



Inspiring Future-Ready Leaders

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Creating a better future through learning

The Faculty of Open Learning & Career Development changes how lifelong learners think about and engage with the world. Our enriching opportunities help build knowledge and competencies, so learners can navigate rapidly evolving workplaces and make positive contributions to society. Whether they are upgrading academic qualifications to take degree studies or acquiring skills to enter or advance in the workforce, we empower learners to become leaders in their careers and communities. Our work drives innovation and growth in our region's economic engine.

For over 50 years, our Transition Year Program has increased successful participation of Black and Indigenous students at Dalhousie. Like our predecessors who launched this trailblazing program, we constantly seek ways to reduce barriers and improve the learning experiences we offer. Our Faculty's close to 200 courses respond to the needs of lifelong learners and employers.

Our goal is to ensure skills development programs address actual labour gaps, reducing unemployment in our region and beyond. Working collaboratively with communities and employers, we strive to expand our knowledge of the open learning ecosystem so we can better anticipate and respond to current and future needs.

Through this campaign, we will increase financial support to remove barriers. We will expand our programming to respond to changing work environments and deepen our knowledge of open learning innovations. We will ultimately strengthen the workforce by giving learners tools and skills that meet the complex needs of today's employers.

Enhancing our impact

Inspiring Future-Ready Leaders

We are committed to creating leaders who are truly ready for the work world of today and tomorrow. To achieve this, we offer innovative programs, specialized skills training and experiential learning opportunities that prepare our students for whatever is next — whether they launch a new career, pursue more education or start a business.

1. Bursaries for Barrired Learners — \$2.4M

Building on our extensive experience with the Transition Year Program, our Bursaries for Barrired Learners will improve access to lifelong learning experiences at Dalhousie by addressing the emotional, physical, socioeconomic, cultural or geographical barriers learners may need to overcome to achieve their goals. These bursaries will focus on improving access for Black Nova Scotian and Indigenous learners, immigrants and refugees, differently abled learners, international students, former youth-in-care, learners who have encountered the justice system, mature learners, first-generation learners and rural learners. Our goal is for every qualified learner to be able to access the lifelong learning they need — from university to professional development — to realize the future they want.

2. Strengthening our impact through research and evaluation — \$2.4M

The world of work is changing rapidly and constantly. Entire sectors are shrinking as new ones emerge. To continue offering the most effective and responsive lifelong learning programming in this reality, we need a deeper understanding of how our programs impact individuals, organizations and communities. Through this campaign, we will expand the work of our Office of Program and Impact Evaluation. Studying different aspects of our programming within the open learning ecosystem, we will be thought and practice leaders in lifelong learning. We will make data-driven decisions to benefit our learners. Focusing on student experience, we will conduct impact studies on microcredentialling, recognition of prior learning, community engagement, accessibility, and different delivery modalities and teaching methodologies. This research will help us better connect lifelong learning to labour market gaps, contributing to local, regional and national economic development.



WE DEVELOP PROGRAMS THAT ARE EVIDENCE-BASED SO OUR LEARNERS GET THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE.

—DEAN DIANNE TYERS

Where research meets lifelong learning

Dr. Dianne Tyers is the Dean of the Faculty of Open Learning & Career Development. The Faculty consistently offers exceptional, responsive programming thanks to its strong culture of inquiry, evaluation and research.

“We develop programs that are evidence-based so our learners get the best possible experience. Through extensive evaluation and robust research, we keep our fingers on the pulse of the employment market, the higher education landscape, the open learning ecosystem, and, of course, on the needs of our learners and the communities we serve. This critical groundwork informs everything we do and gives us confidence that we will continue to deliver relevant and impactful programming for our diverse range of learners.”

Where generosity meets success

Kori Hamilton knows first-hand the life-changing impact when people step up to remove the financial barriers to learning. The recipient of the Myrna (Millard) Ward Entrance Bursary, Hamilton is fulfilling her dream of becoming a nurse, something she couldn't have done without the support of the Dalhousie community.

"I had a difficult childhood, bouncing around foster care systems and lacking the necessary support to stay on track," she says. "At one point, I was living in my car."

Later, while working in a long-term care facility in Saskatchewan, Hamilton had an opportunity to train as a continuing care assistant. She immediately knew she found her passion.

"Being able to help people and give their families peace of mind really inspired me to think about what else I could do," she says. "I remembered how nurses were always there for my family, so I decided that's what I wanted to be."

