

# Spotlight

2018





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2018





Western  
Arts&Humanities



Spotlight

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# FOREWORD

By Dean Michael Milde

*“Our Alumni are amazing! As Dean of Arts and Humanities, it has been my privilege to meet hundreds of our former students. Their stories are compelling, inspiring and incredibly diverse. Yes – you really can do anything with an Arts degree: bank president to performing artist, teacher to fund manager, politician to communications specialist and everything in between and beyond. What connects us is a common commitment to crucial elements of our humanity – the importance of art, language, literature and ideas as the foundation for meaningful reflection on who we are and what is important for us individually and collectively. No one knows this better than you – our alumni – because you are living this commitment every day.”*

MM





# NICOLE

# Borland

BA'11



When Nicole Borland arrived at Western University, she wasn't sure what she was doing there. She wasn't sure of her major, wasn't sure what she wanted to do after university – she wasn't even sure she wanted to be at university at all.

“To be honest, I actually wanted to be a hairdresser,” she says, laughing. “I didn't want to go to Western, I had to go to Western.... I wanted to be a hairdresser and a makeup artist, but my parents were not having that.”

But her reluctant attitude quickly changed as she became engaged in her classes and met people who shared her passions – students and teachers alike. She took an extra year of undergrad, did an Arts Management diploma through Continuing Studies, and then did a two-year Master's program. “I just completely fell in love with being a student,” she says. “It went from a four-year thing that I was begrudgingly doing to being eight years by the end of it.” Originally, Borland planned to major in Classics and English, and even considered Religious Studies, but after taking an Art History course in first year, she realized that was what she truly loved studying.

*"It went from a four-year thing that I was begrudgingly doing to being eight years by the end of it."*

NB

"I wasn't originally in Art History... because I was told it was a bad idea," she explains. "My parents were not happy about it, all of my sisters told me it wasn't a good idea."

But it was through Art History that she met some of the people who would be the most formative in her academic career. She easily reels off half a dozen names when asked who made an especial impact – John Hatch, a knowledgeable and personable professor who always made classes fun; Catherine Elliot Shaw, the curator at the McIntosh Gallery where Borland volunteered; Kirsty Robertson, who taught a Museum Studies class culminating in putting on an exhibition for public display, which Borland describes as "one of the very best classes I took in all of university."

Though there are many people who made a profound impact, she spends a long time discussing two in particular: Sarah Bassnett, and Christine Sprengler. Sarah Bassnett served as her Master's supervisor, and introduced her to numerous people within the London arts community. "She taught me so much more than almost any other human being in my life," says Borland, "not only just the topics that she covered, but also work ethic, and how to exist in academia."

Christine Sprengler, though officially a teacher of Art History, combined course content with MIT and critical theory – but while the content could be dense and difficult, Professor Sprengler presented it "in a very digestible way... she did it in a way that it didn't sound like a language you didn't understand." Instead of the theories seeming distant or abstract, Borland says that "she found a way to make it very applicable to what you were studying, [rather than] just trying to learn what they were saying." And beyond her class content, Professor Sprengler was just a fun and friendly person. "She was hilarious, just such a nerd," says Borland. "A nerd in the best way... She knew more about the strangest, most obscure things than any person you would ever meet."

One thing Borland found she missed at university, however, was writing for non-academic purposes. It was hard to make time for extracurricular writing, when assignments and life piled up, so she started looking for opportunities. In her final year of undergrad, she applied for and received an internship at London Fuse, an arts publication in the city focusing on local events and creators. Articles cover topics such as local postcards or the Forest City Film Festival, as well as more serious topics like Trudeau's recent visit to Western or a behind-the-scenes look at a crisis hotline.

Borland describes the goal of London Fuse as "a reflection of just how great this city is and wanting to make that known to other people – not even people outside of the city, people in the city." It can be easy to get stuck in one's own neighbourhood, or one's own circles, and London Fuse seeks to expand those limits and encourage people to see beyond them. "We give a platform and a voice to a lot of things in London that don't get it otherwise," she says. "I think we help a lot of aspiring artists, musicians, [and] businesses."

After getting the internship, she wrote regularly for the publication. When her Arts Management diploma had an internship component, she was able to do that at London Fuse as well, and her work there even influenced her Master's thesis – initially she planned to study folk art, but switched to local urban revitalization. "[I] was very much steeped in everything that was going on," she says of the experience, "from writing to event planning to promotions... I've worked with some of the very best people I've met in my life here."

She kept working with London Fuse after her internships, and in 2016, a little over four years after first joining the team, she was officially hired as Program Director for the publication. Fifteen months later, she took on the position of Executive Director.



She says her job has taught her a great deal about flexibility, teamwork, and how to cater to different styles of communication.

*“We give a platform and a voice to a lot of things in London that don’t get it otherwise.”*

NB

While her title and roles may have changed over the years, her love for the work she does has not. Her favourite part of her job, however, is watching people shine. She loves getting the opportunity to draw attention to and lift up aspiring artists in London. Borland says working with volunteers is always very rewarding. She loves “seeing people grow and build skills” as they try new things and stretch their limits, and “when they do something they haven’t done before, that sort of sense of pride that they get from that, that’s definitely my favourite part of it.”

