



# HEALTH

[ IMPACT REPORT 2018–2019 ]

health

YORK  
UNIVERSITÉ  
UNIVERSITY 



We envision a world where all people live long and healthy lives, and have an equitable opportunity to achieve it.

KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

HEALTH STUDIES

GLOBAL HEALTH

PSYCHOLOGY

NURSING

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 • **YORK UNIVERSITY**  
 • **IMPACT REPORT 2018-2019**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

**THE FACULTY OF HEALTH'S MISSION** is to enhance human health, health equity, health care and wellbeing by producing creative and world leading ideas, education, and partnerships. This report provides a glimpse into who we are, what types of things we do, and provides illustrations of recent achievements related to our mission. It profiles the extraordinary contributions of faculty members, staff, students, alumni, and organizational partners who are our foundation. Our researchers have produced breakthroughs in understanding and improving health for individuals, communities, and the world at large. Our educational programs are routinely and independently ranked among the very best in the world. Our graduates are leaders and agents of constructive change. Organizations partner with us to solve their challenges and develop the health professionals for the 21st century. Our alumni and friends contribute their wisdom, skills, and financial support to help us achieve our mission.

It isn't just what we do but how we accomplish our mission which sets our Faculty apart. We focus on solving significant health challenges for the public good. We are driven by a desire for social justice, equity and inclusion. We are reimagining how to facilitate flexible lifelong learning through new products, new methods, and new ways to access us. Our research and educational programs recognize that health is a result of complex interconnections between biological, social, economic, cultural, political, psychological, and environmental factors which vary by age, population, and other contexts. We value the freedom to explore, develop and disseminate ideas. We respect the differences and dignity of others in decision making and acting. We conduct ourselves to achieve both integrity and excellence in our individual and collective work.

If you are intrigued by what you read in this report, I invite you to contact us.

Paul McDonald, PhD, FRSPH, FCAHS  
 Professor and Dean, Faculty of Health

# FACULTY OF HEALTH EXPERTS IN THE NEWS

Faculty of Health researchers are regularly sought for their expertise by news media locally, nationally and internationally.



**ELLEN BIALYSTOK**  
PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology professor Ellen Bialystok is the media's go-to expert for current scientific information on the benefits of bilingualism. A leading brain researcher, Bialystok has found through her extensive investigations that learning a second language supports cognitive processing. Among her key findings is that speaking more than one language helps with performing complex thinking tasks and can delay the onset of symptoms of dementia by several years. Bialystok was made an Officer of the Order of Canada for her research in advancing our understanding of bilingualism's impact on cognitive function. She has been sought out for her expertise by media worldwide including the **New York Times**, **Time Magazine**, **The Guardian**, **BBC News**, **CBC News** and the **Toronto Star**.



**MICHAEL RIDDELL**  
KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

When it comes to the relationship between physical activity and type 1 diabetes, few have the combination of knowledge and experience as Michael Riddell who has published more than 150 original research articles on the subject. Along with his team of students, research fellows and collaborators, Riddell is discovering new ways to better manage blood glucose levels around sport and exercise for people living with type 1 diabetes. The Kinesiology & Health Science professor led a team of 21 international researchers in a two-year review of studies on exercise management for type 1 diabetics. The initiative led to the first-ever set of guidelines for health practitioners to help those with this chronic disease exercise safely to avoid potentially dangerous blood-sugar fluctuations. The widely reported findings are not only personally meaningful to Riddell, who himself has type 1 diabetes, but could improve the lives of millions of people worldwide living with the disease. His findings have received wide coverage including **CBC.ca**, **Radio Canada International**, **The Lancet**, and **Science Daily**.

Learn more: [health.yorku.ca/media](http://health.yorku.ca/media)



**JENNIFER KUK**  
KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

Forget about fitness magazine covers with images of chiseled bodies as the only representation of good health. It turns out that you can have obesity, and still be healthy. Research from Kinesiology & Health Science professor Jennifer Kuk has shown that being physically active brought significant health benefits to those with mild to severe obesity or a Body Mass Index greater than 40. "You really have to disconnect body weight from the importance of fitness," says Kuk. "You can get fit without losing weight and have health benefits, and people with healthy obesity live just as long as lean people." Kuk's research has garnered widespread media attention, including the **Washington Post**, **Men's Health**, the **Globe & Mail** and **Radio Canada International**.



**DENNIS RAPHAEL**  
HEALTH POLICY & MANAGEMENT

Dennis Raphael is a professor in York's School of Health Policy & Management and one of Canada's foremost experts in the Social Determinants of Health - socioeconomic factors including income and income inequality, precarious work, housing, education, gender and race, that all have an impact on your health. Raphael's current research looks at why so much attention is focused on obesity and health behaviours rather than the much more important issue of the quality and distribution of the social determinants of health. His research and opinion pieces have appeared in the **Toronto Star**, **NOW Magazine** and the **Hamilton Spectator**.



**DEBRA PEPLER**  
PSYCHOLOGY

Sending a message on social media may only take seconds but the impact can last indefinitely. Psychology professor Debra Pepler, one of Canada's leading authorities on cyberbullying, says when teens harass their peers on social media, their adolescent brains prevent them from fully appreciating the consequences, and how their actions can shatter someone's self-esteem. Her extensive research and expertise on youth aggression and victimization helps parents, schools and policy makers better understand the role of social media in kids' lives. She has been cited in media outlets nationwide including the **Globe & Mail**, **CTV News**, the **Toronto Star** and **Global News**.



**LAUREN SERGIO**  
KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

Interactive video games, it turns out, do more than just entertain us. Research from Kinesiology & Health Science professor and neuroscientist Lauren Sergio reveals that playing a tablet game that involves swiping to hit targets can increase cognitive functioning in seniors with dementia. Another study showed children with concussions take longer than expected to recover. Both studies measured the performance of "thinking-while-moving" tasks, which offer important clues about the human brain's functioning and resiliency. Her findings paint a clearer picture of the relationship between the brain and cognitive-motor ability and have been reported by **CBC News**, **CBS**, **680 News**, and **Global News**.

## FACULTY OF HEALTH RESEARCH

### Faculty of Health research at a glance

From world class vision research, to physical and mental health, to policy change local to global, our researchers are at the forefront of bold discoveries that advance health and health science.



