

# BRINGING LIFE TO LEARNING AT ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES



classroom learning + real-life learning  
 **CAREER  
SUCCESS**

ONTARIO  
UNIVERSITIES | BRINGING LIFE  
TO LEARNING



## **GRADUATES WITH RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE ARE AHEAD OF THEIR PEERS.**

THE NATIONAL GRADUATES SURVEY SHOWS BACHELOR'S LEVEL GRADUATES WITH CO-OP EXPERIENCE EARN MORE THAN THEIR PEERS, HAVE HIGHER EMPLOYMENT AND FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT RATES, AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAVE PAID OFF DEBT TWO YEARS AFTER GRADUATION.





**EMPLOYERS OFTEN  
REQUIRE PROSPECTIVE  
EMPLOYEES TO HAVE  
TWO TO FIVE YEARS OF  
WORK EXPERIENCE.**



APPLIED LEARNING PROGRAMS  
STRENGTHEN STUDENTS' MARKETABILITY  
AND CAN VASTLY IMPROVE CAREER  
PROSPECTS AT GRADUATION.











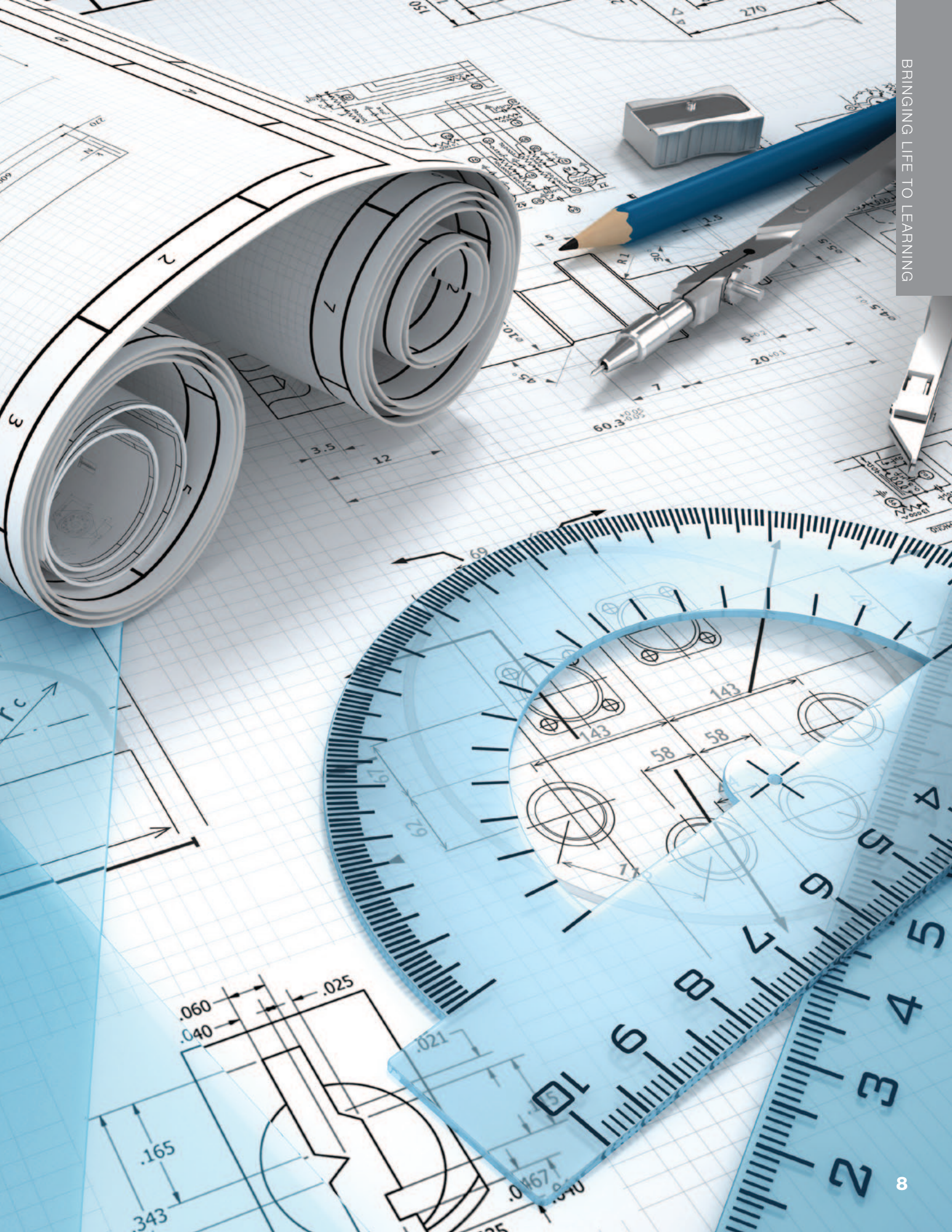
**THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS HAVE  
FOUND FULL-TIME WORK IN THEIR  
FIELDS OF STUDY AS A RESULT  
OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING  
OPPORTUNITIES AT UNIVERSITY.**



