HUMBER POLYTECHNIC | Faculty of Applied Sciences & Technology

FAST Times

MARCH 2026

DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

March brings the welcome return of longer days and brighter evenings, a reminder that spring is just around the corner. Along with the changing season comes fresh momentum, and this month we have several exciting stories and highlights from across our community.

I had the privilege to attend our annual Humber Polytechnic "Champions Women in STEM" event, an International Women's Day luncheon & panel discussion that featured a diverse and extraordinary panel of fearless women who shared their authentic stories and inspired the Humber community, FAST engineering students, and more than 70 female high school students to consider Humber in their academic journey.

While the focus was on the voices of women, it was crucial for my male colleagues and I to actively participate. As allies, we have an important role in challenging gender norms, supporting women's rights, and advocating for equality in all areas of life. I listened, learned and took away valuable insights from our panelists and members of our Women in Engineering Club.

In this issue, we spotlight moments captured at the event as well as our engineering students who attended the Conference on Advocacy and Leadership in Engineering. We also highlight faculty who continue to advance applied research, sharing their expertise at the FAST Symposium and again at the TEBL Symposium. The following pages also include updates from the Humber Arboretum, Barrett CTI and special celebrations including a new member joining the FAST Family!

As the days grow longer and the first signs of spring begin to appear, we look forward to the new energy the season brings and the many exciting events and moments ahead in April!

Warm Regards,
Carl Oliver
Associate Dean

FAST Times

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CHAMPIONING WOMEN IN STEM

When women thrive, we all rise.

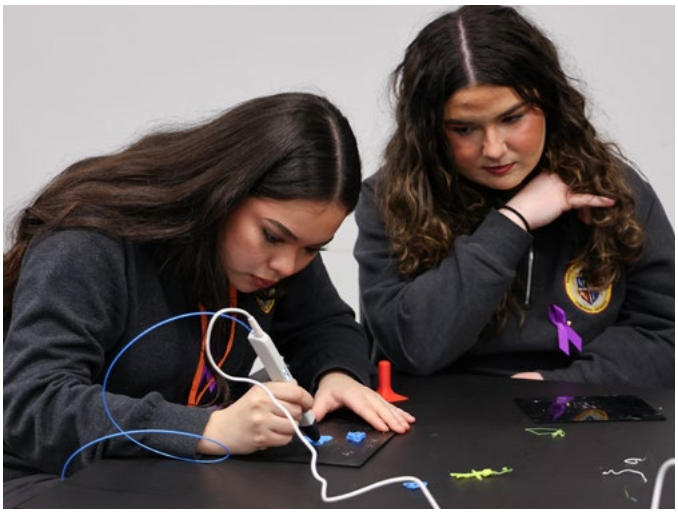
We hosted an inspiring afternoon to Champion Women in STEM and align with the global International Women's Day theme Give to Gain that recognizes when we give, we all gain.

Supported by Siemens Canada and Canerector Foundation, our panel of extraordinary women shared their authentic stories with industry experts, Humber Polytechnic executives, faculty, staff, members of our Women in Engineering Club and more than 70 high school students who leaned in with curiosity and excitement.

Our community includes extraordinary women in skilled trades, science, technology, and engineering who are bold, strong, and transformative. It's essential that we not only recognize their accomplishments but also work to ensure a more inclusive, supportive environment for them to thrive. They are breaking barriers, challenging norms, and paving the way for future generations.

Let's continue to uplift and empower each other, break barriers, and create a world where every woman can thrive!

Read more in Humber Today



CHAMPIONING WOMEN IN STEM (cont'd)

ENGINEERING STUDENTS ATTEND CONFERENCE ON ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP IN ENGINEERING

Submitted by Shaelyn Maximo, Vice President Communications of Humber Polytechnic Undergraduate Engineering Society | B.Eng. Mechatronics Engineering Co-op Student

From February 5-8th, I attended the Conference on Advocacy and Leadership in Engineering (CALE) alongside Vaibhav Tailor and Salvador Felipe Estrada Ramos, representing the Humber Polytechnic Undergraduate Engineering Society (HPUES).

This was my first ever ESSCO conference, and I honestly wish it could've gone on longer.

I met so many wonderful people from across Ontario. Not just talented people, the kind of people you interact with everyday. No one was going around grabbing LinkedIn connections, everyone had an actual interaction. It felt so much more personal. I really enjoyed seeing firsthand the extremities and the joy of engineering culture, learning what other engineering societies do, and especially stepping out of my comfort zone to embrace what it means to be an engineering student!

