

Mentor Program Magazine

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Editorial and Design

Editor

Zoha Azhar

Senior Designer

Rachel Nam

Illustrators

Chansey Chiang
Omer Juma

Proofreader

Maheen Yacoob

Contributors

Niyousha Bastani
Sue Jeong
Ariana Katsanis
Mary Louise Leger

Advisory Committee

Catherine Stace
Career Development Advisor |
Career Planning Service

Muhammad Omer Juma
Mentor Program Coordinator |
Career Planning Service

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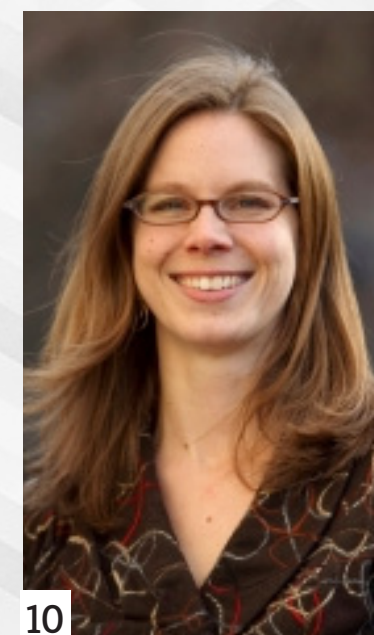
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CaPS

www.mcgill.ca/caps

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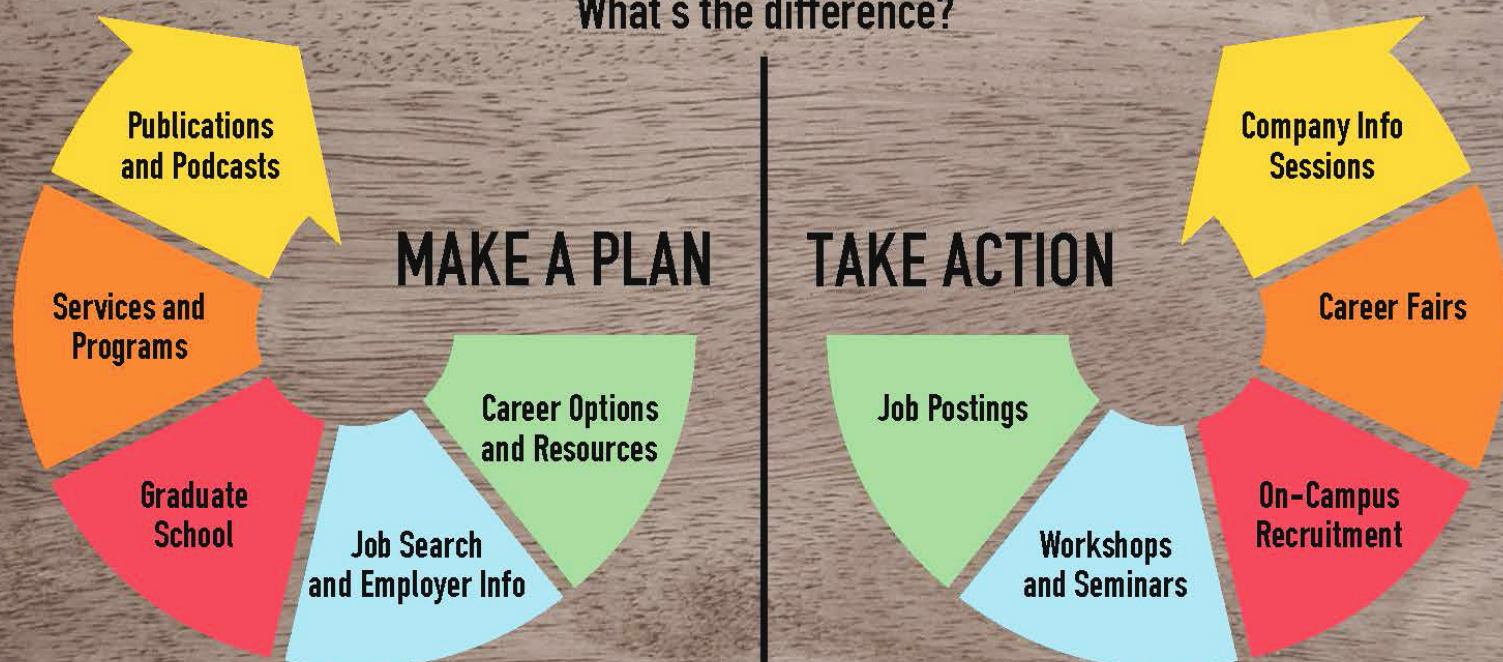
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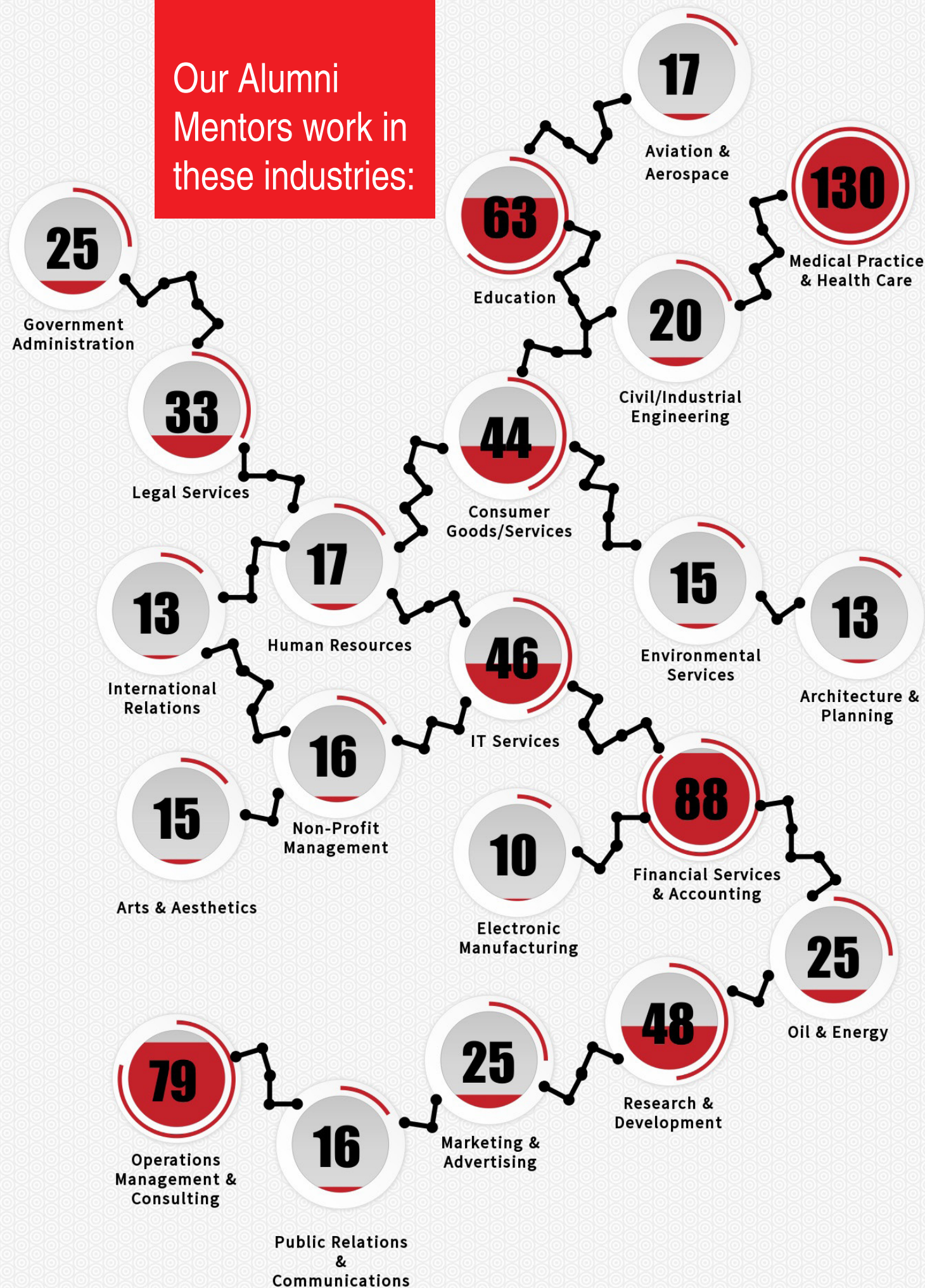
What's the difference?

