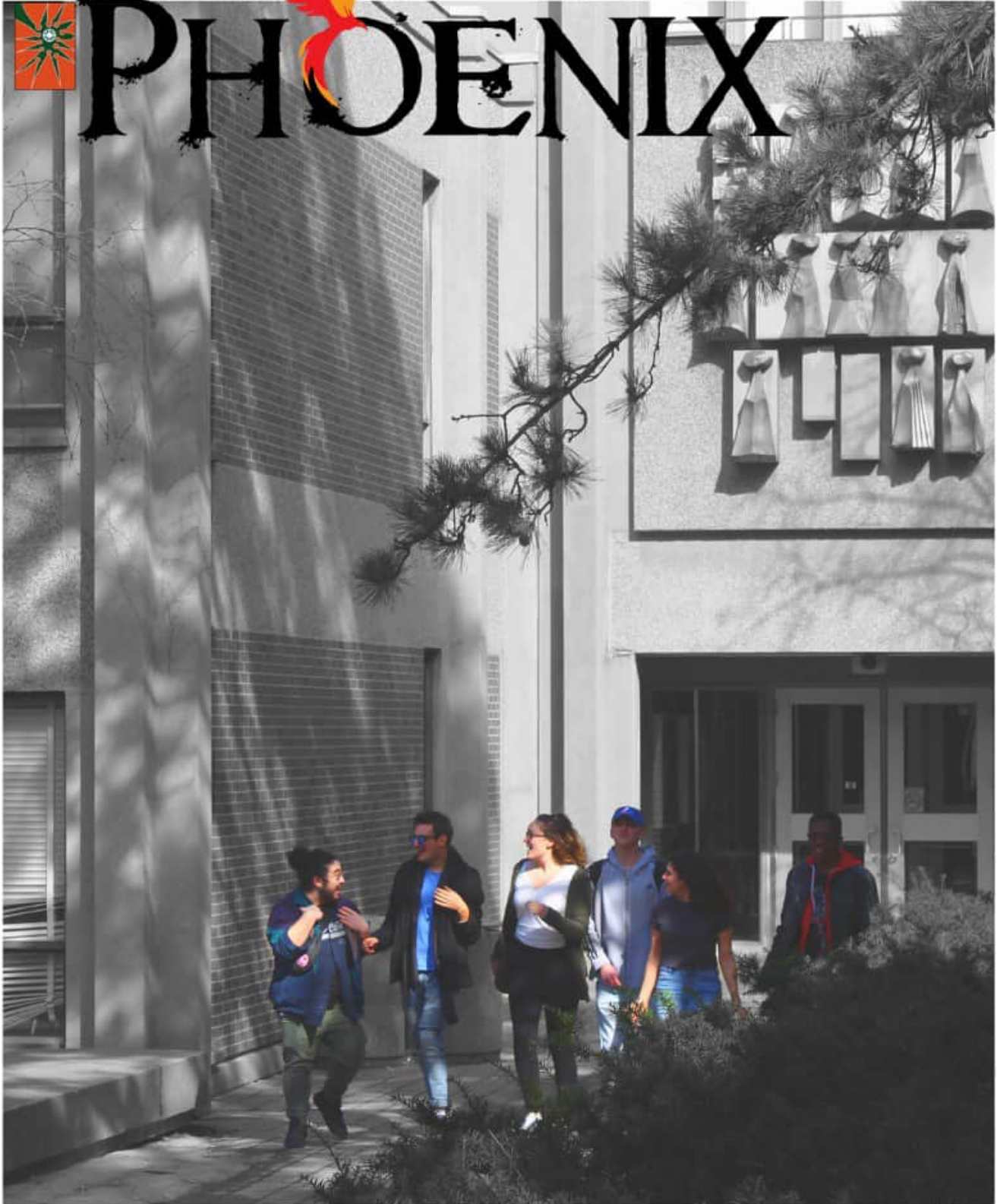


# THE PHOENIX

FOUNDERS COLLEGE NEWSLETTER



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*The Office of the College Head, Founders College. L to R: Erica Alusio, Pablo Idahosa, Rebecca Mangra and Marco Sestito. Photo Courtesy of Desmond Poon*

*Cover Design by Desmond Poon*

## Revisioning and Renewal of the Colleges' Educational Mandate

Prof. Pablo Idahosa, College Head



Pablo Idahosa,  
College Head

“To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate those techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands: it is to communicate graphically.

Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words or syllables — lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe — but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's [world].

— from Paulo Freire's *Education for Critical Consciousness*.

Over forty years ago, Freire affirmed the importance of what adult education could do. It lay in his unshakable belief in the power of understanding the word and the world, and the ability of ordinary people to both experience, give, and make meaning of their world. This issue of *The Phoenix* is about the importance of education, an idea or principle that for many of us educators would think is hardly in need of elaboration, let alone upholding.

However, if in an educational institution, we have to re-acknowledge the importance of education from time to time to remind us of what and how we do what we do. We do so during a time when there are many more items to look at and “worlds” to apprehend and imagine when, despite literacy in most of the industrialized world is, more or less, being taken for granted than in Freire's time, it might be much more difficult to derive meaning from both the word and the world in a time of heightened material insecurity; and, more immedi-

ately, when the uncertainties of resourcing education are once again threatening to undermine its multiple responsibilities and create even more inequalities within and beyond our own society.

Yet, as York and its Colleges segue into another spring, we hope to see signs of renewal through the undertaking of a revisiting, through a revisioning process, of what the College system is, and what it should do and be in the foreseeable future. In whatever way the mandate of the Colleges is repurposed in light of the broader societal and educational changes that have been taking place, whether for the University, the problems of enrolment, the broader and specific quotidian issues around student well-being, and the dedicated one of providing support for students to achieve their academic and intellectual goals, it seems to us that acquiring and enhancing one's education has taken on further significance and meaning in times of uncertainty.

It has often said that education always involves a risk because, whatever you do, there are no guarantees of success; but perhaps most importantly it is also because, fundamentally, as the Dutch educational philosopher, Gert Biesta says (possibly paraphrasing Freire), “education necessarily needs to have an orientation toward the freedom and independence of those being educated.” We would like the revisioning to facilitate that process for students, and once again affirm the obvious: the value and importance of education.

We would also like you to participate in the Revisioning process in whatever way you can, and one way is by visiting our LA&PS Colleges Revisioning website at any time, <https://colleges-revisioning.laps.yorku.ca/>, and complete our Feedback Form online anonymously or send us an email at [lapscolleges@yorku.ca](mailto:lapscolleges@yorku.ca). We look forward to hearing from you!

Our thanks to Rebecca Mangra for her superb job in editing this edition of *The Phoenix*.

## A Message from the Editor

Rebecca Mangra, Space and Facilities Assistant



Rebecca Mangra,  
Space and Facilities  
Assistant

My time as an undergraduate at York University was not an uncommon one. Countless hours of the past four years were spent reading and writing about art, literature and many other fascinating subjects. After I had washed off the various pen marks and dog-eared enough pages, I volunteered and worked part-time jobs with multiple departments on campus. When I look back at my undergraduate career, what stands out to me the most are not the long nights spent editing poetry or frantically combing the shelves of Scott Library, but the people I met.

