

# ENHANCING EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AT MOHAWK

## A Career Ready Fund Initiative

Newsletter – Final Edition



Experiential learning encompasses a long list of the educational opportunities Mohawk College is known for, from field placement and apprenticeships to applied research and industry partnerships.

The province of Ontario defines experiential learning as “an educational activity facilitated and supported by a college through which students learn while doing. Students participate in workplaces, or simulated workplaces, where they are exposed to authentic professional demands and expectations. The goal of an experiential learning experience is to improve students’ employability and interpersonal skills and to support their transition to the workforce.”

Mohawk College has made it a strategic priority to offer experiential learning in 100 per cent of its more than

160 programs leading to diplomas, advanced diplomas and certificates, says Amanda Malkiewich, Director of Co-operative Education and Experiential Learning.

Experiential learning offers students an opportunity to work hands-on, applying their knowledge and skills to gain valuable work experience. For employers and community partners, experiential learning provides a talent pipeline and the opportunity to call on Mohawk expertise to explore ideas and solve problems, says Malkiewich, who was hired to explore the range of experiential learning at Mohawk and how to grow opportunities even further.

Mohawk has been a leader in experiential learning since 1969, as the first college in Canada to offer co-operative education. This year we celebrated our 50th anniversary with

a wonderful event that celebrated our dedicated employer partners.

Experiential Learning at Mohawk is supported by the Centre for Experiential Learning and the Centre for Teaching & Learning (CTL). Faculty have access to a range of resources and workshops to help them embed valuable hands-on opportunities into curriculum.

Mohawk’s vision is demonstrated in SURGE, The Clinic, The Garage, The Agency, The Sound Booth and all the other micro-centres, bringing life to community-based experiential learning in a broad range of programs, says Malkiewich.

**Read on to learn more about how our students are participating in experiential learning opportunities in a variety of programs.**

For more information on Experiential Learning at Mohawk, please contact [experiential@mohawkcollege.ca](mailto:experiential@mohawkcollege.ca)  
[mohawkcollege.ca/experiential-learning](http://mohawkcollege.ca/experiential-learning)

## The Office

Office Administration students have provided reception services for The Office, located in The Agency. Students have made documents compliant to provincial accessibility regulations, provided transcription services and administrative support for a range of campus events.

“Our students embraced the concept and really see the value in this work,” said Peggy Daniel, Office Administration faculty and coordinator of a one-year Office Administration general certificate.

“They would sign up for extra shifts or double shifts. It has been a really great learning experience.”

Along with applying classroom learning through hands-on work guided by faculty, and adding to their skillsets, the Career Ready Fund-supported The Office allows students to earn volunteer hours on their co-curricular record.



Photo by Sarah Currie

“Everyone has been so positive and worked so well together. They solved problems together and learned from each other. We are able to include students at whatever level they are at,” said Daniel.

Office Administration students at both the Fennell campus and the Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades

Training Centre began accessibility training with faculty in the Accessible Media graduate certificate program during a successful pilot last year. They learned to embed accessibility in Word, PDF and Excel documents and are now called upon by College departments and community partners to execute accessibility projects.

“Once people started to know our students’ capabilities, we were frequently called. We had been an unknown commodity before The Office.”

Also through The Office, Human Resource students developed and facilitated mock interviews for students at McMaster University and Mohawk College.



## Universal Access Lab

The Universal Access Lab provides experiential learning opportunities to students in the Accessible Media Production graduate certificate program through capstone projects, field experiences, and consultation on projects from The Agency.

Students in the graduate certificate program learn to build accessibility into documents, videos, audio and digital platforms. It’s believed the program is the only one of its kind in Ontario, and perhaps North America.

“Students can do everything from creating accessible documents, to performing a full audit of a website, to captioning videos or

providing described audio,” said Jennifer Jahnke, a professor and coordinator of the Accessible Media Production graduate certificate program.

“It all makes students more marketable when they apply for jobs because they’ve worked on real projects.”

Program faculty and alumni have trained students in Mohawk’s Office Administration program to embed accessibility and through The Office and the Universal Access Lab. College departments and staff, along with community partners, can call on students to work on accessibility projects.

