



MOUNT
SAINT VINCENT
UNIVERSITY

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION &
WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

2025

**CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION &
WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING CENTRE
ANNUAL REPORT**

Acknowledgment

MSVU is located in Kijipuktuk (Halifax), part of Mi'kma'ki, the unceded ancestral territory which remains the homeland of the Mi'kmaq Nation. This territory is covered by the Covenant Chain of Treaties of Peace and Friendship signed between 1725 and 1779. These treaties are affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada and recognize Aboriginal Title (which is embedded in both the 1763 Royal Proclamation and in section 35(1) of the 1982 Constitution Act). The treaties are living agreements that establish the rules for an ongoing Treaty relationship between nations. We pay respect to the knowledge embedded in the Mi'kmaw custodians of the lands and waters and to the Elders, past, present, and future.

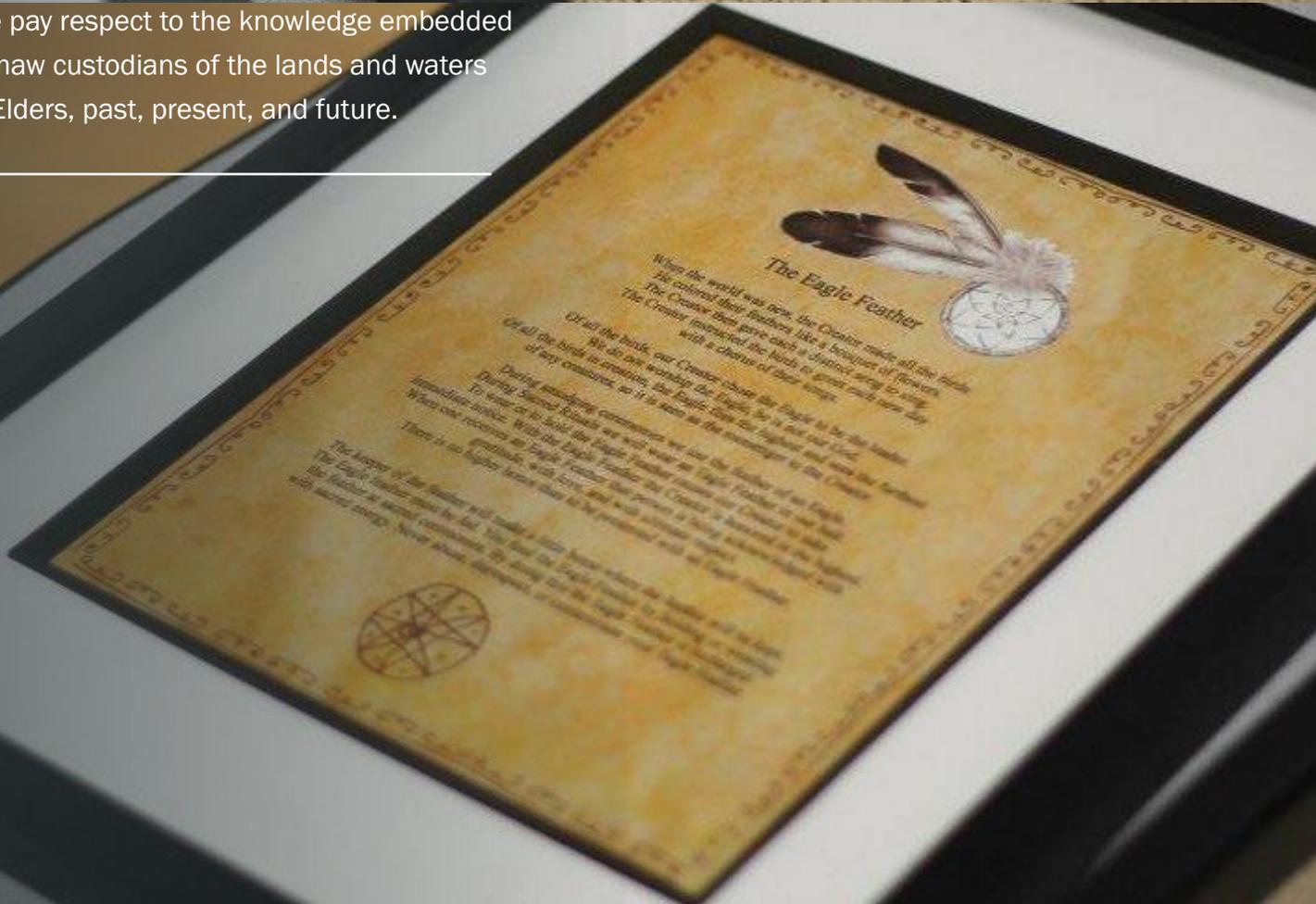
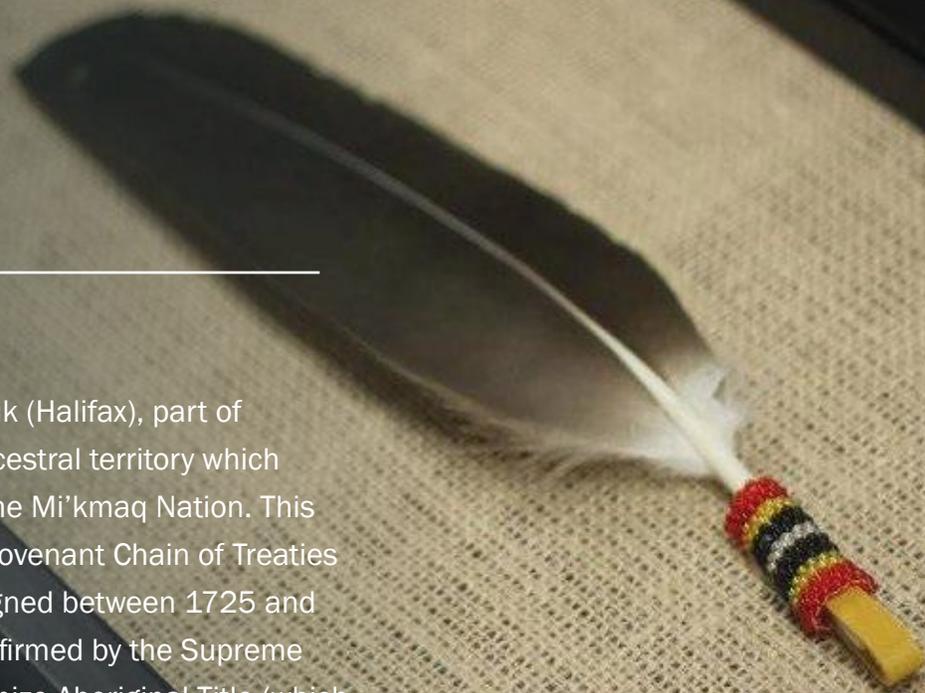