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## About the Author

Jill O'Craven is a third-year student currently studying classics and creative writing. She loves learning everything she can and sharing that love with others.

# LAURA

BA'06

# Briscoe



Western alumna Laura Briscoe graduated from Western University in 2006 with a combined degree in MIT and Visual Arts. Laura is now a Visual Arts and Technology teacher at Oakridge Secondary School located in London Ontario. She has changed the dynamic of secondary education by combining art and math curriculum together—an initiative that is the first of its kind in the province. Her teaching efforts have awarded her the “Prime Minister Award for Teaching Excellence,” the provincial award “Leading Women, Leading Girls,” the “Bishop Townshend Award” and the “Innovative Teacher of the Year” award from the Ontario Business Educators’ Association. Laura’s undergraduate career is a clear example of how a degree in the arts and humanities at Western can transgress into a professional career after graduation.

When asked about why she chose to study both MIT and Visual Arts she replied, “I found that with the content that I was learning in MIT, I was able to pull into my art degree to make my art more meaningful.

Even though I wanted to be a teacher, I was also interested in media culture and creating artworks that had intention.

I felt that the MIT degree helped me deepen those messages within the art."

Laura always knew that she wanted to become a teacher after graduation and mentioned, "While working towards being a teacher in the visual arts, I was involved in the arts community outside of the campus. Western facilitated exhibitions for us to be a part of within the city not just on campus, so it provided the experience as an artist in order to motivate students later." Laura also mentioned that the volunteer work she participated in, although not directly linked to her career goals, was "more about supporting others within the community, which if you're going to become a teacher is something that's important." Laura also developed communication skills while volunteering for Rogers television which she said also made her a better teacher.

Not only did Laura involve herself in career initiatives inside and outside of Western's campus but she was also a part of the Western Rowing Team. When asked what advice she could give to current students with regards to time management she said "with an extra-curricular or when you're on a team I think you can be more successful academically because your team members are motivating you based on their similar schedules. By default, you're automatically programmed into a routine." After mentioning that Laura was in the scholar's elective program as well as having a part-time job, she said, "I find the busier I am, the more organized I become." The advice Laura recommends to students is to "get involved in the school culture, so you have a life balance, and so it's not just all work, it makes it a more enjoyable experience."

*"I find the busier I am, the more organized I become."*

LB

After discussing Laura's ability to excel academically as well as being involved inside and outside of Western's community, I asked for her opinion on the stigma associated with a degree in the arts to which she replied, "I actually didn't know there was a stigma.



The exploratory process of creating art taught me to investigate my interests and push my ideas and thinking. There is a lot of conceptual thought and research put into your ideas and process.” Laura also explained how arts students are people “who have creatively differentiated themselves to think differently and so it helps them solve other problems.” Laura concluded by saying “I don’t think there should be a stigma because sometimes there is no right answer and that’s even more challenging than working to solve one solution.”

Laura said that her favourite aspect of her undergrad at Western was the “cultural space of the building where people are working together and supporting each other. That dynamic carried on into my teaching because I don’t like being in one room with just my class I try and find cross-curricular initiatives, similar to the way I did the MIT and Arts and blending those, I do that for my students in high school too.”

When asked how her undergraduate career has influenced her career today she said “I bring my students every year to Western and so they can see what its like to be a part of a university exhibition and their work has been shown at Western every year at The Black and White Art Show.”

Current Arts and Humanities student, Devon Lowrie, after having graduated from Oakridge High School herself and having been taught by Laura remarks, “She was honestly my favourite teacher! Her classes encouraged us to think more into the wide range of possibilities a degree in visual arts provides us. We were given the opportunity to do projects that set a foundation for university portfolios. We were given criteria to meet in certain tasks, such as illustrating a children’s book for a nearby elementary school class, but also given freedom to explore our interests and practice professionalism with our year-end grade 12 exhibition.”



*“The exploratory process of creating art taught me to investigate my interests and push my ideas and thinking.”*

LB

## Reflection

After interviewing Laura, I learned that even when you have an ideal career in mind, you can customize it to incorporate your passions. Laura didn't need to sacrifice her interest in media culture because she was able to incorporate it into her role as a visual arts teacher. She is a perfect example of the potential within an undergraduate student and one's capability to incorporate education and lifestyle harmoniously. As an undergraduate student myself, Laura's work ethic of staying busy is not so much daunting as it is motivating. It would have been nice to see her classes being taught when I was in high school but I'm glad that the dynamic is changing, especially at the hands of a Western alumna.

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Photo credit: Michael Conley

## About the Author

Monika Young is a fourth-year English Language and Literature student. Monika has also volunteered at the Western Gazette. She plans to pursue a career in journalism after graduation.



# CATHERINE BA'13 Coreno



How/why did you decide to pursue a degree in the humanities, and English in particular?