## **STUDENTS MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE COMPANIES THEY ARE PLACED WITH, AND EMPLOYERS ARE PRAISING UNIVERSITIES FOR THESE CONTRIBUTIONS.**

DOMINIC TOSELLI IS A MECHANICAL ENGINEERING STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO WHO SAVED ENERGY GIANT SHELL CANADA \$1 MILLION A YEAR DURING HIS CO-OP PLACEMENT.



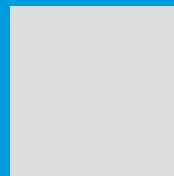




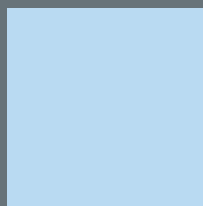


**TODAY, WORK-INTEGRATED  
LEARNING PROGRAMS AT ONTARIO  
UNIVERSITIES SPAN ALL DISCIPLINES,  
FROM ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE  
TO FINE ARTS, ENGINEERING AND  
HEALTH SCIENCES.**





**IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE  
JOB MARKET, EXPERIENTIAL  
LEARNING MAKES STUDENTS  
WORKPLACE-READY, SETTING  
THEM UP FOR CAREER SUCCESS.**





# INTRODUCTION

A different kind of learning occurs when there is no exam to study for, no essay to write – just the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills that have been learned to a real life project. From medicine to engineering and fine arts, experiential learning is where curiosity gets tested in the real world.

Applied, or work-integrated, learning is one of the fastest-growing areas for universities in Ontario, a testament to its tremendous value to students and employers. It began with practicums for students in health sciences, expanded later to those studying business and engineering, and today, spans all disciplines and faculties with hundreds of programs on university campuses. Through internships, co-op programs, community service learning and placements, students are working in businesses, sports franchises, community organizations and international development agencies. Students can also acquire experiential learning through programs on campus that encourage them to take on roles such as investment managers, campaign planners and entrepreneurs.

The benefits of these programs reach far beyond the individual experience – many thousands of students have found full-time employment in their fields of study as a result of the experiential learning opportunities gained during their university education. Since many employers require prospective employees to have two to five years of experience on their resumes, applied learning programs strengthen students' marketability and can vastly improve their career prospects at graduation.

During business and engineering co-ops, medicine and technology practicums and fine arts placements, students engaged in experiential learning programs are setting the foundation for fulfilling, prosperous careers. There are of course students who take these programs and realize the career to which they're aspiring is not the right fit. Either way, these are empowering experiences that reveal a great deal about one's prefer-

ences, potential, the possibilities that lie ahead, and the opportunity to switch gears if something doesn't feel right. Work-terms can also serve to enrich students' lives through experiences in international development or community service.

Applied learning can be enormously beneficial for employers. Not only do they get the chance to review talent over a brief period without making a long-term commitment, they tap into the new ideas and highly valued critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills that these students possess.

A 2014 survey by the Canadian Council of Chief Executives found that when executives of 100 of Canada's largest companies were asked which qualities matter most in potential employees, they responded with "people skills" as number one, followed by communications skills, problem-solving skills, analytical abilities and leadership. When considering new hires, these executives are most interested in strong soft skills, which universities are known for cultivating. In experiential learning programs, students learn to apply these skills to future careers. In sixth place in the survey was industry-specific knowledge and experience, which further supports applied learning as a highly valuable pursuit in terms of students' employment prospects after graduation.