#### 5 RESEARCH CENTRES AND INSTITUTES

- Centre for Vision Research
- Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research
- LaMarsh Centre for Child and Youth Research
- Muscle Health Research Centre
- York University Centre for Aging Research and Education

**150** RESEARCHERS

**330+** ACTIVE RESEARCH GRANTS

**90+** DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FUNDERS

**\$22+** MILLION RESEARCH INCOME GENERATED BY FACULTY OF HEALTH RESEARCHERS ANNUALLY

**13** RESEARCH CHAIRS:

**7** YORK RESEARCH CHAIRS

**5** CANADA RESEARCH CHAIRS

**1** ONTARIO WOMEN'S HEALTH COUNCIL (OWHC) CHAIR  
in Women's Mental Health Research

## Shaping Global Health Policy

**STEVEN HOFFMAN**  
HEALTH POLICY & MANAGEMENT  
OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL

**INTERNATIONAL LAW** is most often associated in the public mind with trade, human rights, immigration and climate change. Human health is affected by all of these domains and has increasingly become an important concern for those who shape global policy.

Steven J. Hoffman, a professor of Health Policy and Management in the Faculty of Health and professor of Law at Osgoode Hall, is among Canada's most prominent scholars in global health law. As Director of York's Global Strategy Lab, he conducts and supervises research to address health threats in a world where trade, travel and technology are rapidly dissolving established political borders.

Pandemics, antimicrobial resistance and access to medicines are some of the topics he examines. "Viruses don't carry passports," says Hoffman. "The world is smaller than ever, which means that risks are shared more than ever - and they travel faster." But Hoffman points out that global health law is uniquely interdisciplinary, involving a consideration of not only medical but behavioural, cultural, environmental and economic factors.

As Scientific Director of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Institute of Population and Public Health - part of Canada's national health research funding agency - Hoffman is leading efforts to support Canadian researchers in several key areas. His team is looking to support work on how urban environments can be made healthier, and how artificial intelligence can be employed to improve public health. "Ultimately, we at CIHR want to make sure that public health policies and practices are informed by the best available research evidence," he says.

One central challenge is crafting new tools for global health governance, to replace outmoded international institutions. "Our current system is based on the world as it was just after World War II," says Hoffman. "In today's hyper-globalized world, our current global governance mechanisms are not proving sufficiently effective. We need to cooperate better across national borders: if we can do that, we'll be able to address some of the biggest challenges of our time."



LEFT TO RIGHT:

**SHAYNA ROSENBAUM, PSYCHOLOGY**

**DOUG CRAWFORD, PSYCHOLOGY**

**JENNIFER STEEVES, PSYCHOLOGY**

**LAURIE WILCOX, PSYCHOLOGY**

**LAUREN SERGIO, KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE**

**MAZYAR FALLAH, KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE**

**DALE STEVENS, PSYCHOLOGY**

**JAMES ELDER, PSYCHOLOGY**

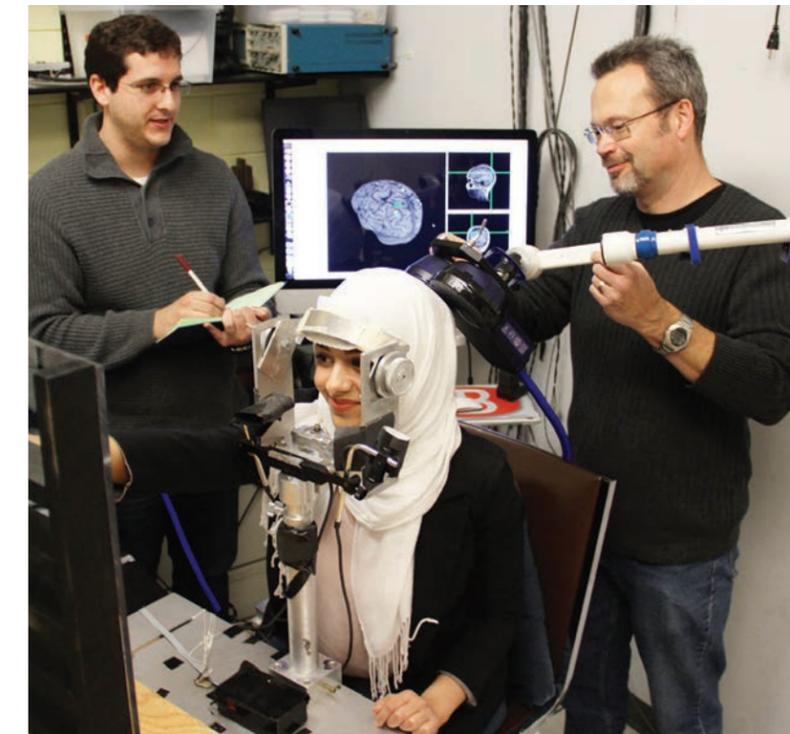
**LAURENCE HARRIS, PSYCHOLOGY (not pictured)**

**VISION IS MOST CLOSELY ASSOCIATED** with the human eye, that most remarkable of cameras. But vision really takes place in the brain, where the film from those cameras is processed - enabling us to regularly sort information and navigate our lives.

Researchers in the VISTA (Vision: Science to Applications) program study how the brain uses visual cues, then apply those lessons digitally to increase human capacity. This intersection of neuroscience and technology is truly unique, and has made York one of the world's top centres for vision research. With \$33 million in funding from the Canada First Research Excellence Fund and generous support from York, VISTA is collaborating with over 50 international partners over seven years to drive innovation in vision science to new heights. Ultimately, says VISTA Scientific Director and York Psychology Distinguished Research Professor Doug Crawford, VISTA's aim is to be "number one in the world."

"A key factor here is that at the end of the day, this research is meant to better people's lives," says Mazyar Fallah, Associate Dean of Research and Innovation in the Faculty of Health and a member of VISTA's leadership team. Knowledge from neuroscience on how the visual cortex plans movement, reads emotion, maintains balance and retains information is now being translated digitally in a variety of real-world applications. These include everything from neuroprosthetics (to assist those with vision loss); phone apps that can help patients with memory loss get around their homes; robotic surveillance of remote areas inaccessible by human monitors; and many others.