I wish I had a better answer than this, but I was always good at English. Throughout elementary school and high school, it was my best subject. More so than that, I really enjoyed it. I told myself that during my first year of University I would try a few different classes and explore my options. If I remember correctly, I took the first-year English requirements, history, comparative literature and childhood and social institutions at King's. Let's just say, I ended up specializing in English language and literature.

Were there any particular classes or professors that had a major effect on you? Were there any other particularly memorable moments that had a hand in shaping you as a person?

I remember my first Comparative Literature class at Conron Hall in University College.

I actually think it was my very first class on a Tuesday morning. I walked in to stained glass windows, Professor Laurence De Looze playing the piano for us to set the mood, and we dove right into *The Odyssey*. I was hooked. Shout out to some of my English professors at King's as well: Dr. Claudia's *Claudian's Modern Art and Drama*, and the *History of Theory and Criticism* blew my mind; Dr. Brian Patton's *Pop Culture* was likely the most fun I had in a University classroom; and Dr. Lorraine DiCicco's *American Literature* class was so interesting and hard but worth it.

Were you involved in any clubs or other extracurriculars? How did these extracurricular activities contribute to your university experience?

My first and second year I didn't really get involved. I had a lot of friends in higher years, so I didn't do much until they graduated, and I needed to meet new people — pathetic I know! I did join *The Regis*, King's student paper, during my last year. I regret not volunteering more. When I did my post-grad program at Humber College, I made a point of volunteering to get to know the organizations I was considering applying for and it paid off!

What was the hardest part of your university experience?

Exams! Essays were hard because I am one of those people who really prepares before getting down to writing, but balancing studying for various exams was a big challenge for me.

What is one thing you recommend every student do during their undergraduate degree?

Go to office hours! You might be surprised by how much your professor wants to help you. I think I was too intimidated to do this first and second year, but in third and fourth I was a regular. Also, find out what resources are available to you and use them! One example is Western's Career Centre.

What do you do for your job? What is your favourite aspect and how does it relate to your studies?

I was recently an Event Coordinator at The Walrus, working on the national speaker series, The Walrus Talks. I am now moving back to London, Ontario to be the Account Representative for the Wolf Performance Hall at the London Public Library. I happened upon a career in events, after taking a post-grad publishing program at Humber. I interned as a publicity assistant and quickly moved into planning literary festivals. In my studies I read about how culture impacted audiences in different times in history, and now, I get to develop spaces where I can see it happening live.

Did you continue your education after finishing your undergraduate degree? Why or why not? Would you recommend this for current students?

I definitely thought long and hard about what I would do after finishing my undergrad. I knew I didn't want to teach. I had been working at the library during my last two years and considered doing a Masters in Library Sciences. I took the Creative Book Publishing Program at Humber College because it was just four months, and did not require an internship at that time. It was the perfect succinct way to get a taste of the industry. I would definitely recommend a specialized program.

Do you have a favourite book or book genre?

Given my line of work after school, I read a lot of literary Canadian fiction. I can't pick a favourite book!



## How did you find the transition from university to the workplace?

I was excited to get into the workplace. You get to that point maybe around second semester in fourth year where you can't wait to get out there. And then after about a year out you miss school terribly! I luckily did not have a lot of down time between internships and employment. I think I would have had a difficult transition otherwise.

## If you were to hire a Western student, what skills would they need?

I think the first thing I would look for is enthusiasm in the work and knowledge, or interest in the company. I would also love for them to be engaged in their community or the industry.

## Where would you like to be in ten years?

Ten years is so far away! I would like to be working in producing quality events and programming for the London community. Maybe I will go back to school. I have always loved the idea of an MBA but it scares me a little. I hope to be very engaged in London's thriving cultural sector.



## About the Author

Rose Ghaedi is a second-year student studying English Language and Literature. She is currently serving as the Academic Managing Editor for the Arts & Humanities Student Council.

# RACHAEL

## Courtemanche

BA'16



Rachael Courtemanche graduated from Western University in 2016, with an Honours Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature and Creative Writing. Rachael continues to be a leader in the community as she holds volunteer positions in mentorship and copywriting at Fanshawe College and Western University, respectively. In this interview, I had the honour of hearing about Rachael's student experience at Western, as well as how her degree has equipped her with skills in communication and public relations – all of which have transferred over to her current job as Communications Coordinator at the London Economic Development Corporation.

**How was your overall experience as a student at Western? What was your favourite part?**

I still smile when I think back to my time at Western. For me, it was more of a personal and enlightening experience rather than a social one.

I lived off-campus and didn't try to inset myself in many activities – although if I could go back I would – and while I did make friends in classes, being social wasn't my main goal. I went to Western to pursue a passion for writing, and what I found was so much more. I'd say that was my favourite part – discovering my love for things like philosophy, sociology, and being able to learn about topics at such an insightful level. It was life and mind changing for me. My experience at Western was more inward facing and allowed me to better understand myself, which I can say definitely impacted my social life.

### Which class did you enjoy most?

There were a few that really stuck with me, like Philosophy, Classical Studies, Nineteenth-Century British Literature, and every Creative Writing class. The skills, techniques, and analytical methods I developed in many of these courses are what made them all so engaging and practical.

