

Looking at our role  
on campus, locally, and  
globally

Advancing SLC's value of  
Belonging and forging a path  
to an inclusive environment

Building community  
for international students  
and graduates

# voyageur

## The Community Issue

HELENA NEVEU,  
SLC Knowledge Keeper  
in Residence



- **CONNECT WITH FELLOW ALUMNI**
- **SHARE UPDATES AND MILESTONES**
- **ANSWER CAREER QUESTIONS**
- **POST JOBS TO RECRUIT THE BEST SLC TALENT**

# It's Your Platform... Are You In?



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**CurrentsSLC.com**



  
**Alumni**  
St. Lawrence College

**Currents**   
[currentssl.com](http://currentssl.com)

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**ON THE COVER**  
Helena Neveu, SLC Knowledge Keeper in Residence, holding an eagle feather in an abalone shell. Photo by Johnny C.Y. Lam

“I’m extremely proud to prepare dishes for our vulnerable community as a culinary student, and working at Martha’s Table has shown me how important it is to support local organizations.”

—*Sara Northcott, 1st year Culinary Management student, page 18*



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Embracing our  
role in community  
economic recovery  
while taking a hard  
look at ourselves



# Staying true to our roots

Serving our communities and  
embracing change

If the COVID-19 pandemic taught us anything, it's how interconnected we all are both locally and globally. For St. Lawrence College, the work accomplished during the pandemic reaffirmed SLC's role as a community college, supporting our students, employees, and members of the broader community.

In these pages, you'll read stories of amazing community engagement from our three distinct yet intertwined communities—campus, local, and global. Through their studies and campus activities, our students touch lives in our communities through volunteering, placements, and how curricular activities are incorporated to also meet the needs of the local community—it's heartwarming and rewarding to read about how a seemingly simple act like a class activity of tree planting will benefit the wider community not only to promote sustainability but also to help beautify the area.

As we emerge on the other side of the pandemic into recovery, SLC will continue supporting students in their academic pursuits and personal well-being. The College will continue partnering with municipalities and industries in the communities we serve.

We will continue to build a global network by welcoming international students and creating opportunities for Canadian students to study abroad, expanding their worldview and career opportunities.

As this work continues, we know SLC alumni are a unique group, with connections woven throughout every aspect of the SLC community.

In this issue you'll also read about the College's report on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, (EDI) and Belonging, which provides a framework for how we will operationalize our value of Belonging and help move us forward in our journey to ensure a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all members of the SLC community. The report was the culmination of the work undertaken by the EDI + Belonging Task Force which conducted an environmental scan of current EDI initiatives, identified existing systemic barriers in corporate policies and processes, and made recommendations that will remove these barriers. Most importantly, the Task Force asked our people who they are. Our students, our employees, our alumni—thousands of points of data were gathered regarding the lived experiences and identities that comprise the SLC community.

The EDI + Belonging report also included how we can better represent Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being into SLC's culture, learning environment, and core curriculum. As an important beginning of that conversation and work, we appointed Helena Neveu as SLC's first Knowledge Keeper. You'll read more about Helena and how she and all the Indigenous Student Advisors promote the health and well-being of students by helping them to find balance in the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of their daily lives.

Our ongoing EDI + Belonging journey will include more changes at SLC to ensure we create a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for everyone. I look forward to this process as it opens up important conversations about who we are, and who we aspire to be as a College.

**Glenn Vollebregt, President and CEO**

@gvollebregt



# St. Lawrence College

The Alumni Relations office exists to encourage positive engagement with our Alumni through lifelong, mutually beneficial relationships.

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## The Feed

More replies from the 100,000 grads edition.

### Fun facts submitted by our grads.

Voyageur 2021 celebrated the College milestone of 100,000 grads. We asked grads to submit selfies and some fun facts, and this is just a sample of what we received!

“I was the featured artist on the cover of *Voyageur* Spring/Summer 2001. I’ve been employed as Library Service Assistant for SDG Library for 13 years. I love my job because I get to be creative in programming, promotion, and display. The great reward in public service is hearing patrons say, “You made my day!” I also feed the artist in me at Priest’s Mill Art Centre in Alexandria, ON, where I’ve worked as a consultant and show and sell my work in the gallery.”

—Tara Nicholson, *Photography*, 1994, *Fine Arts*, 1995

“I’m a volunteer firefighter 🧑🔥🚒. I also have my degree in Business Administration from Laurentian (through SLC). My mom, brother, sister, and I are all graduates from SLC from the business-admin accounting program. We all had the famous Michelle Paquin as a professor! My mom had Michelle in the early 90’s—craziness! Thanks so much!”—Mykaela Mallette

*Business Administration-Accounting*, 2019 & *Bachelor of Business Administration*, 2021

The Feed may be edited for length and clarity.

“I’m a 1985 graduate of the Graphic Design program. I attended the Kingston Campus of St. Lawrence College. I currently live in White Lake, Ontario. I am happily RETIRED now, after enjoying my career at Algonquin College in Ottawa.”—Mary Headrick (*née Dean*), *Graphic Design*, 1985

“I’m retired and reside in Cornwall, Ontario. Part of Cornwall SLC’s first graduating class in 1969—an employee of SLC for 33 years in Cornwall—Also graduated from the three-year Electronics Engineering Technology program in 1982 while working at the College—Enjoy gardening, road trips and world travel.”—Albert ‘Bert’ Ruest, *Electronics Engineering Technician*, 1969

“100,000 grads mark is a great milestone! Living in Kingston, working as a DevOps Engineer for ECi Software Solutions. Tech enthusiast and love playing volleyball and soccer when outdoors!”—Rishab Kumar, *Computer Networking and Technical Support*, 2018

“Reside in Almonte, Ontario, which is the Christmas Hallmark movie capital of the world. Have been working at Health Canada for 20 years.”—Kelly Falco (*Munro*) *Business, Advertising and Public Relations*, 1998

### Giving Back

“I recently gave a gift to support Indigenous students in memory of my Mom and the HAND WRITTEN thank you was just lovely! It’s now in a frame beside her SLC grad picture. Always proud to be SLC!”—Lisa Slack, *Developmental Services Worker* 1984 (*five-time graduate: 1984, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000*), *Retired SLC Professor, General Arts and Science*

# OPEN NEW DOORS

**Take your diploma or degree further  
with one-year graduate certificates.**

- Addictions and Mental Health
- Autism and Behavioral Science
- Business Analytics
- Communicative Disorders Assistant
- Digital Marketing Communications
- Health Care Administration International
- International Business Management
- Project Management
- Supply Chain Management
- Therapeutic Recreation
- User Experience Design



**St. Lawrence  
College**

[stlawrencecollege.ca/gradcert](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/gradcert)

# SLC Diary

Seen & Heard on Campus



Did you know? There are graduate certificate programs in User Experience Design, Digital Marketing Communications, and Business Analytics? Visit [stlawrencecollege.ca/gradcert](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/gradcert) for details.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEAN BURNS

## PERFORMING ARTS

### Triumphant return to stage

Although restrictions meant a smaller sold-out audience than usual, it didn't matter to the talented students of the Music Theatre Performance program who were thrilled to be back live on stage for two productions in the fall—CATS and Sondheim's *Marry Me a Little*. Putting their education to action, students not only got the chance to flex their acting and singing skills, but also develop makeup skills through a workshop on how to create CATS characters, as well as gain valuable behind-the-scenes technical and production skills. →

SURGE TOGETHER

# SLC has a historic inaugural Surge season



Fall 2021 will go down in the St. Lawrence College history books as one of the most exciting, successful varsity seasons ever, with championship seasons and wins at the Ontario Colleges Athletic Association (OCAA) and Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) levels.

### Golf

The year started with two gold medals and one silver medal for Surge varsity golf under the leadership and coaching staff of SLC alumni and former OCAA golfers Rob Brown (Business, 2005) and Brian Black (Business, 2005).

All-Canadian golfer Jamaal Moussaoui (Business, K) won 1st overall at the provincial championship in Sault Ste. Marie. Peter Beneteau (Business, K), followed up Jamaal's award-winning play claiming silver and helping the team finish 1st overall for team gold. Both Jamaal and

Peter were awarded OCAA and CCAA All-Canadian recognition for their efforts.

### Cross-Country

Catherine Irwin (Police Foundations, K), ran herself to multiple 1st place finishes during the season. The OCAA Rookie of the Year kept her pace at provincials, finishing 1st overall and claiming the College's 3rd gold medal



(Top) OCAA Cross Country Rookie of the Year Catherine Irwin and coach Tanya Deeks, (bottom) OCAA Golf Champs: Rob Brown (Coach), Peter Beneteau, Andrew Beneteau, Jamaal Moussaoui, Bryson McCulloch, Michael Beneteau, and Brian Black (Coach)





Rugby champions Zak Raymond (now training with the Team Canada development team) and Evan Sim-Spence



“Everyone involved should be extremely proud of their team and individual accomplishments. You all represented the St. Lawrence Surge with pride, passion, and integrity, and you brought home the awards and medals to prove it.”

Manager of Athletics and Student Engagement,  
Kevin Biggs

of the season. Along with fellow runner, Emma Malua Cimona (Bachelor of Science in Nursing, C), Catherine received OCAA All-Ontario team honours.

**Soccer**

The women’s soccer team valiantly competed at the OCAA championships in London. They finished 2nd overall, after an undefeated regular season under head coach Liana Oulette. The team claimed multiple awards and recognition, including the OCAA East Division title, OCAA Best Defensive Team, as well OCAA All-Stars for forward Melissa Gilligan (Child and Youth Care, K), defender Grace Van Hal (Fitness and Health Promotion, K), and goalkeeper Constance Laroche-Lefebvre (Police Foundations, K). Melissa finished the season as the OCAA Scoring Champion, while Grace received OCAA Defensive Player of the Year in her rookie campaign. The men’s team

achieved great success as well, finishing the season 2nd overall in the east with head coach Carlo Cannovan winning OCAA Coach of the Year. Defender Johnny McDonald (Behavioural Science, K), midfielder Ryan Kiers (Civil Engineering, K), and midfielder Tim Balfour (Social Service Worker, K) received OCAA All-Star honours for their outstanding efforts on the season.

