

Finding Stories at CBC Radio

► Tales from SFU's 2003 Gzowski intern

By Tiffany Chong

When CBC Radio offered me a co-op job as part of the Peter Gzowski Internship last summer, I had no idea what to expect, but I do remember jumping up and down, and replying: "Of course I'll accept the job!!"

The internship turned out to be a fantastic experience. Highlights include a trip to Toronto, singing karaoke with Shelagh Rogers, meeting Peter Mansbridge, and taking Mark Kelly hostage as part of a war-zone reporter training exercise. And all that happened in the first week! I did not have to worry about things going downhill from there because the rest of the summer proved to be just as interesting.

My first stop in Vancouver was with *The Early Edition*—CBC's daily morning show. The motto of the show's producer, Laura Palmer, was "the only way to learn is by doing it." Therefore, in just my first few days, I was researching guests, arranging interviews, and writing scripts for Rick Cluff, the show's host. By the second week, I was producing a weeklong series about high school proms. Memories of this time at *The Early Edition* are a panicky, stressful blur. However, I soon adjusted to the pace with the help of everyone who worked on the show.

A large part of the work was doing "streeters." I became recognized, and sometimes poked fun of, for the bright red CBC 690 AM jacket I wore (which everyone else refused to wear) while interviewing people on the street about various themes such as mortgage rates or Father's Day. Gaining



Communication Co-op student Tiffany Chong, SFU's first Gzowski intern

experience in street reporting was definitely very valuable.

Luckily, the pace of work became more relaxed as I moved from the Current Affairs department to Arts and Entertainment. I was assigned to the weekend arts show *North by Northwest*. Sheryl MacKay, the show's host, is a radio wonder who produces, directs, and operates NXNW all by herself. One of the most rewarding projects I worked on at this show was a story about a local artists' cooperative. I traveled around town to the studios of several artists and recorded their stories about the cooperative to relay to Sheryl on-air.

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Triple C, also known as the Communication Co-op Committee, is a volunteer student group that connects co-op students and promotes SFU Co-op.

Two Guys, a Girl, and a Football Club

► Learning about the importance of teamwork

By Agnes Gulbinowicz

I'll admit it, when I found out that I was placed with the BC Lions for my first co-op work term, I was disappointed; my heart was set on jetting off to Ottawa. Not only was I staying in Vancouver, but I was also interning, which meant I could forget about a monthly paycheck. However, when I arrived at BC Place on my first day, I realized that the job was going to be anything but disappointing.

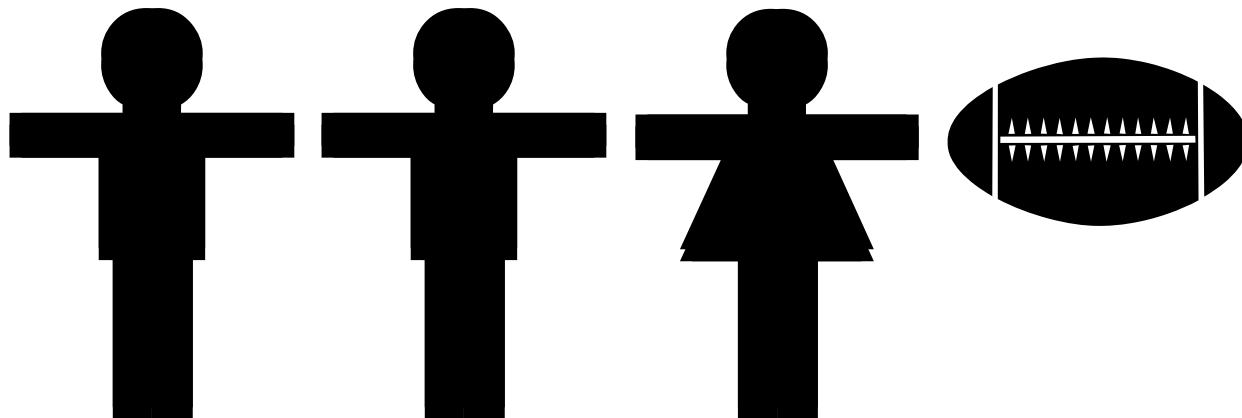
From the get-go, I was learning how to write a proper news release, what to do during a press conference and how to organize and distribute game credentials and countless other tasks. However, my time with the team was educational in more ways than one. Perhaps my greatest educational experience was learning to fit into an effective team.