MAKE A PLAN

TAKE ACTION



Our Alumni
Mentors work in
these industries:



Created by Chansey Chiang and Omer Juma

Developing a successful mentor/mentee relationship

With Stephanie Ambrose, Faculty of Management, Bachelor of Commerce

A successful mentor/mentee relationship is established not very differently from other things; it takes effort, time, and discussion to develop a partnership that allows strangers to comfortably share information with each other. Stephanie Ambrose is a student at McGill University's Faculty of Management. Aspiring to become a Social Entrepreneur, she joined the Mentor Program to be able to ask questions, develop relationships, and receive advice and guidance from a professional already working in the field. She had much to say about how she maintained a good relationship with her mentor, and how she went about approaching him- it takes skill, patience, and practice.

A mentoring relationship is based on trust. Mentees place a great deal of trust in their mentors to provide them with helpful guidance. Likewise, mentors are also trusting of their mentees to not take advantage of the relationship (for example, wasting the mentor's time, repeating information intended for others, asking for favors, soliciting jobs, etc). Building trust notably takes time, but so does finding your own comfort zone.

Mentor/mentee relationships are sometimes slow to develop because mentees are often uncomfortable with their mentors. This discomfort can arise from a variety of factors- mentees reported that they were afraid to make mistakes or appear vulnerable in front of their mentors. They have trouble viewing their mentors as partners, and consider their own problems and needs as insignificant in comparison. In addition, we often forget that our mentors could have had the same concerns when they were younger. Despite this, it is



“...it is two-sided. You need to do the research. You have to show that you are invested and that you care.”

important to develop techniques to become comfortable early on in the mentoring relationship. This can be developed through research and preparation.

Stephanie Ambrose spoke of having done her research during her partnership with her mentor, Nicholas Tan. This was probably one of the main reasons why she had a positive experience. She was nervous when she initially contacted Nicholas, but then soon discovered how open-minded he was, and how much he was willing to help. “My mentor was very helpful, and went the extra mile to provide me with assistance. He would often share resourceful websites with me, and some contacts he thought could also help.” But it takes two to make this collaboration meaningful. “For sure, the mentor wants to help you, but it is two-sided. You need to do the research. You have to show that you are invested and that you care.”

Later on, Stephanie and Nicholas even met up in person. For this face to face meeting, she was figuratively “burning with questions that [she] had.” She mentioned that meeting in person was very beneficial because everything was immediate and direct.

Overall, Stephanie Ambrose had a very positive experience. Through this connection, Stephanie learned about the Canadian Field Studies in Africa program that Nicholas had participated in during his own university career. After hearing about the program, Stephanie looked it up, and found out that she would be interested in it as well. Nicholas helped her get into contact with past participants, and assisted her in understanding what the program is like. Now that she has been accepted into this program, she accredits it to Nicholas’s help. She is currently travelling through Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania as part of the Canadian Field Studies.

Developing a strong connection with one’s mentor is not easy; however, the entire experience can be a valuable one. Sometimes, the best things happen when you go out of your comfort zone, and Stephanie and Nicholas’s relationship represents this. To be able to develop a great relationship like theirs, Stephanie advises: “Show genuine interest in your mentor. It is not always about the mentee. Show interest in your mentor’s life. Listen to them.” And that’s exactly what she did.

– SUE JEONG



INTERDISCIPLINARY MOSAIC OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES:
AROUND THE WORLD THROUGH FOUR STREAMS

ECONOMICS:
CALCULATING THE ABSOLUTE ADVANTAGE

Around the world through four streams

No one seems to escape the constant chatter about graduate school around campus. Chanting the “Masters is the new Bachelors,” many Arts students opt for graduate school without first considering other options that may better meet their needs, aspirations and preferences. One International Development Studies student expressed, “For me, Graduate school would be a waste. I don’t know yet what I want to do with my life.” For such students, there are many alternative professional avenues to explore and consider.