When it comes time to find employment, graduates who have relevant work experience are ahead of their peers. The most recent National Graduates Survey released by Statistics Canada shows that bachelor's level graduates with co-op experience earn more than their peers, have higher employment and full-time employment rates, and are more likely to report that their debt was paid off two years after graduation.

This report provides a snapshot of the breadth of experiential learning opportunities offered by Ontario's universities and places a spotlight on students and employers who are benefitting from them.

# WHEN STUDENTS OF WORK-INTEGRATED PROGRAMS LAND DREAM JOBS

Today, experiential learning programs are as diverse as the aspirations of each student who attends university. From commerce programs specializing in sports to legal projects working to free the wrongfully imprisoned and community initiatives that employ social innovation strategies, a dream job can take many forms.

Those studying the business of sports at Laurentian University's Sports Administration Program have the opportunity to make an impression on their favourite sports teams during their studies. As part of his program, Ryley Scott, who graduated with an Honours Bachelor of



Commerce in Sports Administration in 2012, completed an internship with the Ottawa Senators hockey team. Other interns from the program have worked with major sporting organizations around North America. Many graduates like Scott have gone on to senior management roles with professional sports teams, often as a result of the experiences garnered and connections made during their internships. Today, Scott works in client services at the Ottawa Senators and Canadian Tire Centre, where he interviews and hires interns, many of whom are enrolled in the same program he took just two years ago.







**“ I want to live in a community where people care about each other. If I want that, then I have to be that. Having an opportunity where I can get guidance from my professors and learn from mistakes before starting an articling position gives me comfort – when I go into articling, I’ll have the necessary experience to do a better job in an area that I wouldn’t have had practical work experience in. ”** – Valerie Fernandes, student

While a few experiential learning opportunities take alumni back to their internship roots, others engage students with their underlying interests and passions. At York University’s Osgoode Hall Law School, every Juris Doctor student is exposed to law in action through an experiential course or program as part of their legal education. Osgoode’s Office of Experiential Education program, the first of its kind at a Canadian law school, serves as a catalyst for experiential learning initiatives. With a passion for social justice, Valerie Fernandes, a third-year Osgoode student, is taking part in The

Innocence Project, which teams law students with seasoned criminal lawyers to examine cases of suspected wrongful conviction. Together, they reinvestigate these cases to seek proof of innocence. Fernandes is now working on her second case involving a suspected wrongful murder conviction. She is interviewing subjects, collecting evidence obtained by private investigators and forensics reports, and connecting the dots with Osgoode Professor Alan Young, who is a criminal lawyer and the program supervisor. As a result of her work on this project, her tenacious commitment to social justice and her studies at Osgoode, Fernandes secured an articling position at the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted. There, she will be working on cases similar to those at The Innocence Project.



**“ My academic focus was community development and neighbourhood resilience. Now, I’m working in that very field and loving it. ”** – Erin Kang, alumna

Ontario’s communities are home to some of the world’s most socially innovative organizations; this translates into a prolific range of opportunities for students interested in social justice. Erin Kang was a student of the University of Toronto’s Urban Studies program in the fall of 2011 and received one of her top choices for placement: the Centre for Social Innovation. During her internship, Kang helped facilitate the opening of the centre’s third location in Toronto’s Regent Park, connecting socially conscious people and organizations to each other and the community. Passionate about

her work, she volunteered with the organization when her placement ended. Just a few months before graduation, Kang landed a permanent job at the Centre for Social Innovation as the events co-ordinator and community membership animator, and she rates her job satisfaction as off the charts. She continues to empower members of the centre and works toward a community built on social justice.

**“ Ontario’s postsecondary institutions are global leaders in offering innovative applied learning programs that combine traditional classroom teaching methods with hands-on, collaborative activities that help students learn in new ways. These experiential learning courses help our students develop the valuable practical skills that many employers are seeking and help position these students to actively contribute to our highly skilled, 21st century global economy. ”**

– Brad Duguid, Ontario’s Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities

# CULTIVATING BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

True visionaries know that a vital aspect of business leadership is surrounding oneself with brilliant minds at every level. Many students have made a lasting impact on the companies that provide experiential learning opportunities.