**Rugby**

An historic fall season was finally capped off by the success of the Surge rugby teams. The women’s team powered their way through an admirable season, finishing 4th overall at the provincial championship in Oshawa. Head Coach Kate Pasic won OCAA Coach of the Year, while student-athletes Tori Wentz (Bachelor of Science in Nursing, K) and Ella Van Hal (Bachelor of Science in Nursing, K) received OCAA All-Star honours. The

league also recognized Ella’s outstanding season and championship play, naming her OCAA Rookie of the Year. On the men’s side, the team played arguably their best season ever, finishing 1st overall with an undefeated season under the excellent leadership of OCAA Coach of the Year, Denis Aseltine. The Surge men’s team captured gold at home in front of an electrifying Surge fanbase. Team captain Travis Zelinski (Child and Youth Care, K) led the way, winning OCAA Player of the Year and OCAA All-Star honours. Travis was joined as an All-Star by OCAA Scoring Champion Sam Meindl (Business, K), Zak Raymond (Business, K), Evan Sim-Spence (Advertising and Marketing Communications, K) and Charles Oulton (Project Management, K).

Follow the Surge action:  
[slcsurge.com](http://slcsurge.com)

PHOTOGRAPHS BY (LEFT) OCAA, (RIGHT TOP) ADAM SMITH; ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREW JOYCE

GROW, EXPLORE AND LEARN

# SLC+ Continuing education goals at your own pace



Lifelong learning has a new name at SLC. In fall 2021, SLC+ was launched—a collection of learning opportunities outside of the traditional academic stream. Included are courses and programs through Continuing Education, Corporate Training, microcredentials, and more. Whether you want to upskill, reskill, or pursue an interest or passion, SLC+ has something of interest and is always introducing new programs. Offerings range from Cybersecurity to Ceramics, Thai Cooking to Tourism Fundamentals, and Welding to Wellness.

Check out what's available at [slcplus.ca](http://slcplus.ca).

ACADEMIC LEADERS

## Meet the Deans



Last summer, an academic realignment positioned SLC to be even more ready to respond to the opportunities and needs of our students and our communities. As part of the changes, four new dean positions were introduced to oversee academic streams, while the two campus deans in Brockville and Cornwall took on additional program oversight. Here's an overview of the academic leadership team:

**Eileen DeCourcy**  
Senior VP,  
Academic



**Daniel Liao**  
Dean, Applied  
Science,  
Technology  
and Trades



**Barb Le Blanc**  
Dean, Health  
and Wellness



**Louise Chatterton**  
Dean, Business  
and Community  
Services



**Doug Roughton**  
Dean, Creative  
Industries and  
Brockville Campus



**Richard Wiggers**  
Dean,  
Interdisciplinary  
Studies and  
Pathways and  
Cornwall Campus



**Theresa Steger**  
Dean, Program  
Planning,  
Development  
and Renewal



**“Our new tri-campus program approach will support better coordination and mobilization of our academic division which will allow us to play a crucial role in advancing opportunities within each of our communities. We will be better poised to support our current and future students address challenges related to social issues, economic and environmental sustainability. I am excited about the possibilities the future will bring and how our faculty and academic staff can contribute to innovative teaching and learning in new ways.”**

Senior VP, Academic,  
Eileen DeCourcy



### THE Q&A

## Michael Steele & Dylan Westgate

Two entrepreneurial SLC grads bought the company they worked for and are taking it into the future.

We connected with Michael Steele, Business 1999, and Dylan Westgate, Business 2005, to learn about how SLC connections led to a student placement, which eventually led to these two SLC grads buying the company they worked for.

Sydney Stone (originally Sydney R. Stone) was established in 1951. Since then, it has grown to become one of the premier distributors of print finishing equipment and supplies throughout North America.

### Tell us about your post grad journey, and how it led to your business venture?

**Dylan Westgate:** In my final semester at SLC, I reached out to Michael, an SLC grad, about a placement as suggested by Bill Crowe, my professor. Towards the end of my placement, I was offered a position with the Sydney R. Stone sales team and started in June 2005. Michael and I began discussions with owner David Marsh in early 2008 about purchasing the company and finalized the purchase in November 2008.

**Michael Steele:** I was hired by Sydney R. Stone a few months after graduating in 1999 and moved to Toronto to begin my sales career.

When we purchased the company, it had eight employees—we have since acquired two competitors and now have a staff of 21 with offices in Mississauga and Vancouver.

### What skills did you learn at SLC that helped you make Sydney Stone your own?

**DW:** The first thing that we did was create a business plan. We had discussions about our goals for the first months and years. We discussed branding, marketing, accounting, and much more. The plan's components were like the case studies we prepared at SLC. The plan enabled us to get the funding needed to purchase the business and set up monthly "to-do's" to achieve our goals.

**MS:** SLC provided excellent business education, and skills to develop a marketing strategy, and set realistic goals

Business owners Michael Steele, President, and Dylan Westgate, Managing Director of Sydney Stone pictured in their office.

for growth. We have since acquired two businesses during our tenure and have used many of the skills we learned in the Marketing program with a specific nod to the managerial accounting course.

### What do you love most about being a business owner?

**DW:** I enjoy working with our team; we are constantly surprised by the ideas and skills of our team.

**MS:** The original owner, Sydney R. Stone was a world traveller who imported the most innovative products from all over the world. Dylan and I have worked hard to keep that alive and acquire the rights to some of the world's leading finishing equipment brands. It has made us proud to market, sell and service new print finishing technology to the Canadian marketplace.

### How do you stay connected with the College?

**MS:** We hired Brennan Wright in 2010, who graduated from the same SLC Business program in 2007. He hit the ground running and has since become our lead technical sales representative. Dylan, Brennan and I have been back over the years as guest speakers and judging sales competitions both in person and virtually.

### What advice do you have for new grads and students following in your footsteps?

**DW:** When I graduated, I thought I would work at a larger company. However, my placement at Sydney Stone opened my eyes to the benefits of a small business. I believe students can benefit from working at a small company where they could be exposed to all facets of business.

**MS:** If you own your own business, it's important to know your margins, foreign exchange, inventory levels, staffing costs, and how much money you have in the bank daily. These are key to making sound business decisions and moving your business forward. ✂

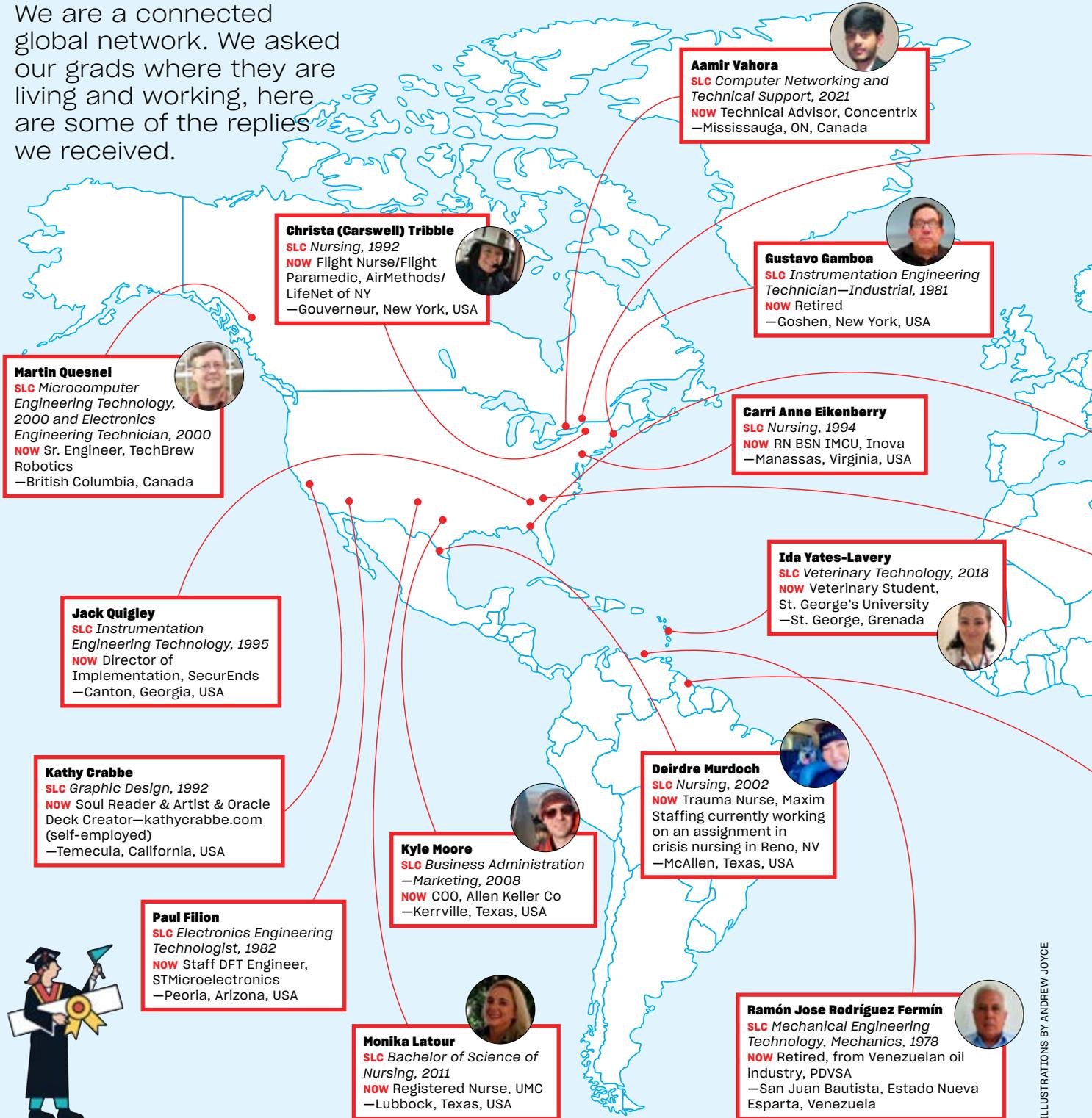
Learn more about Sydney Stone: [printfinishing.com](http://printfinishing.com)

SLC alumni live in 75+ countries.

