



**HUMBER**

Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

WINTER 2024 ISSUE

[liberalarts.humber.ca](http://liberalarts.humber.ca)

# FLAS

# CONNECT



## HIGHLIGHTS

[Borderless Work  
Placement: Career  
Advancement, Global  
Impact and Personal  
Growth](#)

[Co-Chairs' Journey:  
Steering Humber@TIFA  
Return to In-Person  
Success](#)

# WHAT'S INSIDE

**Message from the Senior Dean** 4

## **Contributions from our Students**

The Power of a Door (excerpt) 5  
BY COLE HANSEN  
PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM  
(PWC)

I am From a Poem 8  
BY MARY ELO OSIFO  
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM (TESL)

I am From the Vines of Shiraz 9  
BY SARA HAGHSHENAS  
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM (TESL)

## **FLAS Community Spotlight**

Borderless Work Placement: Career Advancement,  
Global Impact and Personal Growth 11  
BY KIMMY DO

Co-Chairs' Journey: Steering Humber@TIFA Return to  
In-Person Success 14  
BY DAVID MILLER

## **Innovation in FLAS**

FLAS Maps the System! 17  
BY MIKE WELLS AND ELINOR BRAY-COLLINS

Rebound 20  
BY MIKE WELLS



## Did You Know?

Math Competition (Kangaroo Math – March 24) 21  
*BY MIKE WELLS*

## Meet the FLAS Team

*BY FRANCES SPARANO & BARBARA CAM*

Anthony Riga 22  
*Learning Services Assistant*

Aileen Herman 24  
*Program Coordinator*

Samantha Roach 26  
*Associate Dean, Continuous Professional Learning (CPL)*

## Courses Highlight

MILE 220: VIETNAM STUDY ABROAD 28  
*BY CANDACE IRON*

SUSTAINABILITY COURSE FOUNDATIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY  
(GGRN 100) 30  
*BY JENNIFER BALL*

Credits 31



# Message from the Senior Dean

**John Stilla, MA, OCELT**

The Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences (FLAS) is excited to launch this first issue of *FLAS Connect*: our way of sharing the accomplishments, innovations, and contributions of our students, faculty, and staff with the Humber community and our industry and community partners.

FLAS has the privilege and responsibility of educating students across the entire institution, supporting students from multiple program areas in developing their critical literacy, communication, and numeracy skills, as well as building their understanding of identity, society, culture, and history. These skills, mindsets, and knowledges empower our students to achieve their learning goals as they chart their path to a meaningful career and develop the skills necessary for active, engaged, and equity-informed citizenship. In addition to our cross-institutional programming, FLAS is also home to pathways programming that provides multiple entryways into post-secondary education, as well as graduate certificates that connect students to the workforce as they hone their skills and apply them through work placements and practicums. Through this diversity of programming, we contribute to a polytechnic education focused on building personal and professional communities and combatting systemic inequities.

In this first issue, you will read about a range of activities within FLAS, including our successful return to an in-person conference at the Toronto International Festival of Authors, work placements that span the globe within our graduate certificate programs, our faculty leading students through systems thinking in Map the System, the launch of our Rebound program to support student success and retention, our summer program in Vietnam, and more.

Happy reading, and feel free to reach out at any time to learn more about what is happening in FLAS and to partner with us as we continue to provide students an education they can take with them wherever they choose to go.

# CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR STUDENTS

## PROFESSIONAL WRITING AND COMMUNICATIONS (PWC) STUDENT CONTRIBUTION

PROVIDED BY: DAVID MILLER (PC)

This is an excerpt from a reflective opinion piece written by Cole Hansen, a Professional Writing and Communications graduate certificate student, for the first-semester class PWRT 5003: Storytelling and Narrative.

### **The Power of a Door (excerpt)** — Cole Hansen

The reality of homelessness is so foreign to the average person. Instead of seeing the person, they see the problem. They see the addiction, the poor mental health, the disability, fuzzed to them like a cardboard sign saying, "Please Help, I need your money to buy more drugs, God Bless." But until you hear the crackling sound of fire come from someone's ribs breaking because they OD'd and you needed to perform CPR, it's hard to see the true source of the problem, and I can tell you that from my experience, it's not the drugs or the mental health issues.

We are the problem.

Not only do we allow these people to experience homelessness, we encourage it.

Forget the individual (like we always do); why does homelessness exist? Why is it so normalized? We live within a system, that when stripped of all its names, theories, and nuance, it really is the manifestation of one sole problem, hierarchy.

In my line of work, I've seen people experience homelessness for every reason imaginable. Their partner kicked them out, they lost their job, they couldn't afford rent, they suffered from dementia, all because they didn't have the resources needed to cross the finish line.



The things people see as the manifestation of homelessness, the drugs, alcohol, etc. are symptoms of the problem, not the cause.

Too many times I've been forced to deny people a safe place to sleep while they begged me to let them in the door I was guarding. I once had someone argue with me about where they'd sleep that night as they stood with their foot in the doorframe while I blocked their way into the shelter. I could feel the brisk air from the crack in the door flood the entrance. It was so cold that I stepped back to retreat to the warmth of the radiator next to me. All I could tell them was that we didn't have any beds and that they would have to find someplace else, fully knowing that on a night like that one, every bed would be full.

It's so easy to see why people turn to substances and start to lose themselves. How else could you cope, or manage to survive?

I once worked with a client who used to camp around the corner from the shelter where I worked. Every day they would come to the site asking for a place to sleep, and for months, I had to turn them away. Eventually they began breaking down, screaming at me, asking: "why me? Why do I have to spend every night out here in the cold, while everyone else sits warmly inside." The only thing I could tell them was that they needed to calm down or else when we did have a spot they could be denied because of poor behaviour. Eventually, we got them a bed, and after 143 days on the street, we took them in, in the middle of December.

For months I watched that person grow. They struggled with substances and with their anger, furious at the systems that allowed them to live like that. But we worked together, creating a plan to make sure they didn't get themselves discharged.

Within 6 months that person was thriving. They had a job, they were stable, and they were proud.

Until the city came and took that away.

