation. Retirement will allow him plenty of time for his aquatic hobby.



BY **RICHARD DICKENSON**


Lennon and McCartney, Jordan and Pippen, Wright and Wright, these are examples of iconic partnerships that shaped the future of music, sport and flight. Similarly, the Region of Durham and Durham College (DC) enjoy a symbiotic relationship that is positively shaping our community.

Initiatives that demonstrate this partnership are abundant. DC has hosted several global delegations in the Durham Region's vie for foreign investment. The college also played an integral role in the signing of friendship agreements with three separate regions in China. These agreements attract investors to the Durham Region and provide opportunities to Durham College on the global market.

"Durham College and the Region of Durham have enjoyed a very positive and productive working relationship for decades," says Don Lovisa, President of Durham College, "This partnership has had a direct and deep impact on the college, and more specifically our students. The Region has supported our key growth and expansion plans over the years, its employees volunteer their time to sit on our Program Advisory Committees or provide support to us in other areas, and countless of our graduates have found employment with the Region and are providing leadership and expertise that ultimately benefits all Durham residents.

"As one final example, we have been fortunate to have senior-level Region management sit as governors on, and in some cases chair, the Durham College Board, which is vital to the overall governance of the college. All of this means we are proactively working together to advance the social and economic well-being of our communities."

Kathy Weiss, the Region's director of Economic Development and Tourism believes the agriculture sector may not be top of mind for students who are career shopping. But there are jobs to be had in these sectors and the Region's agriculture industry benefits from the labour force the college provides.

"The college is a very valuable asset when we globally promote the region to attract investment in the food sector," says Weiss, "It is a huge asset to say that we have a dedicated education program and top-notch college that provides a labour force to the sectors that we are promoting." 



Regional Chair Roger Anderson (bottom right) meets Durham College scholarship recipients at the 2016 Student and Donor Recognition Evening hosted at the college's Centre for Food.

THE MATCHMAKER

BY RICHARD DICKENSON

PHOTO CREDIT DURHAM COLLEGE ALUMNI OFFICE

There is no denying the strong relationship between the Region of Durham and Durham College (DC). And behind every good union is the work of a matchmaker. Meet Regional Chair Roger Anderson.

Anderson laid strong roots in the community during his 10 years as a constable with the Durham Regional Police Service. From there, he enjoyed a successful career in real estate, in which Anderson's company, Re/Max Quality One provided jobs for 40 people. Whatever the endeavor, Anderson has made a habit of forming strong community ties. From this strength, he has become Durham Region's first publicly-elected and longest-serving regional chair and CEO, a tenure that spans 19 years.

Over those two decades, Anderson has travelled internationally to promote the talents and services of Durham Region businesses and the college, sometimes in the company of DC presidents.

"No one can market the region if they can't promise their people two things: good health care and good education. We are lucky," says Anderson, "I can market the region and without question, I can market two universities, a college, great professors, and amazing teachers who provide hands-on-learning. So for me, it makes my job a lot easier when I can stand up and say, 'not only do we believe in our college and university, we helped build them.'"

DC and UOIT students may have been born, raised and schooled at every level in Durham Region, yet many will work elsewhere. Anderson has a goal to create enough jobs so the majority of graduates can stay close to their families, contribute to the local economy and in turn develop future professionals.

Durham College President Don Lovisa appreciates the ongoing efforts of the regional chair.

"Durham College has been very fortunate to benefit in two ways from its association with Roger Anderson," he says. "First, has been his tireless advocacy and support for the college through his official role as chairman of the Region, including support for a regional investment of \$5 million in our recent expansion of the Whitby campus. He also invited the college to be part of two regional delegations to China that resulted in new partnerships and opportunities for the college in an important global market," says Lovisa.

"Second, from a personal perspective, his golf tournament has established a legacy that sees more than 60 students helped financially each year and this will continue in perpetuity. We know that for some students, financial assistance makes the difference between pursuing an education or not. Roger is a true champion and friend of Durham College."

The Roger Anderson Golf Classic has been on the calendar of many philanthropists for 18 years. One third of the funds raised are given to a charity, which is decided upon each year. The remaining two thirds have always been dedicated to DC and UOIT. Now in its 19th year, the Roger Anderson Golf Classic has donated approximately \$3.5 million to the two institutions. In 2011, DC awarded Anderson an Honorary Credential in Public and Community Relations.

Anderson was surprised and deeply honoured by the recognition.