There is great demand from government and private organizations for expertise in embedding accessibility and principles of universal design, says Jahnke. By 2021, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act requires that everything on the web be accessible for those with low or no vision or hearing impairments. That requires captioning for video and making content compatible with assistive devices, for instance.

Mohawk also used the Career Ready Fund to found #a11yHAM, a chapter of an accessibility group focused on digital inclusion that meets in cities around the world. There are now more than 200 members in the group, who take part in panel discussions, roundtables and networking events.



Photo by Ariel Domenden

## The Clinic

The Clinic’s students provide affordable massage therapy and fitness training onsite to residents and the public at St. Elizabeth Village (SEV) retirement community.

Second-year Health, Wellness and Fitness students are undertaking fitness assessments and leading personal training sessions and group classes, alongside Massage Therapy students delivering treatments to residents at St. Elizabeth Village.

All treatments and fitness sessions are overseen by certified practitioners who guide and support the students.

“The students come in and they don’t have confidence in what they know, and they worry about hurting

somebody,” said Amanda Cuttress, experiential learning field placement technologist and a part-time instructor in Health, Wellness and Fitness.

“They start out apprehensive about working with an older population, but they quickly gain confidence and build relationships with their clients.”

After an assessment establishes a baseline, the student creates a fitness plan based on the clients’ goals. The St. Elizabeth residents choose between a group class for \$5 a session or personal sessions for \$15.

“The clients experience better posture, weight loss, greater strength, increased balance and mobility and more confidence,” said Cuttress.

“They stand up straighter and they aren’t in as much pain in their day-to-day activities.”

And the inter-generational relationship between students and clients is special. Jessica Heidbuurt, who graduated from Health, Wellness and Fitness in April, says her experience in The Clinic exposed her to real people with real fitness challenges, who wanted to support student learning.

“You can only teach so much in class, being in the field is so different. I had such a positive experience at SEV because it helped me grow my confidence in working with clients, and helped me be able to better adapt and modify different programs to different types of people.”

Massage clients get more active and mobile, says Rodger Bramwell, a massage technologist and coordinator at the St. Elizabeth clinic. They are also inspired by the youthful energy the students deliver, he says.

“I feel there is a rejuvenation for the clients who work with young therapists.”

Andrea Wicks-Cherry has been working at The Clinic since September and her experience at St. Elizabeth Village has only confirmed her desire to work with seniors.

“The pure joy of working with clients at St. Elizabeth’s has been remarkable,” she said. “They have been so supportive and understanding, especially when we need to practise new techniques we learn in our classes.”

Massage sessions are just \$10 for residents and \$30 for the public.

The Clinic also offers massage and fitness sessions at the David Braley Athletic & Recreation Centre at Mohawk’s Fennell campus.

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—Jessica Heidbuurt  
Health, Wellness and Fitness graduate

# SURGE

Entrepreneurial hub SURGE has invested Career Ready Fund support in a variety of innovative ways.

That includes offering entrepreneurship training and curriculum to a variety of Mohawk programs, establishing a postsecondary Enactus chapter, supporting The Collective micro-centre, hosting a YouTube business camp, and nurturing student entrepreneurship efforts.

SURGE increased client intakes by 385 per cent in 2018-2019, growing to more than 100 students.

“Our goal is to tap into program areas where entrepreneurship isn’t the traditional career path and to battle the idea that entrepreneurship isn’t for everybody,” said Natalie Reid, project coordinator of SURGE. That includes working with students in Community Services, Police Foundations, and Radio and TV.

“It’s important to show that the skills and characteristics that entrepreneurs have to build and grow a business can be used in any career. These sessions are really successful. We get students to think differently.”

Students in Mohawk’s Enactus chapter instituted StopGap in September 2018, which provided accessibility ramps to nine small businesses in Hamilton in conjunction with Building Renovations students. Three students also attended a national Enactus conference in Vancouver.

This academic year will see Enactus create a sustainable cooking project for at-risk youth while continuing with the StopGap initiative.