In the Creative Writing department, I had the pleasure of working with multiple professors, including the late Priscila Uppal, who inspired not only a passion for the written word, but also the courage to look deep into the nucleus of the human experience. They pushed us to truly confront the bad and the good in the characters we created and the stories they were trying to tell with the guide of our pen. My professors treated us as colleagues and never failed to make sure we were creating authentic pieces with memorable takeaways.

The students I met in the Creative Writing program were also a treat to work with. My short stories only

became stronger with their detailed comments and suggestions. Collectively, we turned the classroom into a space where risks could be taken, ideas challenged, and valuable life experiences shared. Their candor and generosity are two things I both cherish and miss the most. Our community thrives beyond graduation and I am happy to call my classmates dear friends. Therefore, I like to think that education extends beyond a degree or a grade: it offers a pathway to building long-lasting friendships and connections.

In this issue of *The Phoenix*, we hope to show you all the ways education weaves itself into our lives. As we are situated in a university setting, it is tempting to think of education as simply a series of stepping stones or a means to fill our resume. But as the articles you are about to read explore, the value of education extends beyond the lecture hall. From a field study in Corail-Cesselesse, Haiti to art installations inspired by the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, the articles in this issue explore the role of education on a wide global and cultural scale. Through the lens of art, we also feature a variety of photographs, drawings and poetry that aim to capture different facets of education such as the importance of self-care and the power of potential.

In addition, we feature updates from members of the Founders community, such as students and staff, who are unflagging in their efforts to offer diverse learning opportunities. Whether you're interested in learning more about French cuisine or what it takes to be a figure skating champion, we hope *The Phoenix* not only inspires you, but also offers the chance to learn something new.

## Education Beyond Borders

Erica Alusio, College Programs Assistant



*Erica Alusio,  
College Programs  
Assistant*

Education is the key to success. Education allows us to grow, develop and open our mind to the world. It teaches us to question and gain perspective. In learning, we can eliminate ignorance, reduce poverty, create sustainability, prevent illnesses and eradicate inequalities; and yet, according to UNESCO, approximately 263 million

children and youth globally are out of school; girls are more likely to never step foot in a classroom. According to the Government of Canada, a quality basic education in developing countries has proved to foster economic growth, improve social development and reduce poverty. The benefits are greater seen among girls who completed their primary education and who were now half as likely to have children who suffer from malnutrition, less likely to turn to prostitution and less prone to become infected with HIV.<sup>1</sup> Despite numerous evidences pointing to the inherent value of education, there are still various barriers stopping huge populations from gaining one of the most basic human rights, which include: poverty, overcrowded schools and armed conflict.

An organization aiming to end the global education divide is Education Beyond Borders. Education Beyond Borders works primarily, but not exclusively, in developing countries. Their main goal is to build teachers as leaders. They provide teachers around the world with materials, workshops and seminars on

the best ways to deliver lessons and courses with little resources. Each model is based on the community needs that can include workshops on literacy, peace building, environmental sustainability, health, gender, adult education and more. Seeing the value in the work done by this organization and to complement Founders' theme on the importance of education, Founders College held a fundraiser for this organization on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The fundraiser centered around a Monte-Carlo Games day, where students, staff and faculty members could purchase tickets to take part in various activities and games. The event was well attended, and we were able to raise a reasonable amount for the organization. Founders would like to thank everyone who came and donated to the cause! Aside from the obvious notion of charity, the purpose of this fundraiser was to reflect on the dilemma numerous children and youth are facing with regards to access to education, and in turn, to understand how fortunate we are to be attending a post-secondary institution. It is paramount that everyone goes to their lectures and seminars, asks questions, and takes advantage of everything York University can offer them and consciously acknowledge how privileged we are to be here.

For more information on Education Beyond Borders, please visit:

<http://www.educationbeyondborders.org>

<sup>1</sup> [http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues\\_developpement-enjeux\\_developpement/human\\_rights-droits\\_homme/education.aspx?lang=eng](http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/human_rights-droits_homme/education.aspx?lang=eng)

## Lessons from Nonna

Marco Sestito, College Programs Coordinator



*Marco Sestito,  
College Administrative  
Coordinator*

By the age of ten, my Nonna (Grandmother in Italian) completed her formal education. She knew how to read and write, knew arithmetic and civics, and she was an excellent student. In fact, I remember her showing me her report cards where she received the equivalent of straight As. So if she was so great at school, why not continue?

Well, Italy in the 1920s was not the Italy of today, and that was especially true in Southern Italy, in Calabria, where my family originates. Calabria has and continues to be one of, if not the poorest, regions in Italy, and back then, paying for high school texts, uniforms, et al, was something that many, many families simply could not afford.

This reality continued into the 1930s, during my father's youth and 1940s, my mother's, and into the 1950s. My parents and grandparents never had more than an elementary school education yet by far, they were among the most intelligent people I have ever met. And, I dare say, the same could be said of those born at that time no matter their origins.

What they were lacking in formal education, they more than made up for in an honest pursuit and appreciation for knowledge and even more so, for wisdom. Reading was a commonplace occurrence

as was keeping up with current events, asking questions and learning from others. These were all a means of continuing their education.

And now a tangent, if you will. What does a small slice of my family history have to do with education? Two things: One, that the pursuit of education is a never-ending process that extends beyond the classroom. But it is a process that one must want to pursue. It's too easy these days to lament about lost opportunities, but in an age where knowledge is more easily accessible than at any other point in human history, that excuse holds less and less weight.

Second, education is pointless if it does not lead one to wisdom. I wrote earlier in this piece about my parents and grandparents' intelligence; however, I should like to correct myself now and write instead of their wisdom. The downside of having access to knowledge as we do today is that too often, we become enamored with the quantity of what we know and yet pay little to no attention to whether what we know bears any fruit. Knowledge is only useful if it leads one to wisdom. Knowledge without wisdom only makes one a future game show contestant.

My Nonna was wise. She taught me how to live, how to be the person I am today, as did my parents. They used their elementary school education to ignite their own pursuit of wisdom and passed on that wisdom to me.

If you are reading this, you are likely a York student or graduate. You have earned or are in the process of earning your degree. You are educated. Now do something useful with that education and seek wisdom.

## A Message from the President

Rajesh Lachhman, Founders College Student Council President



*Rajesh Lachhman,  
Founders College Student  
Council President*

What is education? Education provides the foundation for individuals to have an impact on the world and integrate in the understanding of their own existence. It grants you the ability to literate fluently,

currently in front of you and participate in many walks of life. In order to truly understand the impact of education, one must recognize that it is never-ending and starts with the people in our everyday lives. My personal example of this is my father who is an educator and the main reason why I wanted to pursue the field of teaching because he was able to positively influence many lives through his years of teaching. How would I describe Founders and how im-

portant it is for education to be available? What must be recognized is that everyone has the drive to strive for greatness. Everyone in the community comes from different walks of life, meaning that people are learning everyday about subjects that are vague or abstract to them or have no prior knowledge of. Before coming to university, I had no idea what the term “intersectionality” meant and how it can be applied to everyday life. Upon being given the opportunity to learn more about intersectionality, it opened my eyes to the fact that everyone comes from different walks of life and are able to attest to different experiences.