Additionally, the sessions, election, and keynote speakers brought the kind of experience and conversation you most likely wouldn't obtain in the classroom, and it made me leave the conference feeling inspired, directing more of my focus to applying advocacy in my leadership roles.

10/10 I would do this again in a heartbeat. Thank you to CALE OCs, ESSCO members, and my amazing roommates for making this an experience of a lifetime! I hope to see everyone again! Until next time!

CANADA-ASEAN NUCLEAR ENERGY TOUR

President Vaughan and Associate Dean, Francis Syms participated in productive Nuclear Energy Capacity Building Roundtable with partners from across ASEAN.

Francis first travelled to Singapore where nuclear energy is not only a clean energy consideration but also part of a broader national and energy security strategy. With limited land, dense urban development, and growing electricity demand, questions around if, where, and how nuclear could play a role require careful planning, regional coordination, and long-term institutional readiness.

He presented a workforce capacity-building framework informed by Canada's experience, drawing on the applied, industry-aligned approach being developed through Humber's School of Clean Energy to support nuclear and clean energy readiness. One of the clearest lessons from Canada is that nuclear readiness must begin well before any project decision. Building regulatory capability, operational expertise, safety culture, and skilled trades capacity early is essential to delivering projects safely and on schedule.

Following, Francis met up with President Vaughan in Jakarta, Indonesia where she was in her dual capacity as President of Humber and Co-Chair of the Canada-ASEAN Business Council Nuclear Energy Working Group.

Alongside our Canadian consortium partners, they delivered Nuclear Energy Capacity Building Roundtables, which were co-hosted with the ASEAN Centre for Energy, and then met with PLN Indonesia Power, Danantara Indonesia, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM), The ASEAN Secretariat, and the Embassy of Canada in Indonesia and Timor-Leste. Across every conversation, one message was constant: workforce development and institutional readiness are the critical enablers of the clean energy transition.

Humber is leading capacity building efforts globally through our new School of Clean Energy, which brings together engineering, ICT, AI and cybersecurity, skilled trades, governance, policy, and public trust to deliver the end-to-end workforce development that nuclear and clean energy projects require.

TEBL 2026 WINTER SYMPOSIUM

Submitted by Ana de Oliveira Rodrigues

The TEBL 2026 Winter Symposium, held on January 29th at the Barrett Centre for Technology and Innovation (BCTI), brought together 65 educators and technology policy makers from the Ontario Council for Technology Education to tackle a pressing question: What is the impact of AI in Education?

As a professor and experienced AI product manager, I was proud to present my insights on the "GenAI Impact on Education". I offered a grounded perspective on how Generative AI actually works. A major takeaway from the session was the distinction between "AI-enriched" and "AI-diminished" learning experiences. I explained that AI enriches the classroom when it acts as a catalyst for deeper interaction between students and teachers and is deployed within safe pedagogical boundaries. On the other hand, learning is diminished when an over-reliance on these tools puts a student's learning capacity at risk, restricting their critical thinking.

On the topic of academic integrity, participants were encouraged to move away from unreliable detection tools and toward a "helper, not shortcut" mindset. I outlined a practical policy where students are encouraged to use AI for first drafts and research assistance, provided they refine the content to reflect their own voice and include citations.

One major takeaway addresses a growing tension in the classroom: the fear that, as AI masters traditional tasks, the skills educators have spent decades honing may be becoming obsolete. I pointed out that this anxiety often creates a "legacy bias," where we insist students learn specific techniques simply because they were difficult for us to master, rather than because they are essential for their future.

The session concluded by highlighting the skills that AI simply cannot replace. I reminded the audience that in the professional world, simply copying and pasting from AI makes a worker obsolete; therefore, students must prove their value by critically analyzing and improving upon what the machine produces. While software can crunch data in seconds, I noted that students still need to learn how to build healthy digital identities, navigate multiple truths, and reconnect as humans to care for the planet. My message for the attendees was clear: to prepare students for an AI-integrated workforce, educators should prioritize uniquely human strengths like adaptability, collaboration, and ethical reasoning.