Another SURGE program supported by the Career Ready Fund is The Collective, which involved 25 Photography, Videography, Music



Photo by Rylee Hill

and Graphic Design students last year who completed paid freelance projects and performances in the community. All students who are accepted into The Collective are given SURGE training and support.

SURGE also hosted the MindShift conference, a celebration of entrepreneurship that attracted 382 students.

“It was one of the most successful student-focused conferences that the college has seen in quite some time. There is so much interest in entrepreneurship,” said Reid.

SURGE’s CreatorJam is an intensive, week-long session led by eight YouTube masters that guided 25 students interested in creating YouTube businesses.

Iris Dip graduated in April from the Small Business & Entrepreneurship program and has launched Cozy Kiln, a non-for-profit, interactive mobile

pottery studio that visits retirement communities, churches and hospitals.

It had long been a dream to start her own business, but she lacked confidence. Winning SURGE’s Pitch It to Win It competition changed that and gave her the funds to buy a kiln and start her company.

“I don’t think I ever believed in myself to be an entrepreneur because that’s honestly a little scary. SURGE gave me the guidance and direction I needed to start. They supported me from developing a business concept to actually implementing my business in real life,” she said.

“I really am proud to tell people about SURGE and everything they’ve done for Cozy Kiln. SURGE was the push I needed to start believing in my own dreams.”



# The Writer's Room

The Writer's Room provides an invaluable opportunity to Mohawk students to work on real projects with screenwriters and producers, says Atul Rao, a professor of Media and Entertainment and the academic coordinator for Multi-Media Storytelling.

With support from the Career Ready Fund, Shaista Justin, one of the most successful Canadian producers based in Los Angeles, came to Mohawk in spring 2019. She had students brainstorm story and world-building ideas for a science-fiction fantasy project her production house Wide Outloud Productions has in development.

"I don't think she really expected much out of it, but she was blown away by the ability of our students. She worked with the students for seven or eight hours. The students didn't want to leave," said Rao.

Many of the students' ideas are finding their way into the drama's episodic storylines and Justin returned to take part in a Writer's Room session with first-year research and reporting students for a documentary about ostrich farming.

The team behind Hamilton Rising, which creates local documentaries for digital platforms, also took part in a Writer's Room session, where students pitched ideas. A number of those ideas are expected to come to production.

Third-year Television Broadcasting student Jordon Kollee took the opportunity to share his documentary idea, taking advice about how to improve and refine it to work on social media channels.

"We learned so much, but it didn't feel like a class. It felt like we were already in the industry and having



Photo by Rylee Hill

a brainstorming meeting. We were treated like peers, not students."

Rao is calling on more of his industry contacts, targeting top screenwriters and producers for this academic year.

"The students really got to explore how this industry works. They can learn a lot from exposure to professionals. They learn that it's tough out there and that creativity and talent will only take you so far. It's about hard work."

Rao says The Writer's Room is also a chance for industry players to scope out the shining stars.

Austin Gougeon is one of two students Justin hired as interns. The Writer's Room experience convinced him that he wants to be on the creative side of TV and that he has the talent to do it.

"It was such a high-energy experience and it's definitely stuck with me. It felt

"We learned so much, but it didn't feel like a class. It felt like we were already in the industry and having a brainstorming meeting. We were treated like peers, not students."

—Jordon Kollee  
Third-year Television  
Broadcasting student

like a real writer's room and it was so exciting to generate ideas and run with them," he said.

"Working on a real project made me realize how much I love it."



"I loved learning about the different Indigenous cultures in Squamish and surrounding areas. I loved hearing their traditional stories and teachings and seeing parallels to our own."

—Caroline Hill  
Pathfinder participant

## Pathfinder

The Pathfinder program encourages Indigenous youth to pursue postsecondary education while exploring their cultural identity and taking part in experiential learning.

Since 2011, Pathfinder has provided high school credits or dual credits for Indigenous youth. The program is facilitated by the Indigenous Student Services department during the summer.

Over two-plus weeks, students meet elders, participate in field trips, learn in workshops and explore the college campus and services.