Fast forward to 2018 when Hamilton along with her husband and child moved to Nova Scotia where she hoped to train as a licensed practical nurse. When she realized she lacked the prerequisites, she turned to the Nova Scotia Native Council for advice and was referred to Dalhousie's Transition Year Program (TYP).

"The TYP was a turning point for me. I learned how to succeed at university and that I had potential beyond what I'd previously imagined. It changed my goal: I wanted to study nursing at Dalhousie."

A straight-A student in the TYP, Hamilton was accepted into the School of Nursing. Thanks to the financial support she received, she is now making her dream come true.

"It is the generosity of others that helped me turn my life around and become the student, worker and mother I am today," says Hamilton. "I cannot express how grateful I am."

Our Bursaries for Barrieted Learners will help more learners reach their full potential.



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IT IS THE GENEROSITY OF OTHERS THAT HELPED ME TURN MY LIFE AROUND.

KORI HAMILTON

3. Inclusive programming options for lifelong learners — \$2.4M

Pursuing a university degree directly after high school is the right option for some learners. For others, there are countless different paths to success and fulfillment. Some may seek non-degree education or training. Others may decide later in life what their dream career could be. Lifelong learners may face family or full-time work commitments that require greater flexibility in their education, such as online learning or options outside regular work hours. Many face economic, social or financial barriers that prevent them from pursuing further education. To address skills shortages in today's labour market, it is critical that we create more inclusive and flexible opportunities for all of these learners. We have launched three alternative programs to do just that — an open credit course called Foundations of Academic Success, microcredentialling and recognition of prior learning. Through funding support, we will enhance and expand these proven initiatives, empowering even more learners with the current skills employers are seeking.

- **Foundations of Academic Success** is a course designed to help learners build the skills needed to succeed in university-level degree studies. It is an “open credit” course, meaning those interested in taking the course do not need to be accepted into a degree program to take it. This allows them to test whether they are interested in degree studies and to gain confidence in their ability to be successful in credit courses. Should they go on to pursue an undergraduate degree at Dalhousie University, their credit from Foundations of Academic Success may be applied to their degree (depending upon the field of study).

- **Microcredentialling** helps learners meet skill and education gaps in the rapidly evolving labour market. Our microcredentials program offers a wide range of short and easily accessible learning opportunities outside traditional higher education degrees. Learners earn microcredentials by showing a mastery of skills and competencies they achieve through micro-learning courses, training programs or experiential learning in the Faculty of Open Learning & Career Development. With microcredentials validated by Dalhousie, learners show employers that they have successfully acquired a skill or competency that is highly valued in the workforce.

- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** assesses past formal and informal learning and life experiences and awards advanced standing or academic equivalency in certificate, diploma or degree programs. RPL can help learners meet entry requirements for a credential or earn advanced standing, decreasing the time it will take them to enter or complete a program.

Our Certificate in Police Leadership offers learners the flexibility of online courses and Recognition of Prior Learning.



THIS MICROCREDENTIAL ALLOWS EACH EMPLOYEE TO HELP FOSTER A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE.

— LISA NOWLAN

Where collaboration meets inclusion

Lisa Nowlan is the Diversity and Inclusion Program Consultant at the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). CIHI's entire workforce — over 700 employees — completed the Faculty's Foundations of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace microcredential.

“Our goal for CIHI is to have our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion be integrated throughout our day-to-day values and practices. This microcredential allows each employee to create a foundation using tools from the course to build on and help foster a more inclusive workplace.

“Now our conversations and interactions are changing — people are making space for EDI and working to incorporate their learning into their daily activities. Working with instructor Camille Dundas and the Faculty of Open Learning & Career Development is helping us get there.”

Transforming lives and communities

Removing barriers and improving access to learning for all, delivering first-in-class programs that respond to learner and community needs, enriching lifelong learning through in-depth research – there are many ways the Dalhousie Faculty of Open Learning & Career Development can make a difference for learners and our region.

Our goals are ambitious, but achieving them is within our reach, with your help.

With your support, our programming will help employ the unemployed, upskill the under-employed, launch new careers, and offer accessible and flexible learning environments that support access to lifelong learning for everyone.

Together, we will achieve lasting, positive change with wide-ranging benefits. We will transform not just the lives of our learners, but also the communities where they live and work.

To learn how you can make a difference by supporting the Faculty of Open Learning & Career Development, please contact us.

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