**“ In giving students workforce training during their academic careers, Ontario’s universities are helping to cultivate this province’s talent, while strengthening our workforce and economy. Experiential learning is just one way that Ontario’s postsecondary institutions are teaching the next generation to lead.”**

– Bob Chiarelli, Ontario’s Minister of Energy



**Dominic Toselli** is a mechanical engineering student at the University of Waterloo who saved energy giant Shell Canada \$1 million a year during his co-op placement in Calgary. While working in the engineering group for inspections and piping,

Toselli compiled an analysis of a heat exchanger problem and pointed out the human factor in the issue, which accounted for 80 per cent of the failings the company was encountering. Since the replacement of heat exchangers is costly and time-consuming, Toselli’s work resulted in significant savings.

Medical and nursing fields were pioneers in experiential learning, and through business and technical disciplines, such as engineering, it greatly expanded.

At the University of Waterloo, engineering students are automatically entered into the co-op program where they work in companies that are relevant to their areas

of study such as biomedicine, mechatronics, nanotechnology and environmental engineering. The students gain valuable experience and provide employers with an opportunity to see the knowledge and skills that may be useful to them in the future. With co-op

programs across all disciplines including arts, environment, applied health sciences, pharmacy, science, math, entrepreneurship, research and computer science, **Waterloo has the largest post-secondary co-op program in the world.**

At Queen’s University, engineering students get hands-on experience during their first year through a course that is structured to teach fundamental skills of engineering practice including problem analysis, modeling, design, project management and client relations. Students spend 12 weeks on projects with a wide range of community partners including the City of Kingston, LaFarge, Cycle Kingston and the United Way. Over the past three years, students from Queen’s Engineering Practice have partnered with more than 50 community groups.

One of the distinguishing features of the Co-operators Centre for Business and Social Entrepreneurship at the University of Guelph is that savvy business students not only get to use their knowledge to help small businesses in the private sector, but also to help non-profits and local charities. Students help community organizations tackle business problems by developing marketing plans, brand strategies and social media platforms. Students receive course credit and real life experience by applying their skills outside the classroom. Community partners benefit greatly from new ideas and solutions to business problems.

While students of Brock University’s Oenology and Viticulture program may be surrounded by barrels of



wine, they're no less focused on setting themselves up for success upon graduation. Students complete three co-op terms: one in a vineyard, another at a winery during the harvest and crush, and the final at any approved aspect of the grape and wine industry. The work terms, combined with an education in oenology and viticulture, and exposure to marketing, tourism and wine appreciation, make for highly specialized experiences for students. Not surprisingly, the **program boasts a 97 per cent employment rate within six months of graduation.** The Niagara wine

real money in startup technology companies in the Waterloo Region. Funded with an initial donation of \$1 million, the student-run fund is supervised by finance professors and a professional advisory board.

Ryerson University is breaking new ground in experiential learning with its zone model of education, blending innovation, entrepreneurship and applied learning. The Digital Media Zone and Centre for Urban Energy provide experiential learning opportunities for students who have an idea for a new business startup, con-

sumer product or change-making social venture. Zone learning helps to develop valuable skills in problem solving, business planning and management, team building, technology and communications – skills that are useful whether students choose to be entrepreneurs or not. Emerging leaders fast-track their product launches and grow their

**“ Ontario’s economy is undergoing a transition and universities are evolving with the changing marketplace. Our province’s universities are teaching the critical thinking skills that students need to be valuable members of the workforce, and they are offering students numerous opportunities to gain experience while studying. To create a resilient economy and prosperous communities, employers need to play an active role in training the next generation for specific jobs. ”**

– Allan O'Dette, President & CEO, Ontario Chamber of Commerce

industry has cause to raise a glass to the program, which is training the next generation of grape growers and winemakers.

For Carleton University students interested in investment management, what better way to learn than managing an on-campus equity portfolio valued at half a million dollars? Every year, the fund – established by Carleton's Sprott School of Business in 2007 with \$50,000 in endowment capital – is managed by 20 students completing their Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of International Business degrees. The program provides students with incredible advantages beyond the opportunity to apply their financial analysis skills – it enables them to build a network of relationships with industry professionals who provide training and mentorship.

The newly established Laurier Startup Fund at Wilfrid Laurier University also gives students a real taste of investment management. The fund is part of a practicum course that allows business students to invest

companies in this supportive community by connecting with mentors, customers and each other. Results show zone learning creates jobs: since its launch, the Digital Media Zone has incubated and accelerated 126 startups, and created nearly 1,000 jobs.