Perhaps what's most exciting is VISTA's future potential. "The next generation is going to be much more tech-savvy than we are," says Crawford. "So VISTA will be a great environment for training young people with one foot in health and the other in technology. We'll be able to move forward in directions we can't even dream of right now."



Psychology Professor and VISTA Scientific Director Doug Crawford (right) and Kinesiology & Health Science PhD student David Cappadocia (left) place a TMS (Trans-Cranial Magnetic Stimulation) coil over a participant's head. TMS technology allows researchers to target areas of the frontal and parietal cortex that are related to short-term visual memory.

## VISTA: A Leading Program for Vision Research



## Improving Long-Term Care

**TAMARA DALY**  
HEALTH POLICY & MANAGEMENT

**OVER 100,000 ONTARIANS** live in long-term care homes in any given year, and they are among our most vulnerable citizens. It's essential that both residents and the people who care for them enjoy the highest quality of life and excellent conditions of work. Professor Tamara Daly has dedicated her career to improving policy and practice in this highly important field.

A political economist and health services researcher, Daly believes that long-term care is understudied, relative to other areas of health care; it's also a much more complex policy environment than many imagine. "Different people will need different types of support, and some will require it sooner than others," she says. In North America, up to 80 percent of patients in long-term care have a form of dementia. Homes are often understaffed, leading to subpar conditions and safety concerns. Increasingly, families have been turning to private care within homes to supplement publicly funded care - but this is unavailable for many, burdensome for others and reveals how homes are understaffed relative to residents' needs.

Part of Daly's research has examined the ways in which Canada can learn from other countries. "Sweden, in particular, presents

a good example as to how care should be prioritized for people toward the end of their lives." There, more of the country's GDP is spent on long-term care, and more staff are available to take care of residents. As a result, timetables are more flexible, and residents receive more personal attention.

As a previous holder of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Chair in Gender, Care Work and Health (2013-2018), Daly also takes into consideration that the majority of care workers and residents are female. "Care work, particularly for people with dementia, requires significant skills, but isn't valued enough by our society," she says.

In terms of her ongoing work, Daly was recently awarded \$2.5 million from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for her newest project "Imagining Age-Friendly 'Communities within Communities:' International Promising Practices," with 25 investigators and 16 partner organizations across Canada and globally to address the complexities of cross-jurisdictional aging practices and policies to support it.

## Mighty Mitochondria: The Power Plant of our Muscles



**DAVID HOOD**  
KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

**YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT MUSCLE FUNCTION** improves with exercise. But what factors regulate that process? How do elderly muscles compare to those of the young? And will they ever discover a pill that could eliminate the need for exercise?

At York's Muscle Health Research Centre (MHRC), these are the types of questions researchers regularly ask. The centre is the world's largest of its type, a place where skeletal muscle - which makes up 40 percent of human body mass - is studied at the molecular, cellular and whole-body level.

In the decade since he first became director of the MHRC, Professor David Hood has discovered a great deal about the various actions that govern muscle growth and decline. An exercise physiologist, his own York laboratory is dedicated to the study of mitochondrial biogenesis. Known as the "power plant" of human cells, mitochondria increase with endurance exercise, leading to the preservation of muscle mass. Hood's lab has also examined how exercise can effectively clear out inefficient mitochondria, which makes cells function more effectively.

Mitochondria are one of many areas under study at the MHRC, where physiotherapists and kinesiologists work alongside lab scientists. Says Hood: "we now have 22 faculty members and 100 trainees. In addition to studying skeletal muscle and adaptations to exercise, we have researchers looking at the heart, blood flow to muscle, metabolism, stem cells and aging." The impact on muscle of conditions such as diabetes, obesity, hypothyroidism and cancer are also being measured.

Muscle disuse can lead to severe frailty and loss of balance, particularly in old age. That's why Hood believes it is critical to understand how muscles behave in response to various stimuli. "Health care costs for musculoskeletal disorders are very significant," he says. "It's very important to maintain sturdy, strong muscles that keep us moving and stable."

# Leading Autism Spectrum Disorder Research

## JONATHAN WEISS PSYCHOLOGY

THE STATISTICS ON MENTAL HEALTH IN CHILDREN are staggering: fully 20 percent struggle with conditions such as depression and anxiety. And when children have neurodevelopmental disabilities (such as autism, ADHD or cerebral palsy), that number can often rise to 50 percent or higher. However, a study conducted by clinical psychologist Jonathan Weiss has shown that cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can make life much brighter - not only for these children, but for their families too.

CBT "is an approach to help participants learn to modify the way they think, and the kind of choices they make when in stressful and challenging situations," says Weiss, an associate professor of Psychology and York Research Chair in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disability. Yet, while it's a practical and widely respected intervention, CBT is often inaccessible to children with brain-based disabilities.

One reason for this, says Weiss, is that therapists often take for granted that anxiety and depression are natural to people with conditions such as autism. "We need to recognize that a person with autism doesn't have to struggle with mental health issues. Then, we have to build the capacity to do something about it."

In Weiss's initial study, children with autism attended ten one-hour-long CBT sessions provided by graduate student and postdoctoral fellow clinicians at York. A fascinating by-product was how this treatment positively affected the parents who accompanied them. "Even though the intervention was designed for children," Weiss says, "we saw indirect benefits for parents. When the family context is healthy, children are more likely to grow up resilient."

Currently, Weiss is conducting a similar five-year study involving children with other neurodevelopmental disabilities; he is optimistic that studies such as these will lead to general improvement in societal mental health. "When we focus on children," he says, "there's a really strong opportunity to enact preventative measures, before serious problems arise."



# Promoting Disability Rights Internationally

## MARCIA RIOUX HEALTH POLICY & MANAGEMENT

MARCIA RIOUX IS LEADING A MAJOR EFFORT to protect human rights and improve quality of life for people with disabilities worldwide. The co-founder of Disability Rights Promotion International (DRPI), a comprehensive system to monitor discrimination against the one billion people globally who have a disability, Rioux says enhancing public awareness of this pervasive issue can foster more inclusive societies.