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OUR MISSION

The mission of the Mount Saint Vincent University Co-operative Education & Work-Integrated Learning Centre is to be a leader in fostering and advancing work-integrated learning by:

- Developing skilled professionals who will strengthen the workforce in new and innovative ways;
- Leveraging community and alumni relationships to MSVU through strong employer partnerships;
- Providing students with the support and experiences for career exploration; and
- Promoting an environment where diversity is celebrated and valued in the workplace.

GREETINGS FROM THE TEAM

No matter your connection to MSVU—whether you are an employer partner, a current or former student, a member of our campus community, or a friend of the university—thank you for taking the time to explore our 2025 Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Annual Report.

With more than 45 years of delivering co-operative education and other work-integrated learning (WIL) programs at MSVU, we are proud to share the accomplishments of our students, employer partners, and the university community. Co-op and WIL thrive on a powerful three-way partnership between students, employers, and post-secondary institutions. In 2025, the MSVU Co-op & WIL Centre facilitated 154 work terms, and in each one we saw this partnership in action.

We witnessed students making meaningful contributions to their organizations while bringing fresh ideas and perspectives into the workplace. We saw employer partners dedicate their time and expertise to mentoring emerging professionals as they applied academic knowledge to real-world challenges. And we observed firsthand the impact of these experiences on student growth, organizational success, and the broader community.

Over the past year, the role of co-op and WIL in preparing students for career success has been a key focus. Beyond our campus, these programs have also gained increasing attention at both the federal and provincial levels. We encourage you to read “Investing in Experience: How WIL is Shaping Canada’s Workforce Future” (pages 10–11) to learn more about how the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia are supporting the continued growth of experiential learning opportunities.

As we reflect on 2025, we are equally excited about what lies ahead in 2026. We look forward to continuing to support our co-op and WIL students and strengthening relationships with both long-standing and new employer partners. We are also expanding opportunities across more areas of MSVU. In summer 2026, the first cohort of Master of Public Relations students will complete their internship work terms—an exciting milestone for work-integrated learning at the university. Additional new WIL initiatives are also in development to ensure these transformative opportunities are accessible to an even broader range of MSVU students.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.



Scott Daniels
Manager



Courtney Green
Coordinator



Raina DeBrouwer
Coordinator



Shari Arsenault
Employer Liaison



Jasmine Ho
Student Liaison

TOP 5 STORIES OF 2025

Each year, MSVU celebrates some big announcements and the achievements of many extraordinary members of the university community. Here are the top five stories that received the biggest responses in 2025 across MSVU channels and external media.

Visit <https://www.msvu.ca/top-10-msvu-stories-of-2025/> for the top 10 stories of the year.

#5 MSVU Child Study Centre project moves forward with construction ramp-up

In 2025, we started construction on our new expanded Child Study Centre that will both provide the best care to preschool aged children and be a nationally leading centre for teaching and research in early childhood education. The new centre is estimated to be completed before the end of 2026.



#4 Vincent's teaching restaurant open

Vincent's Restaurant is a teaching kitchen and restaurant on-campus where students in the university's Tourism & Hospitality Management program gain experience running a restaurant. The 2025 menu was a hit. There were dine-in and take-out options, and the restaurant was open to the public.



#3 From teaching assistant to trailblazer: Dr. Martin Morrison's MSVU Story

Three-time MSVU graduate Dr. Martin Morrison made history as the first Indigenous African Nova Scotian to earn a PhD at MSVU and the first Indigenous African Nova Scotian man to graduate from the Inter-University Doctoral Program, a collaborative initiative between MSVU, Acadia University and St. Francis Xavier University.