"The Honorary Credential was way above any thanks that I've ever had before. I put this on par with receiving the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal," says Anderson. "Once you get there and you see all those kids and all those parents and you realize all the heartache, the joy, the sadness, the books and the bills, all the things that go along with college, it is then that you realize, 'this is big. This is really big.' I wish I had invited my dad." 🍷

The College *and* Region want Moir

BY SARAH YULE

PHOTOS BY BRITTANY DAVIES

Whether it's teaching in the classroom or responding to a high impact call, having the chance to make a difference in people's lives has always been the most rewarding part of Jim Moir's career. Moir is the superintendent of operations



Jim Moir, superintendent of operations for the Region of Durham Paramedic Services.

for The Region of Durham's Paramedic Services. Moir was among the first graduating class of the Advance Care Certificate Program from Durham College in 2001.

Moir has been with Durham Region for 16 years now, and manages the day-to-day operations to ensure the paramedic services run smoothly across the region. Additionally, he teaches paramedic courses part time at Durham College.

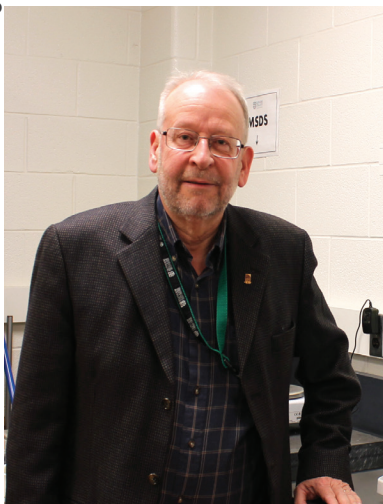
Working for Durham Region is very rewarding Moir says. "Everyday is different and you get to play an impact on people's lives especially being a paramedic. It's not just the high impact calls such as a car crash that we train very hard for, but I think a lot of paramedics forget that a lot of our impact comes from the everyday calls. I am exposed to many very talented people from various departments in the region.

There is always something new to learn from them and it is nice to work for a government that has a genuine concern for the health and well being of it's residents and always strives to deliver the best services it can. Some of the best learning opportunities come as a result of making mistakes. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there." ❧

Here *and* there *and* back again

From Durham College student, to supervisor at the Region of Durham, back to Durham College this time as an instructor, Ron Motum embodies the relationship between the college and the Region.

Motum worked for Durham Region's Works Department for 32 years where he managed day to day activities and employees within the works department, as well as working closely with the Ministry of Environment. After retiring from the Region he returned back to his roots at Durham College



Ron Motum, water quality professor at Durham College.

to teach water quality program courses part-time. Motum graduated from the chemical engineering program in 1974. At that time, Durham College had very small class sizes; there were six people enrolled in his program. Motum believes the water quality program teaches many practical skills that are useful in the workforce as it provides students with hands-on experience and opens up a variety of opportunities as they work closely with Durham Region.

“Always remember the people you meet on the way up, could be the people you meet on the way down.”

Motum brings his experience into the class room and applies his knowledge and education back into the minds of a younger generation. "Durham gives you the knowledge you need to be successful, but it doesn't stop once you graduate. Technology keeps advancing so you have to keep educating yourself and taking courses. There is always room to keep learning." ❧

The Storyteller

BY MASHIAT MASWOOD

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE RICHARDSON,
JENNIFER SANTOS

After working at the Regional Municipality of Durham for 10 years, Jennifer Santos experienced success in a multitude of roles. She began her career in public relations



Jennifer Santos, the manager of corporate communications at the Region of Durham. (Santos)

working for the health department, and worked her way up to a role as the acting manager of corporate communications at the Region of Durham.

Her journey began at Durham College where her passion for arts and love for creativity attracted her to the Public Relations program. Santos enjoyed the variety of courses that stimulated her intellectually and gave her the creative freedom to showcase her talents.

“The program offers an education that is diverse and branches out to other aspects of the multimedia.”

“The program offers an education that is diverse and branches out to other aspects of the multimedia,” says Santos. “The program prepared me for everything I faced in the workplace.”

Fast-paced, ever-changing and constantly evolving are the words she chooses to describe public relations and communications.

“You need strong organizational skills along with an eye for details to succeed in this field,” says Santos. “If you enjoy working on multiple projects and like networking, you will thrive in a public relations role.”

The Creative Maestro

Her passion for art and her love for design led Stephanie Richardson to the Graphic Design program at Durham College (DC). An artist at heart, she enjoyed the diversity of courses that were offered.

At DC, the program channeled her talent, giving her the tools of the trade to cover a broad spectrum of visual communication in corporate, editorial and advertising design. Nevertheless, it was her placement with Jellybean Imaging that exposed her to a variety of work, where she was offered her first job after graduation.

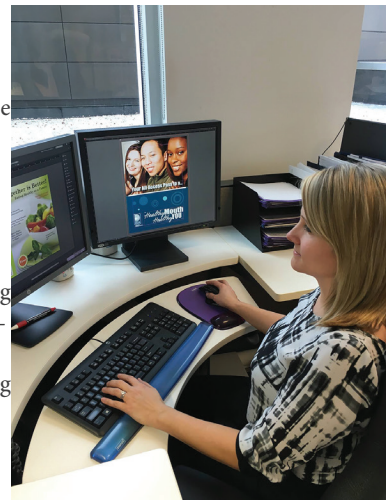
“Also, there were varying industry niches that you could explore; whether it was advertising, graphic design or photography.”