Students connect with faculty and staff and explore a range of course options, including Skilled Trades, Robotics, Community and Health Services. They also get help with job skills and resumé writing and Pathfinder alumni often act as mentors.

This year, Pathfinder is offering its first winter programming during the Winter 2020 term. "The idea in Pathfinder is to help them see themselves in college, to feel it's attainable, and to set them up for success," said Amanda Collina, Manager of Indigenous Student Services.

The Career Ready Fund provided funding to Pathfinder initiatives in both 2018 and 2019.

For the first time, Pathfinder reached beyond Mohawk this summer, with students spending a week in Vancouver. They engaged with local elders, knowledge keepers, and facilitators in art sessions, ceremonies, and explored the University of British Columbia, all while earning a Mohawk College credit.

"We would like to continue the momentum of taking students to different places and exposing them to new experiences in Indigenous communities and postsecondary institutions across Canada and maybe beyond," said Collina.

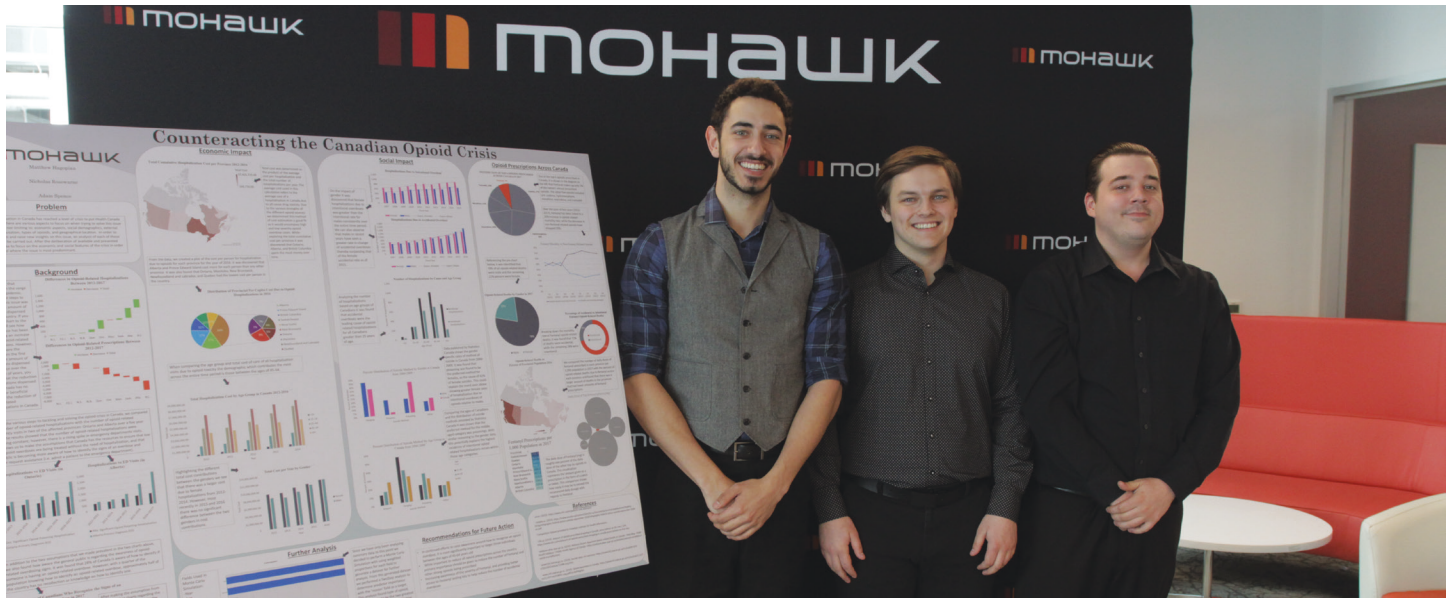
Of nine students in this summer's cohort, three have already begun their studies at Mohawk and another plans to begin in January.

Pathfinder participant Caroline Hill says the program built her confidence and she now feels at home at Mohawk.

"I'm a very shy person but I was able to make some amazing friends that I'm attending Mohawk with this fall," she said.