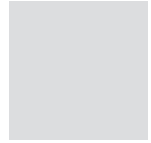
The University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) is providing students from the Faculty of Business and Information Technology with international experience through the Ontario Global Edge Program, a partnership with Ontario's Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Students receive financial support for a work placement within small, entrepreneurial companies outside Canada. They develop a broader awareness of the economy, explore international business and learn about the importance of entrepreneurship within the global marketplace. Through the program, 10 UOIT students participated in a summer study program at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2012 that included eight-week internship placements with entrepreneurial companies in the Hong Kong Science and Technology Park in Shatin.

# INNOVATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY

ONTARIO'S UNIVERSITIES ARE ADVANCING TECHNOLOGY BY TEACHING STUDENTS TECHNICAL SKILLS AND CONNECTING THEM WITH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING PROGRAMS. THESE PROGRAMS PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH THE KIND OF WORK EXPERIENCE THAT TURNS KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION – SOME HAVE LED TO THE NEXT BIG APP, OTHERS TO SOFTWARE THAT SAVES LIVES.

Wilfrid Laurier University's iPhone Application Programming Course combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on learning. Students create mobile applications and present their projects to a panel of technology experts that includes employees from companies such as Apple Inc. The Waste Bin Locator app, created as a result of the course, enables users to find the nearest garbage, recycling or compost bin, discouraging littering and unnecessary waste. More apps developed by students in this course can be found online, and some applications have been sold on Apple's App Store. Many students have ended up working for major tech companies and startups.





# HEAR FROM STUDENTS AND GRADUATES



*Henry Shi*

Henry Shi gave Bloomberg Sports a small taste of Hollywood during his co-op term in 2012. A second-year computer science student at the University of Waterloo, Shi developed software similar to the program popularized in the film *Moneyball*. Shi's software allows coaches to compare the average speed of a pitch to the number of strikeouts, assessing every pitch an opposing team has thrown for the past three years. It was used by Bloomberg's Major League Baseball clients and one of these clients used the information to move from the bottom of the rankings to the top of its division. In 2013, Shi was recognized as one of the top co-op students of the year by the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education. He is now putting his university knowledge and co-op experience to work for himself as an entrepreneur.

It makes sense that an aerospace engineer would be responsible for the development of software that analyzes airplane incidents and crashes – it becomes extraordinary when a 21-year-old intern does it successfully. Bradley Jung was employed by the National Research Council's Flight Research Lab as a co-op student while studying aerospace engineering at Carleton University. Jung worked in the flight recorder playback centre, an aircraft maintenance facility that analyzes flight recorder systems, also known as black boxes. He developed a computer program that constructs an estimate of an aircraft's flight and presents the data in an interactive, visual format that is now used by engineers in the reconstruction of aircraft incidents. The program has already been used in high-profile incidents, allowing the lab to deliver quicker flight animations and analyses, ultimately improving aircraft safety.



*Bradley Jung*



**“Experiential learning is vital in today’s rapidly changing economy. Exposure to entrepreneurship offers a fantastic development opportunity. In an entrepreneurial environment such as MaRS, students experience first-hand the opportunities and challenges faced when moving an idea to application and building a business, and they learn how to adapt to a changing marketplace. Even if the students don’t become entrepreneurs themselves, that problem-solving skill-set will benefit them throughout their careers.”** – Dr. Ilse Treurnicht, CEO, MaRS Discovery District

Jason Silva’s passion for entrepreneurship was sparked when he was a child as he watched his father operate a small contracting business and looked forward to his own opportunity to grow something from the ground up. As a computer science student at Ryerson, Silva completed placements with two startup firms where he also witnessed what it takes to launch and grow a digital enterprise. As a result, he was inspired to start the technology company JBBMobile, which markets Field Cloud, a business automation tool he developed to help trades professionals streamline scheduling and business operations. Today, Silva regularly hires co-op students and credits them with helping to propel his own business forward and enrich day-to-day operations.