“The Graphic Design program gave an overall picture of what we would be doing after graduation,” says the Whitby

native. “Also, there were varying industry niches that you could explore; whether it was advertising, graphic design or photography.”

While her journey as a graphic designer did include some struggles, through persistence and determination, Richardson found a position as a graphic designer in the Durham Health Department, where she has been working for nine years.

“You have to work your way up, to get to where you want to go; you have to keep trying and pursuing opportunities,” says Richardson. “Somewhere along the way, everything will fall into place.”



Stephanie Richardson, graphic designer creates designs for the digital flyers, newsletters and other publication materials at Region of Durham. (Richardson)

Debbie Low, centre,
accepts the
Premier's Award for
community service.
She was selected
out of 19 nominees.



DC GRAD IS ALL SPORTS, ALL THE TIME

BY TIFFANY NOBES

PHOTO COURTESY OF LORI CONNOR

In her personal life and her professional life, Durham College (DC) Sports Administration graduate, Debbie Low, has always had a passion for sport.

In fact, in November 2015, Low was recognized for her passion in sport and her dedication to empowering Canadians living with a disability. She was awarded the Premier's Award for Community Service out of 19 nominees from various Ontario colleges.

Low is a long-time volunteer and has been involved in over seven major multi-sport events including the recent Toronto 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games and six Olympic/Paralympic Games. She also works for the Canadian Sport Institute of Ontario (CSIO), and is constantly active herself. Low never shies away from an athletic opportunity.

"I work out a couple times a week, and when the weather is nice my favourite thing to do is go for a run outdoors. I participated in the sport of canoeing when I was younger and won a few medals at the national level," says Low.

Low is currently the chief executive officer of CSIO where her focus is on high performance sport by helping to enhance the abilities of both Olympic and Paralympic athletes and coaches to achieve international podium performances. In addition, she has sat on a number of national and international

boards and committees, and a bulk of the volunteer work that she has done, and continues to do, is working with athletes with disabilities as she is currently the Vice President of the Canadian Paralympic Committee.

Winning the Premier's Award for community service was a career highlight for Low.

"I was totally surprised! I was so busy at work leading up to the night of the Awards and community service is such a broad area so I truly didn't give it another thought," says Low. "Balancing my volunteering, work and life is something that my family and I have always done, and so my two daughters and husband are also very active volunteers. I believe that I get back more than I give as a volunteer. I have had the opportunity to learn and build leadership and management skills and travel the world through my volunteer experiences."

Low credits much of her success thus far to her time spent at DC. The Sports Administration program provided her with the opportunity to learn about the industry through hands-on experience and an internship in the field. The combination of classroom learning, tailored sessions, a two-day a week placement and supportive professors motivated Low to pursue a field that she is succeeding in today. 🏆

DURHAM GOES INTERNATIONAL WITH PERUVIAN MARKETING STUDENT

BY KATELYN BEER

PHOTO COURTESY OF DURHAM COLLEGE



*Adriana Reyes excels
as one of Durham
College's Team
Experience members.*

Communication is essential in everyday life, especially for Adriana Reyes, an international student from Peru studying Marketing Business Administration at Durham College (DC). Growing up internationally and speaking two languages fluently, communication has been somewhat of a strong suit for Reyes and she continues to succeed through her career.

Arriving in Canada in December of 2012, speaking intermittent English and fluent Spanish, Reyes had the upper hand in not only her career but also as a student with DC.

"My aunt came to Durham College before me so she gave me her experience and referred me," she says. "As well, I reviewed the website and the student support and found the program was very robust."

To become involved in the school and to help give back while studying, Reyes immersed herself in different extra-curricular activities and jobs. Her first position within DC was with Team Experience in September 2014. There, Reyes was representing the international students, giving them a perspective on what it is like to be involved at the school and making them feel more comfortable. Managing different social media handles specifically set up for the Team Experience position, she was able to communicate with the target market and share her experience as a student. She was also working in the International Office at the time, which allowed her to share her experiences with future students.




Adriana Reyes joins David Hawey, chair of DC'S Centre for Food in Peru to translate all written and verbal content for Peruvian College staff members.

Along with Reyes' Team Experience opportunities, she was also able to provide something more; speaking and writing in Spanish fluently. The International Office offered her the opportunity to travel to Peru, where she was born and raised. As project assistant for Durham College translating written documents and spoken word, her overall objective was to promote employment in Peru through the school. Attending college isn't a common thing for Peruvians. DC wanted to improve Peruvian understanding regarding the benefits of attending college.