Overall, education is not limited to the classroom but instead is able to intertwine with many aspects of life. There is an important notion that I learned throughout my time at Founders College and during my term as President: it is that you can never be stagnant when it comes to education because the moment you are stagnant is the moment education becomes a chore versus an opportunity of self-gratification, self-realization and self-awareness.



*Rajesh Lachhman at our annual  
Fall Academic Orientation giving  
an empowered speech to new  
students.*

*Photo Courtesy of Desmond Poon*

## Education as a Tool; Education as a Weapon

Desmond Poon, Urban Studies

Education as a tool; you gain knowledge you can use in the future.

Education as a weapon; you discourage ignorance.

Education as a tool; you use your knowledge to assist in making better the lives of people.

Education as a weapon; you know what's right from wrong.

Education as a tool; you learn from each other.

Education as a weapon; learn from past mistakes.

Education as a tool; failure is an option.

Education as a weapon; failure is a lesson.

Education as a tool; you elevate people from darkness.

Education as a weapon; you bring the world out of darkness.

Education as a tool; be the spark that ignites an idea.



*"Be the spark that ignites an idea"— Photo Courtesy of Desmond Poon*

# Messages from Our Students

## A Two-Tier Education: A Field Study Of The St. Paul School Community In Corail-Cesselesse, Haiti

Liam Bekirsky, French Studies



*Teachers at Saint-Paul School in Corail-Cesselesse accept classroom supplies*

The ***Report on the Field Study of the Community of Saint-Paul School of Corail-Cesselesse*** addresses the academic and psycho-social needs of the Saint-Paul School community and makes strategic recommendations for *Perspective Entraide Humanitaire (PEH)*, a charity supporting the school in its infrastructural development. It includes:

- a presentation of the context of the project, including the education sector in Haiti and its various actors, the objectives and rationale for the field study and a contextualization of education in the zone of Corail-Cesselesse (Part A);
- an outline of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies adopted by the research team, as well as a description of profiles of the participants using descriptive statistics (Part B);
- a discussion of the results framed by the major themes and issues in Haitian education, including quality education, the role and importance of the teaching personnel, of the principal, of the parents, and of NGOs and other actors, as well as questions around identity (Part C); and
- recommendations based on the results of the study and larger trends both for the school and for PEH (Part D).

### ***Context and Approaches of the Study***

Mandated by PEH, the research team led a quantitative and qualitative field study in Haiti between May 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The team consisted of Liam Bekirsky, the principal researcher, Christiane Dumont, Professor of French Studies at York University and Antoine Dérose, president and representative of PEH with support from Louise Morrison, another professor of French Studies from York University.

Preparation of the project began in Fall 2017 with the launch of the pilot surveys for teachers and administrative personnel as well as parents. In consultation with Father Garraud, principal of Saint-Paul School, revisions and additions were made to the surveys to prepare the final versions which were administered during the field study. The quantitative study was complemented by a qualitative study which consisted of focus group interviews of volunteers from the sample. Participants for the quantitative study were randomly selected, though potential sources of bias included the availability and capability of parents to respond. 50 parents and 20 teachers and administrative personnel responded to the survey, while roughly a third of the parents and half of the teachers participated in the focus groups.

In order to broaden their perspective on the school and the region, the research team also met with representatives from various other organizations including UNICEF, the Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences at the Université Notre-Dame in Jacmel and a group of community leaders in Corail-Cesselesse. They also met with principals from different schools who each had different views on the education sector in Haiti.

### ***Results and Discussion***

Questions of accessibility and quality dominate the discussion around education in Haiti. Perspectives

on what makes a quality education vary widely. Concerns of the various stakeholders centered around the misalignment of education with the employment market and between theory and practice, the lack of pedagogic and technological resources, particularly of computers, and the inadequacy of pedagogical and physical infrastructure.

While the teachers and administrators show motivation and interest in collaborating and improving their professional development, there is agreement among the various stakeholders that the teaching personnel face considerable obstacles, notably low pay, a lack of pedagogical infrastructure and professional support, as well as the high number of students in their classes.

Given the significant financial investment parents make when enrolling their children at Saint-Paul School, in some cases up to 90% of their family income, it is not surprising that there exists a large desire among the parents to be more actively involved in the school and the decision-making process. Nonetheless, the parents also face obstacles that prevent them from getting more involved, notably a lack of time and money.

Almost all community stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrative personnel, and community leaders) have confidence in the leadership at Saint-Paul School. Father Garraud, principal of the school, nonetheless faces significant challenges, notably in terms of financing the school's activities and allocating the limited resources effectively. Linguistic and cultural identity dominated much of the discussion in the interviews and survey responses. Various stakeholder communities remain divided, notably around the question of language of instruction (Creole or French).

The absence of the Ministry of Education and NGOs in the region is very much felt by all stakeholders of Saint-Paul School.

### **Recommendations**

In making their recommendations, the research team recognizes the significant limits of their study, notably in terms of time spent on the ground and number of different actors interviewed. Taking into account the realities and needs of the school, of the region of Corail-Cesselesse, of the country and of global trends, the researchers made the following strategic recommendations for the school's continued development:

- Continue to reinforce and build up the school as a center for community activity and engagement
- Organize a committee of parents
- Reflect and develop strategies to design and implement collective projects among the school's stakeholders

- Develop a strategic plan for the school in consultation with members of the school community's stakeholders
- Set up a computer laboratory (which could take the form of a cybercafé) to inspire new projects, increase access to knowledge and resources and improve the digital literacy of the school community

The research team also made several recommendations for PEH to better prioritize their financial and in-kind support for the school's development. These recommendations complement those made for the general development of the school and focus primarily on the mobilization of in-kind resources, particularly expert consulting from members of PEH and volunteers in Haiti, Canada and worldwide, to support Father Garraud in the development of the school's strategic plan and the design and set-up of the computer laboratory.



*Father Garraud and the research team visit one of Saint-Paul School's classrooms*

## Betsabeé Romero's "Braided Roots / Trenzando raíces" at the AG-YU: A Journey Through Culture, Human Connections and Unity

Felicia Addesi, 1st-Year Italian Studies with a minor in Spanish

I became interested in studying the Spanish language and culture after traveling to countries like the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Cuba. During my first semester at York, I had the opportunity to learn about Latin American art by visiting the exhibit "Braided Roots / Trenzando raíces" by Mexican artist Betsabeé Romero at the Art Gallery of York University with my Elementary Spanish class. Romero's work allowed me to have a greater respect and appreciation for Indigenous cultures here in Canada. In addition, one concept that resonated with me was the use of circles throughout the exhibit to represent unity.