Queen’s University computing student Eril Berkok completed a 16-month internship at IBM in 2012, where he was able to sample a range of career options. While part of Berkok’s internship focused on software development, the experience introduced him to fields that reached far beyond that area to project management, marketing and organizational relations. Answering to top-level executives and development experts, Berkok worked across the organization to ensure that each department was equipped with IT products that fit their needs. The experience gave him a real opportunity to refine his communications skills, which he frequently uses as a student advocate on issues at Queen’s while he finishes his degree. He knows these skills will be a strong asset in the workforce.



*Eril Berkok*

# STUDENTS SHAPING COMMUNITIES



## Ontario's university students are participating in all kinds of innovative programs that enhance their communities.

They are providing health care to underserved populations, working on community development through civic engagement, and promoting mental health among at-risk groups. Universities are also teaching the younger generation to think critically about media, and are cultivating leadership through environmental programs.

Through the Live Well Partnership, students gain the supervised work experience they need while providing occupational therapy and physiotherapy to their communities at no cost. The partnership is a collaboration between McMaster University's School of Rehabilitation Science, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford, and Hamilton Health Sciences. Students benefit from the clinical experience, and the community benefits from the provision of care to those in need.

Another program that has students improving communities is Algoma University's Community Economic and Social Development Program, which places students with smaller urban, rural, and First Nations



communities in northern Ontario. Students can begin their careers in community development by connecting theory and knowledge to real-world applications. Past placements include: Habitat for Humanity, North Shore Tribal Council, Children's Aid Society, NORDIK Institute, Batchewana First Nation – Economic Development, New to the Sault, and the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The University of Ottawa has an entire centre devoted to community building. The Centre for Global & Community Engagement promoted social responsibility through volunteering and civic engagement for more than 3,500 students in 2012 alone. It is an on-campus one-stop shop for experiential activities in Ottawa and around the world — not just for students but for the entire university community, including faculty and staff. The University of Ottawa has more than 400 community partners in social services, education, environment, humanitarian assistance and health.

The University of Windsor is giving a boost to its community by providing free legal services to some of the city's most vulnerable residents. Legal Assistance of Windsor is a clinical learning program from the Faculty of Law that allows students to gain valuable practical experience while providing legal aid to those who are unable to pay. The program provides hands-on learning to upper year law students in landlord tenant law, social assistance, disability, immigration, criminal injuries, employment insurance and more. Students are supervised by practicing lawyers and take advantage of various mentorship and networking opportunities. There is also an opportunity for full-time summer employment through the program for second- and third-year students. In 2013, the program provided free legal services to more than 1,500 local residents. Current projects include work pertaining to Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program and human trafficking legislation.

Since 2008, students have been making a difference in one of Toronto's high-needs areas. At the York University-TD Community Engagement Centre, students conduct research and work in community agencies in the Black Creek community. Numerous relationships have been forged by York faculty and students with community partners, and their collective efforts are helping to address social issues in this area. For example, students in a graduate course on urban planning produced a map of potential brown-fields, or previously industrial land that may contain hazardous waste, which helps community residents and organizers to map out safer routes.



Because grade school teachers shape young minds, they play an important role in building strong communities. At Lakehead University, education students are learning how to inspire their future classrooms to think critically about media messages in an ever-changing digital landscape. The Media and Digital Literacy course touches upon gender inequality, body image, diversity, violence and consumerism across all digital and traditional media platforms, including ads, Disney films and video games. Each year during Media Literacy Week, students in the course visit elementary schools to conduct workshops that help children make sense of media and marketing messages.

# WHAT STUDENTS AND GRADUATES ARE SAYING

Eager to combine her desire to give back to the community with her love for the arts, Izzy Mackenzie Lay took part in the University of Toronto's Independent Community Engaged Learning Seminar at New College from 2011-12. Students in the final years of their undergraduate degrees work with a community organization and contribute to social justice initiatives. They earn academic credit by reflecting on their experiences in classroom discussions and assignments. Lay interned at the Griffin Centre, a non-profit mental health agency providing flexible services to youth, adults and families. As an artist, a member of the LGBTQ community, and someone who lives with invisible disabilities, Lay felt that her placement was an opportunity to repay the support she received as a teen. It also combined her social justice activism with her love of the arts, allowing her to use her creative skills in art, dance and poetry. Lay was thrilled to later be hired by the Griffin Centre where she works as a youth outreach worker and co-ordinator of Compass – a drop-in for LGBTQ youth with intellectual disabilities.