"I feel proud and satisfied that I was able to develop a workshop promoting the importance of student engagement in extra-curricular activities at CEFOP, a college in Trujillo, Peru. I was also able to help further establish important connections between Durham College and the Centro Experimental de Formación Profesional (CEFOP)," explains Reyes.

Her outstanding abilities didn't go unnoticed. She was offered the position of engagement facilitator and interpreter. Being that she was fluent in Spanish and now English, she became the personal interpreter for David Hawey, Chair of DC's Centre for Food. Her position involved sitting in on meetings and translating from Spanish to English and then back to Spanish to carry out all conversations between schools. She was also responsible for translating written documents for DC and the Peruvian College.

"Being able to work on real marketing cases with my program has been the most beneficial part of my experience at Durham. As a marketer you get different types of cases, for example we just had a project to market a funeral home. It was a very unique marketing case. You can get those types of cases in your career and you need to learn how to face it and we did, which was beneficial because our project was one of the projects that got selected by the funeral home," explains Reyes.

With the experience she had from being a student at DC, working on real life scenarios and projects, Reyes was lucky enough to come across opportunities such as the Peru experience. The skills she has developed such as problem solving, multi-tasking and being punctual have all helped shape her career. Durham College has opened so many doors and will continue to open doors for this traveling marketer extraordinaire. 

Matisse Hamel-Nelis, 2015 Public Relations graduate flashes the DC Experience flag all in Chicago. Second-year PR students take a professional trip annually.



Chemist Trades In Her Lab Coat

BY MEGHAN HENRIQUES
PHOTO BY HEATHER BULMAN

You could call her a science-loving pharmaceutical chemist who was too much of a people person to be stuck being a lab rat all day. In fact, that is how Matisse Hamel-Nelis describes herself.

After her stint in the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT)'s pharmaceutical chemistry program, Hamel-Nelis enrolled in Durham College's (DC) Pre-Media program in 2012. She was pleasantly surprised to find a close-knit sense of community among her fellow classmates and professors, which focused on student success.

Her husband, Peter Nelis, who is an editor-in-chief for the monthly digital magazine Techsavvy Insider, had encouraged her to pursue a career in public relations. Initially, she had no idea what PR was, but after researching she realized that it might indeed be a good career choice for her. Still cautious, Hamel-Nelis did not want to jump into PR wholeheartedly just yet, which is why she enrolled in the one-year Pre-Media certificate program.

Graduating as the highest-ranking graduate in her program in 2013, Hamel-Nelis knew her husband was right and that PR was the next step in her journey. Diving right into the college's Public Relations program, she proceeded to go above and beyond as a student.

"I like doing everything. I just want to be involved," she says. "I wanted to really immerse myself in every aspect of the school. I knew it would be my last time in school and I wanted to enjoy it. I have always been someone who took part in extra-curricular activities. So any way, shape or form I could be involved, I tried."

This type of enthusiasm led her to become a team member for DC Experience, a unique marketing campaign where

14 students from a variety of programs and backgrounds share their college experience with the community. For Hamel-Nelis, this was a win-win scenario as she already focused on herself already using social media to share her educational journey. Being a face of Durham College had some cool perks for her as well, as her face was flashed around Durham Region, from posters to having her image on the side of a bus. Although Hamel-Nelis was not used to seeing herself everywhere, the publicity gave her a chance to share some personal challenges she dealt with on a day-to-day basis.


Being bipolar is something many people struggle with, including Hamel-Nelis. She felt inspired one day to write a blog about her challenges with this mental illness and share it with the world. Although the story touched many, it specifically touched a mother and daughter. One day in a hospital waiting room a stranger approached Hamel-Nelis and told her to tell her that her daughter was struggling with similar issues and thought she could no longer deal with the stress. After reading Hamel-Nelis's blog she was inspired to keep battling through. The encounter brought chills to Hamel-Nelis and she was humbled that she was able to touch someone's life in such a positive manner.

Although her workload at school was heavy, Hamel-Nelis wanted to take advantage of every opportunity to gain experience. She worked for the college's Communications and Marketing Department, was the president of Durham College's Society of Media, Art & Design, founded and ran the DC Public Relations Society, was a committee member of the Canadian Public Relations Society Inc., and worked as a PR intern for both the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada and Energi PR. She also managed to gain different volunteer experiences, including being a host on Riot Radio.

So how did Hamel-Nelis battle through her daily obstacles and still come up on top? Well, as Hamel-Nelis best puts it, "You have to 'ugly cry' once a week. You need to let it all out. For me, sappy chick flicks like 'P.S. I Love You' or television shows like Grey's Anatomy always do the trick."

As a student, Hamel-Nelis achieved a 4.94 GPA. However, her success was more than academic. As PR professor Paul Welsby says, "Matisse was a delight to teach, not just because she was so professional while still a student, but because she was so humble in terms of her work with her classmates. She was far advanced in skills but she was always personable, fun and a great team player. She took her education and other people's feelings to heart and, as a result, she was a true leader, not just to the class but to the entire PR program."