#2 MSVU launched new 14-month Bachelor of Education option

The 14-month Bachelor of Education (BEd) delivery option saves on time by offering students an earlier entry point (May rather than September) and by running continuously, while keeping the same course and practicum requirements as the existing 20-month program delivery. The 20-month BEd option also continues in order to meet the needs of students who have work or family commitments in the summer semester.



#1 New Doctor of Psychology Program and youth-based mental health clinic

In April, the Government of Nova Scotia announced \$7.9 million in funding for a new Doctor of Psychology program at MSVU, including an associated youth mental health clinic and four new residency positions. Work is well underway to develop the program, with the first class of students expected to begin in 2026. The program will include three years of coursework and supervised practice, plus a fourth year of full-time residency.







“

I am so lucky to have had the option to complete the co-operative education program at MSVU. Working in the field and gaining practical experience helped improve my academic performance. I gained valuable experience in the job force, which made finding a job after graduation easier.

– Julia Strickey, Bachelor of Business Administration
(Co-operative Education), 2024

”

MSVU INSTITUTIONAL DATA

5,410

STUDENTS IN 2025

(undergraduate and graduate,
full-time and part-time)

PROGRAMS OFFERED:

- 27 undergraduate bachelor degrees offered
- 15 Masters and PhD degrees offered
- 11 certificate and diploma programs



1ST UNIVERSITY IN THE MARITIMES TO OFFER A NATIONALLY ACCREDITED CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM



1ST ENGLISH SPEAKING BACHELOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM IN CANADA



1ST TOURISM & HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN ATLANTIC CANADA



1ST ATLANTIC CANADIAN UNIVERSITY TO PROVIDE A TUITION-WAIVER PROGRAM FOR FORMER YOUTH IN CARE

1:20

**FACULTY-TO-STUDENT
RATIO**

**STUDENTS FROM
CLOSE TO**

70

COUNTRIES

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE OF

23

**NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AS BEING
AMONGST THE LOWEST IN CANADA**

600

**FACULTY AND
STAFF**

MORE THAN

40,500

**ALUMNI FROM OVER 100
COUNTRIES**



DID YOU KNOW?

- MSVU was founded in 1873, we were one of the few institutions of higher education for women and girls in Canada at a time when women could not vote
- Every MSVU undergraduate bachelor's degree program has a co-op, internship, work experience or practicum opportunity attached
- MSVU broke the ground in distance learning in 1982, and currently have more than 200 online courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels
- MSVU is home to a high number of first-generation university students (54% compared to a national average of 41%)

INVESTING IN EXPERIENCE

Investing in Experience: How WIL is Shaping Canada's Workforce Future

Work-integrated learning (WIL) has been making a splash in the news lately. WIL blends academic study with hands-on work through work terms like co-ops, internships, and field placements. While not a novel concept – Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) has been facilitating work-integrated learning opportunities since 1979 – WIL has been of particular interest to both the Canadian and the Nova Scotian governments recently.



Recent Federal and Provincial Government Investment

The Canadian government announced significant investment into WIL in the 2025 budget as a strategic way to address youth unemployment, affordability, skills gaps, and rapid technological changes (CEWIL Canada). In November 2025, the federal government announced a commitment of \$635.2 million over three years for the Student Work Placement Program to support around 55,000 WIL opportunities for post-secondary students in 2026-27. By helping students gain practical experience and employers gain access to emerging talent through wage subsidies, the federal government is working to boost long-term economic resilience in Canada.

The Nova Scotia government has also taken concrete steps to elevate WIL as a strategic priority to address both labour shortages and a need to retain graduates who might otherwise move elsewhere. Beyond the continued funding of subsidy programs like the Co-operative Education Incentive and the Student Summer Skills Incentive Program – both aimed at providing wage reimbursement for employers who hire students – Nova Scotia's Legislature is working to strengthen WIL through policy. In March 2025, the Work-integrated Learning Programs Expansion Act (Bill 110) was introduced with the goal of embedding WIL opportunities as a requirement in post-secondary funding agreements. This will potentially broaden access to WIL experiences across all degree programs.

These government financial and policy investments reflect an understanding that quality student work placements are integral to broader economic resilience. By helping students transition successfully into the workforce, governments support both labour market needs and the individual success of graduates.





Mount Saint Vincent University: A Leader in WIL Outcomes

At MSVU, every undergraduate program offers a work-integrated learning component. Beyond this, the MSVU Co-op & WIL Centre is continuously working to expand program offerings to suit student needs and offer experiential learning opportunities in all forms – whether that’s participating in structured programs like co-op, or participating in service learning through classroom lessons.