In her work, Betsabeé Romero uses everyday objects, such as cars, road signs and tires, as well as trees, feathers and musical instruments. The first installation, for example, was titled "Wind and Lightning" [Aves de viento y relámpagos] and displayed ten beautiful hand-carved flutes, which had been created by undergraduate students enrolled in sculptural practice studios. At the top of the flutes were carvings of various shapes of bird heads. Each flute had motion sensors and when students waved their hands or walked near the flutes, different colours of light would display. I recall approaching the flutes and feeling a sense of astonishment about the passion, commitment and possibilities of human achievement.

The brochure for the exhibit stated that Indigenous cultures in Mesoamerica used flutes as luring devices. They were used by people to attract birds in order to obtain their feathers. Betsabeé Romero created a new type of flute to instead attract human attention and to allow viewers to interact with her art installations. When observing my classmates, I recognized that their attention was solely on the flutes, which brought about laughter and enjoyment, as well as conversation. Romero had the ability to 'seduce' her audience by allowing us to enjoy the exhibit while simultaneously promoting communication with one another, using our voices, emotions and eye contact in conjunction with old and new forms of technology.

The last room of the art gallery displayed an installation titled "Awakening of the Birds" [Despertar de las Aves], which consists of a round display of bright colourful feathers suspended in the air. The circular display created a circular shadow on the ground near where my classmates and I were standing. Hence, all of us could engage very easily with the art installation. Suzanne Carte, one of the curators at the gallery, pointed out that, "When standing in a circle, we can recognize the other members of our community." I was fascinated with this concept because I think that often times, instead of having face to face interactions with other individuals of our community, we have different forms of social media distracting us from engaging in one on one conversation.

"Braided Roots / Trenzando raíces" was curated by Emelie Chhangur and Cathie Jamieson and was influenced by the "experiences, encounters, and exchanges" Betsabeé Romero had during her art residency in Toronto in 2017 and her visit to the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. While admiring and studying Romero's work, I noticed a correlation with my own experiences as a learner. Traveling abroad stimulated my desire to pursue higher education, as well as my quest to grapple and understand my drive for something foreign. I highly recommend anyone to visit the Art Gallery of York University and to approach the experience with an open mind and heart to appreciate what we can achieve with desire and passion.



“Swinging Hearts With Our Hands on Our Maternal Belly” by Betsabée Romero located in the AGYU. Altered tractor tires with deer hide drums, videos. Commissioned by the Art Gallery of York University in partnership with the L.L. Odette Artist-in-Residency program, School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design. Drums by Jordan Jamieson and Cathie Jamieson (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation) with Betsabée Romero, Emelie Chhangur, Ana Ghookassoan and Malina Sintnicolaas.



“Wind and Lightning” by Betsabée Romero located in the AGYU



“Awakening of the Birds” by Betsabée Romero located in the AGYU

## Educate Yourself

### Miles Obille, 2nd-Year Social Work

Education exists far beyond the walls of schools. It is neither the ability to repeat something verbatim nor is it proving to professors you did the readings through an essay referencing course texts. The importance of education is not something that can be captured through a letter grade. It is a process of learning and thinking that helps expand knowledge. Education tends to be associated with the institution of school, however, it is not something that suddenly sparks once you enter then dies as you leave. It is a process that bares no limits, with more knowledge to gain, things to learn, and improvements to make.

This is not to say that school as a source of education is not important. In fact, school is important and many jobs require some level of schooling. School facilitates a shared space that challenges students to engage with content that helps them exercise their critical thinking, as well as their interpersonal skills through social interactions with others. A classroom environment with students and a teacher is common globally and happens to be recognized as a right under article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The problem with school is that as a society, we are conditioned to believe that school and education are so closely linked that the two become inseparable. This can lead to a state of content that in turn, can infringe on one's ability to grow. The purpose of school is to help exercise learning skills, gain knowledge, and prepare for the future. The purpose of education is to recognize that you do not know everything and that learning is a path that has a beginning but no end.

Education is not something limited to school. You were learning prior to school, whether it be your first steps or first words. When in school, it is important not to fall into the glass-filling prophecy of teachers filling you with knowledge. There are no rules that state students cannot teach the teacher, just as the

teacher teaches the students. In actuality, there are no rules that state that school is necessary for success, as some of the most successful people did not make it far in their formal education or pursue anything post-secondary.

School is not important, but education is. School acts as a way to measure and legitimize education. You can claim you are educated, but for an employer that must be validated. This validation is obtained through school, and thus, schools (or more specifically, the degree or certificate you receive) are utilized to legitimize and measure levels of education.

Not being in school does not make you uneducated and finishing school does not mean it is put on pause. School cannot teach you everything. Instead of taking interpretations of content, hold conversations with people that experience or know about it firsthand. There is power instilled with education. It is not only important for its benefits career-wise, but also for its potential to break the barrier of differences.

So educate yourself.

Educate yourself, so you never make a racist comment. Educate yourself, so you understand the history of Canada's colonial past and its impacts on Indigenous communities. Educate yourself, to understand that preferred gender pronouns exist. Educate yourself, to realize ableism is a form of oppression. Educate yourself, to understand the colour of someone's skin has nothing to do with their character. Educate yourself, so you understand and respect your peers. Educate yourself, to understand how legislations are impacting you.

## Explore A New Country With a Summer Abroad Course

Muhammad Yasir Khan, 3rd-Year International Development Studies



*Muhammad Yasir Khan in Greece*

Last year, I had an opportunity to visit Greece (Athens and Syros) for a YorkU Summer Abroad course called “Greece: A Modern History.” It was a great opportunity for me to go and learn something about a country which I have never been to. The best part about this course was that I stayed with my classmates with whom I made many memories with, such as going out together to different islands or course-related trips, and chilling together at night before going to bed. The other great thing about this course was that our professor, who teaches courses mostly related to Greece at York during the school year, had an immense knowledge of the country.

After two weeks of classes at York, the day finally came when I had to fly to Greece for the remainder of the course. I still remember the exact feeling of nervousness and anxiety, as that was my first time going to another country without my parents. I asked myself: “How will I live in this country, as this is for a whole month? How will I adjust with my classmates? What will happen?” When I landed in Athens, my friend and I who were on the same flight tried speak-

ing with the taxi driver who had come to pick us up and while talking to him, he said, “I don’t speak English so well.” For the rest of the drive to the residence, I understood that communication could be a barrier. But after having completed the course, I will say it was not.

When it comes to the experience I had, I learned a lot from meeting researchers and local people in Athens who guided me when I was lost while finding my way home. While studying the topic, “Greece and the Asian Diaspora”, I met students from other countries studying the same thing. We completed research projects in Greece and they explained to me how the Greek language is written. Another great part about this course was also visiting some historical cities. A major one was Nafplio, as it was the capital of Greece before Athens, which helped me understand the history of the country. The museums also helped me understand the local people who fought for the freedom of Greece. I am glad I had this opportunity to explore a new country and meet people who ensured to make my experience of visiting Greece a memorable one.