During my interview I had been told that the associate directors of communication were both taking a leave of absence and that two young guys, Nathan and Dan, were taking their place for the season. I don't think I was fully prepared for the challenge of getting used to working with them, as they are both barely two years older than me, and needless to say, thinking of either one of them as my 'bosses' was a challenge. It was strange to be asking for duties from guys that under different circumstances, I would be hanging out with on a Friday night. Still, I was

determined to respect our work dynamic and not treat them too informally.

I was also determined to earn their respect. Because Nathan and Dan had worked together the year before and they had a history that I couldn't compete with, so I didn't try. Instead, I concentrated on my work, and tried to help the guys out in whatever way I could. My dedication was soon paying off and their appreciation was evident. Slowly but surely, they entrusted me with more responsibility and I was even given the chance to write a feature article for *BC Lions Magazine*. By the last month of my work term, the three of us had found a rhythm as a balanced cohesive unit. Each of us knew what the others needed to do their best work. We could provide support to one another without needing to be asked and without having to ask. I finally understood why employers and co-op coordinators rave about teamwork; when you can work effectively in a team it can be one of the most enriching aspects of your job.

People often seem unimpressed when they find out I didn't get to know any of the football players this past summer. The truth is, I got to know two guys who were better team players than any quarterback. And when I jet off to Ottawa for my next work term, the memories and skills I built at the Lions will be some of my greatest assets. ◀



NRCAN: Top Co-op Employer

► Learning the ABC's of government

By Tiffany Quan

In a world of acronyms, we are often left with a language that literally spells out the ABC's for us. As technical and dry as many of these acronyms may sound, your vocabulary will surely be saturated with them if you find yourself "co-oping" with the government.

What does this have to do with Top Co-op Employer? The answer is NRCAN. And that's another one to add to your list of acronyms right after BYOB! Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) receives my vote as outstanding employer and this recognition is due to my adventurous position with the federal department in Ottawa this past summer.

As Assistant Editor of *The Source*, NRCAN's online employee newsletter, I had the opportunity to shape acronyms into stories by writing about news, events, and successes within the department. One week my assignment would be on the DM (Deputy Minister) and hydrogen fuel cell cars, while the next would be on MMS (Minerals and Metals Sector) and the diamond industry in Canada. Then there was "on-the-fly reporting"—exciting to say the least.

This position within the Communications Branch was a far cry from the lay view association of the government as a boring institution. With NRCAN I found myself attending weekly events with the NRCAT, the department's mascot, and interviewing NRCAN scientists about their involvement with some of the most innovative research projects that are being conducted in the country today.

The top three highlights of my co-op experience?

3. Riding in the same elevator as NRCAN's Deputy Minister George Anderson.
2. Riding in the same elevator as NRCAN's Minister Herb Dhaliwah.
1. Seeing my finished work published daily on NRCAN's Intranet site.

All kidding aside, writing for *The Source* was one of the most creative and rewarding jobs I have had as a co-op student who has



Co-op student Tiffany Quan spending some quality time with NRCAN's mascot, NRCAT.

now completed three work terms. As an inspiring journalist, the grandness of the title Assistant Editor did do the post justice. For those who are cynical of government work and may think of it as typical 9 to 5, this job may prove to you otherwise. Though not unlimited, there is room for creative movement in this position and that is what lies in the beauty of writing.