The results of the 2024 MSVU Co-operative Education Graduate Survey show that our approach is resonating with students and leading to positive post-graduate work prospects:

- 94% of 2024 survey respondents are employed in their field of study
- 93% of 2024 survey respondents secured this work within six months of graduating
- 100% of 2024 survey respondents said their co-op/WIL experience helped them secure full-time employment
- 100% of 2024 survey respondents felt prepared for the workforce after completing work terms
- 100% of 2024 survey respondents reported satisfaction with MSVU’s WIL programs overall

Of the 154 MSVU students who completed work terms through the Co-op & WIL Centre (a 12% increase year over year), \$1.58 million was earned. These outcomes show how MSVU’s commitment to providing meaningful work-integrated learning experiences not only benefits students personally and professionally, but also contributes directly to Nova Scotia’s economy. The Co-op & WIL Centre remains committed to further enhancing existing work term opportunities for students and continuously seeking additional avenues of WIL at MSVU.

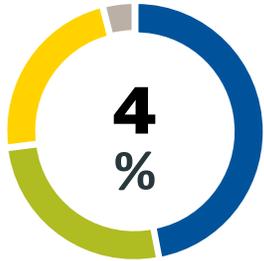


Looking Ahead to 2026

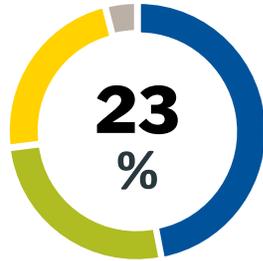
As both Canada and Nova Scotia continue to prioritize work-integrated learning, MSVU will continue the path towards enhanced WIL offerings. In a world where practical experience increasingly defines employability, the government’s strategic embrace of work-integrated learning – through policy, program support, and funding – positions the country, province, and its graduates to thrive together.

MSVU WIL PROGRAMS IN 2025

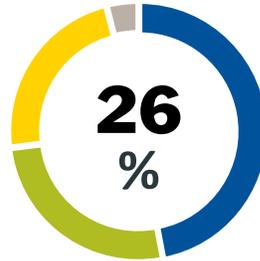
154 STUDENTS COMPLETED WORK TERMS IN 2025



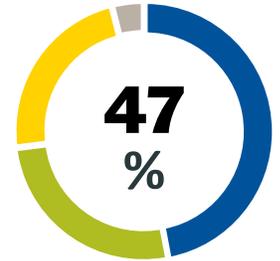
Arts & Science
(4% of WIL at MSVU)



Business Administration
(23% of WIL at MSVU)

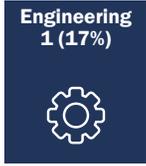


Public Relations
(26% of WIL at MSVU)

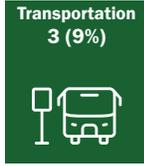


Tourism & Hospitality
Management
(47% of WIL at MSVU)

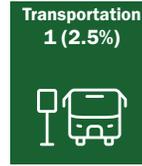
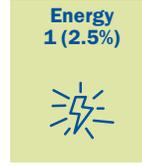
Where they worked:



Where they worked:



Where they worked:



Where they worked:



WORK TERM SALARIES AND LOCATIONS

Average salaries for Business Administration, Public Relations, Tourism & Hospitality Management and Arts & Science (for work terms completed in 2025)

Business Administration

Average hourly: \$19.50
Range hourly: \$16.25 - \$25.00

Public Relations

Average hourly: \$21.00
Range hourly: \$16.00 - \$28.50

Tourism & Hospitality Management

Average hourly: \$16.75
Range hourly: \$15.75 - \$21.75

Arts & Science

Average hourly: \$21.50
Range hourly: \$19.00 - \$24.75

\$1.58 million

earned by co-op, work experience and internship students in 2025
(based on 16 week work terms; 35 hours per week)

Where students worked in 2025



133 (86%)
work terms in Nova Scotia



12 (8%)
work terms in Canada
(outside of Nova Scotia)



9 (6%)
work terms internationally

Where students worked in 2025 (outside of Canada)

1. China
4 work terms



2. Ghana
1 work term



3. India
1 work term



Japan
1 work term



Saudi Arabia
1 work term



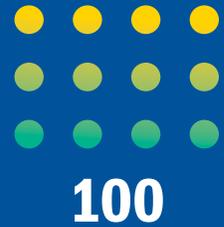
Vietnam
1 work term



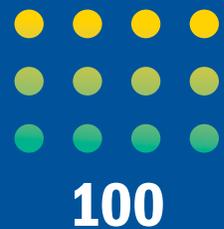
CO-OP & WIL GRADUATE STATISTICS

Based on the May and November 2024 co-op & WIL grad respondents:

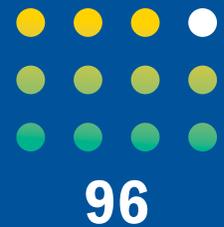
100% said they felt prepared for the workforce after completing their work term(s)



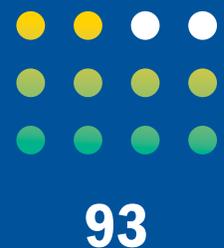
100% said they were satisfied with the MSVU co-op & WIL program



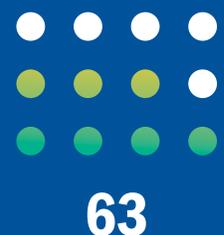
96% were employed in their field of study within one year of graduation



93% secured employment in their field of study within six months of graduation



63% made an annual starting salary of \$50,000+



(May and November 2024 co-op & WIL graduates; data based on a 21% co-op & WIL graduate survey response rate)