### During your time at Western, did you have a clear idea of what you wanted to do with your degree after graduation?

I took a bit of a backwards approach at the start. Before Western, I went to Fanshawe based on the idea that I could get an obvious career from the program I took. I took the approach of career first, then passion. I had a great experience at Fanshawe as well but the program didn't end up being a direct fit with what I excelled at or was passionate about. I spent a lot of time thinking, what am I skilled at, and what do I love, that I can turn into a career? When I decided to come to Western, I was putting my passion before my career. I had no idea what a job in English and writing may look like, which is any parent's nightmare. But the program did a great job at outlining potential opportunities. Additionally, I took advantage of work-study, landing my first position as a Copywriter. From that, I quickly realized what I wanted to do with my degree.

### What was your first job as a recent graduate?

My first job after graduation is where I am currently – working as a Communications Coordinator at the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC).



I worked hard over that summer, and from what started as a temporary position ended up evolving into a continuing, part-time role while I finished my last year of school. When I graduated in 2016, the LEDC made my role permanent and full-time. While I know I worked hard over that summer, I feel lucky that I had the chance to prove my value, willingness to learn, and dedication to the company, and make what was supposed to be temporary into the start of my career.

You obtained your bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature, and Creative Writing. What kinds of skills did you acquire through your undergraduate studies, that helped you transition into the workforce?

There were many transferable skills the program equipped me with. From years of analyzing literature and writing papers, I learned how to use that same critical reasoning and analysis when working on projects. I developed my time management and organizational skills, planning and research tactics, and how to give formal and professional documents a creative spin.

What is your current job like? What kinds of duties and responsibilities do you have?

Working here at the LEDC has ignited a new love for London for me. I didn't realize just how many amazing businesses and people there are in the city doing incredibly innovative things. Part of my role at the LEDC is sharing these untold stories with the world – through content creation, social media management, advertising, and other various projects and initiatives. I often work with small and medium sized companies that don't have a traditional marketing and communications department, and help give their company a voice in the community. Beyond content, I also conduct research, develop new policies and plans, and submit initiatives for awards and recognitions that help put London on the map. We have a small but mighty team here with staff in business development, design, and talent and workforce development, so I am regularly collaborating amongst my team to support their various clients and efforts.

What advice/suggestions would you give to arts students who are feeling anxious about employment after graduating?

Adulting is hard and scary, but accept that anxiety and turn it into fuel to best prepare yourself. Get involved through volunteering on and off campus. Make connections and go networking out in the community. Go to local meetups and meet people that may be able to connect you to job opportunities. And if you can, take on any part time jobs that are relevant to the fields you want to be in to develop practical skills on top of the knowledge you're getting at Western. Of course, always leverage career services at Western and within the community to work on things like your resume and interviewing skills. Your degree alone will not guarantee a job. Rather, how you use that degree – the skills and knowledge you develop – and the experience you gain in other ways are essential to securing employment beyond graduation.

What merits do you believe arts and humanities have in today's society?

While many arts and humanities courses and lectures are focused on the past, those topics are still so relevant to the way the world and people still work and think. Studying arts and humanities gives you a good foundation of knowledge for so many things. I found it opened up many doors for me rather than limiting me to one career, because I could virtually choose my path. While you may not come out of the degree as specialized for a particular field, there's a world of opportunities available, and employers recognize these unique abilities arts and humanities graduates have at their disposal.



## About the Author

Heidi Minhae Choi is completing an Honors Specialization in English Language and Literature and a Major in History.



# KATE

BFA'07

# Graham



The London arts scene is a place of diversity; encompassing all kinds of theatre spaces, fine arts studios, and music halls. From Wortley Road to The Grand Theatre, the arts play a foundational role in shaping this city's identity. The success in the scene can only be attributed to its creative talent – local artists and students of arts institutes around the city. Among the coffee-sipping poets, and yearly subscribers to The Palace Theatre is Kate Graham, the Liberal candidate for the 2018 Ontario Election from the London North Centre, running for the Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP).

Graham's academic background is what classifies her as not only a politician, but also as a member of the London arts scene. She graduated from Western University in 2007 with a BFA in Visual Arts and Political Science. She then went on to do her Master's of Public Administration Degree in Political Science, and is now finishing her PhD in Local Government here at Western. Graham is also teaching a course in Political Science at King's College.

At one point, Graham wanted to be an art teacher. Throughout her years as an undergraduate student, Graham took interest in courses in Political Science, and ended up minoring in it as a result. She came to realize that being a studio artist is not the only thing that defines her. One summer during her university years, Graham got a job as an intern, working as a constituency assistant, where she learned how to change the community through politics. That was when she took a look back at her art and realized that it has always been about cities and politics, and that underneath the artist was where her true inner voice could be found. After that, Graham decided to pursue a career in politics. “I loved doing my undergrad in Visual Arts. I think it gave me an interesting perspective on how to see the world, but the thing that I was most interested in was how to make change and for me that’s through politics.”