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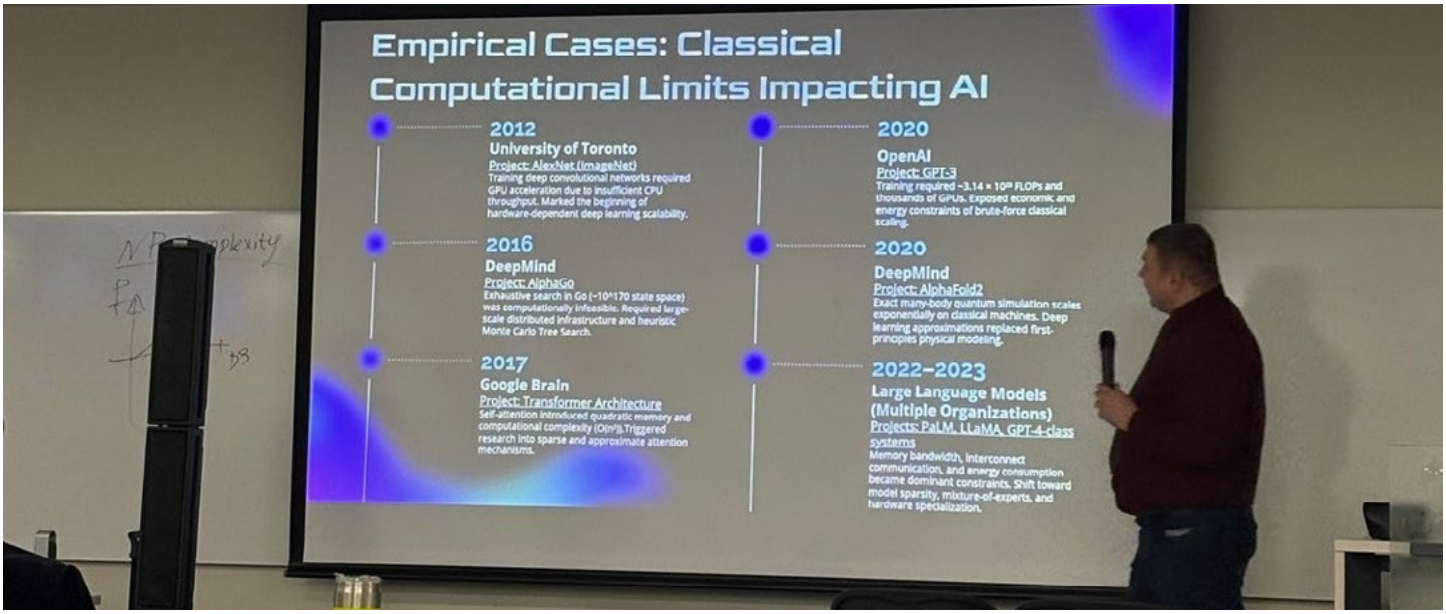
HOME SWEET HUMBER

Celebrating and showcasing life at North Campus and Carrier Drive!

FAST SYMPOSIUM



HOME SWEET HUMBER (cont'd)

CROWDSTRIKE'S TRADECRAFT SCAVENGER HUNT: DETECTING AND RESPONDING TO CYBER THREATS

HOME SWEET HUMBER (cont'd)

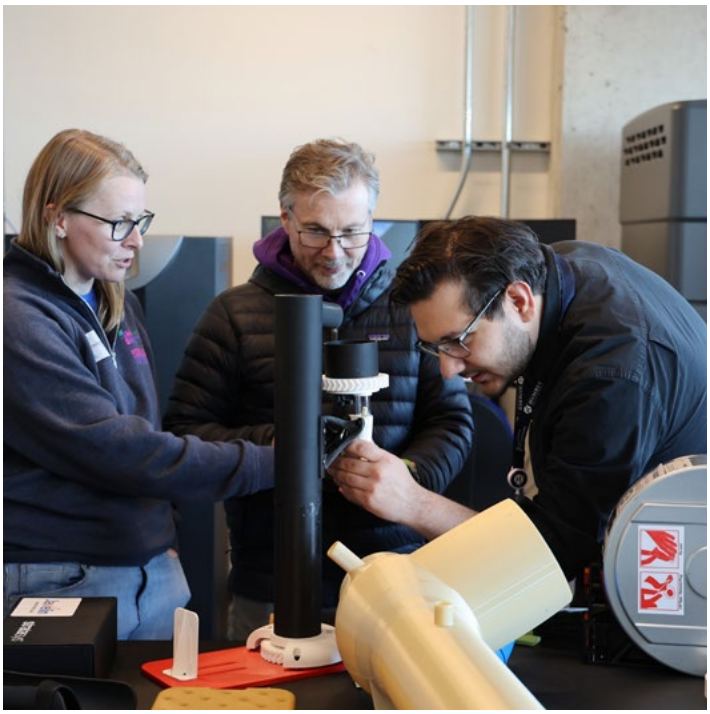
ONTARIO POWER GENERATION VISIT TO CARRIER DRIVE

Share your life on campus images in the next FAST Times issue! Please submit to Jennifer Buchalter: jennifer.buchalter@humber.ca

BARRETT CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATORS BOARD LEADS (TEBL) SYMPOSIUM SUMMIT

The Barrett Centre for Technology Innovation (BCTI) was thrilled to welcome over 60 education leaders from the Ontario Council for Technology Education to the Technology Educators Board Leads (TEBL) of Ontario Symposium Summit!



