

# FLAS CONNECT



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Building Community  
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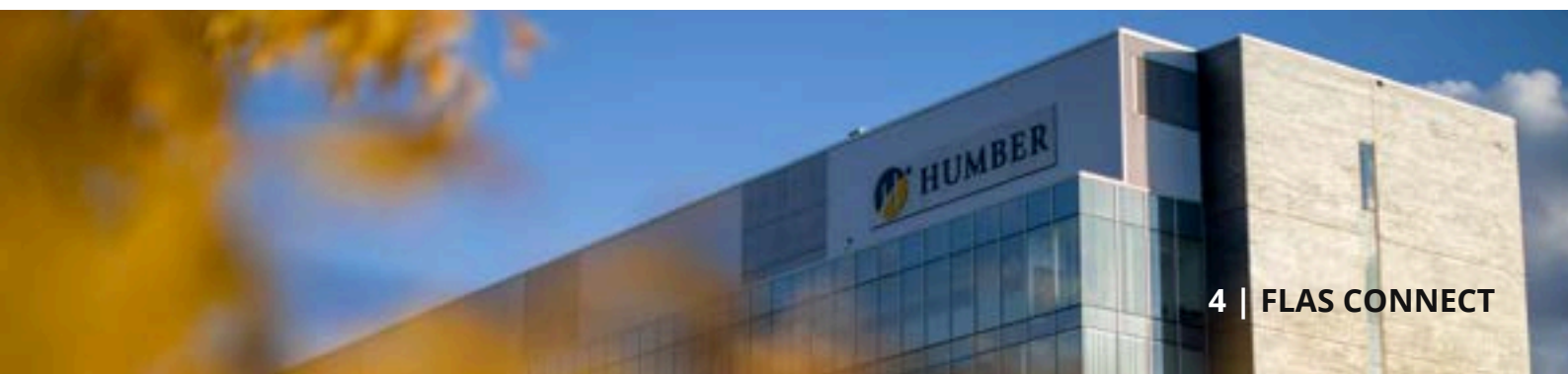


# Message from the Senior Dean

John Stilla, EdD

This Fall the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences (FLAS) has continued to excel in its role of interdisciplinary and access education at Humber Polytechnic. In this issue of FLAS Connect, we highlight our students' inspirational stories and successes; reflect on our Faculty's contributions to mental health, well-being, and storytelling; and share some of the ways we are advancing internationalization and systems thinking to create meaningful experiences for Humber students and those from institutions abroad. We also celebrate some of the individuals within the FLAS team who make our Faculty the innovative and welcoming space that it is.

Solutions to some of the world's most complex problems lie within the skills and mindsets that the liberal arts and sciences bring to our learners, and our team is always up for the challenge of tackling these problems. I hope you enjoy reading about the people, projects, and innovations that lie at the heart of an interdisciplinary and polytechnic approach to education.



# QUEERBAITING:

## THE BANE OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

WRITTEN BY LAURENCE LY AND SHARED BY JESSICA FREITAG

*Below is an excerpt from the original 8-page essay by Laurence Ly (WRIT 100 Fall 2024)*

LGBTQIA+ identities and storylines have been increasingly accepted and praised within fictional media come the 20th century. However, that does not necessarily mean any of it is objectively well done. With the strides the queer community has taken to let their voices be heard, the very media they consume and adore shoots their progress down like a led balloon.

Though no one can fully agree on the definition, 'queerbaiting' is a fan-created term that generally describes a marketing tactic where two characters (most commonly two male characters) are implied to be non-heterosexual to draw in a LGBTQIA+ audience, but their identities or relationship is never confirmed in the end.

Queerbaiting can damage the formative years of a young person still figuring out their identity as I have experienced. The lack of good queer representation for younger people can make you feel doubtful, invisible or like a complete joke. Seeing characters and storylines that properly depict us now brings clarity to what many queer people growing up lacked: to be taken seriously, to be seen, to be loved.

Due to our current political climate regarding the LGBTQIA+ community and the desperate need for something positive in our lives, proper discussion and representation is needed. We need to bring attention to the negative effects queerbaiting has on the LGBTQIA+ community, for both the viewers and the actors involved. By addressing the lack of effort and speaking out for change, we will be able to strengthen our voices to make sure we will always be seen.



## CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE WITH A SIDE OF FUN: THE 2024 PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNERS!

BY MARIA LUCIA DI PLACITO

On August 29th, Humber Polytechnic rolled out the red carpet (or maybe just a particularly polished piece of linoleum) to celebrate the winners of the 2024 President's Awards. The ceremony was filled with applause, inspirational speeches, and a whole lot of coffee. The Humber community cheered on some of our finest who have set the bar high with their incredible contributions to our community. Unsurprisingly, wink wink, many of those honored come from the 5th floor of the LRC! You guessed it... FLAS!

Drumroll please...

First up, Maria Lucia (Marylou) Di Placito and Alyson Renaldo took home the Distinguished Faculty Award. These two have redefined what it means to be "distinguished." While we're still waiting to see them wearing capes around campus, their innovative teaching, leadership, and mentorship certainly makes them superheroes in the eyes of their students and peers.

Next, a huge shoutout to Sara Hassan, Elinor Bray-Collins, and Isabel Sousa—also known as the Humber Map the System Faculty Champions Team—who earned the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Award. Their work is not just about mapping systems, but mapping out a future that's more inclusive and equitable. There's a new navigation team in town, and they're leading us toward a more just world.

And, saving the best for last (or at least tying for best—we don't pick favorites!), we've got the Community Service Award winners: Eufemia Fantetti, Sarah Feldbloom, and Leanne Milech, the brains and brilliance behind YouthINK. Through this incredible initiative, they've empowered young voices to express themselves by fostering creativity and community engagement. They're making sure the future has plenty of ink left to write its next chapters—and we're here for it!

Our Faculty is so incredibly impressed by our winners... so much so that we wanted to learn more about their winning experience! With pen and paper in hand, we hit the cubicles and asked winners the following question: "How did receiving this award make you feel, and how has it impacted you personally and professionally?" Here's what they said...