UNION OF PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS - EASTERN PROVINCES COUNCIL - USHER, HOSKIN & HARCOULT LLP
DEBORAH CONTE

ATLANTICA MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS INC. - BARR & BRETT RYAN - BEACON SECURITIES LIMITED - TALKIN BENNETT
CLARA BUCKLEY & MARY MACDONALD - CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES - ONE ELEVATOR - KIM & PETER CORIO
COMMUNICATIONS, ENERGY AND PAPERWORKERS UNION OF CANADA - KIM CORRAL - SYBILA PASEZ - ANNE MELANCON
ELIZABETH CHURCH - KIM GROUP LIMITED - SUSAN APOSTOLE CLARK - LAW-CANADIAN/NEWFOUR JOINT COUNCIL
MARIE HILLARD & WAYNE SHARLEY - THE DYCKOFF FAMILY FOUNDATION - GLENN & JACK DIAMOND - GEBRUDE COOPER
SANDRA FINDLAY THOMPSON & BRUCE THOMPSON - S. LITVIN COVEYDUCO - JEREMY FREEDMAN - LAWRENCE FREEMAN
KEVIN GILBERT - DAVID GOLDBERG - RICHARD GUILDFORD - WANDA GOSWAMI - PATRICK O'NEILL - GREG GIBBE
BRIAN JESSOP - DANIELLE PAUL NEAT - JACQ ORAL - KATHRYN SMITH - DENISE & STEPHEN LEAHY - VICKI HARRISON
KALIKA DAS - ANIRUDDH KUMAR - ROSE & ROD BROCKMAN - LOIS OYER WANN & DAVID ROCK - ARIAN MCCASKILL
SIME SELLERS - SUZANNE REYNOLDS - JEAN & ROBERT ERAS - SHIRLEY DRYMURE - SHARON AVERY - JARIC KLEJL
PUBLIC SERVICE ALLIANCE OF CANADA - AT BUNN'S BROS. - KATHLEEN BIRNEY - ROYAL FLOORS AND SURFACES
AMANDA WHITEWOOD - SIMON BEARDS - LUCY & TRAVIS MCCONNELL - MARILYN WOODWELL - NANCY MCKELLAR
CENTRES OF NEEDS/DELEGATE - THE MOLES FOUNDATION - THE SCHMIDT FOUNDATION - SARAH & GORDIE VERDI



CO-OP STUDENTS OF THE YEAR

The MSVU Co-op Student of the Year Award was instituted in 1999 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the MSVU Co-op Program. The selection criteria includes academic achievement, community involvement, contribution to the employer, and the impact co-operative education has had on personal and professional development.

Business Administration



Arpit Sharma

Nominated by: Stephanie Peskett, PMco Inc.

“Arpit always goes above and beyond. He requires very little training and is very dependable and reliable. Arpit is someone whom I trust to do anything and is always up for a challenge. He has found mistakes that were never detected before. He has been a huge help during our budget season. Our company has multiple divisions, but this does not scare him. He has taken on financial statements for commercial properties, set up rental notices from 2026 budgets, created journal entries for the construction division for job cost allocations, and handled all of our bank reconciliations. Arpit is a huge asset.

Our annual goals were met earlier than ever this year due to Arpit’s help. The 2026 rental advice notices were out well before the deadline. The monthly deadlines have also been completed ahead of schedule due to his help, and because of his daily tasks, the month-ends go more smoothly than ever.”

Arpit stated that “co-operative education has played a transformative role in shaping my career development, personal growth and my academic growth. Through my experience as a Financial Coordinator at PMco, I have gained far more than technical workplace skills. The co-operative education program has enabled me to connect theory with practice, develop professional confidence, and clarify long-term career goals, while strengthening my discipline, communication, and accountability.

My co-op experiences helped me to strengthen my adaptability and problem-solving skills. I learned how to handle pressure, accept feedback constructively, and learn from mistakes, as both my previous co-op work-term supervisors provided quality feedback. Co-operative education helped me grow as a person by teaching me how to balance responsibilities, manage stress and maintain professionalism in challenging situations. These qualities will benefit me not only in my career but also in every other aspect of my life.”

Public Relations



Kirsten Hannah

Nominated by: Janine Basha, Davis Pier Consulting

“Kirsten ran the marketing workstream for a large Ontario-based conference, and these efforts contributed to the conference selling out in just six weeks (despite an exceptionally tight timeline and a lack of budget to support our marketing efforts). She also stepped outside her responsibilities on the marketing team to clarify the broader team’s understanding of programming and attendee communications. She took the initiative to spearhead a process improvement to our social media workflows. While this wasn’t asked of her, what she put together was done efficiently and effectively.

Additionally, Kirsten effectively managed our LinkedIn page for the past four months, balancing it with many other competing priorities. She led the production of a B2B video series that will roll out in January and added significant value and polish to the end product.

Kirsten’s abilities were noticed very early in the term. She’s so good that our consultants tried to snap up all of her time on project work (there’s a friendly competition for capable “Analysts” in the firm, and she outshone most of our permanent employees at her level).”