I encourage those who are interested in honing their skills as a journalist to write for *The Source*, working under the Editor, Joanna Baker. With the opportunity to really make each story your own, by-lines are of plenty in building a strong portfolio of written works. Top co-op employer? NRCAN is the word . . . or acronym. ▲

Fishing for that Perfect Job

► The benefits of job search websites

By Jen Chan

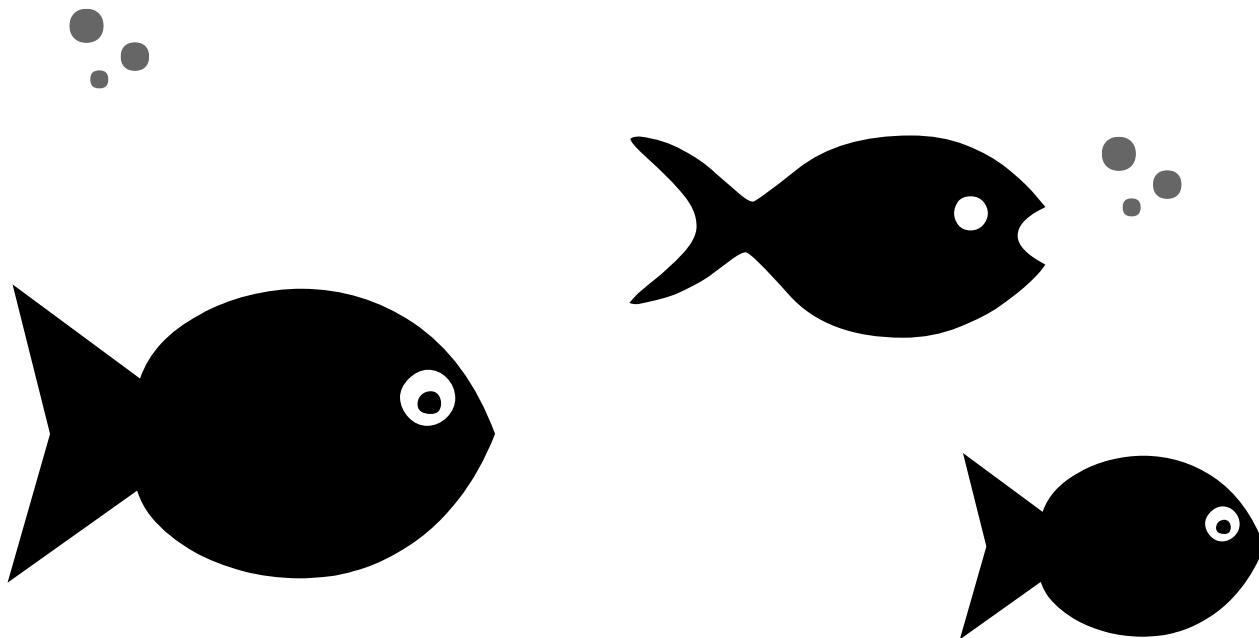
The Communication Co-op program teaches us to develop a variety of important skills as well as provides many amazing job opportunities. We should not assume, however, that simply because we have the co-op experience and knowledge, we are guaranteed all of the jobs that we set out to apply for. A major difference between co-op and the real world is that while you are part of the program, a pool of prospective employers is provided for you. This changes upon graduation; you have to find those jobs yourself, and students often don't know where to begin.

The current trend involves using a range of resources to search for work, and in this technologically-driven age, the Internet is one of the primary tools. Many organizations post jobs on their company websites, while others choose to post theirs on large job search sites. At any rate, be prepared to take your job search online. As Marcia Shimizu, one of the Communication Co-op Coordinators says: "Currently, approximately 10% of all jobs are still being posted using more traditional methods like newspaper ads or postings at employment centers."

A great resource is workopolisCampus.com, Canada's biggest job search site for post-secondary students. While many other job sites exist, many of the jobs posted require years of experience that even a veteran co-op student may not have. Most of the jobs listed on workopolisCampus are entry-level positions that ask for one or two years of experience—perfect for co-op graduates.