*I felt like a million bucks, or maybe I'll up that to 2 million considering inflation lol. For me, it's less about being awarded and more about being noticed. When people acknowledge the efforts you put into your professional endeavors, you can't help but feel personally fulfilled and grateful. It's like I have an extra pep in my step—an incentive to continue applying myself to the work that I love! (Marylou)*



## Alyson Renaldo



*There is something deeply encouraging and humbling about being recognised by faculty and colleagues whose work you admire. I am touched by the acknowledgement. I have not yet gotten over the fact that I was chosen. I have no doubt that the reality of the President's Award will sink in in the next twenty years or so...maybe. Until then, I'll display my gratitude for being a part of the FLAS community by contributing however and whenever I am called to do so. (Alyson)*

## Humber Map the System Faculty Champions



*Receiving the President's Award for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB), alongside the Map the System faculty team, felt both empowering and like a call to action. I was grateful to the nominators and selection committee for recognizing how Map the System (MTS) supports the integration of EDIB principles for learners at Humber Polytechnic. Through systems thinking, learners engage with multiple perspectives, make connections between what seems disconnected, and interrogate dominant narratives. This is especially powerful for those who use MTS as an opportunity to make sense of their own lived experiences of marginalization or to raise awareness of systems of inequity and exclusion. The award experience was also a reminder of the care and intentionality required to advance EDIB principles and a call to action to continue the work of creating an inclusive campus culture for all staff, faculty, and students. (Sara)*

*I am deeply grateful and humbled to receive the EDIB award alongside my colleagues for our work with Map the System (MTS). This recognition affirms the profound impact and potential of MTS—a platform that inspires deep exploration, empathy, and systems analysis, empowering learners to become compassionate advocates for equality, sustainability, and social change. Seeing the impact of MTS resonate among students and others throughout our campus community has reaffirmed for me the value of systems thinking in fostering collective responsibility and long-term engagement with principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. This acknowledgment also fuels my commitment to deepen our understanding of systems and to actively work to disrupt structures of inequality. I am also grateful for the support from our institution and colleagues, who help create spaces where both students and faculty can develop their voices and perspectives on critical issues. (Isabel)*

Our award winners didn't just get plaques and pats on the back. They also scored major campus bragging rights! You can learn more about these stellar folks on the [President's Awards Website](#) and relive the fun by checking out the [photo gallery](#). We promise there were no food fights—though with this group's creativity, anything's possible!



Image by: People(s) & Culture at Humber

**HUMBER@TIFA**

## **RESILIENCE, MATTERING & BELONGING: INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

**BY JENNIFER MAROTTA**

Humber@TIFA's tenth annual interdisciplinary conference had the timely theme of "Resilience, Mattering, and Belonging." Co-Chairs Prof. David Miller and Dr. Jennifer Marotta brought together a program of scholars, educators, and practitioners, all unified in their dedication to advancing the understanding of mental health. As led by our faculty co-organizers Prof. Audrene Kerr-Brown and Dr. Masood Zangeneh, Humber@TIFA specifically focused on post-secondary students, with the goal of nurturing resilience, enhancing mental health, and fostering a profound sense of well-being among those navigating the complexities of higher education while empowering a more resilient and mentally healthy population.

Our keynote, "Regulating Emotions in an Apocalyptic Time" featured Humber's own Prof. Nathan Radke and Dr. Lee Kuhnle performing a live "The UnCoverUp" podcast with special guest Dr. Shelly Leshner from the podcast, "My Nuclear Life." Of particular note was the premiere of Filmmakers Sean Egerton and Sherry Pom's bleak yet riotously funny documentary, "The Prime Minister's Secret Bunker" which featured all three panelists exploring the thought experiment, "what would happen if a nuclear war broke out?" We look forward to adding the keynote to our website for those that missed it.



*Photo: Dr. Lee and Professor Nathan demonstrating MAD or Mutual Assured Destruction*

Delegates noted they had a "great time," found the panels "engaging," remarked upon the "incredible synergy" between sessions and simply noted that "it was a pleasure to be a part of the conference and learn more about such interesting and dynamic research."

Jennifer and Dave would like to thank Senior Dean, John Stilla; Liberal Arts Associate Dean Chris Irwin; and our cheerful conference staff, Megan Hornblow and Mariel Alano (who as our Digital Marketing Assistant created our posters using the stunning conference art by Angela Aujla). We are grateful for our dynamic moderators Dr. Paul Corey, Prof. Arundati Dandapani, Prof. Sara Hassan, Prof. Shelly McCabe, Dr. Alexander Shvarts and Prof. Beth Washburn for their insightful questions and comments. Without the support of our faculty, the success of our event would simply not be possible.



*Photo: Co-chair Dr. Jennifer Marotta, Dr. Lee Kuhnle, Dr. Shelly Leshner, Sean Egerton, Prof. Nathan Radke, Sherry Pom, and Co-chair Prof. David Miller*



# HLR CELEBRATES 10 YEARS AT GLAD DAY BOOKSHOP

BY DAVID MILLER

After releasing its 10-year anniversary issue this summer, the Humber Literary Review's anniversary celebrations culminated in a celebration of the writers and writing published in the journal over the past decade at a party held on Friday, October 18, at the historic Glad Day Bookshop, Canada's oldest LGBTQ+ bookstore.

The event was a success with great participation from both the Humber and Toronto writing communities and featured short readings from ten different writers representing each year of the journal's existence.

Fittingly, journalist and essayist Micah Toub, whose short story "Thank You All for Coming" appeared in the very first issue of the *HLR* back in 2014, kicked off the evening's literary readings, sharing a moving excerpt from an essay about his son, who was born in 2014. Another featured reader was Sadi Muktedir, whose first ever publication credit was with the *HLR* in 2017; he read from his new highly acclaimed novel *Land of No Regrets*, published recently by HarperCollins. Former editor (and outgoing poetry editor) Meaghan Strimas read some new poems that will appear in her upcoming collection, while a student from Humber's Bachelor of Creative and Professional Writing, Patricia Arhinson, also shared the stage (and her poetry) with the captivated audience. Other writers who appeared included poet Catrina Wright and novelists Jes Taylor and Zalicka Reid-Benta.

