

# NEEDS, WANTS & WISHES: Preparing Students For Life Beyond LCC

By Richard Andrews, Writer

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, GLOBALIZATION AND SEISMIC SOCIAL SHIFTS ARE TRANSFORMING THE WORKPLACE AND TRADITIONAL CAREER PATHS. LCC ACADEMIC ADVISORS, KIM TULLOCH AND MAGGIE OWEN, OFFER THEIR PERSPECTIVES ON WHAT STUDENTS NEED AND HOW THEY CAN PREPARE FOR THEIR FUTURE. ►



**Q** IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT SKILLS DO STUDENTS NEED FOR UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS AND THE CHANGING WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE?

**M. Owen:** These days, students require more than just academic qualifications; they need technical knowledge, transferable skills and the ability to communicate effectively. Self-advocacy is also important. LCC students need to represent themselves well and ask thoughtful, pertinent questions. Part of our role is to provide an opportunity to practice through meetings with university representatives and industry professionals.

**K. Tulloch:** Students should develop problem-solving skills and be adaptable. It is also important to demonstrate leadership qualities, not just through visible leadership roles, but as role models, by engaging in community and school life. Many universities are looking for these characteristics when reviewing applications.

**MITCH  
GARBER  
AT THE  
LCC CAREER  
SPEAKERS  
SERIES**



**Q** WHAT ARE STUDENTS' MOST COMMON CONCERNS WHEN IT COMES TO UNIVERSITY APPLICATIONS?

**K. Tulloch:** They often ask: "Will I get into university?" Many students like to explore options but sometimes become fixated on a particular path without sufficient knowledge about whether or not it's realistically achievable and if a given university is suitable for them. Ms. Owen and I gather a lot of information by visiting universities, meeting with representatives and conducting our own research in order to give students a realistic picture. But first, students must determine their individual needs, wants and wishes, which is a process we navigate together through the academic advising course and workshops offered to our students.

**Q** HOW DO YOU ADVISE STUDENTS WHICH UNIVERSITY PROGRAM THEY SHOULD CHOOSE?

**M. Owen:** We work with a developmental model rather than a prescriptive approach. The student's interests, classes, academic progress and co-curriculars are used to identify areas to pursue and define goals. We determine what skills and steps are needed to make their goals

ACADEMIC  
ADVISOR  
MAGGIE  
OWEN



a reality. Then we look at the expectations of a given university to determine suitability for admission.

Most importantly, we emphasize the idea of fit. University is not just about attending classes; it's about being part of a greater community of learners and engaging with it. Students have to feel that they belong and know how to recognize opportunities that will enhance their learning and life experience. Many universities offer excellent programs and our job is to help students find the environment where they will grow and thrive.

**K. Tulloch:** It's important for students to avoid comparing their path with the one taken by friends because every student is unique. The end goal for the students is the same — to gain admission to university. However, what that looks like is a very individual process in terms of program choices, extra-curricular opportunities and the universities a student chooses to apply to.

**Q HOW DO YOU SUPPORT STUDENTS THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY APPLICATION PROCESS?**

**K. Tulloch:** Applying to university today is more involved and more competitive than it used to be, so we try to offer students as much guidance as possible. LCC's "Common App" Wednesdays, for example, is an optional university application workshop, where our grade 11 students are given step-by-step instructions on how to prepare applications for the US, Canada and the UK. We also help guide them in developing a list of universities so that students have many good choices.

**Q WHAT OTHER ACTIVITIES DO YOU OFFER?**

**M. Owen:** In addition to the one-on-one advising sessions and workshops, we also plan initiatives to connect students with the community, which can help inform their decisions. A student-run career speakers series, university tours, information sessions with universities and CEGEP admission representatives, as well as guest speakers who present on a variety of topics, are just a few examples.

**Q SHOULD STUDENTS PREPARE FOR THEIR ACADEMIC ADVISING SESSIONS?**

**K. Tulloch:** Before meeting with one of us, it's helpful for students to research their options and ask themselves: "What do I want? What will make me happy?" Parents also need to set their parameters, define expectations and determine their budget.

**M. Owen:** We visit classes and have an online classroom with plenty of resources to help prepare for a meeting.

**K. Tulloch & M. Owen:** Read, read, read! Research, research, research! Counselling is a collaborative endeavour. ▣

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