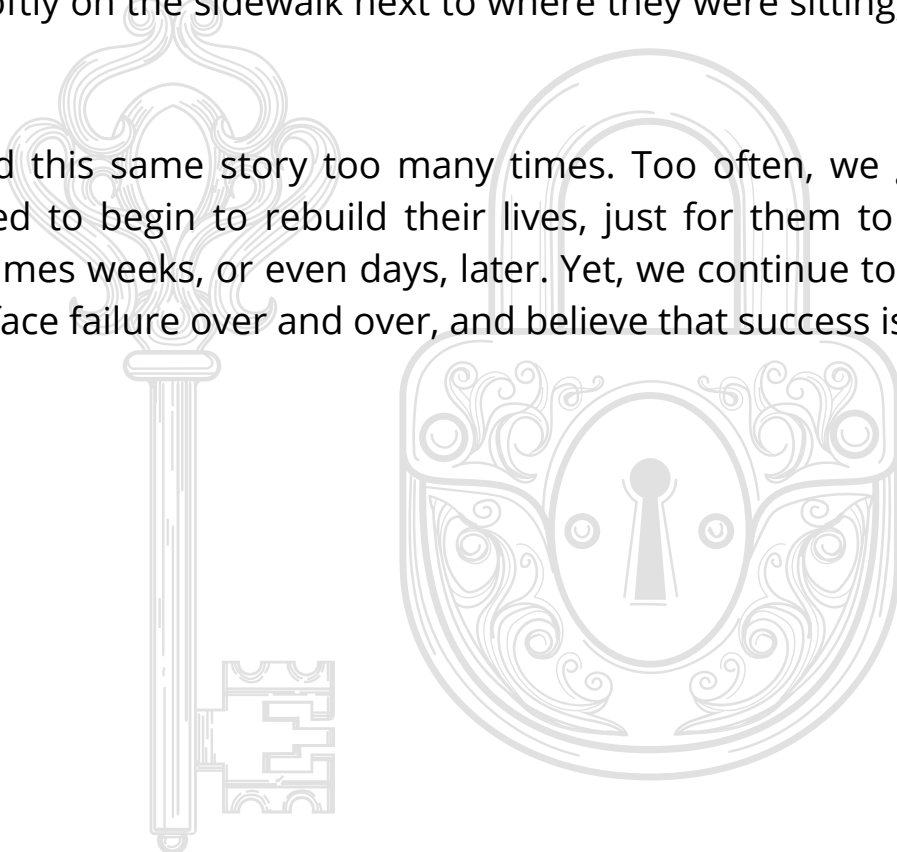
The municipality abruptly told us that the shelter was being repurposed for another demographic and that we had to relocate all active clients, nearly 300 people. With this change in the shelter, our services also changed. Meaning that the program that got my client a job, stopped serving our building and stopped serving our clients, and when they left, so did my client's ability to work with them.

Within days my client was discharged without a referral to another shelter due to unruly behaviour, and just like that, after months of work, building stability and trust, they were back out in the cold.

Everybody wants to succeed, but too often, too many people are stripped of their chances due to circumstance and bad timing. How many times would you try before giving up, before believing that you're not worthy of success?

The last time I saw my client they were on the other side of the door, screaming at us, begging for another chance to be allowed inside. I tried to calm them down, talking to them through the cracked door, but nothing worked, they were broken. Eventually we had to close the door. We monitored the situation from inside, as I watched begging turn to rage. They began using both hands to slam the door and the surrounding glass, switching between that and trying to kick the door in with their feet, almost as if they were giving their hands a break. The violence was so intense I could feel the vibrations of each hit travel through the ground, up my legs, and into my chest, it was as if I could feel their pain through each hit. As they continued to escalate, security had to get involved. Going outside to subdue them, security grabbed them so tight by each arm I could see their face scrunch up from the pain, unable to do anything while they were dragged to the curb. A staff member followed shortly after with the ex-client's two garbage bags of belongings, placing them softly on the sidewalk next to where they were sitting, before rushing back inside.

I've experienced this same story too many times. Too often, we give people the things they need to begin to rebuild their lives, just for them to be taken away months, sometimes weeks, or even days, later. Yet, we continue to expect them to keep trying, to face failure over and over, and believe that success is still possible.



# TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (TESL) STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS

PROVIDED BY: IRENE KOSMAS (PC)

## I am From a Poem

*By Mary Elo Osifo*

I am from the crown,  
from glass and beads.  
I am from Royal, adorable, dignity and coolness.  
I am from the clay,  
I hold more water than soil.  
I am from a communal family,  
knitted together as princes and princesses.  
From Edhere and Johnson.  
I am from the combination of strength and weakness,  
that solves the puzzles of life.  
From the brightness of shining light and success.  
I am from the Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion,  
bonded together in one faith.  
I am from Emede Isoko South of Niger Delta Region,  
part of Nigeria that is full of shining rich dust,  
beautiful oil flowing under the beds of the ocean.  
Oh! My delicious meals; Ukodo porridge,  
Owo soup, Banga soup, and popular Jollof rice,  
so spicy, mouthwatering and flavorsome.  
My dad his love is irreplaceable,  
took me in his gentle hands,  
along we went to his office,  
every single day of work,  
brought me home in protection.  
He watched over me,  
until my mum's studies were over,  
and his love keeps me going now.  
My mum, a great teacher,  
whose emulation can never end,  
who taught me to inner strength from childhood,  
my mum's great taste of Nigerian foods are sweet memories.  
These lines speak of me.



# I am From the Vines of Shiraz

*By Sara Haghshenas*

I am from the vines of Shiraz,  
from the fragrance of Persian roses and citrus groves.  
I am from the laughter within walls of ancient clay,  
(Warm, embracing, the whispers of history in every layer.)

I am from the rose—  
the Shiraz Rose that blooms with stories untold,  
From petals that carry the dawn,  
and leaves that whisper the secrets of the soil.

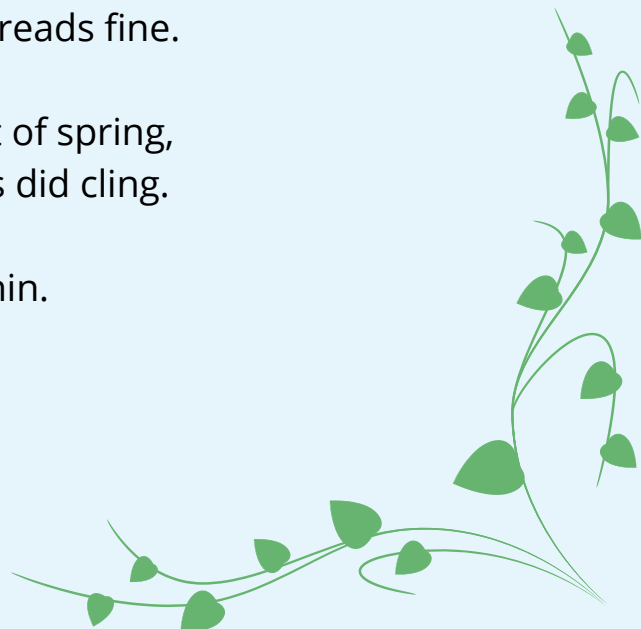
I'm from Nowruz celebrations and resilience,  
from Soheila's wisdom and Hamid's precision.  
From the protective gaze of my mother, the teacher,  
and the inventive spirit of my father, the engineer.