In addition to celebrating 10 years of publishing, the evening also marked the final public event hosted by the current editors of the *HLR*, Eufemia Fantetti and David Miller, who are moving on to other editorial roles in the publication after five years at the helm. The evening concluded with the introduction of English professors Sarah Feldbloom and Neesha Meminger as the new co-editors.

In the past decade, writing from the *HLR* has appeared in issues of Best Canadian Essays and Best Canadian Poetry and has been nominated for National Magazine Awards.

The latest issue of the *HLR* is currently in production! Stay tuned for its release in January 2025.



*Photo: HLR co-editors Eufemia Fantetti and David Miller with long-time book reviewer Keith Garebian (middle) at the HLR's 10th-anniversary celebration.  
(Photo courtesy of Keith Garebian)*



## BUILDING BELONGING: FLAS PARTNERS WITH BEST BUDDIES CANADA TO PROMOTE INCLUSION ON CAMPUS

BY LAUREN ABELA

An exciting new partnership is underway! Best Buddies Canada (BBC), an organization dedicated to fostering inclusion and friendships for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), will be coming back to our community! This collaboration is made possible by \$10,000 in funding from the Humber Polytechnic Community Impact Fund (HP CIF), which supports projects that enhance community engagement and provide educational opportunities for equity-deserving groups. Through this partnership, we aim to create a vibrant, inclusive space for students of all abilities to thrive at Humber.

The fund will be used to recruit and train student leaders, who will organize and host a range of fun and educational events from January-March, 2025. From pizza parties to job fairs, movie nights and awareness campaigns, there will be something for everyone to enjoy. These events are designed to bring together students, staff, faculty and community members to celebrate our unique differences and build connections, a spirit that FLAS captures through our central role in connecting students across the polytechnic.

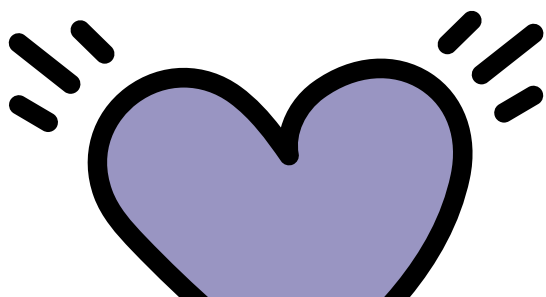
Want to get involved? Follow the Humber Best Buddies Instagram [@BestBuddiesGH](https://www.instagram.com/BestBuddiesGH) for updates on upcoming events, join the Microsoft Teams channel [here](#), or email [Lauren.Abela@Humber.ca](mailto:Lauren.Abela@Humber.ca) to contribute to the planning committee. We can't wait to get started!



*Photo: FLAS Program Support Officer Lauren Abela (left) with her best buddy, Jessica Rotolo, in Indiana at the BB International Leadership Conference.*



*They met at Humber in 2019 and have become lifelong friends all thanks to BBC. Jessica was born with Down syndrome and she is an inspiration to Lauren and to many.*



# STUDENT FEATURE: OLAWALE ASEKUN – A STORY OF GROWTH AND RESILIENCE

BY TUMPE TROTTER

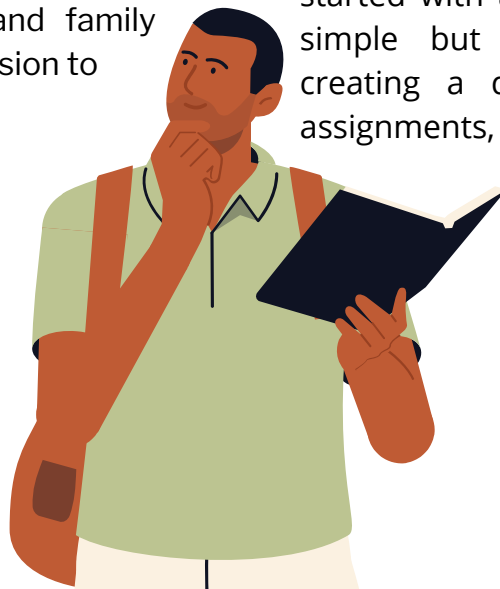
Olawale Asekun's academic journey at Humber Polytechnic started in the Academic Upgrading program. This program is a non-postsecondary program offered to help learners achieve academic and career goals. The courses offered in the program help learners improve English, math and computer skills as well as study biology and chemistry in lab-based environments. Students who successfully complete the program receive credit to gain admission into their college post-secondary programs of choice.

The program has a high intake of mature students especially since many of the learners are juggling work and family responsibilities. Olawale's decision to pursue the program was rooted in his quest to achieve his career goals and to create a more solid foundation for himself and his family. It was a period marked by a determination to overcome any obstacles in his path.

Olawale enrolled in the program in May 2023, completing his Academic Career Entrance (ACE) courses by August 2023. He remained committed to his goals and continued to the ACE-level courses in September 2023. He took on a demanding course load, enrolling in ACE Skills for Success, ACE Math, ACE Computers and ACE Communications. With such a schedule, Olawale would spend 9 hours in ACE Communications and Math and 4 hours in ACE Skills for Success and ACE Computers for a total of 26 hours of class time per week. According to Olawale, one of his most significant challenges was time management, an issue common among many students, but even more pronounced for students like Olawale who have jobs and help provide at home. He often felt overwhelmed trying to complete assignments within deadlines. Furthermore, there were times during the program, when he experienced moments of imposter syndrome, dealing with self-doubt, questioning his abilities and comparing himself to classmates when he came up against complex material. Olawale also shared that a challenge that he faced while in the program was coordinating the varied schedules and workstyles of group members when they were given group work.