The experience has also made her feel connected to her culture.

"I loved learning about the different Indigenous cultures in Squamish and surrounding areas. I loved hearing their traditional stories and teachings and seeing parallels to our own ... I was able to explore a part of Canada that I've always wanted to and fly on a plane for the first time. Growing up I wasn't super involved in my culture but after attending Pathfinder I feel comfortable and safe in learning more about my culture and myself."



## Analytics for Decision Making

The Mohawk College Higher Education Analytics Data (HEAD) Competition was the first event hosted by a college in Canada to use big data and analytics at a hackathon focused on tackling a social issue.

Using Career Ready Fund support, the Analytics for Decision Making program developed and hosted the event, which required competitors to use a variety of descriptive, diagnostic, and predictive analytics techniques to analyze the opioid crisis and find ways to reduce deaths.

Steven Way, professor and coordinator of Analytics for Business Decision Making at the McKeil School of Business, says the HEAD Competition was designed to promote the quality of the program to industry and potential students.

“We also wanted to apply all of the skills and theory taught to our students in a competitive applied environment. Think trial by fire.”

The competition included four teams from Mohawk, and one from Brock University, totalling 21 student participants who took their business analysis skills and applied them to social problems.

Mohawk teams placed first and third, and the event, sponsored by the Institute for Smarter Government, received a large amount of social media traction. The first-place team of three split \$2,500 in prize money.

“This competition is almost like a capstone, only more intense. Students apply their skills in teams to tackle real problems using real data. You can’t get more career-ready training than that without being on the job,” said Way.

The college has committed funds to a second HEAD Competition next March and a Business Analytics Lab will soon find a home in Mohawk’s new Centre for Digital Entrepreneurship.

Matt Hagopian, a graduate of Mohawk’s Business Analytics post-graduate certificate program, says the HEAD Competition was intense.

“I think it offered us a sense of what we would face in the real world. In this project, all the responsibilities were put on our shoulders. We had no direction, we had to find our own way.”

In the first stage, leading up to the competition, students were given two weeks to analyze a data set that

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—**Matt Hagopian**  
Analytics for Business  
Decision Making  
Graduate Certificate

provided anonymized information about those involved in opioid overdoses.

The two-day competition began with poster presentations and questions from peers and judges about how each team reached its conclusions.

At 5 p.m. the teams were given the second stage of the problem and additional data in 25 sets. They had one night to come up with a presentation in front of a panel of judges from McMaster University, Institute for Smarter Government, and TD Bank.

# The Agency

Advertising, marketing and communications micro-centre The Agency worked with 35 clients in the 2018-2019 academic year, offering powerful experiential learning for students in Animation, Journalism, Broadcast Media, Advertising, Photography, Graphic Design, Marketing and Software Engineering.

Projects included animation and video projects for Hamilton Health Sciences, a communications strategy, event planning and crisis management plan for the Canadian Sepsis Foundation, an advertorial real estate insert for The Hamilton Spectator, a new brand identity and website for the Brantford Aquatic Club, podcasts for St. Joseph's Healthcare, a video for Ronald McDonald House, a marketing plan for the Hamilton Naturalists Club, and an updated intranet site for the YWCA.

The Agency also offers lunch and learns with speakers from marketing and



Photo by Matt Hadder

communications and took groups of students on immersive, creative tours of New York City that included museum stops and a tour of a marketing agency for graphic design students, and tours of studios and broadcast facilities for broadcast media students.

Advertising students even presented concepts for pitches to senior marketing executives with the National Hockey League (NHL), based on forming a partnership with a like-minded brand, and enacting a corporate social

responsibility initiative. The success of this initiative is the NHL pitching Mohawk students' creative campaign ideas to their multi-national partners.

Through work with The Agency, two Mohawk advertising students were invited to pitch ideas at the One Show, the most prominent advertising competition in North America.



# City School

City School, which brings the college into the community by offering free college-level and employment readiness training, used Career Ready Funding for a variety of programs and experiential learning supports to those exploring a path to postsecondary education.