Having graduated from the college and stepping into a new career in October at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind as Corporate Communications Specialist, Hamel-Nelis's time at Durham College was expected to be over. However, because of her passion for the college, she was elected to be a member on the Durham College Alumni Association Board of Directors, where she will be an official member for a minimum of three years.

One could say that her enrollment at Durham College four years ago was only the beginning of a beautiful friendship. 



School of Media, Art & Design students bring to life one of the concepts that are being considered for the Civic Revitalization project.

COLOURING OSHAWA INSPIRED

BY MORGAN CLARINGBOLD

PHOTO BY DANIELLE CROSBY

Red, yellow or blue; them, us or you – a vivacious mural will soon bring all of these elements together. The third-year Fine Arts students are hard at work on a unique project that will bring colour, vibrancy and inspiration to the citizens of Oshawa.

Coming this spring, the Community Arts Project will be displayed at Civic Square in front of City Hall. Durham College Fine Arts professor Danielle Crosby and program coordinator Sean McQuay, have been collaborating with the City of Oshawa to create a piece of art that will be woven into the history of the city.

The location for the piece was chosen because it is a key feature of the space as it greets the citizens of Oshawa; it is a focal point of the city. The students were responsible for creating the design concepts of this piece, while keeping in mind that the wall has a wavy architectural build. All 10 aspiring artists put a copious amount of effort and passion into brainstorming and creating thumbnails, roughs and visuals of what they thought would represent the culture and community of Oshawa.

“We knew we had a strong student base there in the arts program and we wanted them to be a part of this process.”

Following the creation and submission of each concept, the City narrowed the submitted choices down from 10 to three, after that, the final decision is up to the public. This aspect is what makes this project so unique — the mural is more than just a school project; it's a community project. The City, the community and the college working in tandem with one another provides groundwork for many future opportunities.

“The mural was a component of the Civic Square Revitalization Project where we saw an opportunity to collaborate with the community,” says Catherine Richards, Supervisor of Cultural Development of Media Art and Design. “We felt

that one of the goals was not only engaging the community to be part of deciding what the mural should look like, but also engaging a community partner to execute the mural and that's where Durham College Faculty of Media Art and Design really comes into play. We knew that we had a strong student base there in the arts program and we wanted them to be part of this process.”

From a myriad of designs, three struck a chord with the City, the final decision is sure to be a challenge. Imagine a forest scene with trees fading into a faint fog with characters, animals and objects bringing life to the painting. The next possibility would be a fractal pattern accompanied by abstract shapes filled with illustrations representing the past, present and future. Finally, a walkway with figures that represent the different types of people that live here, focusing on how much has changed and how diversity is a large part of Oshawa's current culture.

“The panels of this mural will be rotated. It is going to have a one year life span. The City and I don't want to see it ever go away, so there is a possibility it will be donated to a grade school or an institution that possibly can not afford or hasn't had the logistical time to spend organizing something like this,” says Crosby.

All parties involved in the making of this mural are excited for the finished product. A lot of work, dedication, time and money have been spent to make this idea into a reality, says Crosby. The architectural planning, shipping large panels to the school, priming, designing and painting are only a small number of tasks required for the completion of this project. It takes a village, but luckily there are many amazing people supporting each other every step of the way.

“I'm really happy with the relationship all the way across the board, the students, the community partners,” said Crosby. “There have been bumps, but they've been dealt with a lot of understanding and a lot of accommodation on all sides — we are very transparent with each other. It's our first run, we will figure out what does and doesn't work and in the years to come it will be a lot easier.”

SUPERHEROES WEAR LAB COATS TOO

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
MARICELLE AMBAT & MANINDER CHAHAL

A University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) post-doctoral fellow has gone from building dams in her childhood backyard to creating clean fuel for the future. In heels and safety goggles, Ofelia Jianu is determined to create a sustainable global future.

Since a young age, Dr. Jianu was keen on building and creating, without even realizing what it was she was making. Though her father, an automotive engineer, noticed her curiosity, he chose not to pressure her into any specific career.

"I started being interested in engineering, my parents tell me, since I was three years old," says Dr. Jianu. "I started building dams in my parents backyard: digging holes in the ground and using the cement they were supposed to be using to build

This machine, the steam generator, plays a major role in thermochemical water splitting and nuclear hydrogen production.



Ofelia Jianu continues to get UOIT's name on the charts with her achievements in Clean Energy Research and the variety of work she is doing with the graduate students of UOIT.