Arts and politics; how does one represent both? For Graham, art teaches you to see the world, find perspectives, and politics is making a difference with those perspectives. However, through different mediums, art can also make a difference. Art is a way to make a comment or enter into a discussion. It’s an important tool to use to connect with the community. Ultimately, art expresses opinions and shapes dialogue.

In Graham’s words, education in the arts and humanities “strengthens our inner voice and offers us a way to speak up on issues that matter to us.” She believes that the most advantageous thing in arts and humanities education is that it prepares you for the work field. Graduates of arts and humanities programs are creative, good communicators, and are taught the ability to work with others through the collaborative nature of the program. Graham for instance, gave an example of her Studio Arts criticism; how they were tough to face but provided her with such a blessed opportunity for growth.



The Arts and Humanities programs provide students with a launching point for their career and opens them up to more fields rather than being limited to one. Graham has given me an idea of what an ideal candidate in the modern-day job market looks like. Employers often look for talented people with competitive skills to better their organization, and therefore, Arts and Humanities offers programs that strengthen creative, communicative, and collaborative skills in students so that they are competitive in the job market. When asked for a way that undergrad students can improve their resumes, Graham had this to say: “Students should be paying more attention to showing a range of diversity through community events, and profiling those alongside academic achievements.” A strong tie to the community often indicates to the employer a sense of commitment and passion.

*“The Arts & Humanities strengthen our inner voice and offer a way to speak up on issues that matter to us.”*

KG

Reflecting on my conversation with Kate Graham, I feel that her message inspired me as an artist, and a global citizen. I feel that I too can make a difference in the community through my skill sets. As a matter of fact, I believe that anybody can contribute to the community no matter what your skills or interests are. Like Paris, the art scene in London is flavourful and full of diversity. It has a lot to offer to anybody, with nearly any interests. As Graham said during the interview, “The art scene is a huge area of growth for the city,” and I think everyone has an opportunity to be a part of that growth.



*“Follow your passion, listen to that voice inside that catches your attention and run with it in every way possible.”*

KG

Lastly, I asked Graham if she has anything else to say to current or prospective undergrads of Arts and Humanities. “Follow your passion” Graham said, “Listen to that voice inside that catches your attention and run with it in every way possible.” I completely agree with this advice. Undergrad is all about finding that little voice inside of you that’s begging to be let out and heard, and if that voice hasn’t been found yet, then I suggest getting out of your comfort zone and trying new things until you find it. Get off campus and discover other artists, and network with people with similar interests, as Graham says: “Each of us is more than a degree or an accomplishment.”

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## About the Author

Irene Paibulsirijit is a fourth-year student in theatre studies and psychology. She is also the AHSC’s Community Outreach Commissioner.

# ALAN R. Heatherington

BFA'03



This January, I interviewed Alan Heatherington, a Western alumnus with a BA in Spanish, an MA in Spanish Language & Literature, a Bachelor of Education, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts. During our two-hour discussion in the Grad Club, we discussed Alan's experiences as a Western student, the path that led him to become a teacher, and the decision to return to school years later to pursue visual arts.

Heatherington came to Western on full scholarship in September of '79 from a small high school in Bruce County. Although he had a strong mathematic background, his interests led him to study a broad range of languages, including French, Spanish, Russian, and Italian. Initially, Heatherington planned to major in French, but soon he became more interested in Spanish. He participated in a Spanish conversation group and, in third year, studied in Salamanca, Spain.



While Heatherington remembered feeling lonely when he first arrived at Western to live in Saugeen-Maitland Hall, he soon found a group of friends in his program. “What was fun was being in our Spanish class. There was only twelve of us in the class, and it was just a very close-knit group, so we hung around a lot together and did different things.”

After graduation, Heatherington continued with graduate studies in Spanish, where he became a T.A. in the Spanish department. “I was teaching a first-year advanced Spanish class, and three years prior to that, I didn’t know a word of Spanish, so it was a very gratifying experience.” Heatherington had many enjoyable memories with his Spanish classes – and with a close group of other graduate students studying Spanish. Language, Heatherington observed, remains something that is an essential aspect of education for students of any program. “I’m a very strong proponent of expanding your horizons. When you learn another language, you’re learning another culture, and you’re actually learning another way of communicating.”

When he reached the end of the graduate program, Heatherington wasn’t sure what would come after graduation. His first plan – to become an interpreter for the federal government – fell through, leaving his next steps uncertain. After a year, he decided to return to Western to pursue a teaching degree at Althouse College, where he studied to become an Intermediate/Senior teacher.

This experience of uncertainty is one that likely feels familiar for many students, and I asked Heatherington what advice he had for current students. “It helps if you have a more specific career path that you want,” he told me. “You have to be flexible.” The future isn’t dictated by the program one pursues, and there are always options out there to consider.



Be realistic, he advised, and make connections wherever you can. “There’s a lot to be said for having people on your side and making connections. As much as anything, you really need to establish and maintain that.” Keeping good connections with other students and instructors is important, as Heatherington recalled on the many times he’d gotten a favour from an old colleague or friend. “If people recognize your abilities and they know you’re a capable person, hopefully they’ll assist you in any way they can.”