Despite the challenges, Olawale remained dedicated to the task at hand and took on his challenges with courage and persistence. He started with a change of mindset and made simple but impactful decisions such as creating a detailed schedule to prioritize assignments, study sessions, and simplifying

larger tasks into smaller more manageable steps. He addressed the imposter syndrome by giving himself more grace and focused on prior wins to boost his confidence.







*Photo: Olawale Asekun with Manager of Pathways Programs, Tumpe Trotter, receiving the Academic Upgrading Standing Student Award*

Additionally, Olawale identified his mom and his sister as a driving force and inspiration. In his words, it was “my mum’s resilience in taking care of our family that motivated me to strive for a better future.”

Olawale recalled advice one of his professors shared with him: “The best way to get through a tough situation is to break it down into what you can control.” The instructor referred to him as a “rebel” and a “soldier” because his views and perspectives were always different. As Olawale moved through the program, he found that instead of being paralyzed by the overwhelming circumstances, his professor’s advice resonated with him and became a guiding principle whenever he came up against life’s currents.

Olawale is keen on achieving success and is currently enrolled in Business Administration at Humber Polytechnic. He has demonstrated those soldier-like qualities his instructor referred to and is charting his path to a promising future.

And for anyone looking to start their academic journey, his advice is to reach out and ask for help and guidance as much as possible. Good resources for guidance include professors, classmates, or academic support services. In Olawale’s words “seeking guidance is not a sign of weakness. It is also important to pace yourself and not get discouraged by setbacks—success is about persistence and growth over time.”

We wish you the best Olawale!

# STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

## CELEBRATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: FLAS INTRODUCES SENIOR DEAN'S CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION

BY CANDACE IRON

The Spring 2024 FLAS Symposium Committee was tasked with, among other things, finding a meaningful way to include students in the festivities - finding a way to open up the event, make it more inclusive, and have it reflect more of what we do in FLAS.

From this, the new FLAS Senior Dean's Certificates of Recognition were created.

The reality is that whether online, in-person, or experiential, new flexible learning environments require students to adapt in order to engage with their peers and faculty and to excel in their classes. Recognizing this, the Symposium Committee announced the creation of three new Certificates of Recognition designed to celebrate student achievements in various learning environments. Highlighting the diverse experiences and skills students demonstrate through their work in FLAS classes, these certificates focus on engagement in online learning, engagement in in-person learning, and global engagement.

Nominations were provided by professors, and the recipients were selected by a committee comprising the following members:

- FLAS Senior Dean, John Stilla
- Liberal Studies Associate Dean, Chris Irwin
- English Associate Dean, Patrice Esson
- Continuous Professional Learning Associate Dean, Samantha Roach
- Mathematics and Research Associate Dean, Mike Wells

The first certificate, awarded for excellence in Online Learning, acknowledges students who have demonstrated exceptional adaptability, engagement, and performance in online courses. Recipients of this certificate were recognized for their ability to effectively collaborate, communicate, and utilize technology and Blackboard tools to enhance learning.

The 2024 recipients of this certificate are:

- Annicca D. Albano (nominated by Prasad Bidaye)
- Intikhab Amir (nominated by Alexei Gokhman)



*Photo: Award recipients Intikhab Amir, Annicca Albano, and Rubeena Gul at the FLAS Symposium 2024*

The second certificate focuses on In-Person Learning, celebrating those who have actively participated in traditional classroom settings. This certificate honors the importance of personal engagement, critical thinking, and collaboration in a physical learning environment.



*Photo: Rubeena Gul, nominated by Naghmeh Saffarian-Pour, receiving the award*



*Photo: Award recipients Anika Zareen (left) and Jennifer Hall (right) with FLAS Senior Dean John Stilla*



*Photo: Students awarded the FLAS Senior Dean's Certificate of Recognition*

The 2024 recipients of this certificate are:

- Rubeena Gul (nominated by Naghmeh Saffarian-Pour)
- Laurence Ly (nominated by Matthew Harris)
- Cole Hansen (nominated by David Miller)

The third certificate is dedicated to Global Engagement. Recognizing the importance of global awareness and the skills necessary to navigate an increasingly interconnected world, this certificate acknowledges students who have engaged in experiences that extend beyond their local context, such as study abroad programs, work-integrated learning, the Global Summer School, Map the System, and COIL projects.

The 2024 recipients of this certificate are:

- Andrew Drager, Jennifer Hall, Anika Zareen (nominated by David Miller)
- Jeri May Bernardo (nominated by Irene Kosmas)

Overall, the 2024 Senior Dean's Certificates of Recognition provided an opportunity to include students in the FLAS Spring Symposium, while celebrating their achievements.

This coming Winter-Spring, the 2025 FLAS Spring Symposium committee will once again invite faculty to participate in this celebration by nominating students who have excelled in their classes and/or global initiatives. We look forward to your contributions and to celebrating our students' successes!





## MEXICAN FUTURE TEACHERS EMBARK ON A CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY IN TORONTO

BY KIMMY DO

This fall, the FLAS team proudly launched the English Language and Pedagogical Skills for Future Educators Certificate Program, an immersive 8-week program welcoming a group of aspiring learners from Mexico. This initiative provides learners with a unique opportunity to enhance their English fluency and pedagogical skills, all while experiencing the vibrant culture of Toronto.

### Learning Through Real-World Challenges and Cultural Discovery

The past weeks have seen participants dive into engaging activities such as role-playing, case studies, real-world interviews, and collaborative projects that are designed to enhance their confidence and adaptability. "My experience at Humber has been extraordinary. The teachers are highly supportive and the sense of community here has made my experience more fulfilling," shares Orlando Ibarra, one of the learners.

As their learning hasn't stopped at the classroom door, students ventured into the heart of Toronto's natural beauty, where practical learning met cultural exploration. On a recent trip to Etienne Brulé Park, students encountered Ontario's famous fall colors and witnessed the Chinook salmon's migration up the Humber River. A temporary subway delay turned into an impromptu problem-solving exercise, as they worked together to find alternative routes.