## Skating on Thin Ice: An Interview with Alaine Chartrand

Interview by Rebecca Mangra



*Alaine Chartrand, two-time Canadian skating champion*

When Professor Colussi-Arthur sat down to watch the 2019 Canadian Tire National Skating Championships, the last thing she expected was to see anyone familiar. After all, skating is a sport she competed in as a child and regularly follows as an adult. Little did she know that one of the students enrolled in her Introduction to Italian class would be competing! Alaine Chartrand, a first-year Kinesiology major at York University, was crowned the 2019 Canadian Tire National Skating Champion at Harbour Station in Saint John, New Brunswick on January 19, 2019. Chartrand has been competing at the national level for 10 years and internationally for 6 years. The Office of the College Head was able to get an exclusive interview with Chartrand to chat all about the skating life.

### **1. When did you know you wanted to pursue figure skating? Was there a specific moment?**

I started skating at the young age of 4, so I was just thrown into the sport from the beginning. We started taking it seriously by age 6 when I started travelling an hour to another rink for help with a higher-level coach. By the time I was 10, I was chosen as a skater with great talent.

### **2. What are some of the unexpected challenges you have had to face? What are some unexpected highlights?**

Ankle injuries have been an unexpected challenge for me at inopportune times. A sprained ankle left

me off the Olympic team last year. This was devastating and I strongly considered calling it a career. An unexpected highlight was that I decided to skate another year, which led to winning a 2nd national title while pursuing a university degree.

### **3. What has been your favourite moment so far?**

When I won the National Championships in 2016, it was the best competition of my career. The moment at the end of my long program is one I will never forget. There was a lot of pressure and I needed to skate my very best. I did exactly that and felt such satisfaction. But then seeing the standing ovation and tears of those I had moved with my performance was an indescribable feeling.

### **4. How do you balance school, your personal life and skating?**

It is definitely a challenge, but the university has been helpful. I had to manage regular public school with my training in the past, so it isn't something completely new for me, but at the same time it is also much more difficult with a higher level of education. That being said, I do enjoy having the balance of education and athletics. My student-athlete lifestyle doesn't allow for much personal time, but I try to keep in touch with my teammates and friends who

live in other cities.

### **5. What is something about skating that would surprise most people?**

I think it is surprising to people just how many aspects there are of the sport and how much knowledge we have on a variety of topics. Through skating, I have learned about costume design, makeup application and hair styling. We deeply understand the human body and strength, flexibility, and endurance training. Nutrition is a mandatory area of knowledge. In addition, we learn about different styles of dance off the ice and develop a great ear for music.

### **6. What are your future goals regarding your skating career?**

I have accomplished many things to be proud of in my career. In the short term, I am looking forward to competing at my 3rd World Championships at the end of March. Beyond that, it is hard to say as I expected last season to be my final.

**From Founders College, we wish Alaine all the best in her future endeavours!**



## **INTERESTED IN SPORTS?**

York University has one of the largest intramural programs in the country!

Contact [fcscathletics@gmail.com](mailto:fcscathletics@gmail.com) for more information on how you can get involved!

# Verses in Education

## Ripples

Michael Karpati, 2nd-Year English and Creative Writing

The pond stills. I wait for it to move again, but it doesn't, until another one of the students sees me and walks to meet me through the blue-green water, the liquid swishing and swirling around his calves. His footsteps send ripples flowing outward in all directions. The ripples cascade into one another and form transient ridges, almost golden in the sunlight, and they direct themselves casually out into the open waters and dissipate amongst the seen and unseen currents. His current changes and draws him back to the others, away from me and out of my field of vision. The class is behind me and they chatter on about the future with open mouths and semi-closed eyes. They hold the key to time and the future, and they know it. They all know what they want to do, what they want to be. Lawyers. Doctors. Accountants. Some have eyes a shade more open than the others. I only wish my eyes would open, so I could see long after we all leave the water behind and the ripples eventually stop rippling. Silence.

## The Importance of Education

Danielle Zimmerman, Contributor

Not all education is academic. The most important form of education is rather cultivated by our own life experiences.

As a young child, they discovered I was dyslexic. An old woman taught me to read through photographs and I conquered what I was told was a disorder.

I have learned a great deal about compassion and respect, amongst other things, and I have learned to advance through life in trial and error.

My mind is an open vessel, an unwritten book. I am eager to experience every minuscule thing, learning by the choices I make and opening doors as opportunities arise.

I have taken care of humankind and have been taken care of. I've built a house from the ground up, been cultured by travel, learned from losses in my life and made a great deal of mistakes along the way, but each one was a lesson learned.

As the days pass, I grow wiser by my own will. I am the teacher and I am learning.

## The Nutrients of Life

Alisha Dhawan, 5th-Year History



*"The theme of this piece is 'the importance of education' and as this piece depicts, we need education to flourish and grow. However, it is also important to take the time to do things that help us pursue an education — whether it's doing art, playing an instrument, exercising or whatever works for you."*

## Somewhere Beyond the Classroom

Ayesha Boison, 2nd-Year Professional Writing

Those in the back barely pay attention to what is told,  
those in the front hear it all tenfold.  
Those in the middle do it both ways,  
many of them strive for good enough,  
and not particularly A's.  
And what are educators teaching in the midst of all this?  
Something valuable for life I hope.  
They preach a 'gospel',  
much more frequently than a Pope.

Posters of reused words of encouragement  
and anonymous quotes on the walls.  
We come in everyday and look at them  
but hardly remember them at all.  
I haven't the faintest clue what a mortgage is  
but at least I know Shakespeare,  
I can work up the courage to meet new people  
but essays I'll always fear.

School's almost out, and the teacher has one last task,  
'What do you want for your future?' ourselves we must ask.  
My classmates begin to talk — brag about their future.  
A few start mocking each other.  
They've abused the word 'loser'.  
I sit alone and put my head on the desk.  
I'm unsure of what I'll do for my future.  
I have nothing to confess,  
as a reassuring teacher magically appears at my side  
who says, 'don't worry, you're young, you're bright,  
you've got time.'

## Peacock

Zhasmina Zheleva, 2nd-Year Environmental Studies



*"According to many, the peacock symbolizes Vision and Awakening. What is education, if not the entertainment of thought and the exploration of knowledge. Just like the colourful feathers of a peacock, we each come together in a beautiful blend of experiences and lessons learned. Each one of us contributes to the beautiful tale of life, one that never stops educating us along the way."*

# Community Messages

## A Message from the Peer Academic Leader Coordinator

Khadeja Elsibai, 4th-Year Public Policy and French Studies

Founders College's Peer Academic Leadership Program (formerly called the Peer Mentorship Program) is an excellent resource for students, especially in their first year! The program recruits upper-year students in most of Founders' affiliated programs, called PALs, who hold office hours in Central PARC (room FC 102), provide one-on-one support and facilitate two workshops. This year, the PALs have accomplished a lot! They facilitated a writing drop-in session, a workshop on preparing for tests & exams and the College's mid-year round-table discussion. Furthermore, they deliv-

ered presentations on the program in over 8 first-year classes and have been supporting countless of students in their overall student experience.