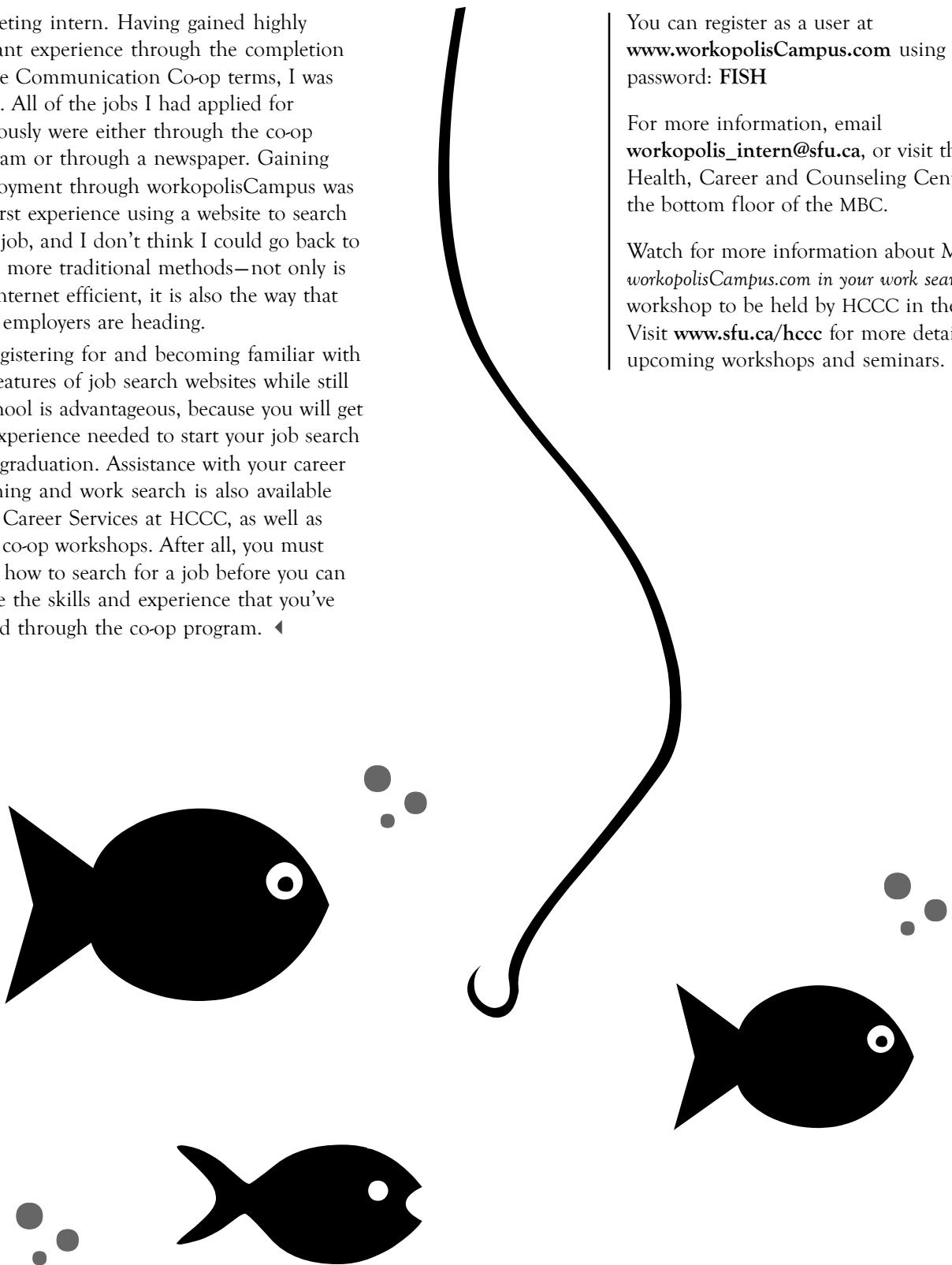
In partnership with SFU's Health, Career, and Counseling Centre (HCCC), the website is free to all students and recent alumni who use the school password (FISH). Not only does workopolisCampus exist as a basic job search engine, but it also offers many features such as on-line resumes and 'CareerAlerts!' which are pre-saved searches that automatically run and send you email notification of interesting jobs. These features make searching for a job convenient and less frustrating for the job seeker, whether it be a job between co-op terms, the summer, or a full-time permanent job after graduation.