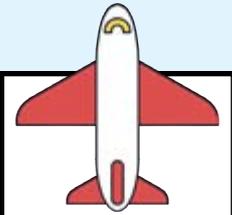
AT A GLANCE

# Where in the World?

We are a connected global network. We asked our grads where they are living and working, here are some of the replies we received.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANDREW JOYCE



**Top 10 Countries with the Most Grads (excluding Canada)**

- India
- United States
- China
- Hungary
- Japan
- Mexico
- Hong Kong
- United Kingdom
- Bermuda
- Germany



**JD Montana**  
**SLC** Computer Programmer Analyst, 2021  
**NOW** Software Engineer, Soffico  
 —Bavaria, Germany



**Mike Mowatt**  
**SLC** Electronics Engineering Technology, 1984  
**NOW** Foreign Service IT Professional, Global Affairs Canada (Consulate General of Canada in Hong Kong)  
 —Wan Chai, Hong Kong

**Gabryelle Decoste**  
**SLC** Hospitality and Tourism Management, 2018 and Hospitality Management—Hotel and Restaurant, 2017  
**NOW** Residence Life Coordinator, St. Lawrence College  
 —Cornwall, Ontario

**Erol Frik**  
**SLC** Mechanical Engineering Technology, 1980  
**NOW** Retired  
 —Istanbul, Turkey

**Patricia Kenney**  
**SLC** Nursing, 1988  
**NOW** Executive Director, Clinical Engagement, Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare  
 —Tallahassee, Florida, USA



**The furthest grad is found:**  
**18,278 km**  
 from SLC  
 The grad is from the Brockville campus. 18,278 kms is the distance from Brockville to Perth, Australia.

**Rachel DeNoble**  
**SLC** Office Administration, 2003  
**NOW** Financial Controller, Building & Construction Industry Training Organization  
 —Wellington, New Zealand

**Roger Kavaner**  
**SLC** Instrumentation Engineering Technician—Industrial, 1969  
**NOW** Managing Director, Financial Consulting Services (self-employed)  
 —Georgetown, Guyana



**Dr. Diana Meeks**  
**SLC** Nursing, 1985  
**NOW** Doctor/Nursing Professor, Adtalem  
 —Marietta, Georgia, USA



**Do you want to be part of the Global Alumni Ambassador program?**  
 Check out our Global Connections story on p. 30



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

# Ryan Lewis

Marketing grad follows his passion and gives artists a voice

Ryan Lewis, a 2012 Business Marketing grad, lights up a room with his jovial voice, kind eyes, and uplifting attitude. So, it's no wonder that he named his business Elevation Music Studio.

In 2001, Ryan came from Barbados to Canada, where he met his wife Kendra; he never dreamed he could pursue music production as a career. He grew up singing in a church choir, was introduced to a cappella, and discovered he loved harmony. Ryan was on track to be an architect, but his passion for music led him to a full-time career as a musician. He had an incredible drive to be in the industry, where he got paid to learn by working with talented musicians. When he arrived in Canada, he took a break from music and pursued business marketing.

He landed in Winchester, Ontario, then lived and worked in Ottawa. Then, wanting to purchase a home for their growing

family, he and Kendra moved to Kingston in 2008, where they are raising twin boys Ziggy and Malachi, now ten years old. He registered at SLC, where his return to school as an adult was an adjustment but also a fun journey, and he was astonished by the community's friendliness. Through the experiences in his program, he started to re-evaluate his plans.

He married his newfound business and marketing skills with his talents as a musician to help others navigate the music industry. Opening his own business was not part of his plan; he anticipated a return to the workforce after graduating, but it wasn't resonating with him. Family responsibilities weighed on him, and he felt overwhelmed, but his inner voice encouraged him to persevere, thus beginning his self-employment journey. SLC gave him the confidence and skills to strike out as an entrepreneur. He works

"Benevolence is often misconstrued as weakness, so it is really up to us not to allow perception to dictate how we treat others and ourselves or how we present ourselves. Kindness is essential; it frees you and comes back." Ryan says.

hard, but it doesn't feel like work. So, if 2 am nights occur, he's fine with this as he is building his business. Elevation Music Studio is a professional recording studio producing audiobooks, albums, and more, that he operated out of his basement for seven years. In 2020 he relocated to a 2,500 sq ft space above his wife Kendra's own venture—Elevation Hair Studio.

How did he get here? "Somebody gave me a shot. Somebody believed in me, somebody saw something in me," Ryan said. Music saved his life. His parents did their best to keep him and his siblings safe, but violence and gangs surrounded them. However, his passion for music kept him focused and gave him a voice, and he pays it forward through his work. He wants to give artists that same opportunity to find their voice.

His company is not necessarily just about music; it is about empowerment. Positive thinking keeps young aspiring musicians focused. He advises them not to be sidetracked. He makes it simple and fun; otherwise, it is not worth pursuing. "The core of my heart is to see people empowered and see that spark that was lost in a person's eye come back. That's the best part of this job," Ryan shares.

Forever indebted to SLC profs, who were so inspirational, he reflects on how his past work experience and newfound skills combined for his new venture. He stays connected with SLC as a speaker, where he motivates students to keep forging their own paths. He has also hosted student placements. The SLC Business Marketing program taught him skills and showed him how to decode everything and use it for his ventures, and he is proud to be an SLC alumnus.—By Kris Ward

**Connect with Ryan:**

[www.elevationmusicstudio.com](http://www.elevationmusicstudio.com)

Youtube: /ryanlewiselevationmusicstudio

Find Ryan on Currents SLC: /user/779704



ASK A PRO

# Reduce Your Footprint

Advice from a Sustainability Manager

We reached out to Brooke Gilmour, the first female graduate of the Energy Systems Engineering Technology program in 2008. Brooke is now the Sustainability Manager at SLC, and contributor to the College's first Sustainability Plan.

## What are the three main principles of sustainability?

Sustainability at SLC brings a holistic approach to the environment, economics, and social and cultural vibrancy. One of the lesser-known lenses is social sustainability. It isn't as widely understood but is integral to sustainable development. If a person is facing racism or discrimination, or struggling to put food on their table, they *are not* experiencing social sustainability.

## What are some easy positive changes EVERYONE can make today?

*Go meatless once a week*

Don't get me wrong; I am not

hating on meat-eaters. I am simply noting the amount of resources required to grow an animal vs. a plant. It's just science; more Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) are produced in an animal's lifespan than from growing a tomato.

## Reduce your plastic waste

Did you know that 80% of the waste in our Great Lakes is plastic waste? This action is accessible to everyone. If you buy stuff, you likely purchase single-use plastic items.

Where do you start? Start with thinking about the product's life cycle BEFORE YOU BUY IT—what will happen at the end of its life? Is there an alternative, more sustainable

"The best part of taking the road towards a sustainable lifestyle is realizing the impacts of our everyday choices ARE important." Brooke says.

product, or will you be able to fix it if it breaks? There are cool repair café events that pop up where handy folks will fix your stuff.

## Reduce energy consumption in your house or apartment

Homeowner? Invest in an energy audit to understand where your home is losing energy. You'll also find out what funding programs can help you pay for energy saving measures. Apartment dweller? Buy LED bulbs for your light fixtures. Reduce your heat loss by asking your landlord for energy and water conservation measures like low flow faucets, or window and door sealing kits.

## How is SLC doing on sustainability?

SLC received the 2018 and 2019 Greatest GHG Emission Reduction Award from Sustainable Kingston and the first-ever Green Builder Award from Green Economy Canada in 2019. The College is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education and in 2019 we received a Bronze Rating from their Sustainability, Rating, Assessment and Tracking System (STARS.) By 2024, we aim to receive a Gold Rating. ✌

See SLC's Sustainability Plan [www.stlawrencecollege.ca/about/sustainability](http://www.stlawrencecollege.ca/about/sustainability)



## Try a simple mini home waste audit

It's not glamorous and you'll likely skip posting a selfie with your sorted waste, but the process will reveal opportunities to make changes in your habits.

### Equipment

Gloves and a big blue tarp on the ground to lay out all your waste.

### Separate

Organize your organics, plastics (recyclable and non-recyclable), metals, glass, and landfill (all non-recyclables).

### Examine your piles

Is there more of one thing than another? Are you actually placing recyclable items in your blue and grey bins? There is a thing called hope-cycling, we hope it's recyclable but in reality, it gets diverted to landfill at some point in the waste sorting process.

### Identify changes

This is the fun part! What is sold in glass instead of plastic? Is there a zero-waste store in your area that has re-filling stations? Can you go without any items? Are there additional recycling options through an Earth Hub chapter or Terra Cycle?

Big Hit  
with  
secondary  
students

THE BIG PICTURE

# Mobile Training Labs

SLC started a pilot program with its Mobile Training Labs with the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (CDSBEO) in September, teaching high school students introductory skills in welding and carpentry.

“CDSBEO students were thrilled to have access to the Mobile Labs and were very appreciative of the guidance and instruction provided by the SLC instructors,” said Todd Lalonde, CDSBEO Board Chair. “There is a world of possibilities available for our graduates, and our partnership with SLC is an excellent way to help students explore all pathways and learn about post-secondary opportunities available locally.”

Photographs  
by Rémi Thériault



We're opening doors to skilled trades experiences, and exciting careers that our communities need.





SLC's mobile labs can transport necessary equipment for training programs.





# Putting the

By SLC  
Communications

# “Community”

# in

Photographs By Rémi Thériault,  
Johnny C.Y. Lam & Duane Cole

# Community College

How SLC is helping drive growth, address workforce gaps, and taking a leadership role within our communities.



Modesto Romero Vargas,  
Environmental  
Technician student  
enjoys learning more  
about Canada's natural  
environment.



**O**n a warm September day in the fall of 2021, Jordan Ann Kevan de Haan paused to proudly watch her students work amidst the beauty of Chevrier Park in Cornwall, Ontario. Twenty-one Environmental Technician students were spread out in the park, helping to plant 300 trees. The fieldwork was completed as part of a course called Environmental Issues and Solutions, said Kevan de Haan, Professor and Program Coordinator of the Environmental Technician program at St. Lawrence College. “While most of this course was delivered online, this opportunity gave students a chance to connect with each other and the environment while expanding their professional network. I am proud of the work they accomplished.”

The fieldwork is an example of the interconnectedness of St. Lawrence College’s communities—campus, local, and global. The opportunity was made possible by local partners—the Raisin Region Conservation Authority (RRCA), who supplied the trees, equipment, and guidance, as well as the City of Cornwall, who provided an accessible location for the fieldwork.

“It felt great being more involved in the community and helping an organization like the RRCA promote local biodiversity,” said student Winter McDougall.

For Modesto Romero Vargas, a student from Mexico, planting trees was an amazing opportunity to learn more about Canada’s natural environment and sustainable development. “It was a great activity where we made a small difference for our planet while meeting our classmates and enjoying the outdoors.”

