

Fall 2015



# GHSpiral

A newsletter for University of Guelph-Humber alumni



## Prof Helps Educators Understand Childhood Development

Preschool is more than a place to play; it's where children begin to develop gender and sexual identities. Early childhood educators (ECEs) play an important role in guiding children through this period of their lives, but they may need guidance themselves on how to deal with certain issues, says University of Guelph-Humber early childhood studies professor Alice Balter.

In a study she co-authored with U of G professor Tricia van Rhijn, Family Relations and Applied Nutrition, she found more than half (54 per cent) of ECEs stated their workplace had no policy on childhood sexuality education and one-third did not know if a policy existed.

"Many factors affect ECEs' willingness to address childhood sexuality in their practice," says Balter, who has worked in the field of sexual education for the past 10 years. If there's no policy in place, "Educators are left feeling uncertain or unwilling to address this area, which has implications."

Sexual identity begins at birth, thanks to biological, psychological and social influences. Healthy sexual development requires boundaries, she says, so that children learn about their bodies and how to use them in appropriate ways.

"Gender construction occurs early, which can be seen in children's play in childcare settings," says Balter. Toys are usually geared toward boys or girls, but she says both genders can learn valuable skills from playing with each other's toys. Girls can develop spatial skills by playing with blocks, whereas boys can learn how to be caring and nurturing by playing with dolls. "In my opinion it would be more important to encourage skill development as opposed to specific boy or girl traits that we want to encourage in children."

The study, "Sexual and Gender Development in Early Learning Settings: A Qualitative Exploration of Ontario Early Childhood Educator's Perceptions," has been submitted for publication to the *Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*.

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## Grads Enter Medical Programs

Getting admitted into medical school is an honour for most people; being one of the first University of Guelph-Humber graduates to be admitted is an even bigger honour for David Field, M.Sc. '15.

"I actually couldn't believe it," he says. "I thought someone else had done it. I saw so many great students go into [my program] and come out of it."

He graduated from the fitness and health promotion program at Humber ITAL, and then received his bachelor of applied science in kinesiology at the University of Guelph-Humber. After graduating with a master's degree in human health and nutritional sciences from U of G, he entered medical school at the University of Toronto in September 2015.

Field was inspired to pursue a career in medicine after interning at a physiotherapy clinic. He was also impressed by the doctors who performed knee surgery on his mother a few years ago. "The doctors gave her a new life," he says.

The small class sizes at the University of Guelph-Humber allowed him to get to know his professors, he adds, and the clinical and research experience he gained strengthened his application to medical school.

He studied the effects of a six-month exercise program on prostate cancer patients with former program head Daniel Santa Mina at the University of Guelph-Humber. "There's a link between prostate cancer and cardiovascular disease," says Field.

Treating prostate cancer may involve androgen depletion therapy, he adds, which causes an increase in bad cholesterol and fat tissue, and a decrease in good cholesterol and muscle mass.

Patients in the study were assigned an exercise regimen that included cardio, weight and resistance training, and nutritional counseling.

Field plans to study family or emergency medicine at U of T. "There's a wide variety of interesting cases in emergency medicine — it seems like it would be quite the adrenaline rush."

Working at a physiotherapy clinic also opened Deanna Groenesteghe's eyes to a new career path. The University of Guelph-Humber kinesiology graduate was accepted into the physician assistant program at U of T, starting in September 2015.

"I was thrilled to get accepted," she says of the physician assistant program. "You do a lot of hands-on stuff — it's not just textbook learning."

She looks forward to applying the knowledge she gained at the University of Guelph-Humber to help patients. Referring to herself as a "hands-on learner," she says the combination of real-world experience gained through work placements at the University and the human anatomy program at U of G, which includes cadaver-based labs, enhanced her learning.

"You don't get that opportunity in other places," she says of the human anatomy program. "In class, you see bones in one dimension. It's not the same as holding a bone."



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## Website Shares Work Stories

If you didn't know what you wanted to do for a living after you graduated, you're not alone. Psychology professor David Stanley switched majors several times as an undergrad before he chose psychology. Now an industrial-organizational psychologist at U of G, he's trying to help others find the right jobs for them.

"I think back to my undergraduate career and I changed programs so many times that I was on a first-name basis with the assistant registrar," says Stanley. "I really recognize how deep this issue is with young people. You're at that age when you're trying to find your career, but you're not exactly sure what you're supposed to do, largely because you don't know what the career options are out there."