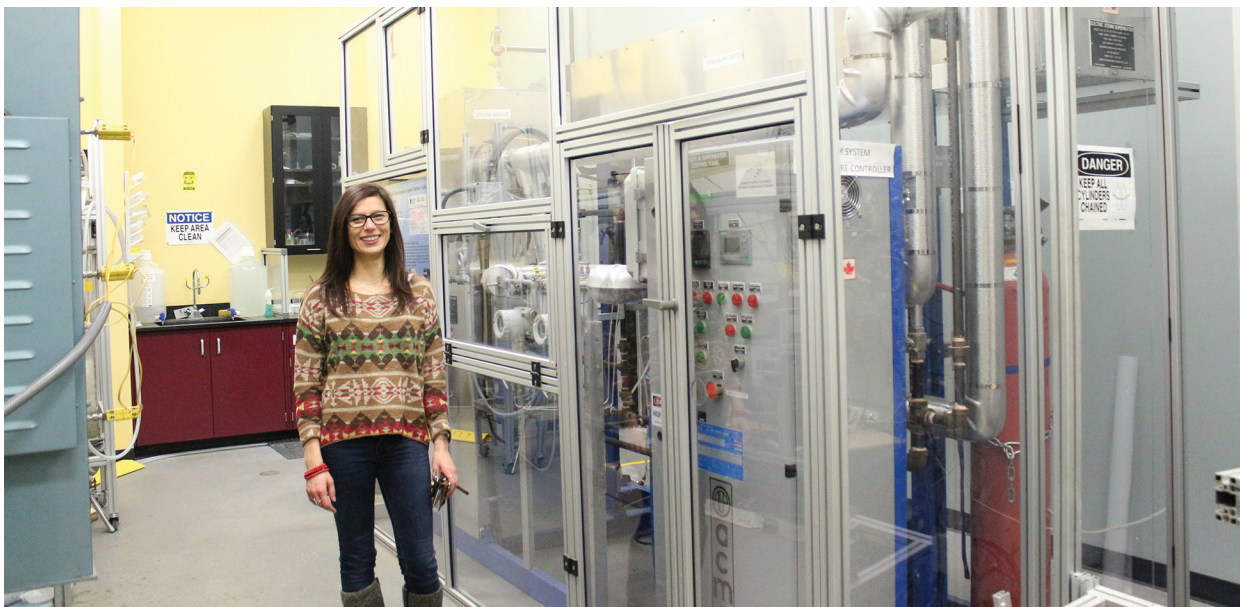
the house. They knew there was some potential there, but they never really encouraged it."

As she grew older, she steered away from engineering, but by the end found herself right in the midst of it, working at a steel company in Hamilton in her last year of high school. It reignited her love for engineering. While working on her undergrad degree she was inspired by one of her professors. He encouraged her to attain a PhD, which led to her position at UOIT and her work at the Clean Energy Research Lab (CERL).

Here she is working on ways to find long term solutions to climate change with the use of hydrogen.

"In comparison to other water splitting processes, this is new technology," says Dr. Jianu. "My main goal is to integrate the copper-chlorine cycle, it has three different reactors. I'm supposed to integrate two of them. I'm working on integrating the other two indirectly as well."

At UOIT, Dr. Jianu has had an opportunity for more diversity than most post doctorate programs offer. In addition to researching and publishing, she is also able to teach students



Dr. Jianu proudly stands by the Steam Generator.




This Multiphase Flow Column was a key part of Dr. Jianu's previous work, where she would spend days on end counting the bubbles to get her conclusion.

who have the same passion and interest for clean energy for our future. Dr. Jianu has made her name in the engineering community as a positive role model for the engineering students at UOIT, and through the work she has accomplished in her field.

"My work is very interesting," says Dr. Jianu. "This research hasn't been done before. It's something new, it's not just one thing that we're working on. It's different engineering aspects... it has a lot of potential."

Dr. Jianu holds a doctorate of Philosophy in Mechanical Engineering from UOIT and a Masters of Science in Control Engineering from Lakehead University. Through her involvement in the youth outreach programs, she brings awareness about engineering and sustainability to students in high schools. She is also a part of the Graduate Mentorship Program at UOIT. In addition, she offers assistance to science and engineering students who are fascinated by the work being done in the CERL.

"It's a little hard to understand, until you see it and get a feel for it," says Dr. Jianu. "We offer lab tours and educational workshops." 

A PROJECT IN CERL

There is a variety of talented researchers working in three different laboratories at the Clean Energy Research Lab (CERL), located at the UOIT North Campus. These labs display thermochemical copper-chlorine cycle for water splitting using solar, nuclear hydrogen production using solar, nuclear and other heat sources. The cycles hope to develop more efficiency with little impact on the environment and even lower costs in production.

These researchers hope to use their research and knowledge to advance and develop technology for clean systems.

Fire in the Family

BY RACHEL MCLEAN

PHOTO BY RACHEL MCLEAN



Pierce Warwick, a graduate from the Firefighter Pre-Service, Education and Training program at Durham College, is a part-time firefighter at the Municipality of Clarington's Station 5 near his home in Enniskillen Ont.