One of the program highlights was the Niagara Falls excursion, where students boarded the Hornblower boat for a thrilling, up-close view of the falls. The day was a perfect mix of excitement and learning, as students practiced their English while discovering how to navigate a new environment and communicate with local people.



*Photo: ELPS students aboard the Hornblower boat during their Niagara Falls day trip*

### Bringing Canadian Traditions to Life

At Halloween, the group participated in a Halloween-themed pumpkin carving workshop. For many, this was their first experience with Canada's beloved autumn tradition, giving them a glimpse into the culture while sparking creativity. To make the day even more fun, the group and Humber staff wore costumes, adding to the festive atmosphere. Some learners also took the opportunity to share with the Humber community about Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), a significant Mexican tradition that honors and remembers deceased loved ones, creating a valuable cultural exchange where everyone learned from each other.

As the program progresses, these future educators are not only gaining language fluency and teaching tools but also acquiring lifelong skills and cherished memories. It equips these future teachers to bring a global lens to their classrooms in Mexico. As Orlando conveys, "I'm confident that my time here will help me grow both personally and professionally. I'm truly grateful for the support and opportunities Humber has offered me."



Language Exchange  
Cafe! →

# RAP

## SPEAKER SERIES

BY MARY TAKACS

The Research Analyst program has always sought innovative ways to add value to their students' learning experiences, as a complement to the rich, formal, program curriculum. In 2013, in addition to extra-curricular workshops, the program launched its Speaker Series. Each term, four to six speakers were invited to deliver timely research-sector topics to the students, providing students with an "insider's" view of the sector. During the pandemic, the Speaker Series switched to an online format, enabling students to continue to network with, and learn from, experts from the field. In the 2023-2024 academic year, RAP hosted an abridged form of the series, a one-time speakers' event, that was hosted by Mike Bone, Vice-president, of the marketing research firm, BrandSpark International. The event was attended by over one hundred students.

The Research Analyst program is pleased to relaunch the program for the 2024-2025 academic year. We are excited to open the program to the wider Humber community who are curious about the research sector, and to prospective students, who want to experience, first-hand, what the program can offer to them.

Upcoming topics will include technological, regulatory, policy, and employment trends



Photo: RAP Speaker Series Poster

in the industry, key employment skills, opportunities open in research, the types of tasks and duties that comprise different roles within the sector, and the ways in which research benefits different stakeholders. Speakers represent a variety of streams within the sector, to include government, corporate, social, community, and academic.

The inaugural speaker for the fall 2024 series was Eva Tolkunow, Manager, Audience Insights, Royal Ontario Museum, speaking about "Leveraging Research-Driven Insights for Strategic Adaptation and Decision Making."

Information about upcoming speakers, dates, and times will be available through the Communique, so we hope that you will be able to attend our Speakers' Series!

# FLAS GRAB N' GO

BY CANDACE IRON

This holiday season, FLAS is hosting a food drive to support the Grab 'n Go Food Banks at both the North and Lakeshore Campuses.

This initiative aims to gather non-perishable food items to ensure that everyone in the Humber community has access to food during the holiday season and beyond. Students, staff, and faculty who are able to, are encouraged to contribute by donating canned goods, packaged snacks, and other food items to one of the labelled donations boxes found on campus (5th floor of the LRC at the North Campus; 3rd floor of the MED Building at the Lakeshore Campus).

If you have questions or ideas, please contact [candace.iron@humber.ca](mailto:candace.iron@humber.ca) (North Campus) or [sarah.armenia@humber.ca](mailto:sarah.armenia@humber.ca) (Lakeshore Campus).

All food collected will be distributed through the Grab 'n Go Food Bank, providing a convenient and discreet option for members of our Humber community who may be facing food insecurity or financial challenges.



# FLAS FESTIVE SPIRIT

BY JESSICA FREITAG

The holiday spirit is in full swing! Some members of the FLAS team got into a festive mood adding some seasonal décor and cheer to the office. The FLAS Food Bank has received a heartwarming bunch of donations during the season of giving. Colleagues enjoyed time with friends, food, and fun at the FLAS holiday party. Wishing everyone a safe, relaxing, enjoyable holiday season and a bright start to 2025!





# THE DUAL CREDIT PROGRAM

BY TUMPE TROTTER



The Dual Credit program is a Ministry-funded program that allows secondary school students in the Greater Toronto Area to enroll in a college or apprenticeship course. The program targets students in grades 11 and 12, who may be disengaged but have the potential to succeed, and students who left school before graduating but have returned to earn their diplomas. It also targets students in Specialist High Skills Major programs (SHSM) and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program. The Dual Credit courses count towards both Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and a postsecondary certificate, diploma, degree, or Certificate of Apprenticeship. To participate, students must have a minimum of 22 OSSD credits.

There are many benefits for students who take part in the Dual Credit program.

- Students obtain their OSSD and a college credit.
- Students get a head start on exploring post-secondary pathway options.
- Students are supported in their self-development, in goal setting and in developing a transition plan.
- Students have access to Humber Polytechnic resources and support.

- Students receive round-trip transportation to and from high school.
- Students are provided with course materials and resources.

Humber has offered the Dual Credit program for over 20 years. Currently, the program falls under the Pathways programs in FLAS. Thousands of high school students have attended Dual Credit courses at Humber Polytechnic.

In the past 5 years (2019/2020 – 2023/24), about 900 students enrolled in the Dual Credit program attended a Humber program. The courses offered in the program come from a range of specialties, across all Faculties. These include Life Drawing for Animation, Introductory Cosmetic Application, Positive Psychology for Academic and Career Success, Welding, Fitness, Video Production, Studio Production, and PC Essentials, among many others. The students not only gain valuable knowledge and skills but also get the college experience that helps set them up for success.

## DID YOU KNOW?

# FACULTY-LED TRIP TO DENMARK

BY ELINOR BRAY-COLLINS & KIMMY DO

Did you know that Humber students have the opportunity to join a faculty-led trip to Denmark this winter and earn academic credit for an upper-level degree breadth elective course?