That includes safety boots for use in the Trades Lab for Introduction to Construction students, scrubs for Foundations of Pharmaceutical students, and digital drawing tablets for Layout and Art Direction students.

City School also booked space at a community kitchen for students to practise making healthy snacks, covered the costs for all students

to earn their Safe Food Handlers certification and provided a road kit for early childhood education students with children's books and activities.

"Our students tend to come to us without positive educational experiences. They may have left high school or tried postsecondary and didn't have a good outcome," said Sarah Harvie, learning support officer.

"The experiences and tangible learning we were able to provide built that positivity into their educational experience."

City School also offered campus tours and Mohawk gear for Indigenous students, and networking events for human services students who could

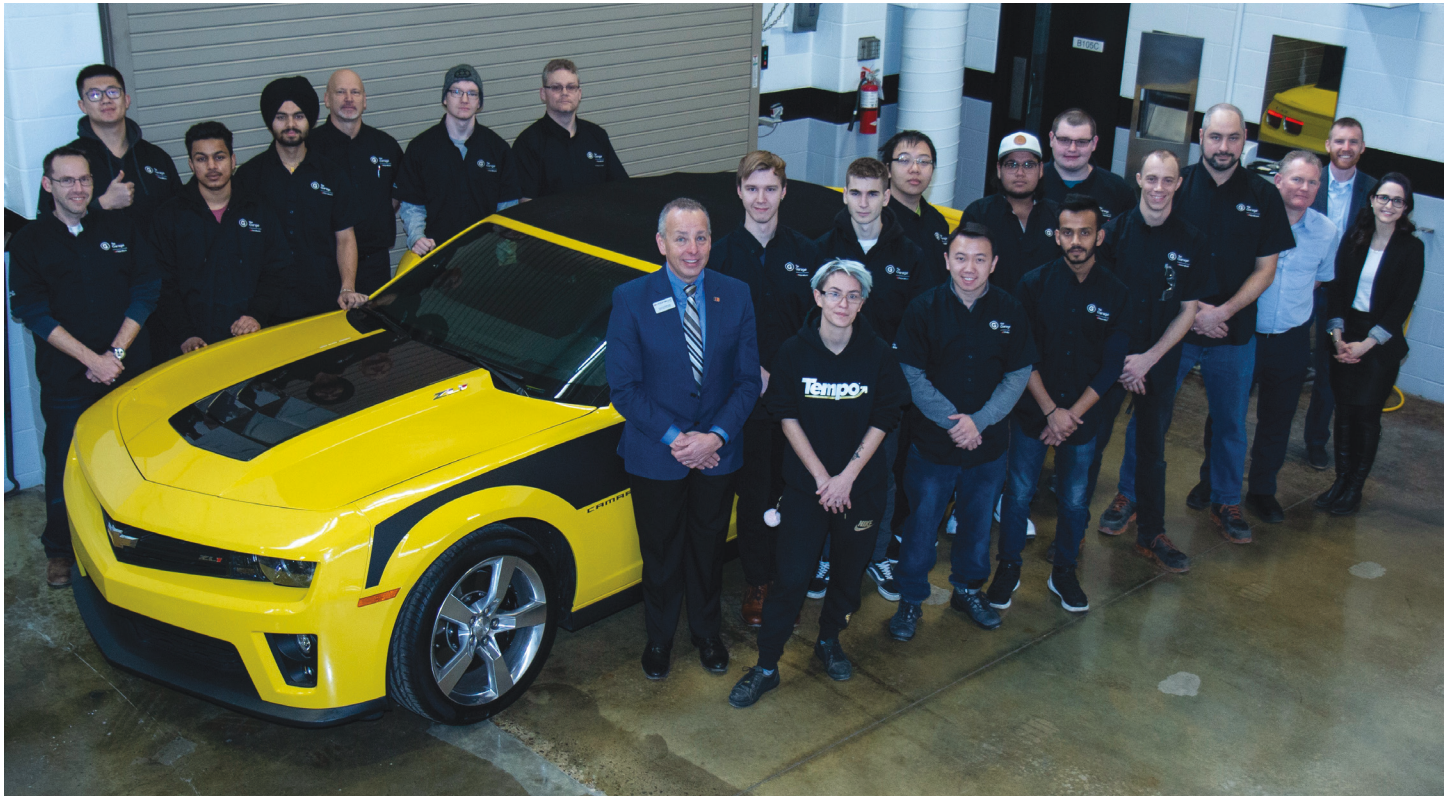
ask questions of professionals in their field. City School students also went on a field trip to an escape room to practise and explore group dynamic skills.