I'm from the harmony of old and new,  
from tales of terraced vineyards and pulleys of grapevines.  
From "Reach for the stars" and "Remember your roots,"  
and the songs that lulled me to dreams of faraway lands.

I'm from the minarets that slice the sky,  
where calls to prayer blend with the echo of church bells.  
I'm from Shiraz of Fars, the cradle of Persian culture,  
from baklava laced with cardamom and saffron threads fine.

From the joy that Pouya brought, like the first light of spring,  
and the gardens where grandmother's citrus fruits did cling.  
In the albums are faces, those present and gone,  
in the corners of my heart, their stories nestle within.

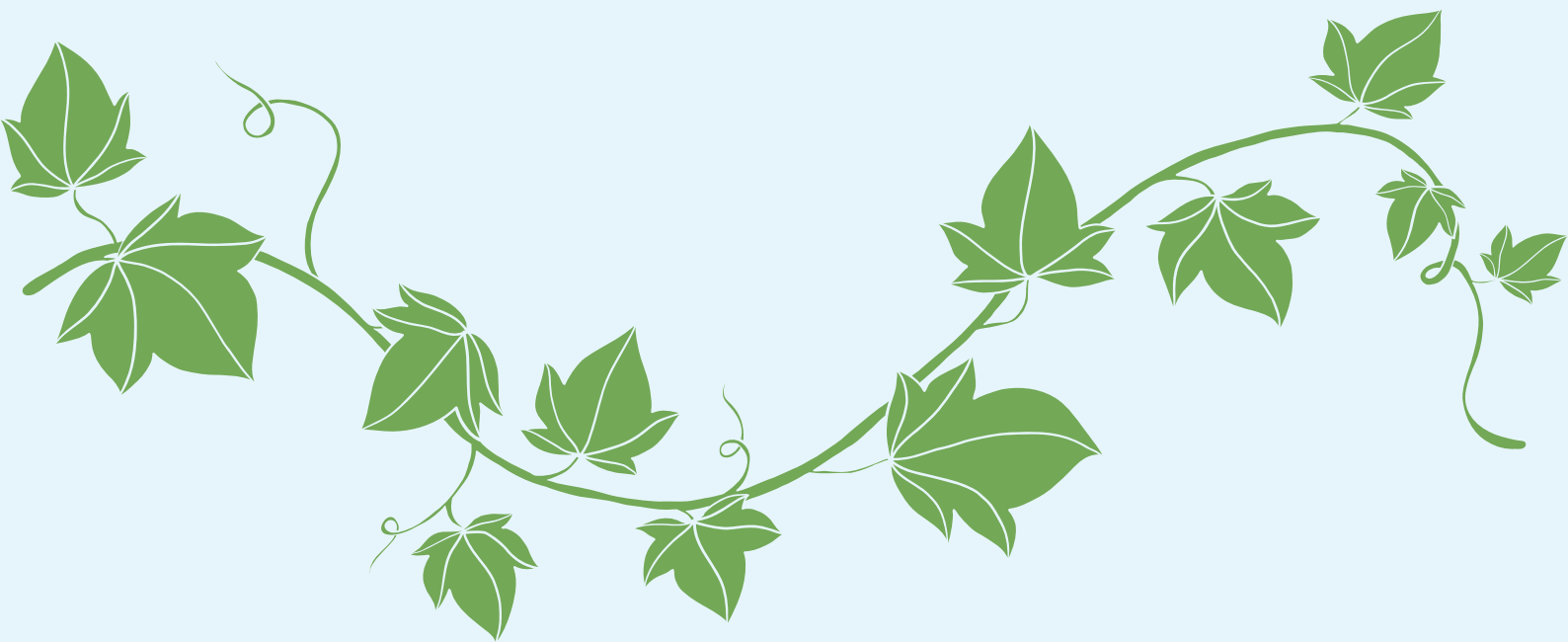
I am from those keepsakes,  
the legacy of a family tree,  
Roots dug deep in Shiraz soil,  
Branches stretching out to the Canadian sea.



Where once was the echo of music and feet,  
Now stands silence in the old city street.

Yet from this transformation, our journey took flight,  
To Canada's promise, beneath the northern light.

I am from those moments—  
from the empire of the mind and the dynasty of the heart.  
As Shiraz changed, so did we, apart and yet together,  
In the dance of the roses, we play our part.  
In a dance of remembrance and all that used to be.