With an interdisciplinary degree at a top tier institution, McGill’s International Development graduates are well poised to pursue a myriad of opportunities. Armed with a Bachelors degree, IDS students have found employment in Fundraising, Foreign Service, Activism, and Community Development.

Kelly Crowley feels traveling is an essential criterion in her career search. She remarks, “I think an important part of IDS is experiencing the world first hand. I’ve been looking at programs like Teach for China, something that would give me some job or work experience while allowing me to live abroad.” The CaPS myFuture job portal is a valuable resource for students who wish to widen their horizons, both physically and mentally. It hosts a database of international work opportunities, ranging from strategy consulting in Buenos Aires, to teaching English in South Korea.

International Development has much utility to offer in terms of a career, even when pursuing employment outside of a specific study. As such, many IDS students pursue a wide range of careers different from standard development work. McGill IDS graduates can be found in fields that range from climate change adaptation to adolescent development to corporate social responsibility consulting. William Guicheney, an IDS student notes, “An important paradigm shift is occurring in both the private and public sector, and the knowledge and skills that IDS graduates possess are becoming increasingly demanded. Our understanding of the challenges currently being faced by most developing nations is becoming a coveted resource. From investment firms, to development agencies, IDS graduates are at the cross-roads of two worlds that are becoming increasingly intertwined, and it is up to every student to find their own place within this new global economy.”

While there is undoubtedly a wealth of career opportunities and resources available for IDS students with a Bachelor’s, there are undeniable advantages for those who choose to pursue their Masters degree. Graduate school can help jumpstart careers and undeniably land better career enhancement opportunities. Those who see themselves as analysts, project managers, non-profit advisors, or development officers should seriously consider graduate school.

With graduation looming over the horizon Alexa Baggly is definitely concerned about finding employment: “The thought that I’ll never use my degree in terms of work scares me for sure.” The job search can be daunting, but it doesn’t have to be directionless. Among the many resources that can help is the McGill Mentor Program, which has assisted hundreds of students in their search for advice, direction, and a glimpse into what the future may hold.

– MARY LOUISE LEGER - MENTOR PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVE FALL 2014



Other careers include:

- International Aid Worker
- Project coordinator
- Business developer
- Liaison Officer
- Federal Program Officer
- Travel Agent
- Market Research Assistant
- International Youth Work
- Research Assistant
- Volunteer Recruiter or Coordinator
- Foreign Policy Officer
- Peace or Human Rights Activism
- Immigration Officer
- Ecotourism Guide or Agent

Students looking for development work can also focus their search by exploring the openings at the following institutions:

- Scientific and Research Organizations
- The UN
- Conflict Management and Peace Consultancy Groups
- International relief organizations
- Foreign Aid Agencies
- Public Service Commissions
- Trade and Import/Export Businesses

Students can find a full list of potential employers here:
<http://www.mcgill.ca/files/caps/ids.pdf>

For more information:

<http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/explore/industry/nonprofit>
<https://csm-caps.mcgill.ca/students/>

Calculating the Absolute Advantage

With increasing talk about the ratio of unemployed university graduates to a limited number of jobs, most students are now beginning to get concerned. Will my Economics degree take me anywhere? Should I have majored in Finance? I don't even want to be an economist! These statements don't make it very reassuring for people interested in both Economics and employment.

What most people don't know is that studying Economics prepares you for a wide variety of jobs in many industries ranging from Brokerage Firms to the Hospitality and tourism sectors. Pay Scale rated Economics 15th among 129 majors for best salary potential.* Economics surpassed International Business, Political Science and Chemistry to gain its place in the polls.

Economics is a great major for undergraduates to pursue because it teaches students a variety of skills. Studying Economics not only helps students learn how to collect and organize data, conduct scientific research and learn research methods, but also prepares students for tasks outside research. Economics teaches students how to write clearly, understand impacts on work with interest rates, analyze government borrowing, and the ability to comment on the well being of nations and, the world. Economics feeds into many industries in both the public and private sectors. Economics graduates, especially, can do the hard math and figure out exactly where they stand. An economist can be a professor, a researcher, someone who monitors economics trends, and even a Prime Minister.