From planting trees in local parks to caring for patients in long-term care, SLC students are making a difference in our communities. Last year, the College welcomed Personal Support Worker students in a new accelerated program funded by the province to help alleviate staffing shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic through placements and job opportunities.

For Samantha Guild, a student in Brockville, the program was a perfect opportunity to get into the health-care field, and a “gift” from the government she does not plan to waste, as she plans to further her education in the Practical Nursing program. “I joined the accelerated PSW program because I love working with people and in the community,” she said. “I want to thank St. Lawrence College for their wonderful teachers and materials. It has been amazing so far and I am excited to continue on this journey.”

Samantha and her 23 classmates completed clinical simulations on campus where they received important hands-on training. Training included learning how to stop the chain of infection, i.e., proper hand hygiene, donning and doffing personal protective equipment, activities of daily living for a resident, including bathing, dressing, feeding, ambulating, and learning how to use lifts safely, Gentle Persuasive Approaches training with the Alzheimer’s Society, bed making, and proper body mechanics including moving, positioning, and transferring with wheelchairs.

The program was welcomed by health care organizations in the community. “Maple View Lodge is proud to partner with SLC and particularly excited to collaborate in the accelerated PSW program,” said Tracy Jordan, Administrator at Maple View Lodge, a long-term care home in Athens, ON. “The quality of the SLC program is reflected in their students who are fully prepared to take on the role of PSW in long-term care. We are pleased to offer a learning environment for them, their energy and enthusiasm is infectious, and our residents benefit greatly from their presence.”

Students also helped to address hunger in Kingston by partnering with Martha’s Table, a community centre within the social welfare network. Over the last year, Culinary Management students prepared nearly 200 individually packaged, gourmet meals for the city’s needy, which has become part of the regular curriculum in the program.

“We have embedded this event into the students’ curriculum so they must come up with the menus and ordering for the whole event,” said Richard Hendy, Chef Professor and Culinary Programs Coordinator. “This authentic activity for the students provides them with a real feeling of belonging in the community.”

“I’m extremely proud to prepare dishes for our vulnerable community as a first-year Culinary Management student and working at Martha’s Table has shown me how important it is to support local organizations,” said student Sara Northcott (pictured on p. 20). “Every patron that visits Martha’s Table is deeply appreciative and being a part of helping and supporting them is incredibly rewarding.”

For Ronda Candy, Executive Director of Martha’s Table, the meals helped to feed even more hungry people in Kingston during the pandemic. “This support is much appreciated; the number of people that we serve each day has doubled in the last few months and this helps offset our budget as well as providing a tasty and nutritious meal for those struggling to

➤ The accelerated PSW program helps students make a difference in our communities.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHNNY C.Y. LAM



make ends meet in our community.”

The approach to community and connections is as strong on the campus as it is off, in that going to school during the pandemic presented new challenges for many students who were studying virtually and through other alternate delivery formats. SLC was aware that supporting student wellness and general mental health was going to be a priority.

For Shane Granger, reaching out to Student Wellness before things got too difficult to manage was the key to his success. From the package of fidget toys to the assistance to buy noise-cancelling headphones to help with his ADHD, the Student Wellness teams offered support to help him be successful and develop strategies to respond and be prepared for challenging situations.

“The staff in Student Wellness were eager to provide the support I needed, often in ways I didn’t expect. My bi-weekly meetings with a counsellor were the most beneficial; they took the time to develop strategies for me to cope with the stressful world we are living in, and it has greatly improved my overall mental wellbeing,” Granger said. “Someone is always there to turn to when I’m in need of extra support and I am grateful for that.”

Student Wellness also found new and creative ways to help students in residence stay connected and well via group support, Wellness Walks, and virtual meetings with Student Wellness.

SLC Wellness teams continued to provide counselling sessions and referrals to mental health organizations while working with community public health units to offer COVID-19 vaccine clinics on campus, accessibility supports, and more during the pandemic.

Newly appointed Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Helena Neveu understands the importance of her role as part of the team fostering a college community that embraces Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being. The College recently renamed the Indigenous Student Centres in her honour to Waasaabiidasamose Indigenous Centres—welcoming spaces for Indigenous students to study, socialize, and participate in events and programming.

“The Creator has granted me life experience, knowledge, and training to help in my competency of delivering Indigegogy,” said Helena. “It is my desire and job to carry on the spiritual message to the people. I see my days being filled with countless activities to grow Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being—not just me, but the whole Indigenous team here at SLC.”

*Read more about SLC’s Belonging + EDI initiatives on page 24*



< Learning how to prepare healthy meals using fresh, locally sourced ingredients is part of the Culinary programs at SLC.





**SOUTH DUNDAS TOURISM APP  
DEVELOPED IN STUDENT PARTNERSHIP  
Supporting community recovery**

If you visited South Dundas last summer, you may have downloaded a new app created by nine students from SLC’s Game Programming course.

The app, called “South Dundas Tourism Pursuit,” features 19 sites across South Dundas and was downloaded 674 times. By visiting these sites and scanning QR codes, users can collect badges, unlock games, and win prizes. The app was created in a partnership between SLC and the Municipality of South Dundas, after exploring collaboration options with SLC Game Programming professor James Dupuis, who saw the potential right away.

“This project gave our students a real-life client to work with, which is a great experience they can add to their resumes. I’m impressed with the outcome and proud of what they accomplished.”

For Donnie Bowes, Artistic Director of the Upper Canada Playhouse, being a site on the app helped drive audiences to the theatre as COVID-19 restrictions began to lift. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to showcase the theatre and help people discover what we offer.”

South Dundas Mayor Steven Byvelts sees the direct benefit of the app to the community.

“As we start to come out lockdowns and restrictions, we’re all looking for things to do that are safe and enjoyable. What better way than to explore a beautiful area like South Dundas? The Committee has worked to cover all corners of the community to make something that is truly a South Dundas tourism experience. We look forward to working with SLC in the future and are thrilled with the result of this partnership.”

Helena Neveu is SLC’s newly appointed Indigenous Knowledge Keeper.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHNNY CAY LAM

**W**ith 12 Recruitment Coordinators serving prospective students from all over the world, fall 2021 saw the highest diversity intake with 456 international students joining SLC from more than 40 countries.

For Yash Kaushik, who graduated from Game Development Technician program in 2019, SLC, and the City of Cornwall were welcoming communities, where people were helpful. “I felt safe and comfortable in the friendly atmosphere,” he said.

“SLC has a lot of great initiatives to give back to the community. During my two-year program, I volunteered with different college departments, which gave me a sense of belonging and helped me grow. I participated in open houses and orientations for international students and organized events and worked part-time as an international housing assistant and a peer tutor. If you are ambitious



A hallmark of the SLC experience is experiential learning through placements or projects. Offered in partnership with local organizations and businesses, students experience real-world learning and contribute to initiatives that make a real difference locally.

Students in several different programs worked in partnership with Launch Lab, a provincially funded network of resources for entrepreneurs, to help Eastern Ontario businesses move to digital platforms as part of their recovery from the pandemic. SLC students worked as graphic designers, web developers, copywriters, User

Experience/User Interface (UX/UI) designers, and digital marketers. Since Digital Main Street's launch in July 2020, students have worked with over 200 businesses throughout Eastern Ontario.

"It has been an absolute pleasure working with SLC students as part of the Digital Main Street Future Proof Program," said Scott Runté, CEO of Launch Lab. "The businesses that have been through the program have raved about the students' skills and professionalism, and I can tell you that the work they performed will make a huge difference to the future of these small businesses."

and willing to get involved, there are many opportunities for international students."

Students will have more opportunities and assistance to study abroad next year thanks to funding from the Global Skills Opportunity (GSO), the Government of Canada's outbound student mobility pilot program, which will enable more than 16,000 Canadian college and undergraduate-level university students from across the country acquire the global skills employers want and the Canadian economy needs. The \$500,000 in funding received by SLC will help 72 students participate in the program which will run between 2021-2025.

"Study and work abroad programs are invaluable learning experiences that ensure students are culturally literate, resilient, adaptable, and ready to succeed in an increasingly globalized world. This is perhaps more important than ever, which is why we are so proud to work with our partners to deliver Global Skills Opportunity. This groundbreaking program will allow more Canadian students to access these opportunities to develop the skills they need to gain a foothold in today's global marketplace," said Denise Amyot, President, Colleges and Institutes Canada.

At SLC, about 35 students each year have previously participated in two faculty-led programs, a Nursing



Yash Kaushik, Game Development Technician program grad 2019, reflects how he felt welcome at SLC and Cornwall.

elective course in Tanzania, and a Tourism course in Costa Rica. These two courses are being redeveloped to be part of the GSO program. Also in development is an Entrepreneurship course at SLC's partner, the Technological University of the Shannon in Ireland.

*Read more about SLC's Global Connections on page 30*

New connections will continue to be forged as SLC grows and evolves the ways we work with our communities.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

*SLC also has Employment Services offices in Sharbot Lake and Ottawa, supporting Canada-Ontario Job Grant-funded programs to offer training and counselling for people seeking employment. Employment Services also operates the largest job board in the region. Check out their new improved website: [slc.totalhire.com/](http://slc.totalhire.com/)*

**SLC IS ON A JOURNEY TO BETTER  
UNDERSTAND AND IMPROVE EQUITY, DIVERSITY  
AND INCLUSION ON ITS CAMPUSES.  
IT'S A JOURNEY THAT HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN.**