Brock University's BaseCamp is an orientation program organized before classes start for first-year students that is designed to help them build new relationships with other incoming students as well as with older students.

Led by their upper-year peers, BaseCamp uses wilderness adventures to foster teamwork and resiliency. For team leaders like Maya Blomme, the benefits come from enhancing their leadership and issues management skills. During her final years at Brock, she was a peer-leader for BaseCamp, guiding younger students through three- to five-day canoe, backpack or rock-climbing trips. Blomme graduated in 2014 with an Honours Bachelor Degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies and was named a Distinguished Graduating Student. She also possesses a Bachelor of Education specializing in outdoor and experiential education at Queen's University. Upon graduation, Blomme feels the BaseCamp leadership experience "tipped the scales" in landing her a job with the Tim Horton's Children's Foundation as program manager for a camp in Alberta.





# BRIDGING BORDERS

Some of the most enriching student experiences combine travel and study, where students can open their minds to new perspectives and worldviews.

Ontario universities offer a plethora of programs that introduce international perspectives and tackle global issues. These programs incorporate experiential learning to bridge barriers among cultures, foster relationships that grow Ontario's economy, and work

development profession. Students often go on to work in international development, and many pursue related graduate degrees.

Students at Nipissing University are helping to green-up the tourism industry in Jamaica while putting their business skills to the test. Upper-year business students travel to Jamaica to work with businesses on eco-tourism as part of Nipissing's iLead Business Experience Certificate. Students earn credits through internships



toward global social justice. Travelling internationally as part of a degree program can offer a better understanding of a field of study, develop curiosity into practical knowledge about the world and help build global networks.

At the University of Toronto Scarborough, the International Development Studies program challenges students to examine how and why countries develop differently. Students in the co-op program are placed with internationally reputable NGOs such as OXFAM, Right To Play and Canadian Feed the Children. Placements are completed around the world in countries including Bolivia, Cambodia, Malawi, Ghana and India. Students learn about the complex dynamics of development theory and gain practical experience essential to the

that require them to conduct extensive research on the goals, challenges and opportunities of the Jamaica-based businesses they'll be working with well before departure. Students address concrete issues facing international eco-tourism operators while travelling, researching, collaborating and solving real-life problems.

Western University also offers an interdisciplinary course focused on international development. As part of Rwanda: Culture, Society and Reconstruction, students learn about and travel to the country for five weeks. While in Rwanda, students partner with community organizations and contribute to community development projects related to education, health-care, child welfare and women's rights.

# STUDENTS FACILITATING HEALTHY LIVING



Ontario's universities help people in communities across the province foster healthy lifestyles. Working with people such as at-risk children, expectant parents and the chronically ill, university students inject a fresh approach into health care and improve the lives of patients.

At York University's KIN Kids Program, students in Kinesiology and Health Sciences help inactive children change their lifestyles by introducing play for children who are overweight, obese or struggling with chronic diseases such as diabetes. Percentage of body fat, waist circumference, aerobic power, blood pressure and heart rate is gathered – data that provides a snapshot of student health and helps design programs to better meet the needs of inactive children. The program also provides York students with invaluable experience in pediatric health research, and teaches them how to analyze data.



As part of the course Gerontology in Practice in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Western University, fourth-year students work on issues put forth by community partners, and get the opportunity to improve the lives of seniors. In the fall of 2013, students worked with the Alzheimer Society London & Middlesex and analyzed research supporting the strong ties between music and memory. The students created a program whereby those living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia had access to an iPod that was pre-loaded with music specifically designed to their preferences. The students witnessed clients' reactions to the music and saw that they often became more animated, experienced elevated moods, and were able to

University students and health partners in Niagara. One important outcome is the creation of a resource guide for diabetic patients so that they will better understand safe insulin use. Other projects are improving the patient experience in the emergency department, identifying strategies to reduce inappropriate use of antibiotics and improving care for patients suffering from sepsis.