Kirsten stated that “co-operative education has been one of the most memorable parts of my undergraduate experience at Mount Saint Vincent University. Through multiple work terms, co-op allowed me to explore potential career paths, gain hands-on professional experience, and better understand how my academic learning translates into real-world concepts.

Through co-op, I developed a stronger sense of real-world competency and professional identity. Through hands-on experience, I moved from seeing myself as “just a student” to recognizing that I could make a real difference in the workforce. This shift boosted my confidence, sense of responsibility, and ability to take initiative in my work. ”

CO-OP EMPLOYERS OF THE YEAR

The MSVU Co-op Employer of the Year Award was established in 2009 to recognize the important contributions of our co-op employer partners and mark the 30th anniversary of co-operative education at Mount Saint Vincent University. We are pleased to acknowledge co-op employers each year who have supported co-operative education at MSVU by demonstrating a commitment to the program and providing excellent work term opportunities for students. These partnerships are critical for the success of our program.

The selection criteria included consideration of the work environment, leadership and mentorship, the supervisor's demonstrated support of student learning, and the employer's longstanding commitment to co-op.



Business Administration Employer of the Year – PMco Inc.

Stephanie Peskett, Finance Coordinator, PMco Inc.

Nominated by: Anup Chimouriya and Arpit Sharma

Anup stated that “the work environment at PMco was professional, supportive, and collaborative. From the beginning, I felt welcomed and encouraged to ask questions, which helped me quickly become comfortable in my role. Supervisors at PMco were approachable and took the time to explain tasks clearly, while providing constructive feedback that motivated me to improve and take ownership of my work.

As a mentor, Stephanie took the time to explain both the technical aspects of my tasks and the reasoning behind them, helping me understand how my work fit into broader accounting processes. She provided constructive, timely feedback, which helped me identify areas for improvement and build confidence in my abilities. Her mentorship encouraged me to think critically, manage my responsibilities independently, and continuously improve the quality of my work.”

Arpit stated that “Stephanie was assigning me different responsibilities that gave me a chance to gain hands-on experience in commercial, residential, construction and real estate companies. My duties were not limited to one area; I was given the chance to work on everything.

My supervisor was very easy to reach and answered my questions as soon as possible. Stephanie also held one-on-one meetings with me to check whether everything was going smoothly or if I had any questions. My supervisor performed way beyond my expectations.”



Public Relations Employer of the Year – Halifax Public Libraries

Marketing and Communications Team, Halifax Public Libraries

Nominated by: Tina River

Tina stated, “My work environment was very supportive, inclusive, and learning-focused. It was my first co-op, and I couldn't have asked for a better experience. From the first-day introductions, I felt included, and my learning experience was designed to support my professional growth. The small team size helped my integration, and everyone supported me with patience and their time. In the end, I successfully worked with every team member on various projects, from newsletters to interviews and site visits. I gained professional confidence and networking opportunities.

My supervisors set clear objectives and a co-op plan for my entire work term, and adjusted timelines accordingly. They created a supportive learning environment that encouraged questions, put my learning first, and provided me with a range of experiences across the projects I worked on and those being undertaken by the organization as a whole. They also introduced me to other departments and employees, helping me understand the organization's structure and strategy.

The mentorship provided me with clarity about the different roles and work assignments I could expect in my future PR journey, and therefore provided me with direction for my work. Both of my supervisors offered to be my references in the future and helped me diversify my network in the Halifax PR community. The workplace environment also enhanced my professionalism and added immensely to my overall confidence, personal as well as professional.”



“

I didn't know it at the time, but enrolling in the Public Relations co-op program was one of the best self-investments I ever made as a young professional. It gave me valuable work experience, a growing network, and strong references that helped me land the job I wanted. Along the way, it taught me how to stand out and present myself confidently to employers. I highly recommend it to anyone looking to set themselves up for workforce success.”

– Emma Hachey, Bachelor of Public Relations
(Co-operative Education), 2024

”

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Bridging Worlds: A Mi'kmaw Student's Journey Toward Leadership in Indigenous Tourism



Growing up in Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation – an Indigenous community nestled between Antigonish and Cape Breton, Nova Scotia – Gabriele Robitaille had big dreams. He described himself as a “naïve youth”, wanting to do everything from directing movies, to making music, to being a journalist. He felt overwhelmed by the possibilities.

After graduating from high school, Gabriele worked as a professional protection officer, then as an oyster farmer, and finally in wastewater management. Through these and other odd jobs around Paqtnkek, Gabriele developed an appreciation for detail and consistency. He was working steadily until his mother got sick and he became her primary caregiver. While Gabriele was happy to help out long-term, his mother saw things differently.

“She would kind of pick on me. She was like, ‘You’re 30 years old. What are you hanging around your mom for?’ It was a common theme every day. ‘What are you doing here? You should be in school. Apply for school.’ She has dementia, so she wasn’t consistently saying much, but she kept coming back to this,” Gabriele laughs.

The constant prodding eventually got to him, and Gabriele had an idea of where he might apply. His brother, Bradley, works on Mount Saint Vincent University’s (MSVU) Kinu Tourism Project - an initiative created to support authentic Indigenous tourism education and the growth of the Indigenous tourism sector in Mi’kma’ki. Through Bradley, Gabriele discovered that Kinu was actively recruiting students for September 2024.