"In the way we organize our social, economic and political systems, all kinds of people are being left out, and can't exercise their rights and freedoms," says Rioux, founder of and Distinguished Research Professor in York's Critical Disability Studies graduate program.

Building on years of human rights research, Rioux established DRPI in 2002 with former UN Special Rapporteur on Disability, the late Bengt Lindqvist. The initiative collects data on violations against individuals, systemic issues and media coverage of disability. With almost \$11 million in funding from governments in Canada, Sweden and parts of Asia, DRPI has grown to encompass thousands of grassroots organization volunteers who use DRPI training and tools to track disability discrimination in 60 countries.

Rioux published DRPI findings to date in *DRPI: The People's Indicators*, a book for the United Nations to help promote adherence to the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. She sees the grassroots movement that encompasses DRPI as a way to empower those with disabilities to more effectively advocate for themselves, and persuade governments to fulfil their human rights obligations. "There is a significant gap between what governments and organizations promise, and the lived experiences of people with disabilities," Rioux says. "They have a right to fully participate in society."





# Mental Health, Wellbeing in Diverse Communities

**NAZILLA KHANLOU**  
NURSING

**NAZILLA KHANLOU'S GOAL** is to enhance the mental health of Ontario's and Canada's women, children, and youth, through academic-community and interdisciplinary research. An associate professor in Nursing and the Women's Health Research Chair in Mental Health at York University, she is leading several funded research projects that ask a diverse set of questions all directed at community-based health promotion in multicultural settings. Recent examples include exploring equity-based health promotion for racialized mothers of children with disabilities (funded by the Women's Xchange at Women's College Research Institute), impact of gender and migration status on accessing funding for developmental services (funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services), protection of privacy rights for young adults with developmental disabilities and their families (funded by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada), and digital literacy, access and inclusion for young adults with developmental disabilities (funded by eCampus Ontario).

Khanlou, who has published multiple books, articles, and reports on youth and women's mental health, is committed to inclusive knowledge transfer initiatives. She is the founder of the International Network on Youth Integration (INYI) and has presented on youth resilience, and migration and mental health internationally.

"Some of the most resilient folks I know are those who have a mental illness, which can be a chronic disability, yet despite their challenges they have the support of family, friends, service providers, and work places around them when things get rough; and when things are good, they in turn reach out to help others who they know need help. Resilience is not developed in a vacuum. It is nourished by inclusive policies, practices, and just societies."



Left to Right: Pina Guzzo-Foliaro, Administrative Secretary Research; Melesa Beharry, Research Officer; Patricia Gagliardi-Ursua, Post-Award Administrator; Sarah Whitaker, Director, Strategic Research & Partnerships

## Supporting Health Research

**THE FACULTY OF HEALTH RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFICE** plays a pivotal role in the success of our researchers. The office is responsible for enhancing research and creative scholarship in the Faculty and is a resource for all aspects of faculty research programs. Support for our researchers includes identifying potential sources of funding; providing regular communication about funding opportunities; planning research events; and facilitating partnerships. In addition, the office provides support with finance, human resources, and research team-building. Staff also promote and celebrate research by hosting workshops on a variety of research topics, as well as work with the communications team in Health and other York offices to spread the word about our research and research accomplishments.

## FACULTY OF HEALTH

## TEACHING &amp; STUDENT SUCCESS

## Faculty of Health teaching and student success at a glance

Our faculty teachers are passionate about the subjects they teach and as active researchers in their fields, they bring new insights into the classroom that inspire excellence in their students.



**192**  
full-time  
faculty



**Largest and most diverse course selection**  
in Psychology and Kinesiology & Health Science of any university in Canada



### AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Faculty members have been recognized with multiple honours and awards including:

- Order of Canada (3)
- Order of Ontario (1)
- Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal, Governor General of Canada (2)
- Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (6)
- Royal Society of Canada (3)

### 5 UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

- Global Health
- Health Studies  
(Policy, Management, Informatics)
- Kinesiology & Health Science
- Nursing
- Psychology



### KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

**1st** in Canada  
**3rd** in North America  
**16th** in the World

(2017 ShanghaiRanking's Global Ranking of Sport Science Schools and Departments)



### GLOBAL HEALTH

One of York's "Standout Programs"  
(Maclean's Magazine)



### PSYCHOLOGY

Among the **top 10** in Canada  
and **top 100** in the world

(Maclean's Magazine & QS World University Rankings)



### CRITICAL DISABILITY STUDIES (MA, PhD)

The only graduate program of its kind in Canada and the only PhD in Critical Disability Studies

## Learning How to Think

LEFT TO RIGHT:

**JULIE CONDER, JOHN EASTWOOD & RON SHEESE**  
PSYCHOLOGY

AS JOHN EASTWOOD WILL TELL YOU, writing isn't just about expressing thoughts - it's about learning how to think. That's why Eastwood, in conjunction with colleague Ron Sheese, developed a second-year course called Writing in Psychology. Here, students learn that to express ideas in clear and compelling language, you must first connect deeply with those ideas.

"It's a real eye-opener for students when they see how writing actually helps them

to figure things out," says Eastwood, an associate professor of clinical psychology. Students also learn to see revision and editing as an important part of that process, and not a mere correcting of errors.

In psychology, "writing isn't considered a traditional part of training as it might be in English or journalism," says Julie Conder, an assistant lecturer who recently began teaching the course. But in an evidence-based discipline like

psychology, she says it's absolutely essential to learn how to construct a solid argument in written form. For his part, Ron Sheese applauds the creation of discipline-specific writing courses. The former director of York's Centre for Academic Writing acknowledges that the skills taught in this course are transferable between disciplines: "from our point of view, writing really improves if you work on it within a context that you care about."





### NICOLETTE RICHARDSON KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

**KINESIOLOGY AND HEALTH SCIENCE** Assistant Lecturer Nicolette Richardson has taken the teaching of anatomy to the next level by introducing state-of-the-art dissection software into the courses she teaches.

The software is “really impressive,” says Richardson. “It allows you to lift layers away, or rotate structures to get three-dimensional views.” It also allows for home study at the student’s convenience, eliminating the need to book laboratory time: “accessibility is so important in a school with many commuters, who are often working outside of school. It’s great to give them that option.”