Heatherington began working with the Board of Education for the City of London as an elementary teacher, primarily as a French teacher. After many years of teaching, Heatherington later moved into a librarian position at a small school in Byron, and he continued in education until his retirement in 2016.

Though Heatherington admitted he’d never envisioned himself as a teacher, he’d had a wide array of experiences and taught in many different circumstances. In addition to teaching elementary, he taught at a summer ESL program at Fanshawe, an immersive course in Spanish, and in Spanish classes for adult students in Continuing Studies. In one instance, his broad experiences led to him to teach both a mother and her young daughter within the span of a few years.

Heatherington also had many emotional memories of teaching, as he recalled the experience, thirteen years ago, when he came out to his class. “I’ve had the most amazing experiences with students who have shown more compassion and understanding than a roomful of adults. There are moments that make it so worthwhile.” Being kind and compassionate remains one of the most important things for potential teachers to remember, Heatherington observed. Teachers need to be cognizant of the spectrum of the human condition and the different abilities and challenges that can exist in a single classroom.

*“I’ve had the most amazing experiences with students who have shown more compassion and understanding than a roomful of adults. There are moments that make it so worthwhile.”*

AH

Heatherington has continued with his art since graduating and has been involved in various local projects. He has submitted work to an annual show held by a local LGBTQ+ group started by Bruce Flowers (another retired teacher), and even had a solo exhibition with Art Project in 2015. But, Heatherington also acknowledged that pursuing visual art professionally can be a daunting prospect, and for those considering it, he emphasized the importance of having a back-up and maintaining strong connections wherever you can. Make good connections with instructors, he advised, become aware of various galleries in the community, and be flexible when options come your way.

## Reflection

As our discussion came to a close, I asked Alan if he had any plans for the future. While he had a few possible ideas – pursuing a Ph.D., writing a book, travelling with his partner – the future remained uncertain for someone only months into his retirement. However, this was, in reflection, one of the most important things I'd come to understand after our conversation: it's okay to be uncertain. You're going to wonder what the next steps are at any age, Alan observed. "The wonderful thing about pursuing a certain career path is that it can lead to so many other options. Don't limit yourself."

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## About the Author

Hilary Doyle is a fourth-year student pursuing a Specialization in English Language and Literature.



# LIZA BA'99 Hull



Liza Hull, a Freelance Editor and Proofreader, graduated from Western University in 1999 with a Bachelor's degree in French Language and Literature. It was the school and the faculty's reputation that convinced her to make the move from Montreal to London to explore her passion for literature.

Hull was very involved in her faculty during her time as an undergraduate student. She was a member of the Arts and Humanities Students' Council as the French Department Representative, worked with Symposium, a publication run by the AHSC, and was one of the founding members of the Arts and Humanities Faculty Soph team. Since many undergraduate students struggle to balance assignments and exams with extracurricular activities, I asked if Hull had any tips for current students. She responded that time management is key, and to not overextend oneself. She also emphasized the importance of learning our limits, and understanding that as students, it is not always possible to undertake every opportunity.

Following her undergraduate career, Hull worked as a translator for General Motors - a job she found through surfing Career Central. Fast forward to 2015, after years of working for various companies, and building a solid network, Hull started her new adventure as a Freelance Bilingual Editor and Proofreader. She enjoys freelancing, because it allows her to be self-employed, and undertake diverse projects.

During our conversation, Hull acknowledged that it might be more challenging for Arts students to see a direct correlation with their area of study and a solid career path. She encourages students to be creative and be willing to take on jobs that might not always be appealing. It is also important, she adds, to network and stay in touch with your friends from Western, as these connections can be valuable when finding a job. For students interested in pursuing translation or editing, she encourages them to continue working on their writing skills, along with being well-versed in marketing and communication. Being bilingual, of course, always helps.

## Reflection

As a fourth-year student also pursuing an undergraduate degree in French Literature, this interview was very rewarding and encouraging. It was uplifting to see someone from my small faculty become so successful in their field. After talking to Liza, I realized that a Western degree is just the beginning. All the hard work and hustle comes after.



## About the Author

Patricia Park is completing an Honors Specialization in French Studies and a Major in Criminology.

# LAUREN BA'10 Moore



Lauren Moore, Content Strategist for Phil Pallen Collective, graduated in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in English Literature. Although Lauren completed her degree in the Arts and Humanities, like many students, she was fascinated by several subjects and switched between different majors. Lauren's love for learning had her considering pathways in Ivey, Health Sciences, MIT, and she ultimately decided to follow her true passion — the arts degree her heart so desired. At Western, the world was Lauren's oyster, and she could explore her interests unencumbered by the pressures of adult life.