When Gabriele considered it, he realized that tourism had always been in his wheelhouse. Since he was 10, Gabriele has been drumming and singing with his brothers in a group called Sacred Flight. The group performs at events across Turtle Island (North America), and has been featured on several national news channels. Equipped with these experiences in Indigenous tourism, Gabriele decided to apply to MSVU’s Bachelor of Tourism & Hospitality management program.



When he started the program in September 2024, Gabriele was immediately impressed by the solid framework in tourism and hospitality theory he was learning. “It’s great, because in one course I will learn something, and I can directly apply it to the next course. There is a lot of synergy between courses. And it was great having that theory behind me before my first co-op work term started.”

Initially, Gabriele knew little about the co-op program. The more he considered the benefits of having relevant experience before graduation, the more interested he became in the idea. It was through a campus job fair presentation that Gabriele eventually figured out exactly where his first co-op work term would be. He saw Fairmont Hotels & Resorts presenting on their SUMMIT Leadership Development Program. Gabriele loved the idea of working at a luxury hotel and providing a top-tier, ultra-luxurious experience for guests. He also liked the idea of being mentored for leadership potential along the way.

At the campus job fair presentation, student attendees were asked to write their names down. When Gabriele later applied to a position at Fairmont, they recognized his name and got in touch.



“I originally applied to be a Front Desk Agent. They got back to me like, ‘Respectfully, you’ve never worked in hospitality. Would you accept a position in housekeeping?’ I was in!”

Gabriele travelled to Lake Louise in Alberta for the summer to start his career in hospitality. He was happy to begin in housekeeping and took great pride in his work. He started the role by cleaning five rooms per day. This quickly grew to 10, 15, and beyond.

“By the time I was finished, I had the same output as a senior person in the role. I was extremely proud of my work. I think different areas at the hotel became aware of my work ethic, which encouraged me.”

Gabriele can’t speak highly enough about his co-op role, not just as a job, but as a formative life experience. He loved the opportunity to work in a luxury hotel, providing 5-star experiences to guests who expected the very best. He also loved the scenery and friendships he forged with colleagues while in Lake Louise.

“Everything was amazing. All of us worked toward the common goal of delivering luxury to guests. A genuine sense of community was built, creating a profound bond. We helped each other out when someone needed it. We encouraged each other to raise the standard of service. I learned that front-of-house operations are impossible without back-of-house excellence. And the glaciers – I never got over how beautiful they were.”

Gabriele can see himself returning to the Fairmont for another co-op work term in a different department. Beyond that, he has big aspirations. It’s his personal goal to land a front-end middle management position shortly after graduating from MSVU. Gabriele would love to one day do something in the Mi’kmaq community. He’s noticed an international interest in Indigenous food, entertainment, and accommodations.

“Indigenous tourism is still very young,” says Gabriele. “There are artists who make art and don’t think much of what they do, and there are tourists who are eager for authentic Mi’kmaq experiences. I want to bring them together. There is also still so much to be decided and explored in the industry. I want to be part of the process of figuring out what’s for sale when it comes to Indigenous art, and what’s sacred.”

When asked if he would recommend MSVU’s Tourism & Hospitality Management program to other Indigenous students, particularly Kinu, Gabriele is enthusiastic.

“I would one thousand percent recommend Kinu to other students. The essence of the project is what a lot of Indigenous kids are lacking in traditional post-secondary education. Leaving home and being away from family goes against everything we’re taught growing up. It takes a lot of courage and foresight to leave home,” Gabriele says. “It also takes great support. It is challenging, but so rewarding. The Kinu program specifically helps me in so many ways – academically, logistically, and emotionally. They help me get to conferences, and they assist with applications for bursaries and scholarships. They even help me when I’m doubting myself. The support is incredible.”

When asked what his mom thinks of everything he’s accomplished through the Kinu Tourism Project, Gabriele smiles widely.

“She is so proud.”

MSVU CO-OP WIL IN ACTION

Co-op & work-integrated learning (WIL) Process Loop

Work integrated learning (WIL) is a partnership between the employer, the student, and the university. This partnership has benefits for everyone: the employer receives the latest theories and fresh ideas from the university, who in turn gets practical input from the workplace, and the student has the opportunity to experience the two as an integrated whole.

Curious to know what that looks like in action? This is how MSVU's WIL programs typically work:

01 Students Start WIL Component of their Programs

Students begin the process of securing a work term. For public relations (undergraduate level) and tourism & hospitality management students, co-op is mandatory. For business administration students, co-op is optional. Students in arts, science and public relations (graduate level) programs have the option to do one paid internship.

02 Employers Post WIL Opportunities

Employers contact the MSVU Co-op & WIL Centre to post work term positions. The MSVU co-op program has students working year-round, so employers can post jobs for January – April, May – August and September – December. Jobs must be related to MSVU fields of study, full-time, paid and a minimum of 13 consecutive weeks.

03 Students Apply to Jobs in an Open Competition

All the WIL jobs we receive are posted in our online job portal, Career Connects. Summer job postings start in January, fall job postings start in May and winter job postings start in September. Students apply to jobs that interest them with a cover letter, resume and reference list.