In addition to classroom lectures, students conduct dissection work in labs - and virtual dissection offers them even more experiential learning, something Richardson sees as critical. “Research tells us that the more active students can be in the learning process, the more they’ll be able to understand and recall the material.”

From lecture recording to online quizzes about anatomical structure, Richardson is always thinking of new ways in which technology can improve the learning process outside the lab as well as in it. In one of her courses, students can perform a physiology experiment - mixing solutions and recording results, all digitally. Currently, she and colleague Loriann Hynes are looking to bring a lifelike synthetic cadaver into the lab. “The technology is incredibly useful,” she says. “Now, we’d love to have that additional hands-on component.”



### PATRICIA BRADLEY NURSING

**PATRICIA BRADLEY SAYS** when teachers and students really understand each other, that’s when effective education happens. The professor of Nursing and coordinator of the Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) BScN program acknowledges that diverse learners bring various experiences, attitudes, expectations, and English language abilities to the classroom. Trying to understand sociocultural differences helps Bradley tailor her teaching methods to learners’ unique learning styles.

Bradley recently surveyed York IENs and faculty, and discovered differences between what these two groups expect of each other. She says building cultural adaptivity lets teachers design curriculum that bridges gaps and inspires better student performance. Her next step for her study, which was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, is spreading the word to the nursing educator community.

“As instructors, we must recognize diversity and focus on inclusion,” says Bradley, Chair of the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing’s IEN accreditation committee. “We should examine our biases and beliefs. Then we can find out who our students are and learn from them. Reciprocity is important in the learning process.”

# Active Learning in the Classroom

**CLAUDIA CHAUFAN**  
HEALTH POLICY & MANAGEMENT



**UNIVERSITY LECTURES CAN BE INTERESTING -** York School of Health Policy and Management Professor Claudia Chaufan is keen to try new pedagogies. She is a strong believer in active learning, a principle that requires instructors to develop meaningful activities that allow students to learn by doing. “It’s important for them to be participants in the co-production of knowledge,” she says.

Chaufan incorporates ideas from sociology, philosophy and political thought into her classes on global health and health policy. Among other things, her students examine how corporate interests are intertwined with those of governments and other nonstate actors in the creation of living conditions that often conspire against health. As an instructor, she employs a variety of techniques. There’s the jigsaw method, where students are divided into study groups that cover one piece of a larger puzzle, then teach their “piece” to their peers, and conclude by reflecting together as a group. In the flipped classroom, students watch lecture

material at home, then troubleshoot and apply what they have learned in class.

“When we ask people to unite on a co-operative task rather than compete to see who is best,” says Chaufan, “we create the best environment for learning.”



## HEALTH LEADERSHIP & LEARNING NETWORK

**TRYING TO STAY UP-TO-DATE** with the latest developments in one's profession when time is scarce is an ongoing challenge, especially for health and health care professionals who typically work in demanding, fast paced environments. Fortunately, York University's Health Leadership and Learning Network (HLLN) in the Faculty of Health offers a variety of certificates, webinars and workshops that allow working professionals to meet their professional, career development, and life-long learning needs required for current workplaces.

The programs offered by HLLN reflect the breadth and depth of health and healthcare. For those in clinical care there is the Advanced Certificate in Clinical Leadership that teaches healthcare professionals how to become inclusive, responsive, and inspirational leaders within collaborative care and inter-professional teams. The Clinical Practice Nurse Educator Certificate program helps current nurses guide new nurses through the learning process. Other areas include subjects of growing importance such as workplace mental health law and digital health promotion, patient safety, quality of care and palliative care.

A recent innovation is HLLN's Health Coach Certificate program where participants learn a set of skills and competencies that can be applied to support clients in leading healthier lives. Specific examples where health coaching meets client population needs include improved nutrition and exercise, disease-related prevention or management, weight loss, smoking cessation and stress management.

For more information about the Health Leadership and Learning Network and its programs visit [hlln.info.yorku.ca](http://hlln.info.yorku.ca).



Student Success Coordinator Agata Stypka (right), with student leaders Rahin Virani (left) and Haniah Saleem (middle) meeting to discuss the upcoming year's programs.

## STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAMS

**THE FACULTY OF HEALTH** and its affiliated Colleges, Calumet College and Stong College, are committed to student success. Through peer mentorship, leadership development and peer-based academic support programs, we help students transition successfully into university and into their post graduate careers, develop their academic and professional skills, and establish networks to become agents of constructive change. [health.yorku.ca/student-success-programs](http://health.yorku.ca/student-success-programs)

## OFFICE OF STUDENT & ACADEMIC SERVICES

**THE OFFICE OF STUDENT AND ACADEMIC SERVICES (OSAS)** helps Faculty of Health students ensure they are on track to complete their degrees by answering any academic questions they may have about course selections, degree requirements, as well as providing information on academic policies, procedures, and regulations. Students can speak to an academic advisor over the phone or book an appointment for an in-person meeting. [health.yorku.ca/academic-advising](http://health.yorku.ca/academic-advising)



OSAS Academic Advisor, Nitzi Savdie (left), meets with a student to discuss degree requirements.

# FACULTY OF HEALTH STUDENTS & ALUMNI

## Faculty of Health students and alumni at a glance

Our students and alumni proudly build on their education by demonstrating excellence and a passion for change in their careers and in their community engagement locally, nationally and internationally.



### LEFT TO RIGHT: **MATTHEW & GEOFFREY SEM** STUDENTS, KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

**FOR KINESIOLOGY AND HEALTH SCIENCE STUDENTS** Geoffrey and Matthew Sem, helping others isn't just a professional goal, but a way of life.

For the past several years, the Sem brothers have taken part in charitable medical missions to developing countries such as Brazil, Guatemala, Haiti and Uganda. Noticing clothing shortages in rural villages, they formed "Donate Your T" where they collect gently used T-shirts from Canadian students - donating more than 3,000 to disadvantaged children worldwide.

At home, the brothers are stellar students and active volunteers. Geoffrey is a refugee youth mentor with the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture and Matthew serves as a national crisis-line responder with the Canadian Suicide Prevention Service. At York, they led clubs such as Heart & Stroke Foundation Club and Model United Nations. Both were honoured at the 2018 School of Kinesiology & Health Science Awards with a Physical and Health Education Canada Student Award for Geoffrey and the Sue Vail Leadership Award for Matthew. Both began their postgraduate studies at medical school at the University of Toronto starting in fall 2018.