We are excited to offer an immersive trip to Denmark from March 1–9, 2025 (during Reading Week) in collaboration with our long-time partner, VIA University College! This unique experience allows students to tackle global challenges, develop real-world skills, and connect with international peers.

Together with students from VIA University College in Aarhus, Denmark, students will use systems thinking and design thinking to explore “wicked” problems and develop potential solutions.

### Why Denmark?

VIA University College, one of Denmark's largest polytechnics, has a strong focus on design for sustainability and how applied sciences can advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Located in the heart of Denmark, VIA emphasizes creative solutions to complex issues of social and ecological justice, offering students the chance to gain new insights and approaches from an intercultural, international perspective.

### Trip Highlights

- Students deep dive into the applications of systems and design thinking in scenarios they can directly relate to their field of work or areas they are passionate about.
- Hands-on learning and cultural exchange: Students participate in collaborative workshops hosted by Humber and VIA faculty, site visits, and cultural activities designed to broaden their global experience.

### Eligibility

Open to students enrolled in one of the following Winter 2025 courses:

- Thinking in Systems (SOCI 3200)
- Social Entrepreneurship (SOCI 3001)
- Extinction: Biodiversity and Human Action (SCIE 3100)



Photo: HumberTV ad for the Denmark trip



## DID YOU KNOW?

# HUMBER DOWNTOWN HOSTS FIRST IELTS ON COMPUTER TEST SESSION

BY JC VARGAS

We are thrilled to announce the successful launch of our first IELTS on Computer test session at Humber Downtown. Leveraging Humber Polytechnic's newest campus in the heart of downtown Toronto, we hosted candidates on the fifth floor, where they completed their Listening, Reading, and Writing tests in a state-of-the-art computer lab. The in-person Speaking test was also conducted on the same floor, ensuring a seamless testing experience.

The event was graced by the presence of Samantha Roach, Associate Dean of FLAS-Continuous Professional Learning, and Diane Simpson, Principal of Humber Downtown. Their attendance underscored the significance of this milestone for our institution.

This new venue marks the fourth test centre under Humber's IELTS Test Centre (CA092) umbrella, complementing our existing locations in Etobicoke and Sudbury. The launch of this downtown location provides test-takers residing in central and eastern Toronto, as well as the GTA, with convenient access to a top-notch IELTS test delivery facility. Moreover, its prime location, just steps away from the Bloor-Yonge subway station, is surrounded by numerous cafes and restaurants, adding to the convenience and appeal.

We are excited about this expansion and the enhanced accessibility it offers to our test-takers.

We have added test dates in November and December for this test venue. Thank you for joining us in celebrating this significant achievement.



*Photo: Diane Simpson, Principal of Humber Downtown, with the Humber IELTS team, FLAS CPL Associate Dean Samantha Roach, and IELTS Manager JC Vargas*



*Photo: Humber launches IELTS on Computer at Humber Downtown*



## DID YOU KNOW?

### THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT'S R&R COMMITTEE INVITES YOU TO THE WELCOME MAT(T) SESSIONS!

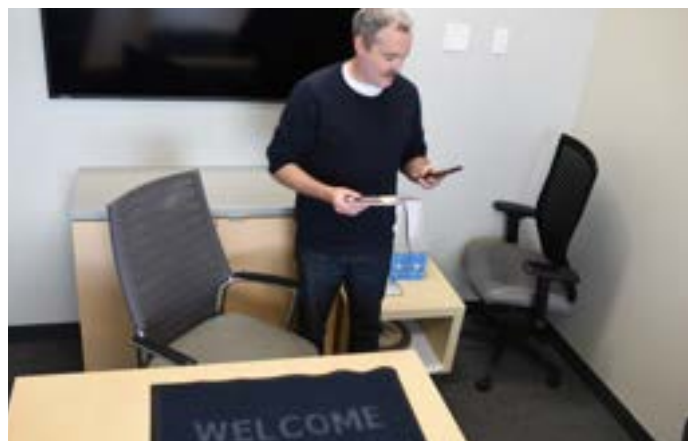
**BY MATTHEW HARRIS**

In 2020, the English department launched its Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Team Members Committee (often shorted to the R&R Committee). This Committee helps ensure that the English department hires more diverse faculty and retains those members when they have been hired.

Over time, the committee saw that one of the main barriers to retention is when faculty members feel disconnected from the Humber community, feel like they can't get answers to important questions, or feel like their work is not valued.

As well, since the pandemic has changed work habits, and many faculty work remotely, there are fewer "water cooler" conversations at our physical offices. These casual and informal conversations often allowed faculty to ask questions that they might have been too nervous to ask in more formal settings. While faculty can still chat via Teams, it is hard to replicate the spontaneity of in-person conversations in a remote environment.

The Welcome Mat(t) sessions were created to address these issues. The Welcome Mat(t)s are hosted 2-3 times a semester and are open to all FLAS faculty members. They are usually held in the FLAS Boardroom in a hybrid format. They provide an informal space where contract and full-time faculty can share ideas and get questions answered. Previous sessions have focused on AI, academic integrity and work stresses.



*Photo: Professor Matthew Harris leading the Mat(t) Session*

The sessions help create that sense of community that many faculty members miss. New faculty members get to meet their colleagues, more senior faculty get to connect with long-time friends, and everyone gets to talk about issues they are facing, both big and small. And there is always a lot of laughter.

We hope that FLAS faculty can join us for an upcoming Welcome Mat(t). Invitations are sent out via email. When you hear of the next session, please consider joining us!



*Photo: The FLAS Recruiting and Retaining Diverse Team Members Committee*

# MEET THE FLAS TEAM

BY FRANCES SPARANO

In this issue, we interview Ashana Dublin and Kehinde Ladipo from FLAS as we dive into their world and take immense pride in their roles and accomplishments.