"Participants really find these activities very beneficial because they tie the theoretical part of learning to the authentic," said Gwen Zeldenrust, a learning experience designer. "They try out their skills, and explore what they've learned."

City School offers courses and programming at the Eva Rothwell Centre, Mission Services, Hamilton Public Library, Aldershot Public Library, and the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre.







## The Garage

Mohawk’s Motive Power Technician students get the opportunity to work on real cars in a real work setting through The Garage: Powered by Tomorrow’s Techs. The initiative launched in fall 2018 and continued in winter 2019, offering four service days in each semester. The Garage was highly successful and will continue in this academic year.

Teams of students worked on the cars of administrators, faculty and staff at Mohawk, providing oil changes, tire changes and rotations, and overall inspections under the direct supervision of Mohawk staff, who are licensed automotive service technicians.

“Student learning is accelerated when authentic work experience is combined with the security and guidance of a lab setting,” said Cavan Cook, faculty lead of The Garage.

“The Garage: Powered by Tomorrow’s Techs, provides students with the rare opportunity to gain real-life service

experience on customer vehicles from within the college community, in the familiarity of Mohawk’s automotive training shop.”

Typically, a total of 32 vehicles are serviced by students at The Garage during each term and it has been showcased to the public during Mohawk’s open houses.

Students were encouraged to build and reflect on both their technical skills and soft skills.

“Essential job skills that can be difficult to learn in a traditional classroom, such as communication skills, customer service, and hands-on problem solving, become much more accessible, and are mentioned as valuable highlights by students who have participated in the program,” said Cook.

Students who worked at The Garage received certificates and letters from Mohawk College that they can share with potential employers.

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–Cavan Cook  
Faculty lead of The Garage





## The Sound Booth

The Sound Booth provides a range of experiential learning opportunities to Music students at Mohawk College.

They include a longstanding Teaching Methods course in which Applied Music students provide more than 60 weekly private lessons to community members at Tuesday Night Music School. It gives teaching experience to students, something few other colleges or universities provide to their music students. It also allows affordable access to instrumental, vocal or theory education to Hamilton residents.

Sound Booth students and teachers hold a yearly recital and also

performed at events across the college in 2019.

The students offer lessons to all ages and all levels of musical ability. Some have never picked up an instrument before, others are learning a second instrument or coming back to it after years away.

The student teachers are evaluated on the progress of their pupils and must display responsibility, time management and professionalism.

The Sound Booth also facilitated a recording of students' work from their song-writing classes at Hamilton's Grant Avenue Studio and highlighted

third-year students' final recitals. The students get the experience of running the show, from publicity and rehearsal, to set up and putting on a performance.

"These recitals represented the culmination of their studies at Mohawk College, covering a wide range of repertoire, from classical to jazz, hip-hop and electronic music, and included several original compositions and arrangements by Mohawk College students," said Jamshed Turel, professor and coordinator of Applied Music.



## The Workshop

The Workshop leverages community building projects that have long been incorporated into the course curriculum for third- and fourth-semester students in Construction Engineering Technology-Building Renovation.

The initiative has been built upon a partnership with CityHousing Hamilton, and discussions are well underway about how to expand The Workshop by encompassing other skilled trades programs, including electrical and plumbing.

The community projects are real job sites, with real timelines, budgets, and limitations on materials. Students take pride in the quality of their work, their professionalism and their work ethic in a “living lab” that will be a grateful family’s new home, said Angelo Cosco, Associate Dean of Construction and Building Systems.

The most recent cohort of Construction Engineering Technology-Building Renovation students took on

the renovations of two townhouses operated by CityHousing Hamilton. They worked on framing, flooring, drywall replacement and repair, painting, trim work and cabinet and countertop replacement.