### **JULIA BRASSOLOTTO** ALUMNA, HEALTH POLICY & EQUITY

**THE CONNECTION BETWEEN INFORMAL CAREGIVING** and rural health is the focus of a major research initiative led by Julia Brassolotto (PhD, 2015). Appointed in July 2017 as the Alberta Innovates - Health Solutions Research Chair in Rural Health and Well-being at the University of Lethbridge, Brassolotto wants to understand the distinct health care needs of the province's different rural communities.

Brassolotto is currently assessing three publicly funded long-term-care facilities in northern, central and southern rural Alberta. The study will determine how factors such as proximity to an urban centre, industrial activity and, especially, paid and unpaid caregivers affect health-care delivery.

Brassolotto's current research builds on her doctoral dissertation that she completed in Health Policy and Equity in York's Graduate Health program, which looked at the state of kidney dialysis and transplantation in rural British Columbia. "Rural Alberta is diverse—a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work," says Brassolotto, also an assistant Public Health professor at the U of L. "The government must look at how to leverage each community's strengths and resources."



### **HELEN OLABODE** ALUMNA, NURSING

**AS A LABOUR AND DELIVERY NURSE** at Brampton Civic Hospital, Helen Olabode (BScN, 2011) has directly or indirectly delivered about 1,000 babies. She says each birth stands out in its own way, and calls her work a "happy place."

Olabode was in a very different place 15 years ago - two decades into retail work, with no high school diploma. Then her father had a stroke, and she helped care for him in hospital. The head nurse noticed her skillful support, and encouraged her to volunteer in the ER. She later helped out in women and children's care, and discovered her calling.

After completing her remaining OSSD credits, she enrolled at York, and juggled raising two young sons with completing a nursing degree. The dedication she showed her patients during clinical placements earned her the Joan C. Ballantyne Compassionate Nursing Prize. "This job means everything to me. I love getting up in the morning, facing challenges and helping families through this important part of their lives."





### LILLY SINGH ALUMNA, PSYCHOLOGY

**IF YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF LILLY SINGH**, she'd probably be the first to forgive you. Even though her hilarious YouTube videos have currently racked up more than 2 billion views that have reportedly earned her \$10.5 million last year, the York psychology grad exudes a charming self-deprecation that makes her instantly relatable to fans.

A comedian, author, motivational speaker and actor, the Scarborough-raised Singh is a kind of Oprah for the streaming generation. Despite her "adorkable" persona, she's also a powerful purveyor of self-confidence, especially for girls. Her 2017 book, *How to Be a Bawse: A Guide to Conquering Life*, is a positive-thinking manual that instantly bestrode the New York Times' bestseller list, and her #GirlLove movement - 84.5% of her subscribers are female - prods girls and women to support each other. As a public speaker she regularly attracts adoring crowds, including the one that saw her address a York spirit rally on Red and White Day in 2016.

Though she seems the very definition of overnight success, Singh (whose trademarked online alias is, unsurprisingly, Superwoman) believes her achievements are the result of an almost monastic devotion to her brand and following. "I'm the type of person who doesn't hope, dream or wish for things," she has said. "I work and work and work."

### DEANNA LENTINI ALUMNA, KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

**DEANNA LENTINI HAS ALWAYS** been in the habit of giving change to homeless people she encounters while walking in Toronto. But two years ago, while volunteering at the Air Canada Centre, she hit upon an even better idea: why not give away the gift card she had received for her services?

This "no-cost donation model" was a perfect fit for students like herself, who want to give but don't have a lot of cash on hand. With a grant from the Faculty of Health's Agents of Change program, Lentini started Fix the 6ix: a program where donors can deposit unused (or partially-used) gift cards at selected donation stations around campus. In just four weeks, she collected \$2,400 - and has since collected thousands more. The money goes to individual recipients, but also provides groceries for shelters, movie tickets for underserved youth and other much-needed goods and services.

Currently working on her master's degree in physiotherapy at the University of Toronto, Lentini has incorporated other no-cost donation ideas into Fix the 6ix - including colleague Matthew Mikhael's "100 for the Homies", which encourages Raptors fans to donate the free pizza vouchers they receive when the team scores 100 points or more. Donations of this type "are like giving away free money, because you didn't buy these cards or vouchers for yourself," says Lentini. "But when you're not using them, we can repurpose them. And it doesn't cost you anything at all."



### AKWATU KHENTI ALUMNUS, HEALTH POLICY & EQUITY

**MAKING ONTARIO A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE PLACE** is Akwatu Khenti's top priority. As the new Assistant Deputy Minister of the province's Anti-Racism Directorate, Khenti works to address systemic racism in the education, child welfare, justice and health sectors. He and his 23-person team partner with school boards, children's aid societies, correctional facilities and government ministries to develop practical, scalable, evidence-based solutions.

Khenti has the right mix of training and experience for the job. He currently directs the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's international health programs, which build care-providing capacity in the developing world. He also introduced CAMH's substance abuse program for black youth, and improved CAMH's diversity policies and practices. Khenti has led research related to health care stigma, black homicide victimization, gun violence, drug abuse and more. He has an MA in political science from the University of Toronto, where he previously taught at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health. He recently completed his PhD in Health Policy and Equity at York.

"I'm passionate about combatting racism because I've experienced it all my life. I want to create a different society for my grandchildren."



### MASEH HADAF STUDENT, GLOBAL HEALTH

**LEADERSHIP COMES NATURALLY** to Maseh Hadaf: while pursuing a BSc in Global Health Policy, Systems and Management, he has led several initiatives to build leadership skills and community among York students. "To me, a leader inspires collective action toward a shared purpose," says Maseh. That's the idea behind The Ascend Network (TAN), a yearly retreat he co-founded with several friends three years ago where prospective student leaders exchange ideas, learn from guest speakers and participate in team-building activities - all while receiving support for "local initiatives with a global mindset". With participants from science, business, the arts and many more, TAN also organizes events and workshops throughout the academic year.