If you are seeking help with articulating your thesis, getting involved on campus and much more, drop by room FC 102 and speak to a PAL! To find out more about the events the PALs will be hosting or to receive one-on-one support, check out the poster below!

## BECOME A PEER ACADEMIC LEADER

### REQUIREMENTS

- GPA of 6.0 or above
- Commit to volunteering for at least 1 term

### BENEFITS OF BEING A P.A.L.

- Flexible volunteer opportunity
- Improve interpersonal skills, leadership skills, time management, etc.
- Expand knowledge of York University & enhance your experience
- Assist students & share your experiences
- Receive training in student support
- Opportunity to get involved at Founders College
- Receive volunteer hours on YUConnect & a certificate of recognition

### OBJECTIVES OF P.A.L. PROGRAM

- Provide easily accessible & ongoing support
- Help new students adapt to university life
- Connect 1st year students with upper year students in their program
- Familiarize incoming students with services & resources at York University

**APPLY TODAY! <https://bit.ly/2tSJDe2>**

For more information, contact: [founders@yorku.ca](mailto:founders@yorku.ca)



## Getting Through Ruff Times: Therapy Dogs Come to Founders

Rebecca Mangra

Last November, Founders College invited therapy dogs from the Therapeutic Paws of Canada (TPOC) to alleviate the stress and anxiety students feel prior to exams. As detailed on their website, TPOC is a non-profit organization of volunteers that provides “animal resources for human needs (physical, mental, educational, motivational, socialization) through regular visits to hospitals, residences, schools, etc.” You can find more information about their organization at [www.tpoc.ca](http://www.tpoc.ca). You can also donate at [www.tpoc.ca/supporters-volunteers/donate](http://www.tpoc.ca/supporters-volunteers/donate) and include that you are donating to the North York team.

Almost 100 students came out to the event aptly titled “Paws Before Finals.” Students broke off

into groups of 10-15 to play, pet, and engage with three of TPOC’s dogs, Summer, Flash and Capri. Menakshi Babulall, 4<sup>th</sup>-year International Development Studies student tells us, “The puppies were not only cute, but also helped me relax during such a stressful time.”

The Office of the College Head is happy to be able to organize events where students can relax and recharge. We are hoping to plan more events with therapy dogs in the new school year. Stay tuned to our Instagram (@founderscollege) and Facebook (@FoundersCollegeAtYorkU) pages for more details!



*Students at Paws Before Finals*

## A Message from the Founders College Alumni Network (FCAN)

Joanne Huy, B.E.S (Hons.) '15

Founders College will always have a special place in my heart. Ever since I started my journey at York, I was welcomed into a community with open arms, a community that is so accepting, caring and fun. Through my involvement with both the College and York University, I was able to create lasting friendships and unforgettable memories with not only current students, but also alumni, faculty members, and staff! Thanks to their encouragement, I had the opportunity to experience growth and personal development by engaging in a variety of student leadership roles across campus – through student council, the student union, and through intramural sports. I am thankful for the relationships I've built with my network of friends, some of which I consider my family today! My experience at Founders while pursuing my BES degree has impacted me in such a positive way and helped shape me to the person I am today. With that being said, I continue to be inspired to offer the same experiences to our community members even beyond my graduation in 2015. I had the pleasure of joining the Founders College Alumni Network (FCAN) as one of the co-chairs and creating network opportunities to engage alumni and to support current students. I'm happy to share that the community of friends that you build at Founders does not end after convocation! In fact, your journey is just the beginning of a life-long con-

nection to the Founders College community. Since 1965, Founders College has been the home away from home for many and has helped create countless memories for students and faculty members alike. Founders College has fostered valuable experiences and relationships that extend beyond graduation. FCAN exists so that we can continue to maintain and grow these friendships, community, and spirit we all shared during our time at York University. Our Network is actively growing and we engage our alumni by hosting events such as professional networking opportunities and social outings, facilitating connections, and sharing resources to keep our community vibrant. To date, we have held multiple Alumni Reunions, BATL Axe Throwing events, Blue Jays games, Comedy Nights, and participated in various panels and roundtables to also support current Founders students and the Founders Office of the College Head. Our upcoming 2019 Alumni Reunion will take place in Spring – stay tuned for more details!

For additional information about upcoming events or committee meetings, contact us at [YUFCAN@yorku.ca](mailto:YUFCAN@yorku.ca), join our Facebook page (Founders College Alumni Network) or follow us on Twitter and Instagram (@FoundersAlumNet). We hope to see you back at Founders College soon!



*Founders College Alumni Network members at the College's 50th Anniversary in 2015*

## AEFFY Brings Francophone Culture & French Language to Keele Campus Community

Khadeja Elsibai

Vous parlez français? Vous êtes francophone? Vous êtes francophile? Adhérez au club AEFFY ! Association des Étudiants Francophones et Francophiles de York (AEFFY) is a club formed in August 2018 with the objective of hosting socio-cultural and academic-oriented activities in French, an official language in Canada and the 5th most spoken language in the world with 300 million speakers<sup>1</sup>. The club aims to unite French-speaking and francophile students from diverse backgrounds on the Keele campus. It strives to bring aspects of francophone culture to York University, thereby allowing Francophone students to build a sense of pride in their culture and to share it with the York community. Furthermore, AEFFY creates a space in which Francophone students can feel comfortable in their own skin. Students learning the French language benefit from first-hand interaction with French-speaking natives, which helps them deepen their un-

derstanding of Francophone culture while participating in extra-curricular activities on the Keele campus.

To date, the club has conducted outreach, participated in the York Federation of Students' Multicultural Week 2019, hosted a Meet and Greet in the Fall term and organized weekly French conversation sessions called "Cafe Conversations." The club planned a successful "5 à 7" (Winter Social) on March 6th, 2019 and hosted numerous activities during the week of March 18th to celebrate International Francophonie Day. Connect with the club on Facebook and Instagram at "AEFFYork", through YUConnect and via email at [aef York@gmail.com](mailto:aef York@gmail.com).

<sup>1</sup><https://www.francophonie.org/lancement-rapport-langue-francaise-dans-le-monde-2018.html>



*Members at the Multicultural Week Parade in January 2019*



*Gougères and poudine mais served at the Multicultural Week Food Fair*

## The Importance of Stories, Student Engagement and Learning Outside the Classroom

Samir Janmohamed, Alumnus and IDSAY President

As a student at York, I vividly remember my first week trying to navigate the large campus and find an organization I could be a part of. While there are hundreds of clubs and associations to choose from, many students are likely to feel overwhelmed, lost and alone. As a student in Economics and International Development Studies (IDS), I believed one of the best ways for me to get involved on campus was through student clubs that brought together others who were pursuing similar majors. In my head, these associations would provide me the ability to continue the discussions we often start in class but never have enough time to discuss later in the day. Quickly, I understood that all my learning in university would not be limited to my interactions with professors in the classroom. I realized, however, that there was a lack of spaces where such could take place.