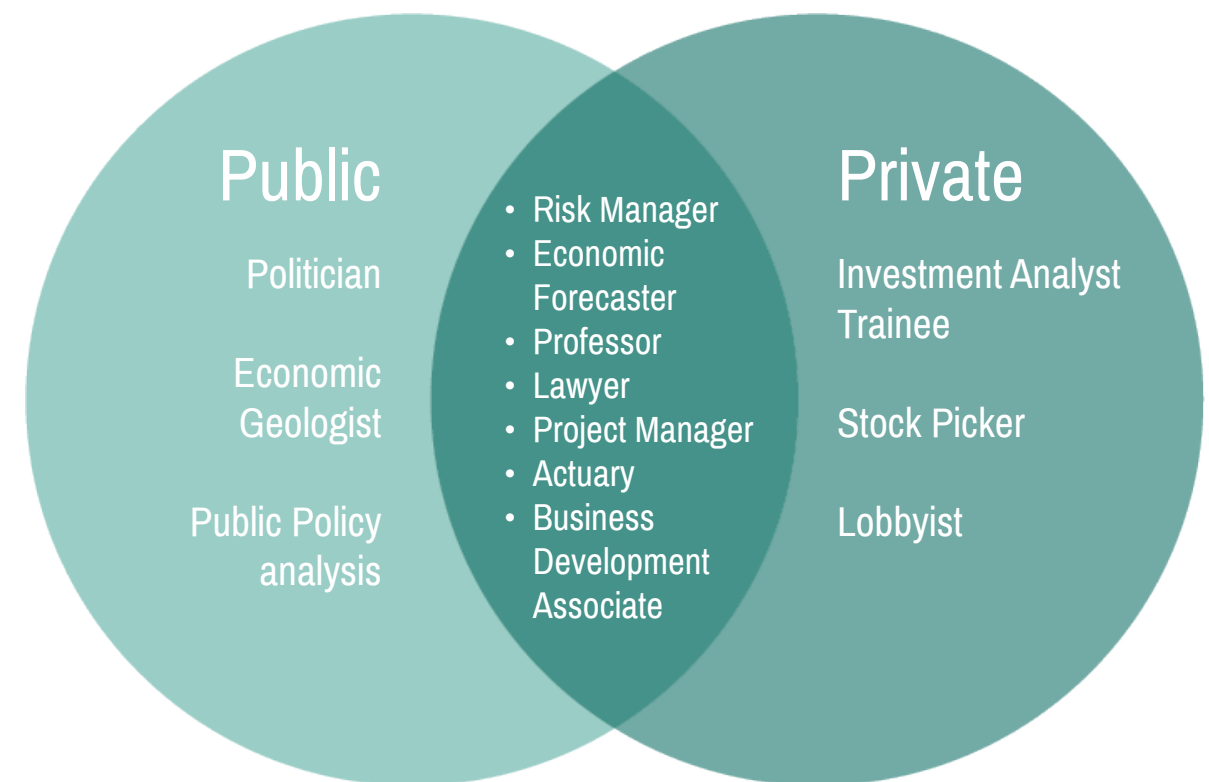
Erin Strumpf, a professor of Economics at McGill University, conducts research specializing in Health Economics. In addition to having written and co-published more research articles that one can count, she has also been affiliated with various organizations such as the Canadian Institutes of Health Research Financing, Sustainability and Governance Work Group to Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For those who are interested, being a member of Canadian Centre for Applied Research puts you in contact with a network of researchers across Canada that work in the Social Sciences and careers related to cancer. Erin Strumpf is part of the "networking and training of students' [in the] developing of data and resources for advance work that is being done by social science to advance the care for cancer." Even though you don't have a PhD in a science-related field, Health Economics enables you to work in a science-dominated field and assist in fighting deadly diseases and illnesses.

In addition to this, studying Economics offers one of the most obvious and rewarding experiences: that of becoming a Professor. Professors have the opportunity to teach, conduct research and publish their findings. Economics professors have the opportunity to inspire young minds and are able to "reinvest and re-familiarize [themselves] with the material [they are] teaching [and] that leads to more research and more questions," noted Erin Strumpf. Doing research in Economics "is like solving a puzzle; asking interesting questions and figuring out how to answer them . . . without using experiments."

For anyone out there who doubts the practicality of an Economics degree, they should note that the unem-

ployment rate for people with this major hovers around 4.5%** , which is lower than either Physics or Accounting. Economics is a great degree that is not only high paying and with a low unemployment rate but it also teaches you skills applicable to many diverse fields.

Below is a Venn diagram indicating some examples of jobs students can pursue in the private and public sector.



So what does it mean to be an economist? Erin Strumpf states "It can really take lots of different forms working in the public sector, working in the private sector. To say you are an Economist, we all do very different things. It's about finding what is exciting for you and whether it's working in the financial sector, improving policies made by governments and other public institutions, (it) can be a whole range of things that you can get very excited and very passionate about!"

The great thing about Economics is you can really make it what you want. You aren't limited as you might be in other fields. Students who study Economics gain such a variety of skills so they have the ability to explore and take up jobs in initially any industry or discipline. It is about finding what is most rewarding to them and building on what their strengths and interests are. What more could you ask for in your degree?

– ARIANNA KATSANIS - MENTOR PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVE FALL 2014



* Based on Statistics in the United States

** http://www.studentsreview.com/unemployment_by_major.php3

ALUMNI MENTOR INTERVIEWS

PREVIOUS ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

Over the years, we have interviewed several Alumni Mentors working in various industries. To learn more about their mentoring experiences and how they built their career after McGill, visit <http://caps.mcgill.ca/externalpdfs/Mentor%20Interviews%202012-2014.pdf>

The last three interviews were published in the Fall Issue of the Mentor Program Magazine (<http://caps.mcgill.ca/externalpdfs/Newsletter%20Fall%202014.pdf>)



James Bassil from AskMen

James Bassil graduated with a BA degree from McGill in 2001 and is now a Publisher and Editor at AskMen.



Talking Law with Daniel Chonchol and Peter Halprin

Daniel Chonchol completed his BCL in 1981 and LLB in 1982 from McGill. He has been working at McGill's Development and Alumni Relations/University Advancement office for over 23 years. Peter Halprin graduated from McGill in 2006 with a BA, and he is an attorney at the Anderson Kill's New York office.



Naseem Awl and International Work in UNICEF

Naseem Awl completed her BA in 2002 from McGill, and has been working with UNICEF for almost 9 years.



Going into Medicine with Dr. Sherif Emil, Director of Pediatric General Surgery at McGill and the Montreal Children's Hospital



Monica Jagielka and the Coca-Cola Company

Monica Jagielka graduated from McGill with a BComm degree in 2010 and is an assistant brand manager at Coca-Cola Ltd.



Talk Show Host Tommy Schnurmacher

Thomas Schnurmacher graduated from McGill's Faculty of Arts in 1972 and currently hosts a talk show at CJAD Radio.



Our Dean of Arts, Christopher Manfredi

Christopher Manfredi holds a BA degree and has been working as the Dean of Arts at McGill University since 2006. He has been appointed as the University's next Provost and Vice-Principal Academic, and will start his mandate in July 2015.



Ankita Rao from Ernst & Young

Graduating with a Joint Honors BComm



Jonathan Moyal and the Segal Centre

Jonathan Moyal is the Director of Development at Segal Centre for Performing Arts. He acquired his MBA from McGill in 2009.



Neil Cuggy and Jonathan Ferrari, Co-Founder of MTL Capital

Jonathan and Neil completed their BComm degrees in 2010 and founded MTL Capital in 2012.



New York Based Attorney Peter Halprin

Peter Halprin graduated from McGill in 2006 with a BA in International Development and Political Science. He is an attorney at the Anderson Kill's New York office.