Nipissing University also has a program that gets students involved in health. Enactus Nipissing is a student group that uses the power of social entrepreneurship to tackle crucial social and environmental problems. Business students earn credits

**“ Driftwood Community Centre's participants have benefited greatly from the hard work of the York students in the KIN Kids Program. The parents involved have gained valuable information about their children's health through the program, which is helping them to improve their lifestyles and the overall health of their families. Overall, Driftwood Community Centre has truly profited from this partnership and is looking forward to its continuation for many years to come. ”**

– Jasmine Surkari, Community Recreation Programmer, Driftwood Community Centre

toward their degree while planning, organizing and promoting events, while at the same time raising awareness about critical health issues. The annual Halloween Blood Donor Save-a-Life event has boosted blood donations from those aged 17-35, a cohort that rarely donates blood. Enactus students are currently raising

tell stories about their past. It inspired many students to aspire to work in gerontology upon graduation. The project was so successful that, each year, students continue to contribute to its further evolution.

awareness about tissue and organ donors, since more than 1,500 Ontarians are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, but fewer than 25 per cent of Ontarians are registered as donors.

Another program focused on improving lives is the Interprofessional Education for Quality Improvement Program in which students and medical professionals work to enhance the quality of health care in the Niagara region. Students and professionals examine infection control, patient satisfaction, falls prevention and chronic disease management as part of a partnership between McMaster University's School of Medicine's Niagara Regional Campus, Brock

Like their counterparts in other medical fields, students in midwifery are required to complete supervised work placements. Laurentian University's midwifery program is offered in collaboration with McMaster and Ryerson, and puts a heavy emphasis on hands-on training. Students complete six terms of full-time placements, and by the time they graduate, they have attended at least 60 births, 40 as the primary care provider.

# STUDENTS ENRICHING COMMUNITIES WITH THE ARTS

## There are now more work-integrated opportunities for arts students.

OCAD University's Community Placement course gives fine arts students the chance to work in the broader arts community. The course involves a placement in an art-related work setting, such as the community program Sustainable Thinking and Expression on Public Space, which uses art to connect people with public spaces and asks students to investigate the role that artists play as catalysts of change. Another sought-after placement includes graphic design with The Public, a progressive, activist design studio focusing on anti-oppression, sustainability and social growth. Students have worked on campaigns that raise awareness about trans issues, the importance of inclusive communities and safer sex for teens.

During Trent University's MA program in Public Texts (English), students have the option of completing an

internship in publishing, editing, communications, journalism and information science, in place of a traditional thesis. Graduate students can test-drive the career that most appeals to them. Students have worked in roles including editorial assistant, environmental research assistant, editor and marketing intern. The experiences teach them about the challenges and opportunities within the industry of their choice, and ensure they are ready for the workforce by graduation.

Students of Drama in Education and Community at the University of Windsor apply their learning almost immediately. In their second, third and fourth years, students are required to complete placements in community living settings, elementary and secondary schools and/or hospitals. Students learn to use drama as a vehicle for learning, teaching, change and transformation. The Clown Doctor Program is one example – here, students learn to use humour and improvisation to promote healthy living and healing. Many graduates go on to become teachers, some go on to graduate school specializing in psychology and drama therapy, and others work in social justice advocacy.





# UNIVERSITIES ADDING VALUE THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Work-integrated learning programs are of vital importance for students and employers alike.

In an increasingly competitive job market, experiential learning programs provide students with invaluable employment experience, making them workplace-ready and expanding their networks – ultimately setting them up for career success.

They also serve as powerful recruitment tools, allowing employers to connect with young talent who bring a fresh approach to their organizations and improve their culture.

Experiential learning connects universities to businesses and communities, creating numerous pathways to learning. From co-op terms to community placements and clinical internships, work-integrated experiences at home and abroad are transformative experiences for students.

In order for Ontario to continue enriching communities with social innovation and vibrant artistic expression and to secure the province's bright economic future, it is crucial for our universities to work closely with businesses, communities and government to prepare the next generation of leaders. Experiential learning has the potential to help build Ontario into the most advanced, dynamic and stable workforce in the country.

**“Experiential learning opportunities are incredibly important both to employers and to the young people they hire. Co-op programs in particular are key components of the talent development and recruitment strategies of large Canadian companies. We applaud universities for providing these opportunities to students and employers.”**

– The Honourable John Manley, President and CEO, Canadian Council of Chief Executives

**BRINGING LIFE TO LEARNING**  
**AT ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES**



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