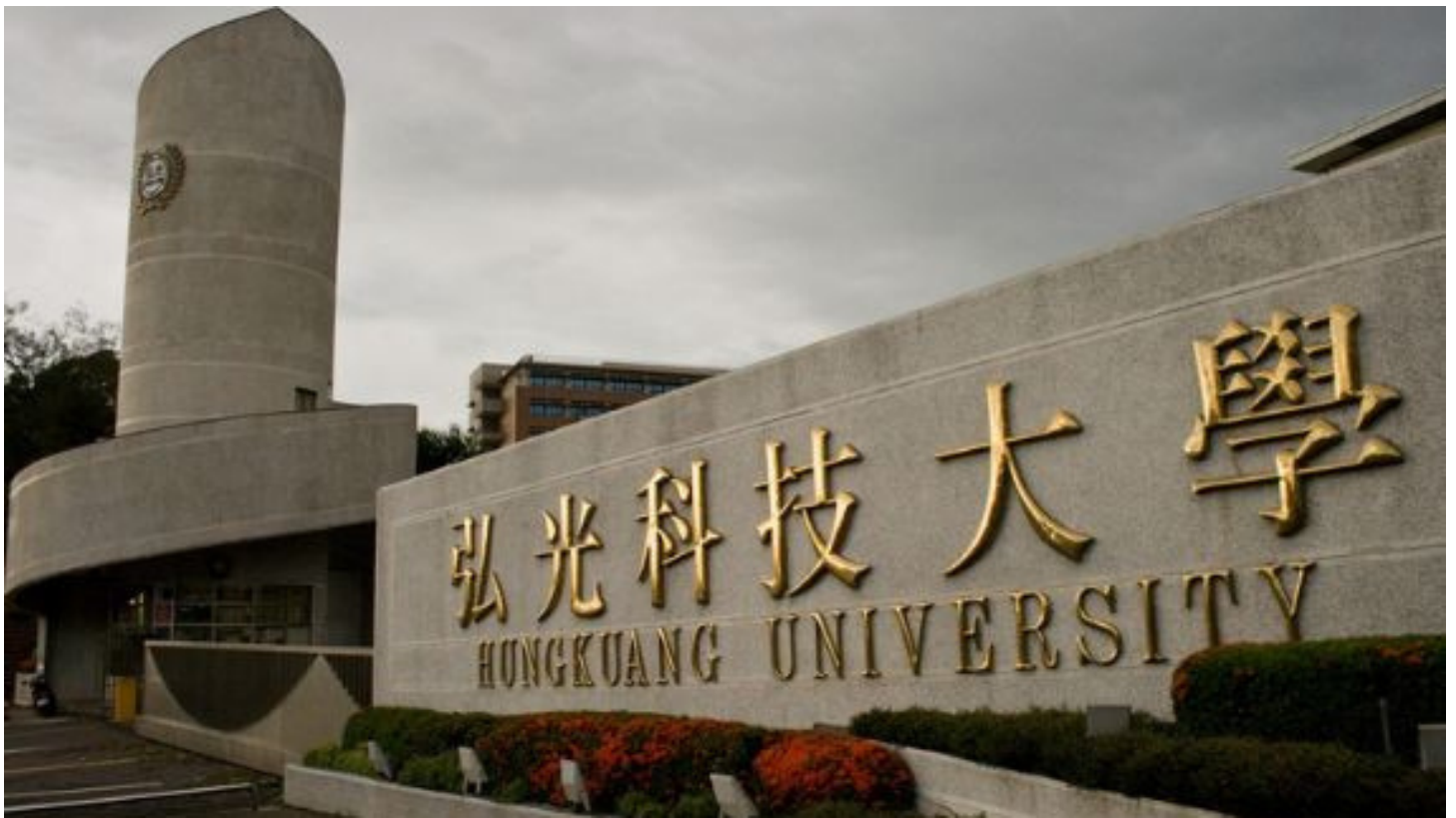


# FLAS COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

## **BORDERLESS WORK PLACEMENT: CAREER ADVANCEMENT, GLOBAL IMPACT AND PERSONAL GROWTH**

BY KIMMY DO

This past summer, Jennifer Hall, Andrew Drager and Anika Zareen from the Professional Writing and Communication (PWC) graduate certificate program embarked on an enriching and transformative journey as they undertook their work placement abroad in Taiwan. This immersive experience orchestrated by the FLAS team in collaboration with its partner, Hungkuang University (HKU) in Taiwan, aimed at refining students' skill set and cultivating invaluable transferable skills pivotal for their future careers.



*Photo: Hungkuang University. Source: Hungkuang University*

### **Career advancement**

Once arriving in Taichung, the PWC students got the opportunity to sharpen their professional skill set through different projects including editing student handbooks, marketing materials, and website content; blogging and making videos to highlight the various departments for social media content; engaging with students on their end-of-year presentations and English writing skills; and planning a Canada Day event on campus.



The diverse activities allow students to put a great deal of the practice and theory involved in the PWC program to the test.

These projects were supervised by two different teams, the Office of International Affairs and the Department of English for Global Communications, which allowed our students to get familiar with different working styles and perspectives. The HKU team not only shared invaluable advice and guidance that aided our students in managing their work and adjusting to their new lives, but also embraced them, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion during their time there. “For me, the Canada Day event was my greatest achievement and success. It was a collaborative experience and a deep lasting memory that I wouldn’t trade for any earthly possession,” Andrew conveyed about one of the projects he completed during his global work placement in Taiwan. This opportunity has expanded horizons for students like Andrew, who is currently engaged in a year-long contract as a Visiting Scholar - Communications Specialist at HKU.



## **Global impact**

The knowledge and skill-sharing aspect in each project tackled by our students further highlights the comprehensive impact of these global placements on the home and host institutions. The Canada Day event, organized with meticulous planning, dedication and collaboration, became a platform for cross-cultural dialogue, igniting curiosity and interest among Taiwanese students and staff.

Through this celebration, Andrew, Jennifer and Anika not only shared the vibrant facets of Canadian culture but also fostered a sense of mutual understanding, breaking down cultural barriers and bridging the gap between two countries.

The collaboration between the Humber students and the HKU staff and students in delivering the writing skills workshops and editing various documents allowed all the stakeholders to exchange expertise, feedback, and best practices, thus broadening their understanding of effective communication and writing techniques in an international context. This facilitated a collaborative learning environment, fostering an atmosphere of reciprocal education and interconnectedness among the students and staff from both institutions.

### **Personal growth**

While their time in Taiwan facilitated the application and enhancement of their professional knowledge, the broader scope of this global placement allowed these students to develop a diverse skill set that transcends specific roles or industries. By navigating cultural nuances, adapting to new work environments, and fostering global connections, they not only fortified their professional capabilities but also nurtured resilience, adaptability, and cross-cultural competence essential for their personal growth and future career endeavors.

“Although we [were] experiencing a completely new culture, I [was] struck by our similarities not our differences. At the end of the day, we all care about the same things – our families, our friends, our pets, being the best versions of ourselves and caring for one another,” Jennifer shared.

Working or studying abroad always comes with its challenges, including the hesitancy of stepping out of comfort zones, being overwhelmed by language and cultural barriers, and navigating the lack of a support system, which are compounded by potential financial concerns or constraints. However, the initiative taken by Humber and HKU not only provided educational and experiential opportunities but also addressed financial aid concerns through bursaries and stipends, empowering students in their endeavors abroad.

Undoubtedly, the key element in this work placement was Andrew, Anika and Jennifer’s unwavering determination and commitment, enabling them to not only embrace the challenge but also excel in representing Humber College with remarkable enthusiasm and professionalism. “The experience strengthened my resolve to always accept a challenge and to not let the unknown stop me,” stated Jennifer.

# CO-CHAIRS' JOURNEY: STEERING HUMBER@TIFA RETURN TO IN-PERSON SUCCESS

BY DAVID MILLER

On September 29 and 30 at the Harbourfront Centre, the Humber@TIFA Interdisciplinary Academic Conference returned to in-person programming for the first time since Fall 2019.

“While we were proud of being able to run our conference virtually during the height of the pandemic to keep our participants safe and healthy, there is something very special about the interpersonal connections that are forged at an in-person conference,” explained conference co-chair Jennifer Marotta. “From the networking opportunities at the reception and coffee breaks, to the more in-depth discussions allowed to flow while sharing lunch together, delegates complimented us on how welcomed and appreciated they felt. You cannot capture those same conversations and moments online.”

Delegate Kellie Roddy (a Ph.D. candidate at UCLA who presented on ancient Mexican migration patterns) echoed these sentiments, “I appreciate [Humber’s] creating this in-person conference. Some of my most interesting takeaways were from conversations in the breaks and meetings after speakers were done and I could ask more questions.”