In my fourth year, I remember Professor Idemudia brought up the need to restart the International Development Students' Association. He casually asked, "Who would want to be the president of the association?" Instinctively, I raised my hand. A few weeks later, other students and I founded the International Development Students' Association at York University with the aim of creating a community with students in the program, while giving them the chance to meet and engage with other students, professors, and professionals with experience working in the Global South.

When studying IDS, we are often stuck learning about theory and research to understand the social, political and economic issues faced by different countries. As interesting and important as it is to understand these challenges, I would argue that it is equally essential for students to hear first-hand stories of individuals who

work on the ground in action, recognizing the challenges they have faced and the work they do. As President of the Association, I wanted to ensure the club would be able to provide students with the opportunity to learn of these challenges before they entered the workforce.

Since our founding in January 2018, we have successfully run two speaker sessions. The first one aimed to demystify NGOs with the discussion centred on questioning their actions, sustainability, and accountability. Our second session focused on understanding Micro-insurance and Microfinance, debating their long-term benefits, sustainability, and role in development in the Global South. Our overarching aim was to provide students with experiential education opportunities to gain a more in-depth understanding of the concepts and ideas discussed in class. It is our belief that through students attending these events, listening, engaging and asking questions, they are developing their ability to become critical thinkers and problem solvers while also continuously reflecting and challenging what they learn in the classroom setting.

The power of storytelling through in-person interactions between students and professionals has provided those who have engaged with us this year with a better understanding of the world they will enter as graduates. It is our hope to continue planning more events that encourage students to discuss the challenges faced when working in the development sector while developing a connection with professionals who have a wealth of knowledge and thought-provoking stories to share.

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*"Quickly, I understood that all my learning in university would not be limited to my interactions with professors in the classroom."*

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*IDSAY at the International Development Conference at UTSC*



*IDSAY at their NGO Speaker Session*

## An Excerpt of *In Strategy*— E2S1: Access To Education & Lifelong Learning With David Agnew

Hewan Wossene, 1st-Year Human Rights & Equity Studies



David Agnew (left) and Hewan Wossene (right)

**Hewan:** Welcome to our second episode of *In Strategy*. Today we're talking about access to education and lifelong learning. Today with us we have Mr. David Agnew, the president of Seneca College. Welcome and thank you for being here with us.

**David:** It's my pleasure. Thank you for inviting me.

**Hewan:** Today we're going to talk about access to education. We'll start it off with a quote from Malala, "One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world." What are your views on that?

**David:** Well, it's interesting. I worked for a little while in international development and the phrase that was taught to me was, 'You teach a boy and you educate a man. You teach a girl and you educate a village or a country or a nation' and it wasn't trying to be sexist, but it was basically saying education had to be something that was universal. Of course, a lot of us of my vintage, we grew up in an

era when, and this unfortunately persists to this day, in certain cultures where education is a boy's advantage and so part of that was trying to say, look if we really want to move the yardsticks as they say in football, if we really want to change society, we have to make sure everybody has an opportunity to be educated.

**Hewan:** For sure, quality education for all whether you're a girl or a boy, for anyone. Let's look at goal number four from the sustainable development goals. We're going to be focusing on quality education and according to the United Nations, it's described as 'ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning for all.' What are your thoughts on that and how do you think we can achieve that by the year 2030?

**David:** Sure, it's an ambitious goal but I think we also should recognize there's been a lot of progress. So the very positive side of this is that I think

you'd literally find compared to twenty years ago, hundreds of millions of young people have access to education. But yes, it has to be a quality education. It's not just good enough to warehouse our children in big gigantic classrooms and not provide that kind of opportunity for a quality education and that's hard because that's investment. That takes a true investment. It starts with great training for teachers and it starts with appropriate facilities. I always remember again from my days in international development that part of a good educational experience in certain parts of the world is making sure that there were good, clean facilities and in schools, so the girls felt comfortable going to them and so on. We have to make school a welcoming place and one with opportunity and of course, I would say this particularly from a perspective of the Seneca world which is, we have to make sure it's relevant to people when they're thinking about the kinds of careers they want and the kinds of job prospects they want, and the kinds of futures they want to build.

**Hewan:** For sure and that also relates to the educational leadership that comes within schools. According to the Sustainable Development Goals, we see them implemented more and more in places, especially here at Newnham campus. We see it through the textile diversion initiative and we see that through how textile and the fashion world affects sustainability, so in terms of that, how do you think we can implement those goals within our communities?

**David:** It's interesting because I think one of the things that you see in the textile waste diversion initiative is a great example where we could just stick a bin in the hall but no, it's being used as a teaching aid. It's being used as an exemplar. We were talking the other day about ways of how we could expand it. I think that you can if you look at all of those sustainability goals and obviously we are privileged to live in a country like Canada where we're not worried about the quality of water in Toronto. We are worried about it in parts of Canada, particularly with indigenous communities, where

it continues to be a challenge but we can use things like the sustainability goals as a way of teaching, a way of learning and as a way of promoting a better and a more sustainable future.

**Hewan:** One thing we see happening in underdeveloped countries is students or children having to walk hours to schools. Do you think there's a way we can bring the education to them and make it even more accessible?

**David:** Technology clearly offers us opportunities to take it to students and take it to communities in a way that we could never hope by bringing everybody from those communities into one place, so there's no question there's more that can be done. Of course in many parts of the world, including in Canada, you take high-speed Wi-Fi for granted. In lots of parts of the world and certainly even parts of Canada or even parts of southern Ontario, you still can't effectively do distance education because this is no longer just static websites.

**To access the rest of Hewan's interview, please scan the following QR code:**



## Founders in the News

### York University English Language Institute Named World Language School of the Year

#### YFile

The following article was published on October 28, 2018 in *YFile*, York University's campus newsletter:

The York University English Language Institute (YUELI) has been recognized as the 2018-19 World Language School of the Year – North America by *iStudy Guide*. The award is the highest recognition for a language institution.

YUELI provides English-language instruction for academic and professional purposes and serves approximately 3,000 students from more than 50 different countries every year. The foundational English-language skills and campus experience gained through YUELI programs help students achieve their academic and career goals at York and around the world.

"YUELI, like Toronto and Canada as a whole, is very open to people of all backgrounds," said Isaac Garcia-Sitton, director of International Education and YUELI. "We pride ourselves on our plurality of cultures and, more importantly, of thought. We are blessed to live in this beautifully diverse country that celebrates unique differences, ideas and experiences – and our institute is very much a microcosm of our country."

Based in the U.K., *iStudy Guide* (Fenice Media Ltd.) is one of the premier international study guides in the world, with annual issues in both digital and print formats published to a subscription base of 250,000 and a readership of 300,000 globally.

An independent panel of judges is appointed each year to conduct research on participating institutions and to analyze their submissions. For the 2017-18 issue, 11,761 votes from 32 countries in total were used to nominate and decide on the award winners.

Institutions are evaluated on the following criteria: student satisfaction, subject knowledge, teaching methods, cultural understanding, school facilities, use of technology, online visibility, diversity, communica-

tion skills and more.