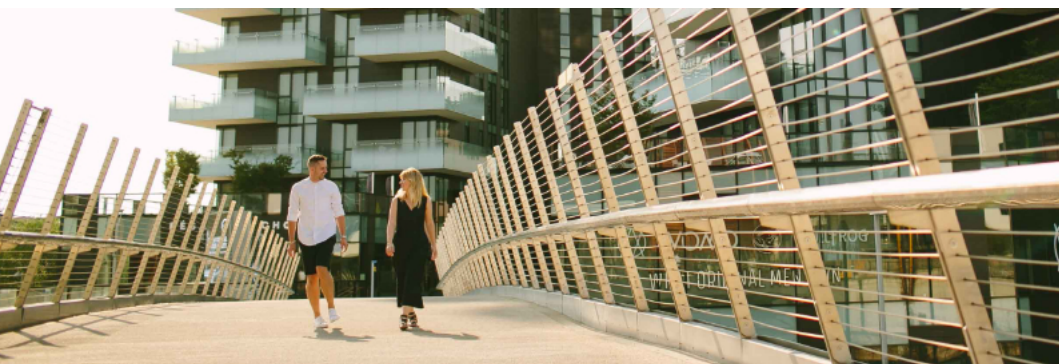
*“Western gave me a blank slate, and allowed me to figure out the type of person I wanted to become.”*

LM

In her English classes, Lauren found American literature to be the most fascinating. Reading books, like *The Scarlet Letter*, that were written so purposefully influenced the calibre of books she wished to read. Lauren's English studies helped her develop the ability to examine stories and empathize with characters; these are skills she continues to leverage in her present work.

Alongside her studies, Lauren wrote for the Western Gazette, was part of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, and wrote for The Big Purple Couch. Lauren held executive positions at her sorority of sixty strong and smart women and found the experience enjoyable. The Big Purple Couch was a campus TV show created by Lauren's future business partner Phil Pallen. At the show, she worked with students from many different faculties and backgrounds. She credits the show with refining her writing for spoken voice and allowing her to meet people she would not have had the opportunity to otherwise. The experience writing for The Big Purple Couch influenced Lauren to pursue her Arts degree over some of the other paths she was considering. Lauren also credits her business partner Phil with encouraging her to get into writing at the time, and she finds it interesting that if they had not met each other, their lives would have been so different. Post-Western, Lauren enrolled Phil in Charlie Sheen's social media internship search; the submission was initially a joke, but after earning a top 50 spot out of 90,000 applicants, they ended up realizing their potential for careers in the field.

After Lauren graduated, she juggled multiple internships in New York City to get footing in the field of writing. During one of her internships, she wrote and produced a variety of content focusing on fashion, nightlife, music, and lifestyle. Lauren found the transition from university to the workplace eye-opening, and unlike her university writing experience, she was working alongside people who were many years her senior.



Being expected to produce work that was of the same calibre as professionals with years of experience was humbling and helped Lauren hone her skills during the transition from university to work-life. Another important thing Lauren encountered during the transition was writing through the lens of a company versus writing essays that are largely rooted in individual opinion. Lauren described a learning moment when she drafted her very first blog post for review by her editor. She expected the post to be received well and in a few quick moments, with a red pen, her editor highlighted nearly every sentence on the page for revision. As shocking as the moment was for her at the time, Lauren looks back on it with appreciation. The editor taught her how to write succinctly, but with personality, which she carries with her today.

*"It changed my approach to writing forever. Really, I remember it like it was yesterday."*

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Many years later, and after holding positions at MTVWorld and BMI, Lauren's current role as Content Strategist for Phil Pallen Collective sees her taking on the voices of many brands. Lauren finds every single writing job different and the ability to put herself in the shoes of another client incredibly valuable. Lauren works with clients from all over the world — often from the comfort of her home via video conference, but also in places like the United Kingdom and Sweden for in-person meetings. Phil Pallen Collective works with clients using a developed process that, although consistent in approach, produces unique results and reflects the nature of a client's brand. Their clients are from many industries, including major television networks. Lauren and her team's goal is to recreate the in-person experience, making one's brand presence felt in a personable way and ensure it is an accurate representation of who they are.

When asked about what advice she would give to a recent graduate developing their personal brand, Lauren offered some simple tips. First, get some high-quality business cards and provide your contact information to the professionals with whom you interact. Secondly, professional photography is key to any brand.

Wedding photographers specialize in capturing moments and can take editorial-style professional photos for a simple website, social media, etc. Photos of moments make an experience more personable online. Lauren explained that when companies hire, they see candidates as investments so the content you provide must be useful. Overall, these simple things can add an extra level of professionalism that separates you from the crowd.

## Reflection

Lauren's story is a powerful one. Her story is an example of the opportunities available to those who are open to new experience and lifelong learning. As a student, Lauren followed her curiosities across faculties and extracurriculars while making incredible connections with her peers along the way. Her transition from university to professional life was humbling and embraced challenges. Importantly, she continued to refine her craft long after receiving a diploma. Lauren's passion for storytelling with a personal touch has allowed her to collaborate with prominent organizations around the globe.

What stood out to me the most about Lauren's story was the power empathy had in shaping her storytelling. Lauren's ability to put herself in an audience's shoes is what allows her to create that "in-person" experience and connect with people where that can be a challenge for many. There is no doubt that in a world where screens increasingly mediate our interactions, it will be storytellers like Lauren that allow us to connect. It was an absolute pleasure interviewing Lauren Moore.