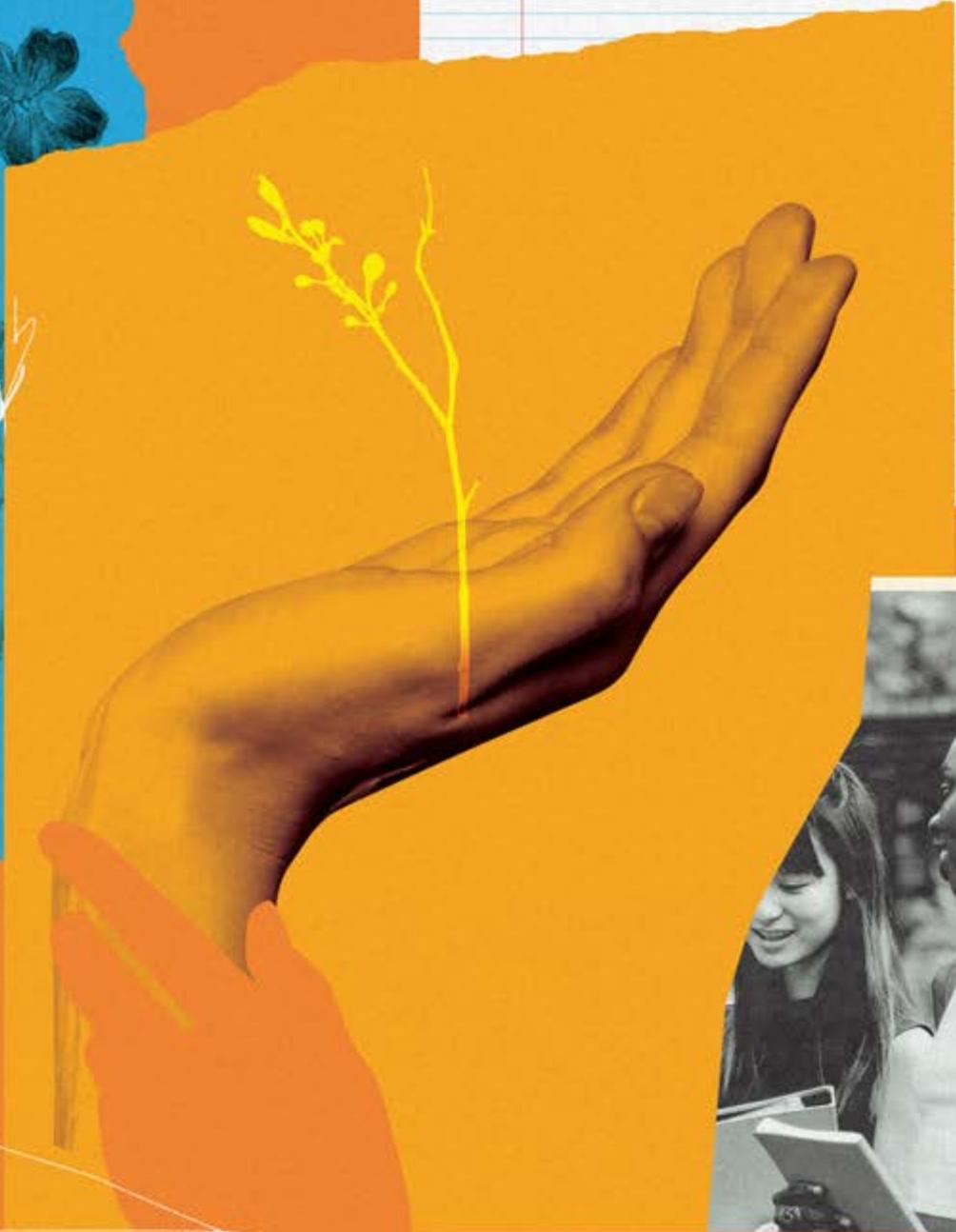
# **BELONGING**



**By Gayathri Shukla,  
Founder, Campfire Kinship**

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Illustrations  
By Yazmin Butcher



# WE'VE ALL EXPERIENCED THE STING OF FEELING LEFT OUT.

Perhaps, it was a group where you struggled to fit in or be accepted. Understandably, you may have left that group to join others where you felt more welcomed.

However, what if the place you feel you don't belong is the place you have to be for eight hours a day, five days a week? According to Harvard Business Review, "social belonging is a fundamental human need, hardwired into our DNA. And yet, 40% of people feel isolated at work or school."

When students or staff feel like they don't belong at work or school, their performance and personal lives suffer. But then, there is the added backdrop of isolation from pandemic protocols and the repercussions of social justice movements, such as #MeToo, #BlackLivesMatter, or #StolenSisters. So, it is no wonder that our collective sense of belonging is fractured now more than ever. As a result, institutions everywhere are taking a hard look at their culture.

St. Lawrence College has undoubtedly embraced this journey, beginning with a steadfast commitment to advancing its recently established Belonging value. In the fall of 2020, Professor Ekta Singh was seconded to the role of Senior Advisor, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) and Belonging, and led a task force that undertook extraordinary efforts to assess the College's culture.

**S**ingh says, "I think it is important to recognize and be honest about the fact that the College has not always been a place where everyone has felt a sense of belonging. The recommendations outlined in the task force's final report are a deliberate attempt to right that

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**"Sharing experiences of inequity can be challenging, and yet many members of our school community shared authentic experiences that were emotional and raw."**

—  
**EKTA SINGH**  
Senior Advisor,  
Equity, Diversity  
Inclusion (EDI) and  
Belonging

wrong. The core values of the College reflect the belief that a community is stronger when we give concrete and tangible expression to these values—students first, integrity, teamwork, innovation, and belonging."

Singh, whose first name, Ekta, means 'unity' in Punjabi, has a deep passion for EDI. She believes an essential foundation for creating inclusive learning environments is understanding how positionality, unconscious biases, and privileges impact these areas. She reflects on her background as a South Asian, second-generation immigrant with over seventeen years of experience as an educator and EDI practitioner: "My experiences and personal stories of inequity situate me in unique ways as a researcher, who I am, what I believe, and even how I connect with and listen to the stories of others. I was very much drawn to responsibilities of building community and unity within the College culture."

The Task Force was comprised of students, faculty, and staff from the College's three campuses. Most members self-identified as members of designated equity groups, such as racialized minorities, women, Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2S+, and peoples with disabilities. In addition, everyone at the College was provided opportunities to share their unique voices, stories, and experiences through a series of listening tours called Courageous Conversations, which included a session for alumni.

Singh shares her takeaways as a result of this initiative: "Sharing experiences of inequity can be challenging, and yet many members of our school community shared authentic experiences that were emotional and raw. We witnessed students, who began as strangers, becoming friends and exchanging contact details with one another. We witnessed staff and faculty from tri-campus communities collaborating and acting as supports for each other; and we witnessed deep introspection, where attendees began to process and question their own biases and how this may have impacted their daily lives and work.



**M**ichael Cooke, Interim Vice President of Student Affairs, speaks to the rigorous, evidence-based approach taken by the task force: “I’m proud that this work reflects well-established research methodologies, and also a really good mix of quantitative and qualitative research. The leaders that were at the task force were very strong academics. But also, they have a deep personal understanding of the nature of belonging and the centrality of storytelling as the primary vehicle for research, and deepening understanding of where we go.”

Cooke attests to the positive shifts emerging at the College due to adopting the task force’s recommendations, such as increasing staffing capability. The College

is seeking to hire a new Vice President of Belonging and a Director of Belonging. In addition, it has appointed a full-time Knowledge Keeper in Residence, Helena Neveu, and added an Indigenous curriculum specialist and an Indigenous member to the recruitment team. He says, “We have re-established and re-engaged our Indigenous Education Council. And we have initiated across the College, a whole series of talking circles led by our knowledge keeper and residents.”

Another area where the task force is making considerable progress is how the College has approached internationalization. Ining Chao, Associate Dean, Global Learning & Partnerships, shares an example: “I see some courses in some programs start to integrate the topic of internationalization in the curriculum. Our



They are leading by example and sharing their voices; these SLC community members are helping improve equity, diversity and inclusion. (Top) Ekta Singh and Helena Neveu, (Bottom) Ining Chao and Terry McGinn.

## Task Force Report's Recommendations

1

Nurture a Deep Diverse Talent Pool

2

Attract and Retain an Enriching and Diverse Student Body

3

Build and Sustain EDI Vision, Leadership, and Communication Capacity

4

Foster EDI Excellence and Innovation in Teaching, Learning, and Research

5

Sustain an Equitable, Diverse, and Inclusive Campus Culture and Climate

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Do you see ways to include and improve Belonging in our alumni community? We want to hear from you! Contact Kris Ward at [alumni@sl.on.ca](mailto:alumni@sl.on.ca). **See the full report:** [stlawrencecollege.ca/edi](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/edi)

staff comes from many different cultures in the international office. One of the initiatives (through our Global Engagement Strategy) is to implement intercultural training for all staff and students.”

International students often face many barriers to belonging, such as linguistic and cultural differences, and financial or psychological stress. Chao empathizes through personal experience, having immigrated from Taiwan to Canada in her twenties for graduate study. She conveys how her identity as a Taiwanese Canadian has shaped her desire to contribute to EDI and Belonging: “As an educator, I want to see students thrive in this learning environment where a rich mixture of cultures contributes to their growth. If we do not focus on belonging, we risk exploiting students only for financial gains. We also lose the opportunity to provide quality education for all students, as the cultural assets they bring to the campus are ignored. When all students belong, that’s when the greatest learning happens.”

**T**erry McGinn, a graduate, returning student, and president of the Kingston Student Association, confirms this point of view. “The College has a wonderful international student population who bring with them inspiring stories, amazing energy, and beautiful cultures. The International Student Welcome Sessions were some of the first community events I volunteered at. I am happy that members of our community have the supports they need available to them more now than they ever have before.”

Becoming a member of the task force was a natural choice for McGinn, who has always strived to be a change agent for the better. “I’ve been involved in advocacy and activism work in one way or another since high school. I especially felt that it was important for the student perspective to be represented in the task force.”

There is a common thread between the views of Singh, Cooke, Chao, and McGinn. It reflects that while belonging can be an intangible concept, it’s powerful to name it as an institutional value. Naming provides a forum to consider, set goals for, and intentionally measure,

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**“If we do not focus on belonging, we risk exploiting students only for financial gains... When all students belong, that’s when the greatest learning happens.”**

—  
**INING CHAO**  
Associate Dean,  
Global Learning &  
Partnerships

especially for those for whom belonging wasn’t automatic, easy, or perhaps never happened at all.

Chao defines diversity as inviting students and staff from all backgrounds to join the College, whereas inclusion is an action. It is about knowing how to behave and work together. When diversity and inclusion are achieved together, belonging is the outcome.

For Cooke, belonging is both a personal and collective imperative: “I’m an older white male, and I’m very conscious of my power and privilege. That has motivated me to deepen my understanding and ask myself what role can I play given my position. The change in the demographic of our student body is dramatic. It’s reflective of a change in the Canadian population and workforce. Belonging, equality, and diversity are about the future of our country and the future of the globe. We have an obligation to graduate [students] with the capacity to play a full role.”

Singh relates to a quote from the late academic author and social justice pioneer, bell hooks: “Dominant culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, revelling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community.”