Passionate educators from school boards across the province came together for a day of collaboration, idea-sharing, and meaningful dialogue focused on technology education strategy, curriculum development, and how emerging trends such as AI are shaping the future of education.

During the symposium, the BCTI team led hands-on workshops demonstrating how cutting-edge educational technologies, like FESTO Meclab and VEX Robotics, can be leveraged to spark curiosity, build problem-solving skills, and connect classroom learning to real-world applications.

The shared commitment to student success was truly inspiring. We look forward to working with Ontario school boards throughout the year to inspire students and educators alike.

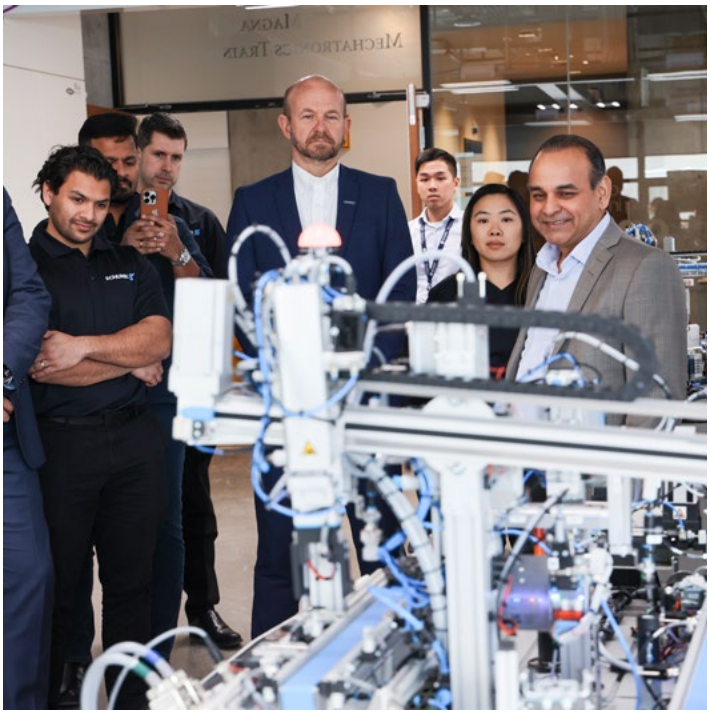
BARRETT CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION (cont'd)

SCHUNK SALES MEETING

SCHUNK is a global leader in tool holding, work holding, gripping, and automation technology. As one of the Barrett CTI's Advanced Manufacturing Consortium partners, they play a key role in driving innovation at Humber Polytechnic. Their technologies support many of our projects, and together we're preparing the next generation of STEM talent.

We were proud to host the SCHUNK National Sales Meeting, bringing Clint Hamid, President of SCHUNK Canada, and his team together for a focused day of sales and marketing collaboration. Linda Jin-Troendle, Associate Dean at Humber Polytechnic's Faculty of Business, led an engaging soft-skills session on presenting business value, strengthening client relationships, and embracing continuous learning.

We're excited to keep building on this partnership!



BARRETT CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION (cont'd)

MECHATRONICS SKILLS QUALIFYING COMPETITION

On February 20, seven teams of Humber students raced against the clock to build an automated production system at the annual Humber Skills Mechatronics Qualifying Competition.

Throughout the day, students showcased their practical skills in automation, mechanical assembly, electrical wiring, PLC programming, troubleshooting, and professional practice. The top team will go on to represent Humber Polytechnic at Skills Ontario.

Competitors were evaluated by an accomplished panel of Humber alumni and past Skills competitors (including Wesley Juan, Nickolas de Boer, Mateusz Cwalinski, Bogdan Malynovskyy, Grant Maddock, and Cole Hunter). Since 2004, Humber students have earned more than 40 medals at provincial, national, and world competitions. This legacy highlights the strength of skilled trades and technology education in the Faculty of Applied Sciences & Technology at Humber Polytechnic and at the Barrett Centre for Technology Innovation, as well as the skills, confidence, and experience our learners bring to the global stage.

A huge thank-you to the dedicated students, coaches, and staff whose hard work made this event possible!