The Colorful Journey of a Flavorist – Tanya Bradley

Completing her BSc in Biochemistry from McGill in 2006 she pursued her MSc



High-Tech Advice for a Career in IT with Diane Morneau from IBM

Diane Morneau acquired a Management certificate from McGill's School of Continuing Studies and has been working at IBM for over 17 years.



Starting a career in the Sports Development Sector with Suheil Tandon, Founder and Director of Pro Sports Development

Suheil Tandon completed his BSc in Mathematics and Statistics in 2009 from McGill, and founded Pro Sports Development in India.



Developing a career in the Not for Profit Industries and Job Search Skills with Bruce Hill from the Kidney Foundation of Canada

Bruce Hill graduated from McGill with a BA in Geography in 1983 and currently works as the Senior Development Manager at the Kidney Foundation of Canada.



There are more than a hundred full-time and part-time occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces, ranging from Pilots to Marine Engineers. More than 90,000 Canadians serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, of which about 12% percent are women, according to www.forces.ca. As an Infantry Commander in the Canadian Armed Forces, Mr. Ken Wang offers great insight on what it means to join the army.

The option of serving in the Canadian Armed Forces is often overlooked, and there are many prejudices and stereotypes that exist against it. However, it is an honorable career that allows people to serve their country in different roles and circumstances. Many might be surprised to read that, "...in your garrison/unit, it's pretty much like an eight to four type of job." Mr. Wang starts his day by leading soldiers for morning exercises, called a PT. Then, around nine, he works on paperwork. "You're in charge of 40 people, which means that there's a lot of administrative tasks that need to get done." He explained that in the field you apply the knowledge that you learned. Thus, in the Canadian Armed Forces, you spend about 50-70% of your time physically training, while the other 30-40% of your time is spent in the field, sleeping in tents, and training for combat. There is also deployment, where soldiers are sent to different countries. You conduct missions abroad, and today, there is the possibility of being deployed to Iraq. There, "you lead by example, work alongside your team, and serve beside them."

Mr. Wang graduated from McGill University in 2011 with a Bachelor's in Commerce, and a Minor in German Language. Today, he is an Infantry Commander training to be a Platoon Commander. His responsibilities include leading, mentoring, and training soldiers in the field and administering their personal files when in the garrison/unit (a place with a body of troops). However, before joining the Canadian Armed Forces, his first job after graduation was a Product Manager at the NAPA, headquarters located in Montreal (found through the Career Planning

Service at McGill). Mr. Wang wanted to join the Canadian Armed Forces right after graduation, but was not able to because of rigid procedures that need to be taken before entrance into the army. For students who are interested, he wholeheartedly advises them to start research early. "Everything is online. The Canadian Armed Forces offers many great opportunities. For example, the army offers to pay for your education fully. This is applicable even after your commencement at McGill. It guarantees immediate employment afterwards with a starting salary of \$55,000 and many benefits. In two years, you move up to about \$75,000 to \$90,000 a year." Though the Canadian Armed Forces is a tremendous commitment that comes with great responsibility, it provides quick employment to graduating students, and is cleverly financially lucrative as well.

Mr. Wang also advises that while salary and benefits are substantial, it should not be the only reason for which one joins the army. He said that it could even be the worst reason to join. "You won't be happy. You need to be motivated by something greater." When asked why he joined the Canadian Armed Forces, he replied that growing up in Quebec with immigrant parents impacted him greatly in his decision to join. While growing up, he learned that he was given opportunities that others might not have, solely because he was a Canadian. He was grateful for having been given those opportunities, and wanted to give back to the Canadian people and country. Not only that, but he claims he also has a thirst for adventure.



However, like any other job it may be hard to adapt to a career in the Canadian Armed Forces. For students, adjustment to an environment that emphasizes order through social hierarchy may be difficult. Jobs and roles in the army depend on rank, and many can find this system confining. When asked how he dealt with the change, he responded, "It's interesting that you bring this up. The cool thing about entering the Canadian Armed Forces after university is that you're put in charge of almost 40 soldiers, and you are ranked pretty high in status. Obviously though, you do have to go through training and earn the recognition. And through this process, you learn the importance of obeying orders." As a former Management student at McGill University, Mr. Wang was always interested in taking on leadership roles, and was given some exposure to taking on such roles through his involvement in the Students' Society of McGill University as an extracurricular activity during his time at school. He said that he had a positive experience at McGill University, and is proud to have spent time here.

Today, Mr. Wang is placed in a capacity that deals with peoples' well-being; one that requires great responsibility. While there are many challenges that come with this, it is, in fact, these kinds of challenges that make his job the most rewarding. His role in the greater Canadian society is one of great importance to our country.

Those students who are interested in joining the Canadian Armed Forces, are advised to learn to be humble, to be understanding, willing to work, and to stay fit. With final exams swiftly approaching, he reminds many that, "taking care of the body, mind, and soul," is just as important as studying and thinking about one's future plans.

– SUE JEONG



He was grateful for having been given those opportunities, and wanted to give back to the Canadian people and country.

Earth, Wind and Fire: A Career in Urban Planning With Willie Macrae

The primary focus for many students studying geography, architecture and environment is to lay the groundwork for a career in urban planning. Our undergraduates are keen on exploring opportunities, which allow them to apply theories learned in class toward the planning of ecologically sustainable, socially equitable, and aesthetically pleasing urban development. Mr. Willie Macrae, a Senior Planner for the City of Toronto shares with us his experiences as a student, his transition into society after graduation, and now his position as a working professional.

Mr. Macrae graduated from McGill University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Arts and a Major in Geography. At McGill, he was just as actively involved in extracurricular activities as he was in his studies. He was a part of the Alpine Ski Team, which requires year round commitment to the sport. As its member, Mr. Macrae dedicated his time to dry round trainings, social functions, marketing for the club, finding sponsorships, and skiing all winter. "It led me to have a well-rounded university life," he remarked. "University isn't just about academics. Being involved got me active. Socially, it opened up many avenues too, and it helped me learn French. Working hard means enjoying your university life as well."