## About the Author

Nick Rego is a fourth-year medical science and philosophy student. He also serves as the Alumni Relations Commissioner for the Arts & Humanities Students' Council.



# SAM BA'15 Roberts



Seven years ago, Sam Roberts accepted her offer to Western University with the promise of a prestigious scholarship, and four years later she graduated with an Honours Specialization in Art History & Criticism, a Certificate in Business French, and many distinctions. To those of us on the outside of such success, it is not hard to assume that for some people it just comes easy.

Well, it doesn't.

Roberts was no more handed a perfect job post-grad than she was the killer marks she worked her butt off for during her undergrad. Following graduation, the humble Roberts left one London for the next and attended the Courtauld Institute of Art for her M.A in Art History, Criticism, and Conservation. But rather than "stepping into a 60k salary post-graduation" like her friends from BMO, Roberts, like many graduates, floundered. She did the resume thing, the temp-job thing, even the road-trip-across-the-country and move-to-France thing.

Having settled in Toronto, Roberts now works for LUMAS Gallery as an art consultant, and at Sick Kids Hospital as an administrative assistant, two very contrasting jobs that, regardless, get the bills paid.

Roberts talked about the ongoing struggle of work, the internal battle between doing what you love and doing what is safe. Having been offered the opportunity to go full time at Sick Kids with good pay and benefits, Roberts said, “It was so tempting... but I would have to give up on the gallery, and I just knew that I wasn’t going to be happy.” While she does love her job at Sick Kids, it is simply not what she has “invested so much time and money into, studying and practicing and talking to people about.” Rather than take the easy road out, Roberts now balances both jobs and expressed the importance of having side hustles. “Don’t just do your job and go home,” she said, “Always have something extra going on until you are where you need to be. Always have something in your mind that’s pushing you closer to your goal.” In short, be persistent about what you want. When asked if she had managed to reach her goal so soon, as many students might naively hope for post-grad, Roberts laughed. “LUMAS is a really great first step, but no [it’s not my end goal],” she admitted, and further answered, “It’s going to be hard to take a big step forward after that, so I might just move sideways for a bit.”

In terms of her time spent at Western, Roberts voiced that it was a formative education and that one thing she felt Western was particularly great for were the opportunities to get involved. The kinds of experiences you get outside of your academic career are what make you stand out, she informed me and went on to explain how her involvement benefited her time in university (and everything after) immensely. “I think that multitasking was effective not only in helping me compartmentalize and manage all the different things you’re required to do when working full time and expected to be a human, but also, for grad school it came off great. It showed that I could handle a lot of work even if my course load wasn’t as rigorous as some others might be.”

Between volunteering at the MacIntosh Gallery, interning at Museum London, and being an Arts Soph, Roberts certainly took advantage of her time at Western and took part in as much as she could — a step she deems as crucial for a successful post-graduation.



*"Don't just do your job and go home. Always have something extra going on until you are where you need to be. Always have something in your mind that's pushing you closer to your goal."*

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As well as Vice President of Events in the French club, and communications for the German club, Roberts was also a part of Scholar's Electives, an independent research project that allowed her to work with multiple professors including "the amazing Dr. Bentley." Being in the art world, Roberts hinted, is a lot about who you know and how you can utilize those contacts. So go out there and get them, and the best way to do that, she suggested, is to get involved.

When asked if she had any advice for arts students in regard to the persistent pressures they face about not finding a job, Roberts had a simple answer for those of us currently crying about it: "If you believe firmly enough in what you love to do and what you want to do, then you'll make it work." After working temp-jobs for several months, it wasn't until a year post-grad school that Roberts "fandango-ed [her] way" into a gallery job, confessing, "You have to be firm with yourself. You're going to have so many pressure, friends, family, money [and] that's hard," she said, "but you have to know that what is fulfilling for you is not necessarily going to be something that comes right away or pays really well." Good things, she said, come to those who wait and those who work their butts off. You have to work for it, and you have to be patient, and if you're not where you want to be just yet, then you keep going. "It's a combination of hard work, luck, and time at the end of the day," she concluded, "if you have something that is your rock in your core, then you just make it work. That faith in yourself will keep you warm."

*"If you believe firmly enough in what you love to do and what you want to do, then you'll make it work."*

SR

## Reflection

Interviewing Sam was hands-down one of the most rewarding things I have done in my first year of university. I left feeling hopeful, inspired, and even confident in my future. In a world where Art majors will receive endless flack for following their hearts instead of their wallets, it can be refreshing to — for once — hear that you're on the right track. She taught me that it is as simple as discovering what you want and going after it — something that sounds easy, but is often forgotten along the way. And, at the very least, this interview just reaffirmed my belief that, "All of your peers, whether or not they show it, have no idea what they're doing, and everyone you talk to that has finished school also has no idea what they're doing. None of us know what the heck is going on." Needless to say, adult-ing is a trap, and the ultimate goal of having your life together? Nothing more than an urban myth.

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## About the Author

Francesca DeNoble is a first-year English studies and soon-to-be SASAH student. She is currently working very hard to figure out what she is doing with her life.

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