Indeed, the key to unlocking this value might be understanding that everyone wants to belong fundamentally. Of course, we can’t belong alone, but we can move through any fear of differences by embracing what makes each of us unique.

The journey of belonging might not be easy, but it is promising. McGinn captures the essence of it when she says: “I love our students. I love the way the faculty and staff work so hard to lift them up. I love that the campus is small enough that there are such great characters that we all know and love. But that it’s big enough that we have this huge diversity of students with such a wide array of lived experiences that no two stories are even close to being the same...and yet we’ve all ended up here, in this same spot, together, for this time in our lives that we’ll remember forever.” ✖

# GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

SLC is ensuring that international students feel part of the community, both as students and as alumni.



BY ANDREA GUNN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
ALEXA MAZZARELLO  
& DUANE COLE

## THE TRIP FROM ACCRA, GHANA, TO KINGSTON,

**ONTARIO,** was a challenging one for Veronica Dogbegah. She had an eight-hour flight from Ghana to Portugal, where she endured a 14-hour layover. From Lisbon, she flew into Toronto, arriving a little after midnight. She had never been to Canada before. She had booked a hotel room so she could get some rest before continuing on to Kingston, where she would soon start the User Experience (UX) Design program.

In Ghana, Veronica had worked for a software company. "I looked after customer complaints. I listened to customers' problems, then I would send the issue to someone else to sort the problem, then I would follow up with the customer to see if the issue had been resolved. I realized that my strength was in problem-solving, but in my role, I was



Veronica Dogbegah,  
User Experience  
Design, 2020, Project  
Management, 2021



handing over the problems for someone else to solve.”

She started exploring user experience design, which builds services and technologies that best meet the needs of both users and service operators. Veronica’s research led her to St. Lawrence College, and its graduate certificate in UX design. She was excited about the opportunity to build her skills in this rapidly expanding field.

First though, she had to get to Kingston. And there was a problem. In Toronto, she discovered that her hotel room booking had been cancelled. She tried other hotels. They were either wildly out of her budget or had a check-in time of 4 pm the next day. After more than 24 hours of travel, on three continents, Veronica just wanted to get to Kingston, where she had a place to stay and could get some sleep.

“So, I weighed my options,” she says. “I weighed the prices of hotels—up to \$200—and then I checked the price of an Uber—\$240—to take me to Kingston.”

So, Veronica utilized her well-honed problem-solving skills and got to her new home in Kingston at 4:30 am via Uber.

It’s this type of initiative, combining the innate talent and learned experience of international students, that St. Lawrence College wants to attract. And while some international students are coming to SLC for their first post-secondary experience, many more, like Veronica, enter their programs armed with years of complementary training and work experience.

“A lot of these students are attracted to our graduate certificates or diploma programs,” says Richard Webster, International Education Manager, Community Development. “For example, in our Health Care Administration program, many of our international students are already doctors or nurses in their home country. They are coming in with a whole host of skills, then looking to be building administrative skills in relation to health care. The same with our Supply Chain Management, Project Management, and other programs. Particularly for those groups of students, there’s a real opportunity for us to help employers understand the degree of expertise that a lot of our students already have before they even arrived to get their SLC education.”

**K**ishan Kapadiya already had two degrees—a BSc in horticulture and an MSc in plant molecular biology—when he came to Canada from India. He was interested in the business side of the agricultural sector, so he came to St. Lawrence College to study Project Management and then International Business Management. One of his favourite



Kishan Kapadiya  
Project Management,  
2020, International  
Business  
Management, 2021

components of the Project Management program was the volunteer placement, designed to give students practical experience using the tools they learned in class, while growing their local network.

Kishan’s placement was at Kingston’s Robinson Community Garden. “They asked me to look at their crop yield and post-harvest losses.” Kishan also tackled the community garden’s watering methods, moving them from watering by hand to a sprinkler irrigation system. He continued volunteering for the community garden after his

placement was over. “I wanted to improve my own knowledge,” he says. “I wanted to do something for homeless people, because the garden contributes their vegetables to local organizations that feed homeless people.”

“For some international students,” says Shelley Aylesworth-Spink, VP International Education, “volunteer work is not something they’re familiar with. Volunteering at a local agency is a great opportunity for international students to better understand their new community...and it may just lead to a full-time paid job in their field.”

**Veronica was aware** of the benefits of volunteerism; she had been an active member of Rotary International in Ghana. “In order to get familiar with an environment,” she says, “you need to do things that let you meet people.” In Kingston, she researched community groups she could get involved in. She competed in the Mayor’s Innovation

# “We’re starting to learn from international students, what they need and how they can be successful in their programs, and then be successful as they go out into the workforce.”

— SHELLEY AYLESWORTH-SPINK, VP INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Challenge, which invites Kingston post-secondary students to brainstorm new ways to tackle specific gaps in local services. “That gave me a starting point,” says Veronica. “I met people from the community and the mayor’s office. In addition, I connected with people on LinkedIn whom I wouldn’t have otherwise met.

Veronica’s classroom experiences gave her new connections, too. “The classes here were smaller than I was used to, so that gave me a more personalized relationship with others. I could reach out to my professors; they were very accessible. They were very much concerned about student growth and about our career paths. It wasn’t just a case of ‘Learn this and then go survive by yourself.’” Veronica also connected with community groups through her UX design program, working for project clients like Kingston’s Grand Theatre. “I put these projects in my portfolio,” she says, “and they made me ready to engage recruiters.”

SLC isn’t leaving international students’ success to chance: the College has introduced a number initiatives as part of its Global Engagement Strategy, both to remove barriers for international students and to grow a global mindset for the College community.

**P**rior to 2017, St. Lawrence College only saw about 100 international students a year, says Shelley. “That year,” she says, “St. Lawrence started accepting hundreds more international students.” But subsequent consultations with the College community showed that the simple expansion of international numbers wasn’t enough: there needed to be a more thoughtful process, one that embodied the vision of the College, the needs of the students, and the opportunity to embrace a global outlook.

Understanding that students come from a variety of learning and teaching styles helps professors and administrators bridge barriers their students may face. Shelley says, “Many students will come from a system of secondary education where memorization is important: they’re not really invited to be part of a classroom discussion. Working in groups can be a new experience.”

“We’re starting to learn from international students, what they need and how they can be successful in their programs, and then be

successful as they go out into the workforce.”

International students at the College are eligible for a post-graduate work permit. For some, this is an opportunity to add Canadian work experience to their resumé; for others, it’s also the first step to becoming a permanent resident in Canada.

As part of his Project Management course, Kishan got a better sense of the regional job market when he went on a site visit to a local employer—Canopy Growth Corporation in Smiths Falls. Previously, he had never even thought about a career in the cannabis industry, but now it intrigued him. “This was all totally new to me,” he says, “but I’m a risk-taker. I love to try new things.” Here was an emerging industry that needed people who knew about agriculture, project management, and business strategy.

Kishan is now working at Canopy’s research and development facility in Scarborough and Veronica recently moved to Ottawa, for her dream job as a UX designer at SAP, a global software company.

“It’s a win if our graduates find meaningful employment connected to their program areas,” Richard says. “But it’s also important that we’re doing everything we can to support our communities, as well as fulfilling our role in addressing local labour shortages.” Now with the support of an anonymous donor, SLC has created a Global Engagement Community Development program to do just that. Richard is now focusing on building deeper connections with local employers and services in the College’s three home communities, starting with Cornwall. These connections will set up many more international graduates for success in their new communities. And that success doesn’t just mean finding a job locally in their field after they graduate. It also means finding part-time work when they’re still students. It means finding a good place to live, access to faith-based supports, and feeling part of the community, whether they are in Cornwall, Brockville, or Kingston.

“I’m really excited about building this program,” Richard says. “We want to ensure that our international students coming to St. Lawrence have a seamless experience, that they feel connected to the community from day one. They’re connected to volunteer opportunities, employment opportunities, and networking opportunities.” ✕

## GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020–2024

- 1 Create a distinctive global culture at SLC encompassing the daily academic and student life activities of staff, students, faculty, and alumni.
- 2 Develop and support global citizenship among students, staff, faculty, and alumni.
- 3 Champion both the transition for international students to SLC and Canada along with an enriched intercultural learning experience for all students.
- 4 Create and nurture excellence in academic opportunities and partnerships in Canada and abroad.
- 5 Work in our SLC campus communities to support intercultural awareness and meet immigration needs.

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The SLC in Five Strategic Plan has a goal to strengthen the Global Alumni Network. One initiative is to develop a Global Alumni Ambassadors program to support current students, support Global Engagement strategies, and maintain SLC networks after graduation. Interested in learning more and being a part of the program? Find out more at [stlawrencecollege.ca/alumni](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/alumni).

# The SLC Premier's Awards Nominees

# 2021

The 2021 Premier's Awards were awarded on November 18 in a virtual ceremony celebrating Ontario's outstanding college graduates. The Premier's Awards recognize college graduates making important social and economic contributions to Ontario. The night's first award set off a celebration for the SLC community as three-time skilled trades graduate Melissa Phelan's name was announced as the Apprenticeship category winner.





APPRENTICESHIP

## Melissa Phelan

Entrepreneur, Self-employed  
Welding & Fabrication Technician, 2016  
Welder Apprenticeship Level III, 2015  
Welder Apprenticeship Level II, 2015  
Welder Apprenticeship Level I, 2014

A self-employed entrepreneur, Melissa graduated from SLC's Welding & Fabrication Technician program in 2016 and Welder Apprenticeship levels I, II, III in 2015 from the Cornwall campus. Melissa is the first woman from SLC to win a Premier's Award and was one of seven St. Lawrence College alumni nominated for these awards.

Melissa Phelan is a highly skilled welder and robotics weld programmer who has become a vocal advocate for women entering the welding industry and the trades in general. Recognized as a woman to watch in the trades, Melissa is both a talented welder and technician and a leading voice within the Canadian manufacturing sector. Based in Kingston, Ontario she uses social media and online forums as a force for positive change. Melissa is a confident millennial woman who uses her skills and experience to encourage, inform, and inspire the next generation of women in the trades.

As part of her award, a \$5,000 bursary was created in her honour at SLC to support a student who identifies as female in the Welding program, with the first recipient in winter 2022.