“With their dedication and commitment, we were able to complete renovations from demolition to final touch-ups on two townhouses operated by CityHousing Hamilton. What a win-win for our students, the families moving into these units and the City of Hamilton,” said Cosco.

Students encountered the typical challenges inherent with building renovations, including replacing an odd-sized front door. To install the new door, they had to remove an existing abutting window, shift it over and reinstall it. That required troubleshooting and problem-solving skills that will serve students well in their working lives, said Cosco.



## Riipen

Mohawk College was able to apply Career Ready Fund support to enhance its institutional licence with the experiential learning platform, Riipen. The match-making platform connects postsecondary students working on assignments with industry and community organizations needing talent and expertise for projects.

Mohawk hosted informational webinars, workshops, and one-on-one sessions for faculty to encourage and support assignment creation, and included Riipen in the Centre for Teaching and Learning’s Great Ideas for Teaching (GIFT) Conference. Riipen also provides academic relationship managers to work directly with faculty.

Mohawk Graphic Design students executed real-world projects through the Riipen platform in the last academic year, including rebranding and logo design for The Toronto Police Services – Business Intelligence and Analytics department, and Hospice Niagara.

A target for this academic year is to engage at least 500 students on the platform through assignments, projects and case competitions, with a particular focus on McKeil of Business, Media & Entertainment and Continuing Education, says Nadine Williams-Brown, academic development officer managing the Riipen project.

# Global Experience

Nine Autism and Behavioural Science (ABS) graduate certificate students at Mohawk College completed their field placement hours among students with autism and their teachers at the Sorem school in Chandigarh, India thanks in part to the Career Ready Fund.

Mohawk's strategic plan has identified global experiences as foundational to student learning. This is the third trip to India for ABS students, while other programs have offered educational experiences in Costa Rica, Guatemala, Greece and Jamaica.

The April trip to northern India was a partnership with Global Autism Project.

"It was a remarkable experience on many levels," said Emily Comegna, a professor and program and field coordinator in the ABS graduate certificate program.

"There were challenges that the students handled so well and there was learning happening all the time."

Three students from Mohawk's Photography—Still and Motion program were part of the contingent, completing a Global Experience general education course. They documented the trip through photos and video, took staff and class photos to be used by the Sorem school, and created a school brochure and video.

All the students, along with three Mohawk staff, worked for six months ahead of the service learning trip on training, cultural activities and team development.

"These students are working to become leaders in their field, and we expected them to really step into a leadership role in India," said Michelle Turan, a research fellow in the College Student



Photo by Alicia Downes

Success Innovation Centre. Students worked in teams to develop solutions to challenges raised by Sorem staff that were sustainable after the Mohawk team left. The number of deliverables was astounding, says Turan.

"Students come into this often not very confident in their own skills. An experience like this will push anyone out of their comfort zone and that creates huge wins because students see themselves in a new light."

One goal of Sorem leadership is to build awareness of autism in the community, since those with disabilities are often ostracized and kept at home in India. Mohawk students took the Sorem children on two outings to a store, helping them learn to shop for groceries, handle money and take transit. The planning will provide a roadmap for future trips.

Students also worked with a speech language pathologist to implement a communication program using pictures and made a 90-minute presentation. The students then worked alongside Sorem teachers on specific praise techniques to reinforce desired behaviours in students with autism.

Global experiences are critical to preparing students to care for those with autism in an increasingly diverse community. Students' views were assessed on an intercultural scale both before the trip and after their return. Turan says research has shown that students experiencing work integrations of more than two weeks return showing more adaptability and acceptance of other cultures.

"A trip like this helps our students develop their culturally responsive skillset and how they can understand and value the perspectives of others from different backgrounds."

A number of students described their experience as "life-changing" and said it would permanently affect their careers, interests and outlook on the world.

"It is impossible to do something like this and not come back with an altered perspective," said Comegna. "For some participants, the transformation piece happens while they're there, but for others it continues for years. Many of us are still feeling the transformative effect."