Maseh completed his fourth year Global Health placement in 2018 with the Jordan Health Aid Society International (JHASI). Based in Amman, Jordan, JHASI is an NGO working with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to provide health services to refugees in both urban and camp settings. Maseh was part of a team that focused on the logistics and procurement areas of the health operation, specifically looking at the various information systems for purchasing, tracking and monitoring of medicines and health commodities. He developed an operational map to identify gaps and ways to improve services.



## FACULTY OF HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

# Futures Start at Health

## PATHWAYS TO MEDICAL & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

**MANY OF OUR STUDENTS** are attracted to the Faculty of Health's five degree programs because they offer all of the prerequisite courses required by medical, dental and other professional health schools (e.g. Chiropractor; Physiotherapist; Occupational Therapist) in Ontario and across Canada.



**ELIZABETH FUNG**  
ALUMNA, KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE (BSc)  
Graduated from University of Toronto  
Medical School, 2018

"York gave me the opportunity to explore and discover my passion for medicine. I was provided with a strong foundation in human anatomy and physiology. My degree program developed my leadership, teamwork, communication, and interpersonal skills that are vital for professionals in the medical field."

## Faculty of Health partnerships at a glance

There is no ivory tower approach to learning, teaching and research in York's Faculty of Health. We believe that community based teaching and research is key to a richer learning and research experience. Our community partners, including agencies, hospitals and community centres, value and benefit from the ideas, enthusiasm and expertise of our faculty and students.

**27+**  
formal research  
partnerships

Active research  
collaborations  
in more than  
**30**  
countries



### LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS (just a few of many examples)

- Doctors Without Borders Canada
- University Health Network
- Hospital for Sick Children
- Black Creek Community Health Centre
- Driftwood Community Centre
- Right to Play
- MLSE Launchpad
- William Osler Health System
- COSTI Immigrant Services
- Ontario HIV Treatment Network
- Southlake Regional Health Centre
- North York General Hospital

### GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS (just a few of many examples)

- World Health Organization, Jordan
- World Health Organization, Sri Lanka
- Health Aid Society, Jordan
- Regional Toxicology Institute, Costa Rica
- Humanity and Inclusion, United Kingdom
- Scottish Public Health Network, Scotland

# Improving Quality of Life for Patients with Dementia

## CHRISTINE JONAS-SIMPSON NURSING

**THE FIRST THING YOU NOTICE** on entering the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy are its softly lit rooms, alive with music and dancing, spiked with riotous colour from paintings and other art projects, with large windows and light, and a feeling of welcome and calm. It is, in the words of Director and York School of Nursing professor, Christine Jonas-Simpson, a place of “joy, belonging, fun, and discovery.” The Bitove Academy philosophy requires a “living in the moment” and a commitment to learning about others through conversation, art, dance, and transgenerational programs.

Now in its fifth year, the Academy is a joint project between York’s School of Nursing and the University Health Network. Its main benefactor is Toronto’s Bitove family: John Bitove, the late food-services magnate, named it after his wife, Dotsa. Bitove’s inspiration came from an adult day program in Florida, where the arts were used regularly in program activities. At the Bitove Academy, researchers from York’s School of Nursing and their colleagues are conducting research on the role of art in arts-based relational dementia caring, the benefits of musical engagement for wellness, and the inclusion of youth for shared discovery while enthusiastically sharing in the joy of creation.

Here, participants work with professional artists to write songs and poetry, play the ukulele, learn to dance, create theatre, paint, sing and share meals and conversation. A core element is its transgenerational focus. Students from York (Nursing, Kinesiology & Health Science, and Dance) are regulars at the Academy. The Academy provides opportunities for students to learn about how people with dementia can truly thrive. “They learn that the stigma surrounding dementia creates unnecessary suffering,” says Jonas-Simpson, “and that they can help eliminate stigma, which can lead to enhanced health and quality of life.”

A research expert in dementia and bereavement, Jonas-Simpson has always incorporated the arts in her nursing career; at the age of 20, she began playing her flute for patients in hospitals and she continues to do so today for Academy members. In recent years, she’s added acting and filmmaking to her resume: like the Academy learners themselves, she is constantly discovering new modes of expression. “The Bitove Academy is the best place I’ve ever experienced with the most amazing team and loving community,” she says.

At the Bitove Academy, researchers from York’s School of Nursing and their colleagues are conducting research on the role of art in arts-based relational dementia caring.

Established in 2015, York University's Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research is leading change.



# New Solutions for Global Health Challenges

**JAMES ORBINSKI**  
**DAHDALEH INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH**

**DROUGHT, FAMINE, WARFARE** and overpopulation: at one time, these problems seemed remote from our daily reality. That is no longer the case. Today, the world is beset by health crises caused by climate change, mass migration and systems of governance that no longer work well on a planet that adds one billion citizens to its population every thirteen years. The time to act is now.

Established in 2015, York University's Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research is leading change in a world that desperately needs it. And there is no-one better to lead that change than James Orbinski, the Institute's inaugural director.

A renowned humanitarian and medical doctor, Orbinski is best known for his fieldwork with Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders. He led MSF's mission during the Rwandan genocide in 1994, and served as International Council President when the organization was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.

Orbinski considers the Dahdaleh Institute "a catalyst for good science, effective policy, and new ways of thinking. All of this is possible: the only thing limiting us is our imagination." Right now, the Institute is working with the Lassonde School of Engineering to develop digital technology that will, among other things, improve water quality in refugee camps. They are organizing conferences and workshops to explore how outmoded post-World War II governance systems can be revitalized.

And they are marshalling York's capacities in law, business, technology and culture to create a vision of health that takes into account its social as well as scientific dimensions.

In spite of dire world events, Orbinski remains optimistic that the global problems facing us can indeed be solved. "I'm very hopeful about this Institute, and about our ability as human beings to take these issues on. I can't imagine a better purpose for an institute of global health."



The Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Building, home to the Dahdaleh Institute for Global Health Research.

# Assessing Syrian Refugee Integration



## **MICHAELA HYNIE** PSYCHOLOGY

**OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS**, 40,000 Syrians fleeing conflict in their home country have resettled in Canada. How well are they adapting to their new life? That's the key question Psychology Professor Michaela Hynie asks in a study that measures the integration of 1,932 adult Syrian refugees living in Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec.