Today, Mr. Macrae works for the City of Toronto. He is responsible for coordinating the development and for the review of different development policies. He overlooks new development applications for the King Parliament area of Toronto, including the famous Distillery District, and conducts planning studies for relevant projects.

Like many other mentors and members of alumni McGill, urban planning was not the initial career plan. Mr. Macrae was originally interested in pursuing a job in environmental sciences because he wanted to propel his knowledge and interest in the field into a career. Mr. Macrae noted, "Having always enjoyed the tangible component of geography and having had learned about the subject while at McGill opened up many career opportunities. When you have a practical education, it can limit your access to opportunities. What I liked about the McGill program was its theoretical nature. I was able to use what I learned."

Many students find it rather daunting to think about establishing a career in their chosen fields of study right after graduation. Surprisingly, though, many professionals switch jobs. Experiences count a lot, especially for those who are interested in urban planning. Not only that, but thinking about graduate school is crucial too. Research regarding internship opportunities and graduate school ahead of time is strongly advised. "Internships are important. We often accept students who have completed graduate school or have had relevant prior experience. I encourage people to try to have some work experience," explained Mr. Macrae. Giving his own example, he pointed out that he engaged in an internship through a local municipality that helped him foster his interests. It gave him opportunities to build his social network. Today, most information is available online. He suggests looking into different postings for job availabilities through the general municipality or provincial websites.



"University isn't just about academics. Being involved got me active. Working hard means enjoying your university life as well."

However, the process does not end with finding an internship and gaining some work experience. It is always important to network and communicate with as many people as possible. Resources like LinkedIn can be a great tool to connect professionally with others. It is critical to become more accessible through these media. Mr. Macrae added, "The private sector might be more involved and developed on social media." It is also essential to be prepared and aware of all resources available to you. The Mentor Program through CaPS offers students a direct connection with McGill alumni, such as Mr. Macrae. While at times it seems difficult to initiate a conversation and create a dialogue with a professional, it is important to realize that alumni also remember being students and have all been through the challenging job hunt phase. "I recall being a student," remembers Mr. Macrae. "I always want to make myself available because I remember the ominous world of the job market. I want to help students overcome some of those barriers. The key thing is, though, that I want the mentees to do their research in advance. They need to be informed about what they want and what I do for a hardy conversation."

Mr. Macrae encourages students to expose themselves to spark new interests. He mentioned, "Work hard, get good marks, and enjoy the university experience. Because, arguably, those times can be the most fun in your life. Don't be too stressed about employment. But, when you are in the full job-seeking mode, it is important to be diligent, hardworking, and to establish a diverse social network; don't despair, and something will always come."

My conversation with Mr. Macrae helped me learn a little bit more about urban planning and what the field might entail. He is very friendly, and willing to give advice. He understands students and the anxiety that comes with researching and finding employment. To students who are pursuing urban planning, there is plenty yet to be accomplished by harnessing the power of the natural elements and bringing it into environmentally conscious infrastructure.

– SUE JEONG



Going to the Ends of the Earth

With Peter Adams

The environment sector can look incredibly broad to someone just looking to start a career in the field. Of the countless opportunities available for those passionate about the environment is Environmental Consultancy. Peter Adams is Climate Risk Consultant in New York, and also a McGill alumnus and CaPS mentor. He took some time to chat with me about his position, giving a glimpse into what it's like working as a consultant, and also sharing some particularly unique career development tips.

Adams currently works for Acclimatise, a specialist consulting company focused on climate change adaptation agendas. Acclimatise provides advising services to businesses and governmental bodies on how to adapt to climate change and manage climate change risks.

In our interview, Adams clarified that being a consultant often equates to being a translator. "There's a lot of information out there, but it's very complex," Adams explained. "What we do is translate the complex climate science for the user, for the decision maker, and for the company."

It might be difficult to picture what this actually looks like on a day to day basis, but Adams painted a fairly clear picture of what it's like to work for a small consulting company like Acclimatise where, at any given time, one can expect to be working on a number of different projects in multiple small teams. "Right now I'm involved in three projects, and they are all quite different," Adams told me. Generally, a day in the environmental consultant's life involves making "a lot of phone calls [to] interesting people



"I didn't like having to go and present and network and do all those things but I made a goal to never say no. If anybody offered me a chance to speak I always said yes."

to talk about what they're doing and to understand what they need to know, how they work and what their problems may be." Beyond that, the job also involves extensive research. "There's a lot of reading and writing, there's a lot of pulling together interviews and putting together the results of our analysis," Adams explained. "Then there's even more writing because we have to find really clear ways to present our information." Above all, a consultant's ultimate goal is to "tak[e] a complexity and reduc[e] it to a simple and actionable result." In other words, consultancy means de-codifying academic sources on the daily and making their content meaningful and clear for decision makers.

A small consultancy company can also provide a unique work setting that does not necessarily involve going to the same old office every day. As part of his job, Adams is presented with opportunities to travel

often in order to meet clients or to speak at conferences. It also means partnering up with other consultancies on bigger projects which can span over multiple years and multiple countries. For Adams, this aspect of the job makes it particularly enjoyable as "there are constant refreshing encounters and building of new relationships while working in a new country."

When Adams started the job, the prospect of travelling to speak at conferences was a daunting one. "I didn't like having to go and present and network and do all those things [...] but I made a goal to never say no. If anybody offered me a chance to speak [...] I always said yes." This doesn't mean that presentations will suddenly become less daunting or that you'll wake up one day suddenly loving presentations— rather, it all takes practice. Adams' approach serves as a useful model, building on experience to develop confidence and ability. His never-say-no approach also emphasizes his belief that "in this field, being able to present well is fundamental to doing your job well and getting new opportunities."