04 Employers Interview Students

Employers select the students they want to interview and conduct interviews on campus, virtually or at the employer's location. Employers then rank students that they would like to hire. Employers are not required to rank students who wouldn't be a fit for the position.

05 Students Receive Offers

Students receive offers from the organizations that ranked them and can accept or decline offers. Once a student accepts a position, a work term hiring confirmation is sent to the employer and student, and the employer completes all standard paperwork they would complete for routine hiring.

06 Work Term Commences

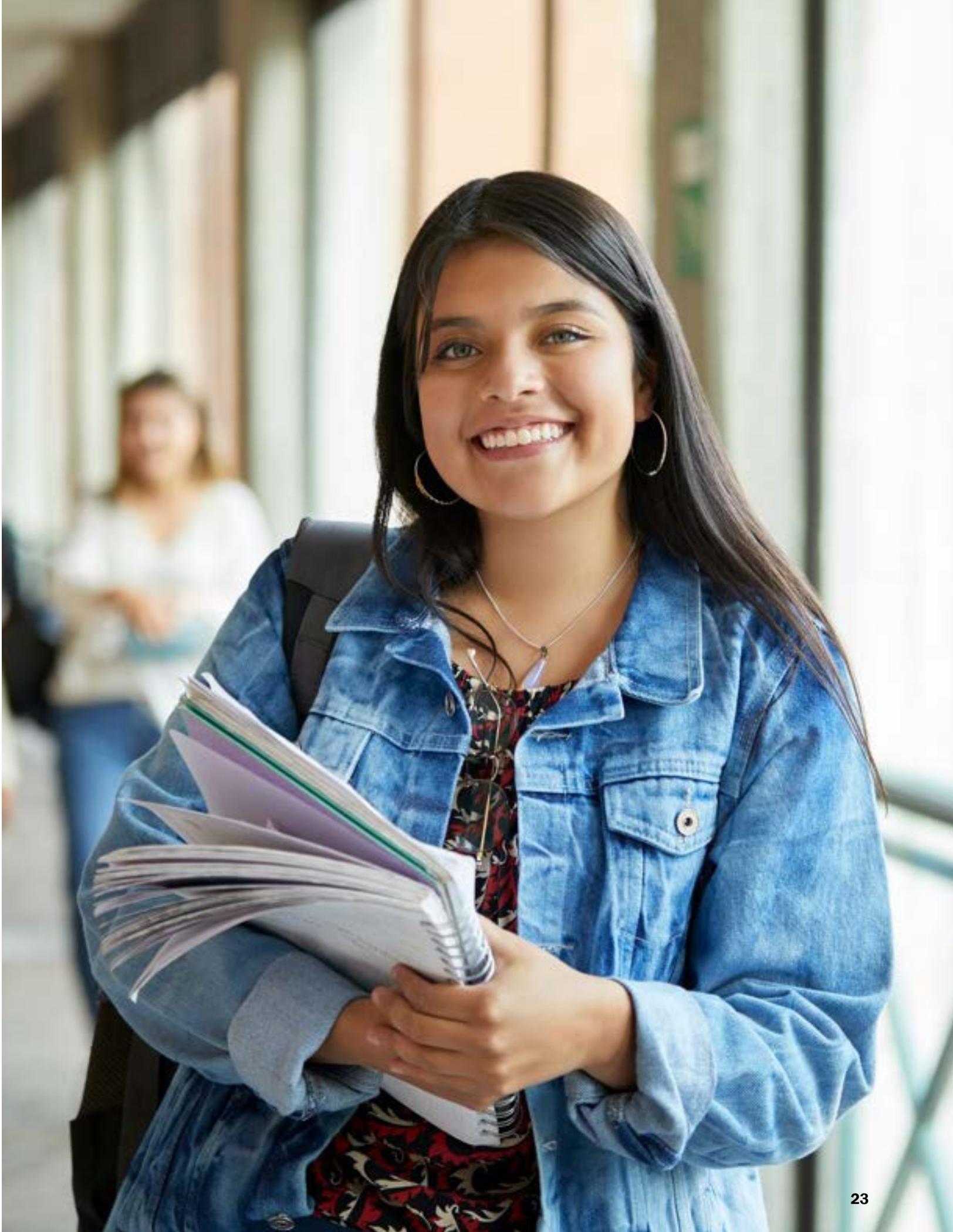
The student begins their four-month work term with the employer. Over the course of the work term, students benefit from learning in a constructive, practical mentorship environment. Employers benefit from getting a fresh perspective and the opportunity to mentor an emerging professional.

07 Evaluations

Halfway through the work term, a Co-op & WIL Coordinator meets with the student and employer to assess the progress of the student. At the end of the work term, the employer receives an online final evaluation to complete. While these are formal touchpoints with the Co-op & WIL Centre, we are regularly in contact with employers and students, and always available to meet throughout the term.

08 Work Term Concludes and Return to Study

The work term ends with the student returning to full-time studies to apply their practical learning to their studies. For internship students, this marks the end of their WIL experience. Co-op students will embark on the WIL process until they complete all three co-op work terms.





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