**WOMAN  
TO WATCH  
IN THE  
TRADES**





## Celebrating our Premier's Awards Nominees

It was a truly global celebration as St. Lawrence College's Premier's Awards nominees joined for a pre-award virtual celebration from various cities in Ontario, Alberta and even from Bali, Indonesia. SLC's President and CEO Glenn Vollebregt and Board Chair Roger Richard toasted the stellar group of nominees representing SLC at the Colleges Ontario Premier's Awards. Nominees shared highlights of their career paths and reminisced about their time at SLC.

MEET THE 2021 NOMINEES



HEALTH SCIENCES

### Christine Bruce

Medical Laboratory Technology, 1997

Christine leads with both her head and her heart. She is a 'how to handle COVID' thought leader who led her team to be the first hospital in Ontario to test for COVID and the first in the province to test saliva. She is an innovator in her field, the first to adopt new technology and opportunities while staying committed to her teams, and ensuring welcoming, integrated workplaces. She is a champion and active voice for the Medical Laboratory testing sector, shaping practices across the country, and ensuring laboratory professionals are sustainable and well represented in the health care sector.



BUSINESS

### Karyn Robarts

Fashion Merchandising, 1987

Named one of the 100 most influential design professionals in China by Architectural Digest, Karyn Robarts embodies a head for business, a heart for children, and an eye for beauty. In addition to the 1000+ projects her architectural and design firm has managed from its headquarters in China, she has shown an extraordinary commitment to education, establishing five schools—four Montessori and one educating orphans with disabilities—and was the creator of a children's education program delivered to 100,000 preschoolers in 300+ schools in China. Karyn is designing a better future.



TECHNOLOGY

### Fernando Ferrer

Computer Programmer Analyst, 2008

An emerging tech talent recognized internationally, Fernando Ferrer is making a name for himself as a big data architect with nerves of steel as he develops businesses across sectors and consults with companies worldwide, while still finding time to mentor young talent. Marrying extraordinary technical skills with a collaborative nature and business mindset, he works with organizations like the US Army, Amazon, and the US Olympic Committee to develop technological solutions, including health care platforms, sports analytics programs, and fintech. He was also a founding member of a successful health care analytics company acquired by a multibillion-dollar conglomerate.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY (LEFT) BERNARD CLARK; (RIGHT) CLAYTON, SELFIE; BERNARD, SAIGE CLARK; ROBYNE, TALLIS ROBARTS; ILLUSTRATION BY ANDREW JOYCE



RECENT GRADUATE

## Clayton MacKinnon

Visual and Creative Arts—Fine Arts, 2017

An outdoor enthusiast, and sought-after digital marketing specialist, Clayton has translated his creative arts education and personal experiences into a career full of passion, creativity, and social justice. He weaves entrepreneurial ventures with volunteer positions, supports marginalized communities, promotes tourism, local pride, and lends his talent in support of fellow artists and social justice champions. Through his “Paddle Ontario Project,” started while he was in college, he has travelled 4,877km across Ontario, raising awareness of its landscape with his hand-painted canoe and his Mini Cooper.



CREATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN

## Bernard Clark

Visual and Creative Arts – Fine Arts, 1985; Photography, 1985

Capturing a subject’s true likeness and understanding who they are, or “sitter’s psychology,” is the essence of photography. And for The Tragically Hip guitarist, Rob Baker, Bernard Clark is a natural. “It is a mysterious and elusive quality for virtually all photographers, but it just seems to come naturally to Bernard, as if it were in his artistic DNA.”

That DNA has fueled a 35-year career, capturing the essences of President Jimmy Carter, Margaret Atwood, and The Tragically Hip.

Add to that a Juno Award, two books, and solo exhibitions, Bernard’s work captures the range of the human experience.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

## Robyne Hanley-Dafoe

Behavioural Science Technology, 2000; Addiction Treatment and Prevention Worker, 2000



An award-winning psychology and education instructor, author, researcher, international speaker, and philanthropist, Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe motivates people to become “resiliency rock stars,” offering practical strategies to cultivate resiliency and move through life’s inevitable challenges. Using her own struggles and challenges to fuel her life’s work, Robyne has harnessed her gifts as an educational leader to make an everyday impact on people’s lives around the world. Named Canada’s Most Requested Speaker in 2022, Robyne has become a highly sought-after expert during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in 2021 published her first book, *Calm Within the Storm: A Pathway to Everyday Resiliency*.



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St. Lawrence  
College

# Alumni News

Celebrating your milestones, testimonials, and fondest memories



Did you know? Over 600 bursaries from SLIC donors help students start and finish their studies.

## ALUMNI

### Reflect/ Refresh/Reframe art exhibit

The annual alumni exhibit continued last fall in an online format. The public was invited to visit the 3D virtual gallery, learn more about the participating alumni artists and vote for their favourite artwork. The exhibit was capped off with a virtual reception where the winners were announced, and artists shared their journeys and future goals. →

**Be part of next year's exhibit.** Watch for announcements and stay up to date on the Marianne van Silfhout Gallery exhibits online: [stlawrencecollege.ca/gallery](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/gallery)



**2nd place**  
"Soulmates Turtles" by Tara Nicholson, Photography, 1994 and Fine Arts, 1995; Design, 2014



**3rd place**  
"u good?" by Elly Ayling, Graphic Design, 2013, Website Creation and Design, 2014



INSPIRING YOUTH

## CYC grad recognized as a rising star by profession



Warren Duncan, Child and Youth Care 2016, was selected by the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care (OACYC) for the 2021 Krista Sepp Memorial Horizon Award.

"This award was designed to recognize the incredible potential of young leaders within the field. In keeping

with the values of the Krista Sepp Awards and their ongoing legacy, recipients of this award will display; Enthusiasm, Empathy, Creativity, and Initiative."

"I hope to inspire the young people I work with, so they too know to believe in themselves. I love what I do each day and want to say thank you to the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care, Hamilton Wentworth District School Board, St. Lawrence College, family, and friends for believing in me and providing me these life changing opportunities," Warren said of his award.

Warren currently works as a Child and Youth Care Practitioner with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board.



Krista Sepp Memorial Award winner Warren Duncan



DEBUT CHILDREN'S BOOK

## Alumna author



Early Childhood Education alumna Shauna Taylor has published a children's book called "The Door" in summer 2021. Inspired by her daughter, her debut is a story of courage and overcoming any fear, big or small. The book can be purchased from Indigo.

**Connect with author Shauna Taylor:**

Facebook: @shaunataylorwriter  
Find Shauna on Currents SLC

LEGACY OF RESILIENCE

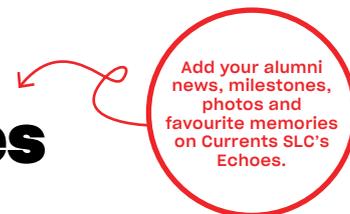
## New Class of 2021 bursary



To honour the strange and unusual circumstances under which the Class of 2021 graduated, a new bursary was established to carry forward their legacy of resilience and achievement in completing their programs during a pandemic. The Class of 2021 Resiliency Bursary was first awarded this past fall to recognize a student who is overcoming obstacles while completing their education.

**To learn more about SLC bursaries, please visit:**

[stlawrencecollege.ca/alumni/support-slc](http://stlawrencecollege.ca/alumni/support-slc)



# Echoes



FIVE-TIME ALUMNA WINS AWARD

## 2021 Brockville Citizen of the Year



The Brockville Chamber of Commerce has named JoAnne Sytsma, five-time alumna, Citizen of the Year. JoAnne has made outstanding contributions benefiting the well-being of her community through her many long-term commitments with various organizations. The Chamber declared “she is a shining example of a person who is true to her convictions and steadfast to her values. She believes in our community, its potential, and the people who make up our community. She works sometimes as a leader, sometimes quietly behind the scenes, to make Brockville and area a better place for everyone. No matter what her

formal role may be, she always works as a ‘champion’ for our community.”

JoAnne has graduated from five programs at SLC: Office Administration—General, 1992, Automated Office Skills, 1992, Human Resources, 1995, General Arts and Science, 1997 and Accounting, 2011.

JoAnne demonstrates a seemingly effortless ability to inspire and motivate others to her level of contribution. Her intense motivation, energetic commitment and giving nature continue to inspire others to participate and give. She is a determined, goal-oriented person who brings others together for the greater good.

1969

### Maralee Maughan

Secretary – Medical  
Married in 1983, two children, daughter and son. I worked as a Medical Secretary and Administrative Assistant for 42 years, with 40 years in the Department of Urology, at KGH/Queen’s University and retired on December 31, 2011.

1977

### Marian Drouillard

Graphic Design  
Retired in 2017 as Manager of Geomatics Division of the Engineering Department, City of Windsor; now pursuing a new career in retirement as an Alcohol Ink Artist, offering small group workshops, community programs and abstract Alcohol Ink Art for sale. Other community interests include volunteering as Media and Promotions contact for the Annual Tecumseh Terry Fox Run; Chair of the Arts & Culture Council Advisory Committee, Town of Tecumseh; co-Chair of the Heritage Council Advisory Committee, Town of Tecumseh and former Organizer of the 13-year-old Annual Terry Fox Giant Used Book Sale, which has raised over \$285,000 for Cancer Research. In addition, I am a member (Director) of the Windsor-Essex Arts & Cultural Alliance.

1982

### Rene Melchers

Restoration Technology  
Married in 1982—3 Sons. Nomination Council of Regents, 2000 Premier’s Award nominee, St. Lawrence College—Technology, 1998 Business of the Year, Brockville District Advertising & Sales Club—President, 1995 Rotary International (District 7040), 1995—Current—President, 2001—2002—Charter President, 2005—2006—Assistant District Governor, 2010—2011—District Governor, 2012—2013—(Rotary International Leader for over 2,000 Rotarians in Ontario, Northern New York & Quebec). Established and co-chaired 1000 Islands Workforce Development Board (1996—2011), provincially funded organization reporting to government on local workforce trends, opportunities and priorities. Chaired several provincial committees or publicly-funded organizations and led several organizations in strategic planning.

1993

### Colleen Neron

Health Care Aide  
I worked at Providence Manor from 1994 until retirement in January 2015 due to knee replacement.

2003

### Victoria Willey

Personal Support Worker  
I had been out of this field, but in December 2020, I started working a regular evening shift line, and I →



love my new job so much!  
I recently had some students from St. Lawrence College placement at my work, and I am thrilled to see some fellow nursing students coming from SLC.