Working with psychology professor Natalie Allen at Western University, he developed workstory.net, a website that features stories and videos about people (including many U of G-H graduates) discussing what they like most about their jobs. The 150 profiles are organized into job sectors such as business and health.

Stanley says career guides are often outdated, and vocational testing helps identify interests, but they can't predict what a particular job is like.

"That's why we started workstory.net — to help young people find out about careers from people who love those jobs," he says. "To me there's something really inspiring about someone who's not only in a job, but loving their job and talking about why they love that job."



City University

**A** new partnership agreement between U of G-H and the City Law School at City University London will provide secured admission to the prestigious U.K. law school for U of G-H graduates who achieve a minimum average.

The City Law School offers a two-year graduate entry LLB, allowing students to be called to the bar in any Commonwealth country.

“We’re thrilled to be able to facilitate this path for all U of G-H graduates interested in a law career,” says George Bragues, assistant vice-provost of U of G-H. “The opportunity to study core and specialist areas of legal subjects within a multicultural metropolis such as London is one we’re very excited to offer.”



Mark Saunders

## Police Officer Becomes Top Cop

**A** few months before graduating from the University of Guelph-Humber’s justice studies program, Mark Saunders already had a job lined up as chief of the Toronto Police Service (TPS).

The 32-year veteran of TPS was named its chief in April, taking over a force of approximately 5,500 uniformed officers and 2,500 civilian members. As TPS deputy chief since 2012, Saunders led the Specialized Operations Command, overseeing more than 1,200 officers.

He has also worked in other units, including the intelligence division, drug squad, emergency task force, urban street gang unit and the homicide squad, where he was the unit commander. He also served as an undercover officer and created the investigative cybercrime unit.

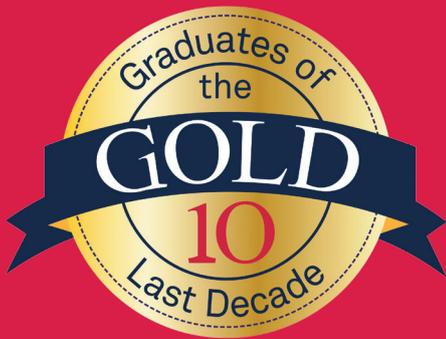
Gary Ellis, head of the University of Guelph-Humber’s justice studies program and a former TPS superintendent, said he was pleased to see Saunders appointed as police chief.

“Mark is a respected, dedicated and hard-working police officer who is also a conscientious learner,” said Ellis, who worked for TPS for 31 years.

“Even though he had many years of experience as a police officer, he wanted to learn more and he came to the University of Guelph-Humber to upgrade his skills and develop a stronger understanding of the many facets of our evolving justice system. He was an exceptional student who added to the learning experience of his fellow students at the University.”

Guelph-Humber vice-provost John Walsh said Saunders’ appointment “not only demonstrates the importance of continually building on skills and learning, but also provides an indication that the justice studies program curriculum and training model meets the needs of a changing justice environment.

“We are delighted that one of our students is being appointed as head of TPS and we wish him the very best in this challenging role.”



## Get Ready to Celebrate!

The University of Guelph-Humber is gearing up for an important milestone in 2016 when we celebrate our first 10-year class reunion.

As we prepare for this celebration, there will be a number of opportunities for alumni to engage with University of Guelph-Humber staff and student communities. Along with our annual events, such as attending a Blue Jays game and Golf 101, we'll host a number of activities throughout the academic year with a focus on creating opportunities for our alumni to share their knowledge and experience with current students.

We invite you to join us over the coming months. There are so many ways to get involved with the University of Guelph-Humber: hire a graduate, host placement and internship students, or give a monetary gift to support student success. We're always looking for new ways for you to become active participants and supporters in the future of the University of Guelph-Humber. As "Graduates of the Last Decade" (GOLD), you are the future of U of G-H, and your support is critical to our continued success as Ontario's first dual accreditation university.

We can't wait to celebrate with you!



New mascot Swoop with vice-provost John Walsh at the mascot launch Sept. 16.

## U of G-H Mascot Update

Remember how we said we wanted the University of Guelph-Humber mascot to be unique, one-of-a-kind and exclusive to us? Well, it turns out there are many phoenix mascots and icons currently in use in Canada, so we were unable to secure a trademark licence for the U of G-H Phoenix.

Onwards and upwards! Since the Guelph-Humber community submitted so many great mascot ideas, we are moving forward with the second most popular choice submitted by students, staff, faculty and alumni. The great horned owl, or Swoop as he has been named, is our new school mascot!

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