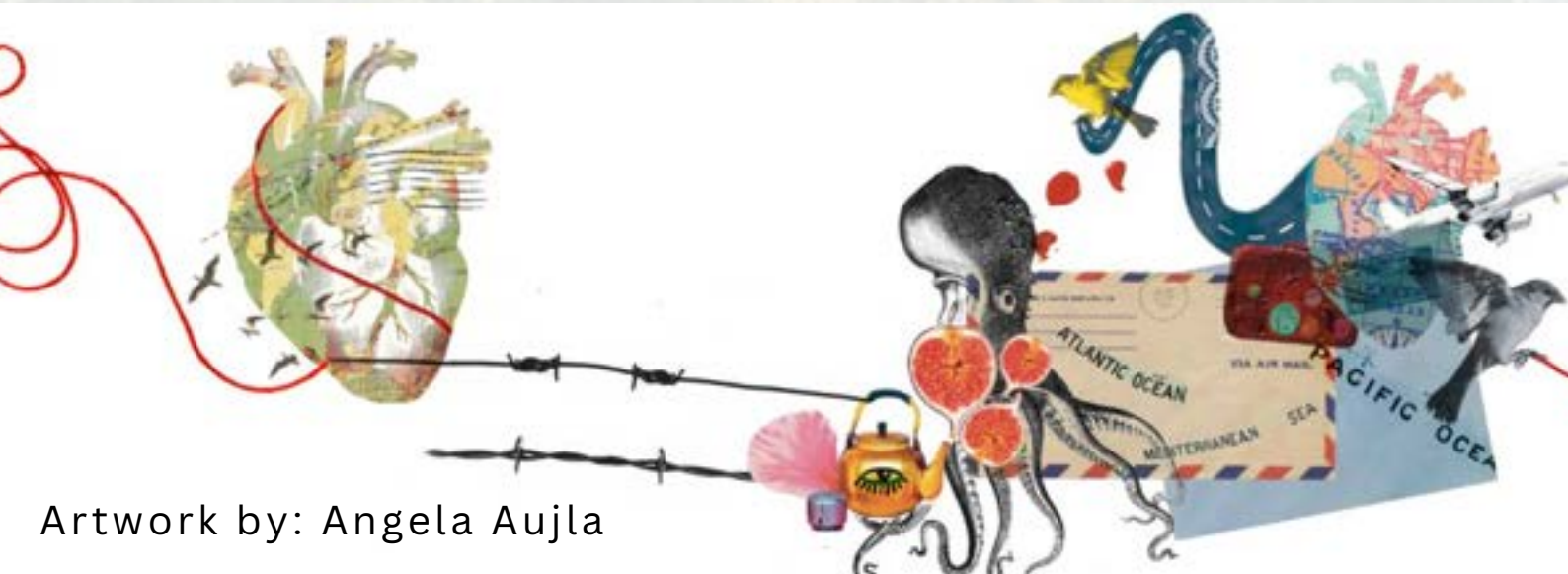


*Photo: Prasad Bidaye. Source: Jennifer Marotta*



This year's theme was displacement and diaspora, and the opening day included a plenary panel featuring long-time conference artist Angela Aujla and English Department faculty member Prasad Bidaye followed by a keynote presentation by writer and UBC professor Billy-Ray Belcourt, who was then interviewed on stage. Marotta cited these opening-day events as a highlight. "Both the keynote and plenary panel were dynamic and engaging" she said, "and I appreciated how the themes from one to the other were tied in so seamlessly by my co-chair, Dave Miller, in his fascinating discussion with Dr. Billy-Ray Belcourt. It was a privilege to hear Belcourt speak." Belcourt's keynote focused on the process of reservization in Canada, with particular attention focused on his personal experiences as a member of Driftpile Cree First Nation who grew up on the reserve. The conversation expanded to explore the concept of internal displacement felt by Indigenous Peoples in Canada, whose reserves were often removed from their traditional territories.

In the plenary, Aujla assessed and discussed her relationship to diaspora and displacement through a consideration of how these themes play out in her work, looking at how her immigrant ancestors practiced and made culture and community in Canada. Professor Bidaye then discussed some projects of the activist collective Indigenous Resistance, using these as a means of defining the concept of "outernationalism," which provided a theoretical foundation upon which the rest of the conference rested.



Artwork by: Angela Aujla



*Photo: Prasad Bidaye (Left), Angela Aujla (Right). Source: Jennifer Marotta*

The second day consisted of eight panels that explored subjects as varied as pop-culture representations of displacement and diaspora, polarization and the perils of displacement, reclaiming identities in diaspora, and migration and mental health in literature. Another delegate, University of Windsor lecturer Victoria Aboud (who presented on the concept of “homeland” in Lebanese literature) found inspiration in the presentations: “I was so inspired (I use that word very seriously!) with the depth of the conversations and intellectual engagement that the panels offered.”

It’s now been a decade since FLAS and the Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) first began their partnership, with this being the ninth edition of the conference. Past themes include the climate crisis, anti-intellectualism, new perspectives on the 1960s counterculture, and social justice, and keynote speakers have included Angela Davis, Chris Hedges, Pankaj Mishra, and Nikki Sanchez among others.

Next year will mark the tenth anniversary of the collaboration between FLAS and TIFA. While still early in the planning stages, the 2024 conference will be focused on the subject of resilience, mattering and well-being, with Liberal Studies professors Masood Zangeneh and Audrene Kerr-Brown joining the conference co-chairs as part of the planning and execution team. Suzanne Methot, an Asini Wachi Nehiyaw social historian with an expertise in trauma-informed practices, will deliver the keynote.

# INNOVATION IN FLAS

## FLAS MAPS THE SYSTEM!

BY MIKE WELLS AND ELINOR BRAY-COLLINS

### What is Map the System?

FLAS professors Elinor Bray-Collins, Isabel Sousa, and Sara Hassan will once again be helping Humber students grow their capacity for critical systems thinking as they return to facilitate Humber's 2023-2024 participation in the Map the System competition: a global student competition that has been organized and run by the University of Oxford for the past decade.

The program has inspired students from around the world to become leaders in social change by first understanding the inherited systems that have created many of the global challenges that the world faces. Map the System is built on the belief that before transformational change can happen, networks of individuals need to develop a collective and complex understanding of the systems that have created the challenges they seek to address (<https://mapthesystem.sbs.ox.ac.uk>).

Systems thinking is a way of approaching inquiry and problem-solving by looking at the vast range of pieces that contribute to the true complexity of things. Systems thinking differs from many other approaches to problem solving which focus on specific parts of a problem instead of looking at the system that those parts come from. When combined with critical analysis that is aimed at identifying social injustice, systems thinking becomes part of a powerful framework for deeply understanding the multifaceted and interconnected challenges that confront humanity today.

Students who participate in Map the System learn about the value of systems thinking, build their capacity for international and local collaboration, and apply these new skills to work together to understand and map complex global problems related to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and beyond. Each of the Humber teams spends upwards of 80 hours preparing their competition submissions.