HUMBER ARBORETUM

Register Now for Summer Nature Day Camp

This summer, let your kids get outside to explore nature at North Campus! The Humber Arboretum offers day camp and leadership programs for ages 5 through 17 during July and August. Nature Camp (ages 5 to 12) runs with a different theme each week, plus there are two sessions of Junior Naturalists (ages 12 and 13) to choose from, and the LYNX Teen Leader training program (ages 14 to 17).

Learn more and register now: humber.ca/arboretum/learn/camps/march-break-camp.html

HUMBER
ARBORETUM
+ CENTRE FOR URBAN ECOLOGY

Free T-Shirt for March Break Nature Campers

There are also spots still available for the Humber Arboretum's March Break Nature Camp, and every camper will receive a free Nature Camp t-shirt! From March 16 to 20, kids aged 6 to 12 can spend their days active and engaged while they explore animal adaptations, signs of spring, the science of staying warm, winter birds, and more. Registration closes at midnight on March 12.

Learn more about all camp offerings and register now: Humber.ca/arboretum/camp

Now Hiring Students for Summer

The Humber Arboretum is currently accepting applications from students who are interested in working in the garden or at nature camp this summer. Visit our website for details and get your application in soon; interviews are already underway!

Humber.ca/arboretum/jobs

HUMBER ARBORETUM (cont'd)

Owls in the CUE

Staff, students, and community members were treated to a visit from some of the educators and animal ambassadors from the University of Guelph's Wild Ontario program, which provides a home for birds of prey who cannot be released to the wild. Einstein the Great Horned Owl and Atwood the Saw-whet Owl were the stars of Who's Hoo Part 2: Live Owl Meet and Greet (along with Indy the Red-tailed Hawk who came in honour of the Humber Hawks!). Many participants were building on what they learned about amazing owl anatomy from Arboretum educator Olivia during Who's Hoo Part 1 in January.

Other Arb Activities

February and early March events also included more Beaks and Brews morning bird walks with coffee and a nature walk for World Wildlife Day; the first three events in the new Bushcraft Skills workshop series, which taught attendees how to tie a variety of useful knots, make their own cordage out of natural materials, and carve a spoon out of wood; and on Groundhog Day the Arb teamed up with Humber & University of Guelph-Humber Library to introduce more staff and students to the cooperative boardgame Daybreak, which challenges players to work together to solve the climate crisis. Arboretum staff also led customized tours for a variety of Humber classes, taking students from nursing and early childhood education outside to connect with nature, and showing students from a FLAS pathway program all of the sustainable features of the LEED Gold Certified Centre for Urban Ecology.

HUMBER ARBORETUM (cont'd)

Thank You Wild Birds Unlimited - Etobicoke

Thank you to our friends at Wild Birds Unlimited – Etobicoke (5468 Dundas Street West) for once again donating the seed to keep our bird feeders hopping. For many years they've been helping the Arb's avian residents (and some squirrels) make it through the winter.

Upcoming Events at the Arb

Learn more and register at: Humber.ca/arboretum/events

- March 13: River Walk for the International Day of Action for Rivers
- March 16-20: March Break Nature Day Camp (ages 6-12)
- March 25: Beaks and Brews – Coffee and Bird Walk
- March 26: Coal Burning: Bushcraft Workshop Series
- March 28: Etobicoke Master Gardeners Workshop
- April 7: Walk for International Beaver Day
- April 16: Evening Walk for Bat Appreciation Day
- April 22: Earth Day Introduction to iNaturalist

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FAST CELEBRATIONS

PROFESSOR EARNS COMPTIA SECURITY CERTIFICATION

Congratulations to Amar Sawadi, M.A.Sc., P.Eng., who earned his CompTIA Security+ certification. This credential validates his expertise in cybersecurity, bringing greater depth to our students. Congratulations Amar!

WELCOME A NEW MEMBER TO THE FAST FAMILY

Congratulations to Program Support Officer, Navpreet Kaur who welcomed a new little superstar (and potential future engineer) into the world!

Nivaaj Singh Gill made his debut on February 27, 2026, at 12:44 p.m., weighing 8 lbs 7 oz and measuring 52 cm of pure cuteness!

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FAST MILESTONES

Congratulations to the following FAST members who are celebrating career milestones in March. Thank you for the dedication, talent, and commitment you bring to the Humber FAST community—we're proud to celebrate this important milestone with you!

MARCH

5 years
Wei Zhang

1 year
Elizabeth Russell

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 30
10AM – 2PM
Annual FAST Career Fair
Barrett CTI Atrium

April 3
Holiday. Campus is Closed.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

FAST *Times* recognizes and celebrates the achievements of our faculty and students. To share your successes with us, please submit stories and images to Jennifer Buchalter: jennifer.buchalter@humber.ca

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