Hynie is leading a team of 20 researchers who are participating in Refugee Integration and Long-term Health Outcomes in Canada, a five-year, \$1.35 million pan-Canadian study funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. They are assessing the refugees' integration levels from 2016 to 2021 by tracking their social connections, employment, housing, social services usage and sense of belonging. The project also compares the integration outcomes of government-assisted versus privately sponsored refugees to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each model.

"We have very little longitudinal data on the integration of refugees in Canada," Hynie says. "By monitoring their long-term physical and mental health, we can identify what improvements might need to be made to best meet newcomers' needs."

Hynie and her research partners, including colleagues from universities, settlement, health and community organizations, and Syrian newcomers themselves, are conducting in-person interviews with refugees in six cities across Canada. This community-based research approach is one Hynie has practised for 12 years, and it's a topic she teaches in York's fourth-year Psychology Advanced Community Based Applied Research course. She sees it as fundamental to translating research findings into practical solutions that communities can use.

"When doing a project that could have real-world applications," Hynie says, "it's important to work directly with the community that's involved."

# Learning on Ice

## **STEPHANIE BOWERMAN** KINESIOLOGY & HEALTH SCIENCE

**LEARNING TO ICE SKATE** requires balance, strength and coordination—skills that can be harder to develop for children with disabilities who may have limited opportunities for recreational programs. Among those with expertise, drive and time to help are York Kinesiology & Health Science students. In the fall of 2016, the two groups came together in partnership between York University and the adaptive skate program SkateABLE.

Each term, a handful of third-year students taking the Adapted Physical Activity course with Kinesiology & Health Science Professor Stephanie Bowerman volunteer as one-on-one coaches to SkateABLE participants—children who have physical and developmental disabilities such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome or Cerebral Palsy. At two one-hour classes on Saturday evenings at Canlan Ice Sports Park on York University's Keele campus, the students teach children how to skate in a way that meets their individual needs. Over the course of the eight-week session, the students draw on their knowledge of recreation programming, including HIGH FIVE®, Canada's only quality assurance standard for children's sport and recreation, for differently abled individuals to help the kids become confident on the ice and have fun.

While the collaboration fills an important need for young skaters with special needs, it also provides the students with valuable experiential education. Bowerman says the students are able to apply their classroom training in a direct way. And by taking part in SkateABLE volunteer training, they gain a certification that is nationally recognized by the sports and recreation industry. At the same time, they are using their knowledge and skills to make a difference in people's lives.

"It's a great win-win for both sides," Bowerman says. "The quality of the skating program goes up because of the calibre of the volunteers, and by working closely with the SkateABLE head coaches, the students get to master their skills and become good leaders."





## FACULTY OF HEALTH LOOKING FORWARD

# A Legacy of Generosity

## SHERMAN HEALTH SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTRE

**IMAGINE SITTING IN A CHAIR** and watching the room around you - Dr. Laurence Harris' Tumbling Room - actually move to simulate the effect of the loss of gravity on one's vision, similar to what astronauts experience; or as part of Dr. Gary Turner's team looking at the wiring within the brain as part of neurorehabilitation to enhance cognitive functioning in normal aging. These are just two examples of the leading-edge research conducted in the Sherman Health Science Research Centre, bringing scientists studying the brain and vision, biomechanics, virtual reality and robotics together under one roof.

What was once a hockey arena was transformed in 2010 into a state-of-the-art research facility made possible through a generous \$5 million investment, that has

advanced the work of more than 25 faculty researchers, by York University Board of Governors member, the late Honey Sherman and her husband, the late Barry Sherman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Apotex Inc. The Sherman Health Science Research Centre's centrepiece is a neuroimaging laboratory suite, York's MRI Facility, that features the latest functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) technology. This facility gives York's researchers in-house access to this technology, which has many applications to human health, including in areas such as visual-motor functions compromised by neurological disorders and injuries; multi-joint movement coordination; cognitive function and aging; monocular blindness; memory; concussion and other traumatic brain injury.

## ADVANCEMENT & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONNECTING STUDENTS AND FACULTY** with community partners - local to global - is central to the Faculty of Health's mission to enhance human health, health equity, wellbeing, and world leading ideas by developing transformational partnerships with those who share our vision and values. Our Advancement team establishes mutually beneficial relationships with alumni and friends, foundations, corporations and industry partners that help enrich the teaching and learning experience for students, expand research opportunities and drive innovation and impact. Our International Office develops and manages programs to increase the Faculty's international activities. Examples include international placements for Global Health students, as well as study abroad and exchange programs.



Left to Right: Trisha Mitchell, Development Coordinator; Julie Castle, Campaign Director; Julie Hard, Manager, International Relations

## INDIGENIZATION

**A KEY PRIORITY FOR THE FACULTY OF HEALTH**, in conjunction with York University's commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations around post secondary education, is the indigenization of our curriculum. While a number of our researchers currently work with First Nations communities such as Psychology Professor Yvonne Bohr who received more than \$1.2 million from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to work with community elders and youth workers in Nunavut to improve mental health among Inuit youth, we are looking to broaden and deepen our partnership with First Nations. The School of Health Policy and Management has recently hired an indigenous scholar, Assistant Professor Sean Hillier from the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation. Hillier's research focuses on how policy shapes and impacts health care for indigenous peoples in Canada. The Faculty of Health has also committed to the creation of its first ever indigenous elder in residence.

## INTERNATIONALIZATION

**THE UNIVERSITY'S GOALS** to enhance experiential learning and internationalize York's curriculum are exemplified by the Faculty of Health's unique undergraduate program in global health. The first cohort of students in the Global Health program have completed their fourth-year practicum placements with the World Health Organization in Sri Lanka, the Health Aid Society in Jordan, the Regional Toxicology Institute in Costa Rica, and Handicap International in England, to name a few.



Global Health student, Afnan Osman, on her international placement at the World Health Organization in Amman, Jordan in 2018



York University's Faculty of Health was founded in 2006 by integrating four academic units with varying perspectives. No university in Canada combines these strengths in equivalent depth.

**FACULTY OF HEALTH**

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