Previous winners of the Language School of the Year award include the University of Victoria English Language Centre (Canada), the YMCA International Language School (Canada) and the Aston International Academy (U.S.).

YUELI is a part of the School of Continuing Studies and has been operating for 33 years with the mission to provide the highest quality English training programs for academic and professional purposes. It is one of very few language institutes in Canada to offer training for students at all levels of English. As the largest public English-language institute in the country, YUELI is able to offer pre-university pathway programs as well as custom-designed courses tailor-made for institutional partners based on their individual needs.

See a sneak peek of YUELI's feature in *iStudy Guide* 2018-19.



## A Summer Indoors Equals a Perfect Internship for a Graduating Student

Elaine Smith, special contributing writer to *Innovatus*



*Neave Constantine*

The following article was published on February 21, 2019 in *YFile*, York University's campus newsletter:

Spending his summer behind a desk at one of the Town of Richmond Hill's municipal offices was the perfect placement for graduating student Neave Constantine.

A mature student, Constantine will earn his BES (Honours) in Environmental Studies in April. Not only did his placement confirm that he chose the right major, but it kept him out of the hot sun.

"I have an advanced Ontario diploma in civil engineering, so I worked on a job site for two years," Constantine said with a chuckle. "I had my fill of being out in the weather."

Even better, he gained hands-on experience working with a geographic information system (GIS) and six credits as part of ENVS 4001.

"I'm intending to work after graduation, so I wanted to see where I fit into the job market," Constantine said. "I'm certified in GIS, but I had no experience."

That has all changed after a summer – 540 hours – spent working for the Town of Richmond Hill's Environment & Infrastructure Services. Rapid development is turning the town from a rural environment to an urban one, and developers and contractors need real-time information about the infrastructure before they break ground on new projects. Constantine took surveyors' data about the location of watermain, gas lines and other services and created the maps used by the builders. He worked under pressure, knowing that

people would be coming into the office daily requesting the maps he was creating and expecting them to be correct.

"My contributions were needed and they [the supervisors] trusted me," he said. "It gave me a real sense of responsibility."

"I also got real GIS experience. I had been taught specific theory, but working with the team, I learned different ways of going about it."

It wasn't only the technical lessons that Constantine learned. "I was part of a team and it was essential to fit in seamlessly," he said. "You must be able to get along with everyone."

Having previously worked in the private sector, he was intrigued by the difference he saw working for the government. "In the private sector, it was about the quantity of results," Constantine said. "In the public sector, you want good quality results. What you do must be done properly, because you are accountable to the public."

After interviewing for the placement and being offered the position, Constantine discovered that his supervisor was a York alumnus.

"People do look after each other," he said of the University's alumni community. "On the job, too, the networking has been immeasurably helpful."

Constantine has begun to apply for post-graduation jobs, but he has decided to keep his options open by also applying to a master's program in Environmental Studies. Whichever route he takes, he is grateful to his placement for its lessons and opportunities.

"It made me more confident that the future I hope for is attainable," he said. "Even the positive criticism made me believe that there is a future for me in the job market."

## In Memoriam

### Passings: Louis Lefebvre

YFile



*CERLAC's founding conference. From left to right: Louis Lefebvre, CERLAC's founding director; David Pollock; Raul Prebisch; H. Ian McDonald, former York University president; Domingos Donida; Arturo O'Donnell; José Nun*

The following article was published on August 1, 2018 in *YFile*, York University's campus newsletter:

Louis Lefebvre, noted economist and founding director of York University's Centre for Research on Latin America and the Caribbean (CERLAC), died at Mount Sinai Hospital on July 28.

Born in Budapest, Hungary in 1924, Lefebvre left Hungary in the early 1950s, first heading to Italy, and then to Venezuela "because the visa line was shortest," he said. He stayed in Venezuela, where he worked in the oil industry for a number of years.

After travelling to New York on a Venezuelan passport to visit his brother, he was admitted to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as a graduate student in economics despite the fact that he had no documentation of his prior education. He obtained a doctorate in economics from MIT and eventually taught there.

In the early 1970s, he moved to Toronto with his wife, Rosalind, having accepted a position in the Economics Department at York University where he remained for the rest of his career.

Lefebvre was a leading figure in development economics, and published research on India as well as various Latin American countries. He played a key role in the creation of CERLAC and was its director from 1978-84, as well as a professor of economics. Lefebvre dedicated much of his energy to shaping economic policies, and worked closely with international organizations and progressive political leaders, most notably former Greek prime minister Andreas Papandreou.

In his final years, Lefebvre remained an active scholar and staunch supporter of CERLAC.

## Passings: Priscila Uppal

Jennifer Duncan



*Priscila Uppal*

It is because of Founders Fellow Priscila Uppal that I've been teaching in York's Creative Writing Program for over a dozen years. We first met as successful graduates of the program giving readings at its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and I was impressed by her drive and boldness. Years later, she recognized me at Doubleday's party for Ian McEwan and we got so caught up in an animated discussion of creative writing pedagogy that we almost missed the champagne toast. Days later, she called and invited me to teach at York, where she was coordinating the program with Richard Teleky while finishing her doctorate. She changed my life, opening up vistas before me, as she did for so many.

Priscila was the most powerful force of generativity and generosity I have ever met. She wrote 11 books of poetry, 2 novels, 2 plays, a collection of short stories, a memoir and a scholarly treatise on the Canadian elegy; she edited 7 anthologies, helped found Canadian Creative Writers and Writing Programs to advance our pedagogy, organized conferences, and was poet-in-residence at the Olympics; and, she ran marathons, gave legendary parties, and supported dozens of causes as well as a huge network of friends. She would run from her house at St. Clair and Oakwood down to a festival at Harbourfront, change into a glamorous outfit with a hat fit for royalty, give a passionate reading, then throw a soiree to celebrate a friend's award.

She gave me an elegant baby shower, then published an essay about it to explore her lack of desire for motherhood. But as she housed and coached a friend fallen on hard times, sent monthly cheques to impoverished poets, hosted clothing swaps to help writers to a professional wardrobe, and loyally promoted and guided the careers of her students and peers, I would tell her that I wished she was my mother, her nurturance was so practical and inspirational.

When she was on her deathbed this past September, she was still arranging her courses at York, convinced that her monumental strength and will would save her. Becoming increasingly feeble, surrounded by her devoted friends, she got calls that she'd won the Exile short story prize and was long-listed for an essay prize. She told me, "It matters, but it doesn't matter." And it doesn't matter as much as her being alive to continue her work, but it does matter very much that she was here, giving us her words, her teaching, and her flamboyant and authentic self.



## **We Need You!**

**We are always seeking contributions for *The Phoenix* and are always happy to provide a platform to showcase the work of our students, Fellows, staff and alumni.**

**If you would like to contribute to the next edition of *The Phoenix* in Fall 2019, please send your articles, artwork, poetry and photos to [founders@yorku.ca](mailto:founders@yorku.ca).**