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

My lifelong goal is wanting to be involved in helping other students in an impactful way. As an immigrant, it was a hard transition into a new school curriculum, but I had people who helped to motivate me as a student, and I saw firsthand how having people in your corner could assist in reaching your goals. Furthermore, I wanted to challenge myself intellectually through the exchange of information with those in my immediate surroundings.

I chose Humber specifically because it always felt like home. This institution changed the trajectory of my life by giving me an education and a platform to grow both personally and professionally. I wanted to give back by joining the organization.

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

I had the opportunity to further my professional development by collaborating on revamping an Academic Upgrading course called Skills for Success.



**Ashana Dublin**

**Learning Services Assistant,  
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

The course was created over twenty years ago, and my educational journey helped me to design an improved version that still held the core of the original course but incorporated new curriculum ideas that matched the advancement in education such as online learning. I take pride in this because I took this course as part of a previous program here at Humber, so being involved really meant a lot and my goal of making an impact was becoming a reality.

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

I joined FLAS because the job posting at the time appealed to me. It offered the flexibility to continue with my learning and allowed me to grow in learning new ways of helping students. Additionally, I was a student of one of their programs, Academic Upgrading, so I felt drawn to the department that started me on my educational journey in Canada. I have been with FLAS for two years and four months.

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

One of my hobbies is baking. I enjoy experimenting with recipes from various parts of the world that intrigue me. I love diverse cultures and the diversity they bring, so this gives me a look into their world a bit.



## **We would like to get to know 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?**

One goal that I have is to master a new language: Korean. I am an avid watcher of various Asian genres and an enthusiastic fan of their music, specifically Bangtan Sonyeondan (BTS). I want to travel there to have a more personal experience of the culture, so this is my first step in achieving that.

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

By continuing my education, I can get back into teaching which would provide academic excellence for the students in the various programs the department offers. This could be achieved through implementing various learning techniques and interdisciplinary approaches that foster active learning. To build FLAS's knowledge and a sense of community, I could collaborate with different departments to exchange information. Furthermore, I would continue to work on student-centered initiatives such as EDIB, provision of safe spaces, and contribution to the faculty community.



# MEET THE FLAS TEAM

BY FRANCES SPARANO

In this issue, we interview Ashana Dublin and Kehinde Ladipo from FLAS as we dive into their world and take immense pride in their roles and accomplishments.

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

I grew up to love mathematics because my father was a well-loved high school mathematics teacher who was very passionate about his job. His passion motivated me to pursue a BSc Mathematics degree. In my gap year, I enrolled in an advanced level program at a college where I had an amazing mathematics/physics teacher who was also passionately excited about the subjects and pushed us to work hard to excel. The teacher opened my eyes to realize that mathematics can be exciting and good grades are possible. These factors, along with having fun teaching mathematics and supporting learners to build a solid foundation for their future career, motivated me to pursue my career as a mathematics professor and researcher.

My journey to Humber began while I had a post-doctoral researcher position at Field's Institute University of Toronto, followed by Ontario Tech University Oshawa (formerly known as UOIT).



Kehinde Ladipo

**Professor,  
Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

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

Although I was enjoying my postdoctoral positions, I needed a long-term plan for the time the positions would end. I was missing the classroom environment settings and opportunity to interact with learners. I started looking for teaching opportunities specifically. I have been part of Humber's FLAS since 2010.

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

In Summer of 2024, I was nominated to participate in the inaugural applied research program organized by Humber's Office of Research. The program was designed to enhance applied research culture and promote more collaboration across the faculties. Collaborative interdisciplinary research is necessary to build an inclusive coercive community.

At the end of the 7-week program, participants earned the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA) certificates I and II (<https://www.seda.ac.uk/>). I learned a lot of new research tools and dissemination options in professional journals. The program has challenged me to seek opportunities to participate in inter-faculty research efforts at Humber.

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

My hobbies include sewing, backyard gardening and canning during summer. I plant vegetables, very hot peppers, and tomatoes. With tomatoes I am always racing to pluck my produce before the squirrels.



**We would like to get to know 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?**

Apart from my passion for teaching and learning, I am a mathematics researcher. I write computer codes in multiple languages to conduct numerical simulation experiments that can predict the pattern of a fluid flow under certain conditions. Together with a research colleague, we published an article that describes the flow of blood in the arteries using numerical simulation, computer programming and some mathematics equations that students typically learn at the undergraduate level.

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

The overall success and growth of FLAS depends on the joint effort of every member of the faculty. Nevertheless, I am inspired to purposefully build connections with other professors at FLAS and other faculties where the courses we teach are applied, to gain more insight into how to integrate theory and practice in the classroom. With the support from FLAS, I am committed to continuously seeking professional development opportunities to improve my skills. I do not hesitate to try new ideas and to implement new evidence-based strategies that can improve learners' engagement and sense of belonging in the learning space. I am committed to participate in FLAS efforts to improve collaboration and emotional well-being among students and faculty.

# TEACHING TRIANGLES:

## BUILDING COMMUNITY AND ENHANCING PRACTICES

BY KAUKAB KAMRAN

Teaching Triangles is an inspiring, collaborative initiative at FLAS that provides an opportunity for professors to observe one another's classes with the purpose of learning, sharing ideas, and refining their own teaching practices.

In this model, three professors form a “triangle” and visit each other's classrooms to witness varied teaching styles, classroom management techniques, and strategies for student engagement. This approach is particularly meaningful as it allows educators to learn directly from peers, cultivating a sense of collegiality and shared purpose.

For me, Teaching Triangles helps overcome the isolation that may accompany teaching. I am able to see how my colleagues approach classroom dynamics, manage discussions, and create an interactive learning environment. Sometimes, I find that I am already using similar strategies, which is reassuring and reinforces my confidence in my teaching. Other times, I come across creative ideas or innovative methods I may not have considered. These observations add valuable tools to my teaching toolkit, and I leave each class visit with fresh approaches to try in my own class.