Upon registering as a workopolisCampus user, one of the first jobs I viewed was a posting to be this year's workopolisCampus



marketing intern. Having gained highly relevant experience through the completion of five Communication Co-op terms, I was hired. All of the jobs I had applied for previously were either through the co-op program or through a newspaper. Gaining employment through workopolisCampus was my first experience using a website to search for a job, and I don't think I could go back to using more traditional methods—not only is the Internet efficient, it is also the way that most employers are heading.

Registering for and becoming familiar with the features of job search websites while still at school is advantageous, because you will get the experience needed to start your job search after graduation. Assistance with your career planning and work search is also available from Career Services at HCCC, as well as from co-op workshops. After all, you must learn how to search for a job before you can utilize the skills and experience that you've gained through the co-op program. ▲



You can register as a user at www.workopolisCampus.com using SFU's password: **FISH**

For more information, email workopolis_intern@sfu.ca, or visit the Health, Career and Counseling Centre on the bottom floor of the MBC.

Watch for more information about *Maximizing workopolisCampus.com in your work search*, a workshop to be held by HCCC in the spring. Visit www.sfu.ca/hccc for more details about upcoming workshops and seminars.

Where Are They Now?

► Tips to improve the interview process

By Elana Chan

This issue of *Where Are They Now?* will be a touch out of the ordinary. When searching for a prime example for a successful SFU co-op alumnus, it was suggested to me to interview Thoren Hudyma, Senior Press Officer with Prime Minister Jean Chretien's office. She resides in icy Ottawa, and at the time of writing she was as busy as ever, especially because the PM was scheduled to retire before the end of the year!

As a result of attempting to interview someone I have yet to meet in person, here is what I learned:

Get in touch with your interviewee straight away. Because I foresaw that this process takes time, I emailed Thoren right away and a few days later I got a reply from her. She sounded like a really nice person on email as she explained that she would be leaving for Afghanistan in a few days. She also provided me with three email addresses to reach her during this time.

Technologies such as e-mail allow us to communicate differently than we used to

Do your research and ask appropriate questions. I did a search online and found out that Thoren used to work in the Office of the Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Status of Women). Research helps the writer create an intended focus for the article, as well as choosing the right questions to ask. I

asked Thoren how co-op had helped her in her career, as well as how she handled controversial issues such as the current debate over formally legalizing same-sex marriage.

Follow-up is essential. I did not hear from Thoren for a few weeks and figured that she did not have Internet access in Afghanistan as she planned. I emailed her to make sure my last email did not get lost in the sea of emails that we all get each day, especially if you work in the PM's office! Finally she phoned me. She wanted to look at the interview questions more closely on her way back to Ottawa and said she would get back in touch with me within a few days.

Have an interview and writing schedule. Had I had followed a timeline strictly, I would have actually completed the interview, and with much more ease. When I did not receive Thoren's email, I made sure that my email was working. I got her office number from my research and phoned Thoren in addition to of emailing her. It did become a bit frustrating as I was beginning to foster a relationship with her answering machine, but I finally got to talk to her with the help of her receptionist. It turns out she had told one of her assistants to send me the interview answers, but somehow I did not receive them. She offered to send them out once more. At press time however, I had not received her answers yet.

Although it was not possible for us to meet in person, I could tell from briefly talking to Thoren that she would be interesting to interview. Technologies such as e-mail allow us to communicate differently than we used to, but despite the advantage of breaking down distances, communication has also become less personal, and cannot replace a meeting in person. What is most important however, is to use email wisely as noted in the recommendations above. ▲

Meet the Faculty

► An interview with Dr. Kirsten McAllister

By Amy Mullis

Anyone who has visited the Communication Department since September may have noticed a few new faces. One of those new faces is Dr. Kirsten McAllister.