Firefighting was always a popular topic around the dinner table when Pierce Warwick was growing up. With an uncle working full-time for Pickering Fire Services and his father being a volunteer at their local Station 5 in Enniskillen, Ont., Warwick got to hear many stories about the exciting job of being a firefighter. A graduate of the Firefighter Pre-Service, Education and Training program at Durham College, the 21-year-old is now a part-time firefighter for the Municipality of Clarington.

"Growing up, my dad was a volunteer and my uncle was a full-time firefighter in Pickering, so I got to hear stories about how exciting and gratifying the job could be, and it really sparked my interest," remembers Warwick. "I always had a career in firefighting in the back of my mind, so when my first college program didn't work out, I decided it was finally time to chase my dream and I applied to Durham College."

Since getting hired at the Municipality of Clarington, Warwick has been continually training and updating his skills through the fire department, and his final goal is to become a full-time firefighter. It is highly competitive, so he understands he needs to be realistic and that's why every job he has had since graduating has helped him build and improve the skills that could help when trying to get hired in the future.

"As a school, Durham College is very dedicated and focused on student and graduate success. They gave us access to professionals and as the class representative, I had the opportunity to meet with different fire chiefs in the area and work on improving the program as a whole. That was a really great experience for me," explains Warwick, adding that his favourite part about the program was the variation in perspectives from the professors and guest speakers.

As the student representative for the class of 2013, Warwick made meaningful connections within Durham Region, which he thinks helped him become the youngest part-time firefighter at his station. As someone who is always looking for full-time opportunities within the department, it is very important to Warwick that he keeps learning as much as possible to keep himself and others safe in an emergency situation. The best way to do that is to keep responding to as many calls as possible and to keep up with all medical and first aid training with the municipality. He also puts a strong focus on staying active, ensuring he is able to perform properly when responding to a fire call. His current job as a civil construction labourer helps him stay active as well as improve on communication and leadership skills, both of which are crucial for an emergency first responder (EMS).

But, for Warwick, it's not all work and no play. "I love the outdoors," he explains. "So, when I'm not working or on call for the fire department, I spend a lot of time hunting and fishing. I believe staying fit and active is extremely important not just for a first responder, but for everyone. I also believe in always trying to achieve your goals and dreams. For me, that means always working towards becoming a full-time firefighter."

Warwick understands the intimidation factor that can affect all new graduates. One of his biggest professional obstacles has been developing and remembering the skills needed in certain medical emergencies. Being new to the field and going into high-stress situations where someone's life was in his hands proved to be extremely intimidating. He thinks getting as much experience as possible helped with his confidence as an EMS. Keeping focused on schooling and doing the theory and background work may not have been as exciting as he would have liked, but Warwick feels that when paired with constant upgrading of skills and participating in training courses, doing the background work will definitely show commitment and help other new graduates land that first job. He adds that graduates should hold on to their textbooks and lecture notes because they can be very useful when studying for the Characteristics/Readiness Assessment (CPS) test all firefighters need to pass when applying for new positions.

"I love that I get to help people who are in harm's way and may potentially be in danger. Responding to calls and helping people who are injured is very rewarding and I like being able to make someone's life a little better. And having an amazing group of guys at the fire hall makes responding to calls, no matter the time of day or night, that much easier." 🧯



Durham College graduate Alan Dean points to one of his gold medals won in the Canadian Games for the Physically Disabled.

From the soccer pitch to the world stage

BY EDWARD RHODES

PHOTOS BY: EDWARD RHODES

All seemed grim as Alan Dean looked to the sky while lying on the soccer pitch in agony, after a slide tackle ended his playing career. Little did he know that not only was his playing career in jeopardy, but his life as well. 30 hours after the initial break, Dean lost his leg due to complications of gangrene virus. Like anyone, he was devastated with the loss of his leg but realized he was lucky to be alive. Since that incident, he knew his life was about to change forever. Eventually coming to grips with the loss of his leg, Dean has used his accident as an opportunity to launch a new career, and he started by enrolling in Durham College's Sports Administration program.

Despite the accident, Dean was not ready to hang up his cleats and say goodbye to playing. Two-years later, he participated in the Ontario and Canadian Games for the Physically Disabled and tallied two gold, two silver and two bronze medals to his collection. This was the starting point for Dean's decision to focus his career on the administrative side of amputee athletics.


"When people are more established it is very hard to make a notch in there. Sports for people with disabilities, it was all new there was nobody. The field was wide open for people like me. It was a new thing and the government got behind it provincially and nationally. It worked out great," says Dean.

During his administrative career Dean played an active role across the globe for athletes with disabilities. His biggest

splash was during his tenure at the 1976 Canadian National Games for the Physically Disabled. Since then, he has been a pioneer and activist in organizing events and competitions for amputee athletes. He has worked at establishing his credibility administratively by sitting on numerous boards and governing bodies nationally and internationally.