Getting new opportunities also involves another dreaded practice, even more terrifying than public presentations for many – the art of networking. Adams admitted, quite honestly, that like most students, he has never liked networking. As Adams put it, networking, in its most conventional and limited definition equates to "being a salesperson." He explained that the discomfort we all feel when networking often comes from the idea that "you have to exaggerate and put yourself out there." But for Adams, networking doesn't have to involve "being your own cheerleader". Adams has developed his own way of networking which he "actually really enjoy[s]." To some, enjoyable networking can sound almost mythical, but for Adams, the concept is very real, and it simply involves going to events and being genuinely enthusiastic about what you care about.

That may seem too easy but it can work. To do this, he also developed a simple tactic: ask lots of questions. When he first moved to New York, Adams went to many networking events and there he often "asked [others] questions, tons of questions." As he was genuinely interested about what others were doing in the field, his many questions led to many great conversations. "We would be networking, but in a really organic way," Adams remarked admittedly, this may not always be practical when looking for a job but Adams recommends to "as much as possible, be authentic [and] be yourself." Networking doesn't have to start by talking about your-self. Ask others about what they're doing and this can often lead to discovering common interests and to developing rich

professional relationships and friendships.

It seems that networking is not only a way of advancing career goals but can also be an effective way of formulating these goals in the first place. To those who aren't so sure where they're headed, Adams recommends to let curiosity guide you. "I never thought I would end up in this field but I found that it was what I really cared about – so I say go to a lot of random events, talk to a lot of random people, travel and see what you may run into. Don't be afraid to take a left turn and try something new." As an undergrad, Adams studied Humanities. He then took 7 years off to travel and work abroad. "That's when I discovered what I really wanted to do and came back to McGill for my Masters degree," Adams told me. The chance to explore and travel allowed Adams to develop "a clear goal of working on environmental policies in developing countries." He was specially struck by "a tension between environmental goals and developmental goals" when he spent two and half years in far western parts of China. He began to realize the negative environmental impacts of economic development. While highlighting that "there is no one right path," taking time off from his studies was crucial for Adams in finding what he really wanted.

For those who are already interested in consultancy, Adams also provided some useful advice. The ideal candidate for Adams' position is above all an effective writer. "We are always dealing with complex ideas and we need to find creative and effective ways to communicate them," Adams explained. While "being able to analyze and digest information is important," Adams insisted that "none of that matters if you can't write." As a major aspect of the job is communicating with clients, Adams recommends spending plenty of time with your writing during university years. As the job also involves extensive teamwork, communication skills are also essential for ongoing collaborations. On top of writing, Adams also highlighted effective research and analytical skills as part of the necessary skill set.

When I finally remembered to ask Adams to specify his position title at the end of our interview, he joked that his title "is pretty nebulous." While Adams' title may vaguely vary from environmental to climate risk consultant, his career advice is certainly insightful and far from nebulous.

– NIYOUSHA BASTANI



Experience trumps degrees!

a recap of the November speaker panel

What will happen when I close my textbooks for good and step into the professional world? It's a question that all students ask themselves, and for better or for worse, it's a question faced more frequently by those who embark on the quest to obtain a Bachelor in Arts degree. The CaPS Mentor Program and the Sociology Student's Association co-hosted a panel of alumni mentors in November. The mentors shared their experiences and advice regarding the transition from graduation to the work place and career development in general. The panellists featured were Samantha Cook, Stephen Reisler, Corina Sferdenschi and Linda Sarvi. Even though they came from different fields of study and chose different career paths, they seemed to agree on some golden rules. There was abundant overlap in what they each took away from their distinct career experiences.

Corina Sferdenschi introduced herself as a former Psychology student, having graduated from McGill in 2009. Although she had originally planned to become a therapist, her plans soon changed to accommodate her growing passion for writing. Sferdenschi went back to school to study Communications and Public Relations at McGill's continuing education program alongside a full-time work engagement. After celebrating some ups, such as getting hired in Communications at SSMU, and facing some downs, such as the difficult experience of being unemployed after SSMU changed positions, Sferdenschi realized that Public Relations is a battlefield, in which you must be well connected and start with an internship. Having discovered that PR involves a slightly longer career path than she had intended upon, Sferdenschi turned to Human Resources, something she had always had at the back of her mind. While tackling a Human Resources diploma, Sferdenschi was offered a job at McGill. The job eventually led to her present position of HR coordinator at the university. She explained that her Psychology degree has been a great asset as it "bridges [a] gap" by helping "understand people's reactions during interviews."

No stranger to shifting plans, Sferdenschi advised the attendees against becoming too attached to the career they envision for themselves upon graduation. "In life, things don't always work out the way that you think they will - especially in a field that is very broad," Sferdenschi stressed. It's important to have something to fall back on. It's also important to be open to unexpected opportunities. You never know what life will bring your way.

Samantha Cook echoed Sferdenschi's advice. "You really never know what you're going to get. So be open to people and opportunities." Like Sferdenschi, Cook also graduated in 2009 but with a degree in English Literature. "A B.A. is a B.A. is a B.A., unless maybe if you're in economics," Cook said, half-jokingly. A B.A. is broad education in a wide range of skills; it does not train you for a specific job. Cook graduated with no specific career plan in mind, and received an internship opportunity at the Clinton Global Initiative in New York. Her experience as a SSMU executive proved to be a great asset in the application process. Both her experiences at SSMU and at the internship provided her with *tangible skills* – she stressed that this is key for finding an entry-level job. Most people want to hire someone with concrete skills. Someone who can start the very next day, with very little training, she explained.

After the internship, Cook found that "the most important thing [...] is getting to know people." She emphasized the importance of networking, because you never know who will lead you to your next job. Cook's next job was working as an assistant to an ex-SSMU-er. When a classmate from McGill posted on Facebook about an open position at a not-for-profit organization, Cook seized the opportunity for her next venture. She ended up working as the organization's Social Media Manager. Today, Cook is a Production Manager at a video-game company. She loves what she does. Cook believes she would not have ended up here if she had not kept an open mind and had not taken the time to get to know people.