This is the fifth year that professors and students from the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences have taken part in Map the System. In that time, over 300 students from all six Humber academic Faculties, as well as from the IGS, have participated. This year has the highest rate of student participation yet – with over 119 teams registered in the competition. In fact, Humber College has the highest rate of student participation in Canada and has one of the highest rates of participation in the world! The Map the System organizers from FLAS also support students from Global Polytechnic Alliance (GPA) institutions (Via University in Denmark, and Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand), as part of a COIL project (Collaborative Online International Learning). These students are the only inter-institutional, international teams in the global competition.

Humber's Map the System students have done well in competition with university students at the national level. Humber students have received seven awards at the national-level competition over the past four years. This year, the winning Humber team will receive funding to travel to the national in-person finals and take part in a Systems Summit, hosted by Map the System Canada in Banff, Alberta.

### **Who is this competition for?**

Map the System is for current Humber students and recent graduates from any program who want to learn more about a social or environmental problem that they are passionate about. Teams are typically made up of individuals, or groups of up to five people. The only requirement is at least one team member must be a current student, or recent graduate (within 12 months). This means that student teams can also include practitioners or industry professionals.

### **In Map the System, Students will:**

- Develop a Systems Thinking mindset,
- Design a visual Systems Map of their chosen problem using Systems Thinking tools,
- Practice research and presentation skills,
- Build connections with other innovative, change-making students, faculty, and practitioners from within Humber and the wider community,
- Compete to be the winning Humber team that will present at the Canadian finals, and
- Compete for prizes, cash, and National awards.

## For Faculty:

Map the System also provides a well-structured vehicle for integrating systems thinking into existing courses or programs. New Faculty participating in Map the System will reap the support of experienced faculty, a host of Systems Thinking resources, lesson plans, slides, activities, and much more.

Faculty can integrate Map the System into their courses by:

- Embedding the competition in a course that they are teaching, and
- Giving students an option to participate in the competition in lieu of another course assignment.

Questions? Contact Elinor at [elinor.bray-collins@humber.ca](mailto:elinor.bray-collins@humber.ca) or Sara at [sara.hassan@humber.ca](mailto:sara.hassan@humber.ca)



# REBOUND

BY MIKE WELLS

Starting this winter, the Pathways department in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences will be rolling out a new program to support students who are getting back on track in their academics. Rebound is an academic recovery program designed to help students to get back on their academic feet and to help them prepare for future academic success at Humber. Rebound will build on the successes of the Interim Semester Program by allowing a wider range of diploma-level students who are required to withdraw from their programs to continue their studies in a supportive environment, which will include individualized support and goal setting, regular assessments of progress, a focus on learning skills development, long-term support, and positive reinforcement and encouragement.

Students and advisors who are interested in learning more about Rebound can visit the Rebound website at <https://liberalarts.humber.ca/current-students/resources/rebound.html>, or connect with one of the Pathways team members at [gas@humber.ca](mailto:gas@humber.ca).





# DID YOU KNOW?

## MATH COMPETITION (KANGAROO MATH – MARCH 24)

BY MIKE WELLS



The Canadian Math Kangaroo Contest is coming back to Humber College on March 24, 2024!

The contest involves a multiple-choice competition that engages the critical thinking and creativity of students from Grade 1 – Grade 12. This is a way to make math both fun and inspiring for students who participate online and in-person in more than 50 cities across Canada.

To learn more about the Canadian Math Kangaroo Contest, please visit their website at <https://mathkangaroo.ca/en>.

If you are interested in the contest and would like further information, please reach out to Mike Wells at [Mike.Wells@humber.ca](mailto:Mike.Wells@humber.ca).

# MEET THE FLAS TEAM

BY FRANCES SPARANO/BARBARA CAM

In this issue, we interview three members from FLAS as we dive into their world and take immense pride in their crucial roles and accomplishments.

## ANTHONY RIGA

LEARNING SERVICES ASSISTANT



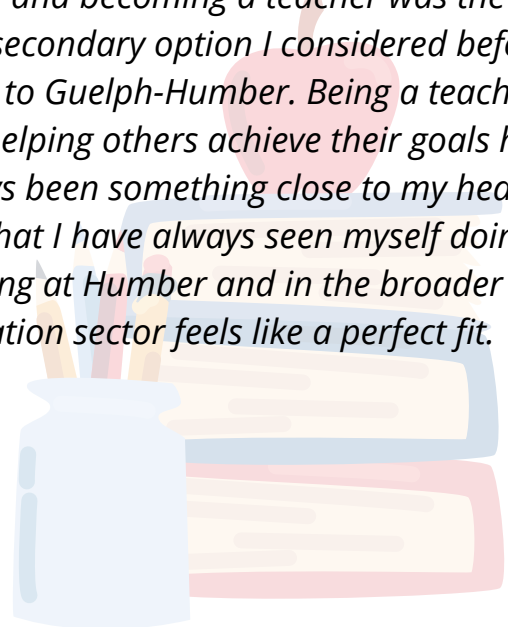
**What motivated you to join this Faculty, and how long have you been part of it?**

*I have been with the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences for over a year and a half. I was drawn to this opportunity because it allowed me to learn all the other programs here at Humber, as I get to interact with students from different programs every day.*

**What motivated you to pursue a career in Humber and within the educational sector?**

*As a former Guelph-Humber student in the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program, I was a part of the Humber community for five years, and it is a significant part of me. My time at Guelph-Humber allowed me to learn about who I was and where I wanted to go in life. Working with Humber now is my way of giving back to the community that shaped me, even in a small way.*

*Furthermore, I have a passion for teaching. I have been a swim instructor for the past ten years, and becoming a teacher was the first post-secondary option I considered before going to Guelph-Humber. Being a teacher and helping others achieve their goals has always been something close to my heart and that I have always seen myself doing, so working at Humber and in the broader education sector feels like a perfect fit.*



**Can you tell us about your role and what are the primary responsibilities and challenges you encounter in your current position?**

*My official title is Learning Services Assistant, and my primary responsibility is supporting students, faculty, and staff when they visit the FLAS office, from registration to administration and technical support. Dealing with many students from different programs and backgrounds can sometimes be challenging. I like to say that my job is like a puzzle: I need to put all the pieces together with every student I interact with to help them best. While sometimes challenging, it is what makes my job interesting and enjoyable.*

**We would like to learn more about the person behind the professional role. Could you share something personal about yourself, a dream, a goal, or something people might not know about you?**

*I have always dreamt of having my own business. Combining that dream with my passion for teaching and being in aquatics for over a decade, my goal is to open my own swim school one day.*