Dr. McAllister, who received her PhD in Sociology from Carleton University, joins SFU after completing a post doctorate at the Institute for Cultural Research at Lancaster University in the UK. However, she is not unfamiliar with SFU. She completed both her BA (Geography) and MA (Communication) right here on The Hill and is enthused about being back. "I have a great amount of respect for the tradition of socially and politically committed scholarship at SFU, which always has had a creative and critical dimension. I am also enthused by the interdisciplinary scholarship of new faculty in the department and across the University," says Dr. McAllister. "In addition, because I benefited greatly from teachers who were dedicated to a liberal arts education at SFU, I feel committed to contributing to this tradition of education," she adds.

Dr. McAllister is looking forward to building connections within, across and outside the University to do creative and critical research. Her research interests are diverse and include memory and political violence with a focus on the photographic images, archives and memorials of Japanese Canadians interned during World War II. Recently she has also become interested in asylum seekers and refugees, new information technology and surveillance with regards to the re-configurations of identity and social bodies.

While this is her first experience teaching co-op students, Dr. McAllister views the program as an important element of a well-rounded education: "Gaining experience working on projects with others who depend on you to fulfill your responsibilities in new and challenging contexts is extremely valuable. It gives students the opportunity to move beyond the abstractions of the classroom and apply their skills in critical thinking, team-



Dr. Kirsten McAllister, one of the School of Communication's new faculty members

work, writing and research. It also gives the opportunity to move beyond what they have studied and be innovative, learning from and making contributions to a range of different organizations."

Dr. McAllister is interested in the experiences and insight co-op students will bring to her classes and is looking forward to learning from them as they apply what they have learned in the field to their schoolwork. ▲

“Co-op gives students the opportunity to move beyond the abstractions of the classroom”

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For the last part of my internship, I was stationed at Radio 3, which was a radical departure from the previous two placements. The Radio 3 team works in an unconventional style, meaning no one has just one job. Each person works on every aspect of production. Here, I was encouraged to create something interesting, different, and 'outside the box,' to use the old cliché. This was surprisingly difficult because there were so many options and opportunities. There was one assignment I particularly enjoyed where I asked friends to tell me two-minute-long stories about everything from "the emergency room" to "getting caught."

All in all, I have not experienced a better co-op term. I have realized that the best aspect about creating radio is learning about people's stories. My job this term was to find interesting ways to tell those stories. To top off my amazing summer, I was offered the opportunity to continue working for CBC Radio! ◀

PlacePro Tips

- All online applications are due at 9:00 p.m. PST on the job deadline date.
- Your online portfolio for each application should include four documents: SIS, cover letter, resume, and transcript.
- Organize your application portfolios by typing the correct number into the *Order* field beside each document. The correct order is SIS form = 1, cover letter = 2, resume = 3, and transcript = 4.
- Only tag postings as *Interested* if you are actually applying for the position.
- Always have a default portfolio containing your SIS, resume and transcript uploaded.
- Keep your portfolio for a specific job posting online for at least one week before changing or taking it down.

Statistics Corner

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Who we are

New admits	25	24
Returning students	58	66
Total students enrolled	83	90

Matching

Students matched	65	75
Round One matches	7	10
Self-directed co-ops	10	10

Who's doing what

Eight-month term	13	19
First co-op	22	18
Second co-op	12	15
Third co-op	21	17
Fourth co-op	10	10
Fifth co-op	0	4
Part-time co-op	1	2

Where we're working

Greater Vancouver	56	55
Out-of-town	6	16
Overseas	3	4

Who we're working for

Federal government	10	20
Provincial government	2	4
Municipal government	1	2
Government agencies	5	5
Not-for-profit	17	11
Private	30	30

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