Linda Sarvi is the most recently graduated panellist; she emphasized the need to get to know yourself, and not just others. "Take time to cultivate yourself," she advised. Sarvi finished her studies in December last year, leaving McGill with a degree in Sociology. She applied for jobs while waiting for the convocation ceremony, but did not hear back from any of them. While working service jobs to pay the bills, she took time to do the things she liked. Being away from what she described as McGill's "hyper-productive environment," gave Sarvi the chance to explore her interests. This was her "saving grace" as she realized that the mentality we often carry, that we always have to be doing something or accomplishing something is not real life. Take the time to discover yourself before jumping into something. Stop asking yourself "how do I fit my B.A. into something?" Sarvi said; instead, ask yourself "how do I make [these] opportunities cater to me?" Sarvi is now the Communications Director at a social enterprise founded by another McGill alumnus. Her experiences in writing for different publications at McGill were an asset for the position. Sarvi strongly believed that it is important to take time to do things you like, both in school, and after graduation.

"Learn a lot, keep your eyes wide open, and leverage what you learn," Stephen Reisler similarly advised and was our last speaker. Reisler graduated from McGill in 1975 with a degree in Communications and English Literature. Reisler also holds a Masters of Science in Communications. He is a Business Transition Specialist and co-founder of ROGG Americas LLC. While in school, Reisler states he "lived, ate, and slept McGill." The university experience for him was all about what he did outside of the classroom. Reisler organized the McGill Open House in 1974. He was awarded the Scarlet Key that same year for his contributions to student life and leadership on campus.

Reisler admitted that a B.A. will likely not lead to a specific job – but the wide range of knowledge gained from the degree can prove helpful when it comes to leveraging opportunities as they arise. Use your time at McGill to gain experiences outside of the classroom and to "gain a broad base" from your education. Leveraging his business travel opportunities from early on in his career, Reisler took advantage of these experiences to build a 19-year career in Consultancy. Reisler wrapped up the panel by advising the attendees to go outside of their comfort zone. "Accumulate experiences, not degrees," Reisler said - insightful words that all four panelists agreed with.

– NIYOUSHA BASTANI



Meghan Gutnik and Kateryna Gordiychuk -
Mentor Program Representatives

Corina Sferdenschi

Samantha Cook

Linda Sarvi

Stephen Reisler



MEET THE

TEAM

Inspired by University Affairs December 2014 issue



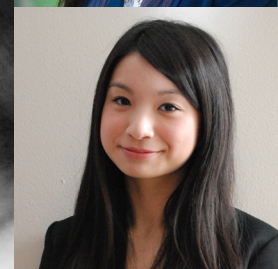
Muhammad Omer Juma - Mentor Program Coordinator
U3 Bachelor of Arts (Economics & Psychology)
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
Creating the change I want to see in the world



Zoha Azhar - Editor for the Mentor Program Newsletter
Bachelor of Arts '13 (Economics and Political Science)
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
Larry King discusses my undying love for the Oxford comma.



Sue Jeong - Journalist for the Mentor Program Newsletter
U2 Bachelor of Arts (IDS & East Asian Studies)
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
I see myself researching in a think tank.



Joy Chang - Mentor Program Representative
U2 Bachelor of Arts (Psychology & Sociology)
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
Happily going to work, even on a Monday.



Chansey Chiang - Mentor Program Representative
U1 Bachelor of Arts (Economics and Psychology)
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
Appreciating every extra second of precious sleep



Kateryna Gordiychuk - Mentor Program Representative
U1 Bachelor of Arts (Sociology, Psychology & Anthropology)
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
Working in a very enlightening newspaper



Zahra Khambaty - Mentor Program Representative
U2 Bachelor of Arts (Mathematics & Computer Science)
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
A proud owner of a multibillion dollar gaming application



Maheen Yacoob - Mentor Program Representative
U3 Bachelor of Arts (English Literature & Chemistry)
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
I aspire to be a science fiction author, screenwriter, and character.



Created by Chansey Chiang and Omer Juma

Message from the Mentor Program Coordinator

If you are interested in joining the Mentor Program as a Mentor or Mentee, you can register online by visiting our website:
<http://www.mcgill.ca/caps/students/services/mentor>.

Dear Mentors,

Interested in participating in speaker panels, workshops and Mentor Program events?

Would you like to be interviewed about your career path and mentorship experience?

Has your profile and contact information on your profile changed?

Please contact the Mentor Program Coordinator at mentor.caps@mcgill.ca

Dear Mentees,

Interested in sharing your mentorship experience and how it moulded your career path?

Has your previous match ended and would like to be matched with another mentor? Please contact the coordinator with James IDs of at least 3 mentors and you will be matched. You can view the updated list of mentors on our database here:
http://caps.mcgill.ca/ci2/index.php/mentor/list_mentors

Contact the Mentor Program Coordinator at mentor.caps@mcgill.ca for further information.

If you have any suggestions about how we can improve the program and the newsletter, please send me an email at mentor.caps@mcgill.ca. We always appreciate feedback!

UPCOMING EVENTS



A combination of galas, brunches, talks, panels, and workshops, all focused on helping you get the most value out of your McGill degree and assisting with your transition into the post-McGill world.
Brought to you by University Advancement, Campus Life & Engagement, and Students' Society of McGill University.
Learn more at: <http://mcgillredandwhite.weebly.com/>

Speed Mentoring Café for Counselling, Social Work and Psychology

Friday April 4th, 2:30-4:00

Wendy Patrick Room, Wilson Hall

Curious about career options in Counseling,
Psychology & Social Work?

Registration through [myFuture](#).

A Breakfast Celebration for Graduating Mac Students

Students Today

Alumni Tomorrow



April 9th, 9:30 - 11:30 am
Faculty Lounge,
Macdonald Stewart MS2-022

Registration is required:
[myFuture http://csm-caps.mcgill.ca/students](http://csm-caps.mcgill.ca/students)
Keyword search "Breakfast" in the "Events" section



McGill Career Planning Service (Downtown)
Suite 2200, Brown Student Services
3600 McTavish St.
Montreal, QC H3A 0G3
514-398-3304

McGill Career Planning Service (Macdonald)
Student Services, Centennial Centre
21,111 Lakeshore Road
Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC H9X 3V9
514-398-7582



McGill CaPS

Career Planning Service
Service de planification de carrière