**2013**

**Serenah Pettigrew**

Pre-Health Sciences  
I graduated Valedictorian of the Winnipeg Regional Critical Care Nursing Program after working in medicine, surgery, and emergency for three years. I started working in ICU at the start of the pandemic and continue to do so.

**Pauline Timmerman**

Esthetician  
I was titled Kingston's Best Esthetician by Community Votes.

**2015**

**Elsa Lyon**

Office Administration  
– Medical  
I initially took medical office administration, and worked in a doctor's office. Then a friend of mine who was articling to become a lawyer got me a job working at his office as a law clerk. Everything that I learned at SLC got me that job and I am forever grateful. My friend and I ended up getting married, bought our first home this year and welcomed a sweet baby boy to the world in January.

**2016**

**Brandon Haystead**

Bachelor of Business Administration  
I recently passed the CFE (CPA) exam.

**2017**

**Ashleigh Russell**

Advertising and Marketing Communications Management  
So excited to get married to the amazing man

I met at SLC this August!!  
Another thing I owe to this amazing college!

**Harleen Kaur Dhaliwal**

Early Childhood Education  
After graduation, I got married and lived in Kingston with my husband and beautiful son. I started working as a CSR, and now I am managing the store independently and making my dreams come true.

**2019**

**Shawn Hopkins**

Business Administration – Marketing  
Founder of Humanatronix Media Ltd and Stature Leadership Innovations, I've hired 3 SLC students and an SLC professor to help run and grow these businesses out of Ottawa & Toronto, Ontario. I am also looking to launch HNX Academy by the end of 2021 to provide high-quality resources for younger entrepreneurs looking to build their own empires. Creator and host of the Future Lens Podcast.

**Alexandra Strauss**

Hospital Ward Clerk  
Been with Pasqua Hospital ER for two years and was recently promoted to Medical Administrative Officer at the College of Medicine.

**2020**

**Supreet Kaur**

Computer Networking and Technical Support  
Thanks to my parents, friends everyone who helped me throughout my journey at SLC. My time at SLC will always be remembered.

# Passings.

**1990**

Margaret Galda,  
*Municipal Tax Administration;*  
Jeannette Runciman,  
*French as a Second Language*

**1991**

Marion Whiting,  
*Home Support – Level II*

**1992**

James Mcgovern,  
*Ontario Management Development Program;*  
Stephanie Vivian,  
*Child and Youth Worker*

**1993**

Marlene Thorneloe,  
*Home Support – Level II*

**1996**

Brian Myers,  
*Ontario Management Development Program*

**1997**

Patricia Kavanagh Williams,  
*Nursing;*  
Mary Wyllie,  
*Registered Nurse – Critical Care Nursing*

**1998**

Cynthia Latreille,  
*Social Service Worker*

**1999**

Mary Coyle,  
*Nursing;*  
Patricia Reynolds,  
*Registered Nurse – Occupational Health Nursing*

**2000**

Aaron Clark,  
*Business – Marketing;*  
Angie Tingren-Watkins,  
*Ontario Management Development Program*

**2006**

Natalie Botting,  
*Medical Laboratory Technician*

**2008**

Robert Hurford,  
*Music Theatre – Performance*

**2009**

Shawn Coney,  
*Business – Accounting*

**2012**

Josh Poirier,  
*Carpenter General*

**2015**

Ryan Villeneuve,  
*Electrical Engineering Technician*

**2021**

Jessica Dsouza,  
*Fitness and Health Promotion*

**SLC Staff**

Michael Barrette  
June Clarke  
Ken Davis  
Don Laplante  
Rejean Mainville  
Mark Metzloff  
Gordon Montgomery  
Stuart Payne  
Ron Richer  
Angie Tingren-Watkins  
Gwyn Williams

**1969**

Pamela Wilson,  
*Early Childhood Education*

**1971**

Harley Stratford,  
*Public Administration*

**1975**

Mary Hogan,  
*Business Administration – Marketing*

**1976**

Ineke Wevers,  
*Diploma Nursing*

**1977**

Ineta Skepple,  
*Registered Nurse – Management Skills*

**1980**

Ronald Mallory,  
*Instrumentation Engineering Technology – Industrial*

**1981**

Marg Stockill,  
*Child and Youth Worker*

**1987**

Linda Campbell,  
*Life Skills Coach;*  
Michael Sudak,  
*Life Skills Coach*

Passings is compiled from publicly available obituaries and family notifications. To add or correct a listing, please email [alumni@sl.on.ca](mailto:alumni@sl.on.ca)



Laughter, smiles and community spirit at the retirees' gatherings (these photos were taken pre-Covid)



# Retirees Community Ties

When a system of community colleges was established in 1965, the province was divided into 19 areas so that as many Ontario residents as possible would be within commuting distance of one of these new post-secondary institutions. As their name indicated, they were intended to serve their local communities.

As time passed, these local colleges became increasingly global—both attracting students from afar and venturing far afield to deliver courses. Examples of the latter include SLC courses provided in Malaysia, Saint Lucia, Kenya, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates. More than 100,000

students have now graduated from SLC and live in 75 different countries. But SLC was also remained a community college, including the ways in which its retirees contribute to, and work with, local charities and organizations.

Martha's Table, Goodway Thrift Store, 100 Women Who Care, Trillium Gift of Life, Pathways to Education, Kingston Youth Employment Services, Patient and Family Advisory Committee, Community Volunteer Patient Program, Track & Field Coaching, Grand Theatre, Emergency Street Work, and Youth Triage Volunteer Team are a few of the more than 50 organizations that SLC

retirees support. As Retirees Association President Pennie Carr-Harris has observed, with respect to our active volunteers, before retiring we often wonder what we will do with our time, but soon after we wonder how we had time to work!

The Treasurer of the Retirees Association, Thelma Mott, has volunteered at the Seniors Centre in Kingston for 17 years, serving on the front desk, in the finance area, and coordinating distribution of its monthly Vista magazine.

Dave Enns retired from his teaching position on Cornwall Campus in 1998. [I can't help noting that I retired the same year, and our combined departure must have created

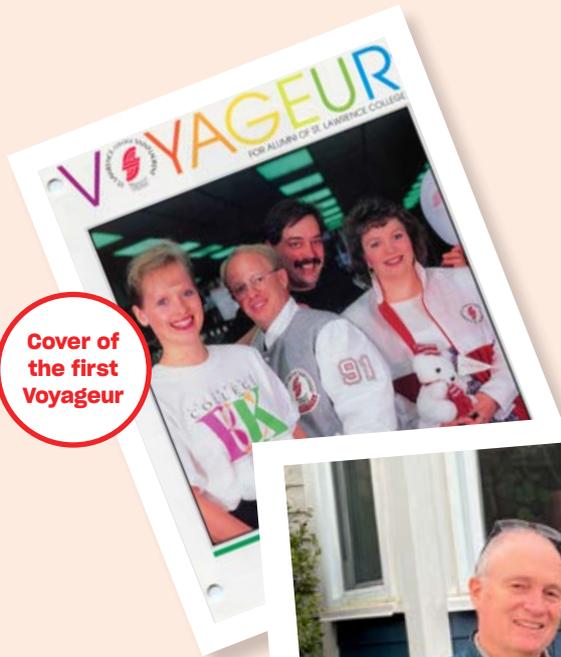
quite a challenge for the.] That year, Dave began holding annual gatherings at which retirees were encouraged to contribute \$100 each to raise \$1,000 for a student bursary. They succeeded and have done so every year since, raising about \$70,000 which now supports two \$1,000 bursaries annually.

For the 50th anniversary of SLC in 2017, Association member Ian Wilson suggested we encourage retirees to donate \$50,000 in support of the College. While this seemed a rather ambitious goal, it has since been far exceeded. Donations from retirees (including those not in the Retirees Association), now total over \$200,000 and support over 50 funds, including 35 bursaries and awards.

An annual SLC Retirees Association student bursary was also recently established. Valued at \$500, it will be awarded to a returning single-parent student enrolled in any full-time program.

There are doubtless many other examples of retirees supporting their communities and we would be glad to learn of them if you would like to send a note to [slcretirees@gmail.com](mailto:slcretirees@gmail.com). Please also visit the Association website ([www.slcretirees.weebly.com](http://www.slcretirees.weebly.com)) as a way of keeping in touch with your retired colleagues of the SLC community.

—By Dick Tindal



Cover of the first Voyageur



Frank and Robin



No longer on the St. Lawrence River, Frank and Bill had a Halifax reunion in early 2022

# Voyageur Magazine Celebrates 30 years

We reached out to Frank Lockington, Business 1983, former Director of Development and Alumni Relations and asked him to share his memories of Voyageur’s launch.

Frank came up with the idea to launch an alumni magazine with his colleague Robin Pepper, Business 1982.

SLC launched the magazine to celebrate its 25th anniversary in 1992, linking the three campuses and engaging alumni. The Voyageur Expedition was born, with a five-day canoe trip from Kingston to Cornwall, using two 12 passenger Voyageur-style canoes, secured by faculty member Steve Winters, with some grads joining in.

As they travelled down the river, local media announced the new magazine and that grads could call in with their addresses to receive a copy with some calls answered with one of SLC’s first cell phones. This was

the first significant effort to build an alumni contact list for SLC.

Frank remembers, “The whole “alumni at SLC” effort would not have been possible without the support of then-College president, Bill Cruden. For the record, Bill spent the very last day of his 23-year tenure as President paddling a canoe down the St. Lawrence River, loaded up with SLC alumni and our new St. Lawrence College Voyageur magazine. Fun times.”

Frank is now retired in Dartmouth, NS, enjoying Maritime life with his wife Trish and Golden Retrievers, Georgia and Piper. He keeps up with SLC through Voyageur magazine and the SLC Retirees Association.



# What are the benefits of being one of the 100,000+ SLC alumni?

**You can check out the SLC website** for lots of great information on programs, grad certificates, community connections, and, of course, alumni opportunities!

Check out the alumni pages to learn about the lifelong benefits of being part of the SLC alumni community, including:

- Discounts and perks, including discounted insurance
- Communications, including past issues of Voyageur
- Programs and activities
- Opportunities to support the College

Follow us for all the latest news and offerings!

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 @StLawrenceCollegeAlumni

 @slc\_alumni

 [linkedin.com/groups/1888887/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1888887/)

 Alumni online platform:  
CurrentsSLC.com

[stlawrencecollege.ca/alumni](https://stlawrencecollege.ca/alumni)

  
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