**Could you elaborate on your interests and hobbies?**

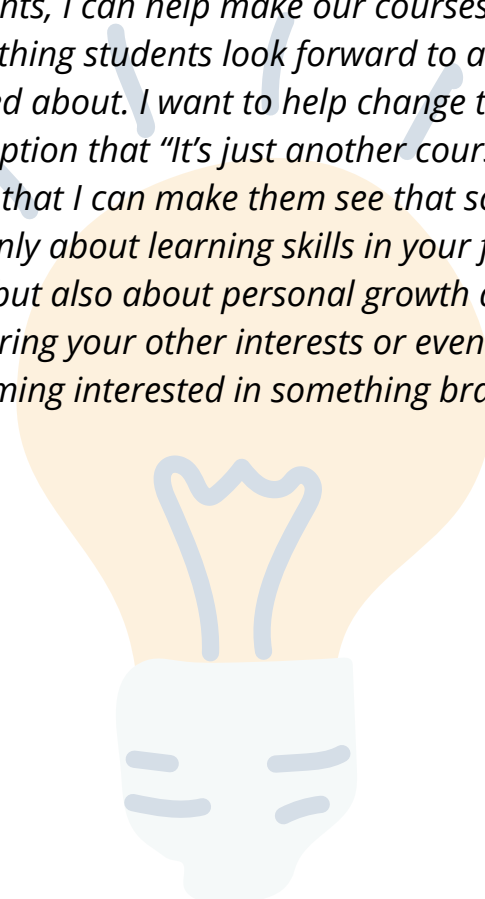
*I love sports, especially hockey, golf, and swimming. I also like to play video games, listen to music and read in my spare time as it helps me relax and escape to wherever my imagination takes me.*

**Can you share an accomplishment or project in your role that you take pride in?**

*While not a single accomplishment or project, I take pride in the fact that I can make a difference in a student's experience every time I interact with them, whether it is being the person who finally answers their question after getting redirected from department to department or knowing that I was able to help them get into a class, even something as small as showing them tricks for using the registration system. I am proud that my actions can make a difference; if students can leave the office with the information they are looking for, I know I have done my job.*

**In what ways do you envision your contributions fostering the overall success and growth of the Faculty?**

*I hope that through my interactions with students, I can help make our courses something students look forward to and are excited about. I want to help change the perception that "It's just another course." I hope that I can make them see that school is not only about learning skills in your future field but also about personal growth and exploring your other interests or even becoming interested in something brand new.*





# AILEEN HERMAN

## PROGRAM COORDINATOR

### Can you tell us about your role within the Faculty?

*I'm Aileen Herman, and I joined the Liberal Studies Faculty in 2004. As a teacher, I teach degree-level and diploma-level courses such as politics electives in Globalization, Democracy and Dictatorship, Introduction to Arts and Sciences (GNED 101), and Introductory Interdisciplinary Studies.*

*In my second year, I took on the GNED 101/HESL 024 Program Coordinator (PC) role with the Department of Liberal Studies. This new position stretched my responsibilities to collaborating and supporting students and colleagues, fostering FLAS initiatives, and being committee Chair in GNED 101/HESL 024.*

### What motivated you to pursue a career at Humber and within the educational sector?

*My passion and long history of teaching directed my career path. From tutoring and co-facilitating Life-skills courses for differently abled adults during high school to being a teaching assistant to supply teaching at the elementary level, I have found gratification by teaching and learning day by day.*

*Being part of a place like Humber offers opportunities to engage vocational-focused students with subjects and ideas they would not otherwise be exposed to and contribute to students' growth as informed global citizens and critical thinkers.*

### What are the primary responsibilities and challenges you encounter in your current position?

*The responsibilities and challenges vary between being a teacher or a Program Coordinator (PC)*

*My challenges as a teacher include designing and delivering a curriculum in a way that meets diverse students' learning needs, creating strategies for engagement between their liberal studies courses and professional goals and changing the perception of some students, such as general electives, particularly GNED 101/HESL 024, as 'non-program' courses, unaware of their impact on professional life.*

*As a program coordinator, challenges involve the perception of being administrative, even though I am still a faculty. Furthermore, my role in facilitating and supporting student concerns becomes more manageable with the support from the Liberal Arts Team (Associate Dean- Chris Irwin, Program Coordinator Candace Iron, Program Coordinator Melanie Chaparian) and other Liberal Studies faculty who focus day by day on the student's best interests.*





**We would like to learn more about the person behind the professional role. Could you share something personal about yourself, a dream, a goal, or something people might not know about you?**

*Parenting is my other profession. We have three kids, and music is a significant part of our family culture. We often engage in family jam sessions, music lessons, and varied performances.*

**Can you share an accomplishment or project in your role that you take pride in?**

*One of my sources of pride is my GNED 101/HESL 024 Committee course redesign, which started three years ago with Sara Hassan, Jennifer Marotta, Hamid Rezaei Yazdi, and Christopher Taylor.*

*The redesign aims to enhance student engagement and relevance by diversifying voices and narratives represented by the curriculum, aligning with EDIB goals, braid IWKBD (Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing), and focusing on sustainability and accessibility for all students and our large number of English Language Learners.*

*Adopting Universal Design for Learning (UDL), another accomplishment is through an informed backward model. The first step involved the creation of the GNED 101/HESL 024 Learner Profile in collaboration with Jeffrey Daniel from Institutional Planning and Kate Staig, ALS Consultant and UDL CoP Co-chair. This research has provided a clear picture of our student demographics, providing insights into defining Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), setting goals, structuring courses and designing course content*

**What motivated you to join this Faculty, and how long have you been part of it?**

*Some reasons for my joining Humber started from the excellent mentorship from colleagues like Melanie Chaparian and Ian Baird, Humber's collegial and collaborative culture, the student-focused curriculum design and delivery, and the opportunity to work and learn from colleagues with diverse disciplinary backgrounds.*

**In what ways do you envision your contributions fostering the overall success and growth of the faculty?**

*The GNED 101/HESL 024 Committee's Learner Profile benefits the entire faculty as required for all diploma programs, as these students are shared among our different departments. This redesigned course offers an engaging, relevant, and accessible learning experience for all FLAS students and faculty.*

**Could you elaborate on your interests and hobbies?**

*I enjoy hiking through the escarpments and nature walks. I am also an avid puzzler and welcome anyone interested in a puzzle exchange!*

# SAMANTHA ROACH

ASSOCIATE DEAN, CONTINUOUS  
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING (CPL)