Dean's latest accomplishment was his induction into the Canadian Disabilities Hall of Fame and the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame as a Builder/Contributor. The resident of Aurora credits his hometown and its people as his motivation to continue with his passion for sports, even though his injury left him on the sideline for quite some time. Dean was an active member in the grassroots program for the Aurora Soccer Club.

"I use to referee at St. Andrews prior to my accident and met one of the teachers after my accident who really encouraged me to stay involved in sports. He was instrumental in keeping me going," says Dean.

Dean's experience is an example of how a life-changing event really can be transforming. Dean was honoured to be a medal presenter at the Paralympic games in Sydney in 2000 and again in 2004 in Athens, it demonstrates how Dean has left his mark on amputee athletics. As a pioneer in Canadian Paralympic athletics, Dean has laid the foundation for athletes across the world to shine and be recognized for their accomplishments. 



Durham College VP of Academics Elaine Popp poses with alumni Kyle Merkley (left) and Hannah Elkington (right).

Alumni in the Pit guides future graduates

BY JESSICA MOFFITT

PHOTO BY BETH CHAPLEAU

Every year a new crop of Durham College (DC) students leave the comfort of campus life and break into the job market with all of its stresses, risks and responsibilities. Even though professors do all they can to prepare the thousands of young adults that sit in their class for the real world, much of

“It’s sometimes nice to take a minute to think about graduation and think about what your future is going to look like.”

what happens next depends on the students themselves. Each year, DC likes to take a look back at these Alumni that have achieved success in their field of study by showcasing graduates at the Alumni in the Pit event. This event not only highlights the benefits of being a Durham College alumnus but aims to point current students in the right direction by lending advice

to those yet to graduate in an interactive question and answer type setting.

“As some of you can attest to it’s pretty easy to become focused on assignments, exams, extra-curricular activities and field placements during your time at college,” says Dr. Elaine Popp, Vice President of Academics. “But with that said, it’s sometimes nice to take a minute to think about graduation and think about what your future is going to look like once you walk out the door with your diploma, advanced diploma or certificate in hand, and the Alumni in the Pit event is a great way to help you do that.”

This year, DC has chosen to feature Kyle Merkley, Music Supervisor at Arpix Media and graduate of Music Business Management and Hannah Elkington, the York Regional police officer who graduated from the Police Foundations program. Both graduates took the time to give a brief outline of their career thus far and without a doubt inspired the many students in attendance.



Gamers prepare for battle at a LANWAR event in 2014 at UOIT. (Lee Clifford Photography)

GAME ON

BY **KRYSTYNA PAPATZIKAKIS**

PHOTOS BY LEE CLIFFORD PHOTOGRAPHY

Countless lectures have been held in the very same classroom where students sometimes spend 40 hours straight playing video games. For Jonathan Yang, both uses have proven to be equally valuable.

Opportunities to transform the campus like this are possible by joining one of the Student Association's clubs and societies at Durham College/University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT). By doing so, students can network and excel in an area outside their field of study. For Yang, his extra-curricular activity just so happened to flawlessly integrate with his studies – and his love of video games.

Yang graduated in 2015 from the Bachelor of Commerce program at UOIT. As a student, he was the president of LANWAR, the society responsible for the competitive, marathon-like gaming events held on campus. By getting involved, Yang was able to apply what he was learning in-class to a real-world scenario, all the while supporting something he was passionate about.

Once elected as president in 2014, he was able to drive LANWAR forward from a business perspective. He did so by successfully coordinating over 70 volunteers and securing sponsorships that provided over \$55,000 worth of prizes for the society's tournaments. Since 2011, LANWAR has evolved into the largest collegiate gaming event held at a university campus in Ontario, with well over 1,000 people at last year's event.



Because of his studies, Yang was able to use his understanding of business to drive sales for a LANWAR event in 2014 that filled UB2080 – one of UOIT's largest lecture rooms. (Lee Clifford Photography)

"LANWAR changed my career trajectory in a way I would have never thought possible," says Yang. "I was able to make key connections in the video game industry and was thereafter sought to join the eSports team."

Having worked as an eSports Program Coordinator for Activision Blizzard Entertainment – one of the most successful interactive entertainment companies in the world – Yang wants to further diversify his career by exploring new opportunities. Although no longer a student, he still remains actively involved in LANWAR's activities because, in addition to the professional experience he gained, Yang built an entire network of people whom he hopes to continue sharing his experience with.

"I try my best to be open to the new students as a mentor. I want to give them every opportunity that was made available to me at UOIT, and more," says Yang. "I keep an open email and Skype policy with them so they can approach me at any time for any questions. Or if they ever want to play a game!" 🎮

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