Teaching Triangles also gives the freedom to create a group with professors from their own discipline or other departments. When I collaborate with colleagues from Mathematics and Statistics, I get insights into how they handle subject-specific challenges, often sparking ideas that directly apply to my courses.

Alternatively, when working with professors from departments such as English or Liberal Studies, I am introduced to new perspectives that broaden my understanding of teaching beyond the confines of my subject area. This cross-disciplinary exchange offers insights into classroom practices and encourages creative thinking.

Teaching Triangles fosters a greater sense of connection among peers. Meeting with colleagues to discuss our observations and share insights creates bonds that can lead to larger projects and creativity. At the very least, Teaching Triangles allow us to form supportive relationships, learn from one another, and work together to improve our teaching practices.

It transforms teaching into a shared, enriching experience. This initiative is more than just observing—it is about building a network of educators who inspire and support one another, creating a ripple effect that benefits our students and strengthens the academic community.

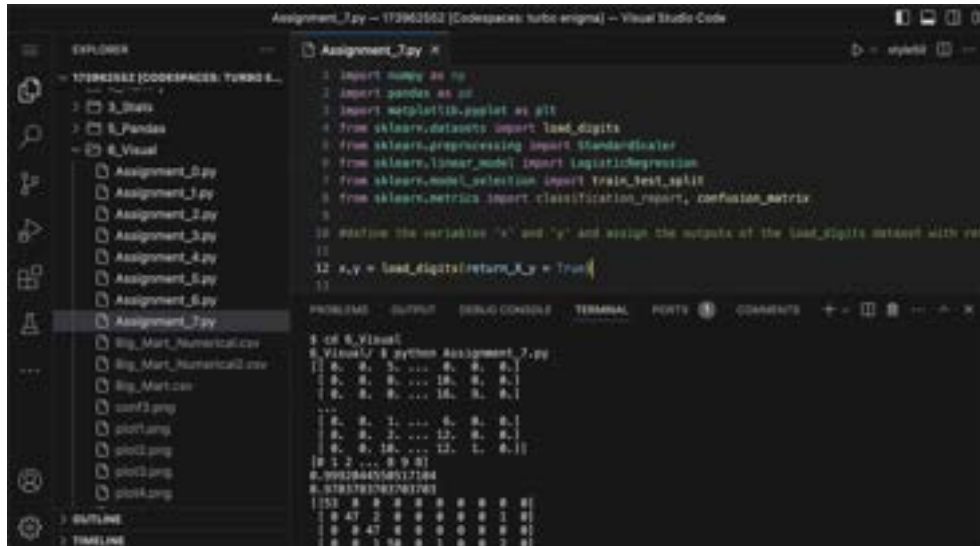




## COURSES HIGHLIGHT

# PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS WITH PYTHON AND AI: A HUMBER POLYTECHNIC COLLABORATION

BY BRENDAN MCLELLAN



*Photo: Screenshot of Visual Studio Code Workspace*

In the fast-paced world of data science, Humber College offers a specialized micro-credential, Predictive Analytics with Python and AI. Created through a collaboration between Humber Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) and the Humber Department of Mathematics, Research Skills, and Analysis, this micro-credential combines the expertise of both groups to deliver a truly comprehensive learning experience. Tailored for those seeking to sharpen their skills in data manipulation and statistical analysis, this online, self-directed course is perfect for both beginners and seasoned professionals looking to upskill in key industry tools such as Python, GitHub, ChatGPT and Visual Studio Code.

The course spans over seven weeks, delivering 24 hours of content that covers the essentials of Python programming, statistics, and data visualization. Powered by Harvard University's CS50 teaching and

learning tools, learners will explore Python libraries like NumPy and Pandas and tackle real-world data challenges, while gaining experience with data visualization using Matplotlib. Key topics include measures of central tendency, predictive modelling, and regression techniques. By the end of the course, participants will be equipped to create data-driven insights with precision and communicate those findings effectively.

This micro-credential emphasizes hands-on learning and practical application. Graduates will emerge proficient in analyzing data, managing data workflows, and utilizing modern coding practices. Humber's Predictive Analytics with Python and AI is more than just a course—it's a gateway to building expert skills in data analytics with industry-standard tools, preparing learners for the future of work in data-driven environments.

# THINKING IN SYSTEMS

BY ELINOR BRAY-COLLINS

This fall, FLAS launched an upper-level course in systems thinking that encourages students to rethink both what and how they learn. The course is centered on two key ideas: students decide what they want to study and how to integrate it into their lives meaningfully.

To start, students select a topic to explore with one condition—it must address a systems-level issue. Many choose issues tied to their experiences, volunteer work, or career goals. Once their focus is set, students can connect their projects to personal and professional aspirations, with options like joining the Map the System competition, a study trip to Denmark, or partnering with an organization to tackle real-world challenges. The goal is for students to make the course “work” for them.

One student, a former Team Canada gymnast now studying youth care, is investigating mental health issues in sports. Another, who aspires to be a paralegal, is analyzing how the justice system’s emphasis on guilty pleas impacts Indigenous and racialized Canadians.

This flexible course design also includes interactive workshops where students learn skills in systems thinking, mapping, and intervention design, applying these to their projects. It culminates in a symposium where they present their research and calls to action.

This fall is the first iteration of the course. The course will have two versions, the fall version will include a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) opportunity with Design Thinking students at VIA University in Denmark, where we combine our expertise to create better systems interventions through incorporating design processes and enhancing those processes with systems thinking. In the winter version of the course, students can access additional mentorship and resources from Map the System staff and mentors at Mount Royal University in Alberta and opt to participate in a subsidized study trip to Denmark over reading week.

Early feedback from students has been positive, with many contributing ideas for the next iteration. Students this term have reported signing up because the experience “doesn’t sound like a typical course,” while others expressed that they feel like they are “learning in a more innovative way.”

Ultimately, the course aims to create meaningful opportunities for students to recognize how their careers can intersect with efforts to address urgent societal issues and contribute to transformative systems change.



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*Thank you to all contributors and interviewees for participating in the creation of our summer issue*





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