## Can you tell us about your role and responsibilities within the Faculty?

*My role is one that is very interesting. It essentially involves overseeing two buckets (1) the Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) portfolio and (2) the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) - Test Centre. Within the CPL portfolio, we provide our learners with a high-quality education with the flexibility to learn on their own time and on their own terms. We provide a range of programs and credentials that respond to the needs of the labour market, including various certificate programs, courses, workshops, and training. These programs offer learners, industry, and community partners the opportunity to explore disciplines and fields of study that align with their personal and career interests while enhancing communication, critical thinking, interpersonal and professional skills. As it relates to the IELTS Test Centre, I am responsible for the overall management of the strategic operations at Humber, which offers both paper-based and computer-based IELTS testing to support the academic, career and immigration needs of test takers.*

## What motivated you to join this faculty, and how long have you been part of it?

*I started this role in August 2023, so I have been in the position for less than a year. Notwithstanding, I have been in education broadly for almost two decades and I have led multiple successful projects throughout this time. Bearing this in mind, I was excited about the opportunity to bring my passion and leadership skills in education to bear on this role. I am convinced that with the rapid changes in education, there is an opportunity to repurpose and reposition FLAS CPL to help bridge the gap and provide critical programming that supports upskilling, reskilling, critical skills, and career progression.*

## What are the primary responsibilities and challenges you encounter in your current position?

*My primary responsibility is to ensure that the strategic goals of the department are set and met. This includes working with the CPL team, faculty, community, and industry partners to develop and deliver flexible, relevant programs that meet the needs of our diverse stakeholders. In addition, I collaborate with my colleagues and peers across my faculty to ensure that we further demonstrate the value of a liberal arts education. One challenge that I have encountered is the rapid speed by which programming is changing, notwithstanding, I also see it as an opportunity in and of itself to repurpose, repackage and reengage various partners and learners for the delivery of our programs.*



**What motivated you to pursue a career at Humber and within the educational sector?**

*Coming to Humber was really aligned with my career aspirations to continue serving in higher education as I believe in the power of education, not just to empower lives, but to advance the development of society. Humber is one of the largest Colleges in Ontario and as such has a unique position to provide a quality polytechnic education to all our learners - I'm proud to be a part of this institution.*

**Can you share an accomplishment or project in your role that you take pride in?**

*Given that I have been in the role for less than one year thus far, I have taken the time to understand the portfolio better, which includes getting to know my team colleagues within the Faculty and across campus. During this time of learning, I have audited my portfolio and mapped out an improvement plan that will leverage the opportunities and areas for improvement; this I think is an essential step in moving the portfolio forward.*

**In what ways do you envision your contributions fostering the overall success and growth of the Faculty?**

*Working to respond quickly to the needs of our learners is a priority. Within this context, I think that developing new programs and credentials, and building strategic partnerships with industry and community, both locally and internationally will help to foster overall success and growth of the faculty. This approach will also enhance our profile, visibility, and impact.*

**We would like to learn more about the person behind the professional role. Could you share something personal about yourself, a dream, a goal, or something people might not know about you?**

*Outside of my professional life, I love to explore new places, trails, small towns, cities, and countries with my family. While I have visited many cities and countries, it is my dream to one day travel to every continent in the world and learn about new cultures and meet new people while creating memories and experiences.*

**Could you elaborate on your interests and hobbies?**

*In addition to exploring new places and cultures, I find fulfillment in mentoring young women. This allows me to use my experience and education to make a small, yet meaningful impact by giving back to society. One day, I would love to establish a foundation or community organization that helps mentor, motivate, and inspire women.*



# COURSES HIGHLIGHT

## MILE 220: VIETNAM STUDY ABROAD

BY CANDACE IRON

MILE 220 is a faculty-led study abroad course offered through Liberal Studies that I teach in the Spring semester with my colleague Naveen Joshi.

The course takes students abroad to Vietnam for nearly 3 weeks, where they study at two National Universities alongside Vietnamese students, learning about topics such as globalization, sustainability, Indigenous histories and cultures, art and architecture, and language. Each topic is covered in classes and then is brought to life through site visits to museums, villages, buildings, and UNESCO Heritage Sites. In addition to all of this, students learn through experience, trying their hand at creating traditional artforms, shopping in local outdoor markets and then cooking national dishes, and speaking with local people while exploring cities and the countryside. Students will even have the opportunity to boat or kayak an inland sea to experience massive limestone mountains and caves up close, and to hike the Son Tra Peninsula to see the local primates (douc langurs) in their natural environment!







The focus of the course is on immersive global learning, intercultural competencies, global citizenship, and the development of lifelong learning skills, including reflexivity, leadership, collaboration, problem solving, and critical thinking - all skills incorporated into classes, site visits, and assessments, which are completed both in Canada and while abroad.

The course truly is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for students to explore Vietnam and earn a college credit, which can be counted as either a General Elective or Degree Breath Elective (Lower-Level Arts & Humanities).



# SUSTAINABILITY COURSE: FOUNDATIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY (GGRN 100)

BY JENNIFER BALL

FLAS is pleased to showcase a unique course offered in the department of General Arts and Science: Foundations of Sustainability (GGRN 100).

In this experiential, solutions-focused course, students primarily explore three interlocking global sustainability challenges: the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and social inequality. Through interdisciplinary examination of modern life and the centering of Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being, and Doing, students reflect on the impacts of food, energy, manufacturing, building, and consumption habits have on the planet and its inhabitants.

Much of the learning takes place outdoors in our beautiful Humber Arboretum and Lakeshore campus park lands. This approach invites students to form personal connections with the living world and makes good use of the forests, beaches, waterways, wetlands, meadows, and walking trails at our back door.

The course culminates in a capstone, mock UN-style Climate Action Summit during which students, in delegations, must balance the needs of all beings while charting a course to a least-harmful climate scenario of 1.5 degrees Celsius of warming by year 2100.





## FLAS NEWSLETTER TEAM

### **Barbara Cam**

Administrative Assistant

### **Izzy Dewi**

Digital Marketing Assistant

### **Kimmy Do**

Manager, Global Initiatives, Partnerships and Programs

### **Frances Sparano**

Manager, English Language and Communications Programming

### **Tumpe Trotter**

Academic Program Manager

### **Mike Wells**

Associate Dean, Mathematics, Research Skills & Analysis (Acting)

### **Kate Zhang**

Program Coordinator, Math

*Thank you to all contributors and interviewees for participating in the creation of our first newsletter.*



# CONTACT INFORMATION

<https://liberalarts.humber.ca/>

 [slas@humber.ca](mailto:slas@humber.ca)

## North Campus

LRC 5th Floor  
205 Humber College Blvd.,  
Toronto, ON M9W 5L7

## Lakeshore Campus

MED Building - Level 3  
3170 Lakeshore Blvd W, 3rd floor  
Etobicoke, ON M8V 3X8

J Building  
27 Colonel Samuel Smith Park Dr,  
Etobicoke, ON M8V 4B6



**HUMBER**

Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences