

NOHFC Helps Pair Land Full Time Employment

Looking back, many university graduates will tell you the worst part of graduating is figuring out how to get that first foot in the door to start off a professional career.

Courtney Gilbert, a Communications graduate, of Espanola and Crystal Craig, a Business Management graduate, from Sudbury, are two Laurentian University alumni who were staring that dilemma square in the face during the summer of 2007.

Starting their careers, they found they were treading water rather than making waves in the professional world. Employers were looking to hire, but there was little demand for “entry level” positions.

“When I used to apply for jobs it would be ‘three to five years experience,’” said Gilbert.

Three to five years that neither recent graduate had.

Opportunity Knocks

But all was not lost for Craig and Gilbert. The two put their noses to the grindstone and spent time mulling their options to gain the experience they needed to get the job they wanted. As it turned out, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation’s (NOHFC) Youth Internship and Co-op Program supported the type of opportunities they were looking for.

“It really helps in terms of giving newly graduated students a chance,” said Gilbert. “It’s kind of a little spot just reserved for you. It helped to get that leg up.”



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At a Glance:

WHERE

Sudbury, Ontario

WHO

Science North and interns
Crystal Craig and Courtney
Gilbert

HOW NOHFC HELPED

Funding helped create
internship opportunities for
the two graduates when no
other prospects existed.

The NOHFC’s Youth Internship and Co-op Program works with employers to provide Northern Ontario students the opportunity to enter a co-op placement or internship if they are currently attending or are a recent graduate of an accredited college or university. These co-ops and internships are completed at workplaces that benefit the students and give them the skills and experience they need to enter into the professional workforce afterwards.

“It’s giving you a chance to learn what you’re all about,” Gilbert said. “You’re mentored by your manager, so it’s a chance for professional development. It’s a really great opportunity.”

Professional Development Close to Home

For Craig and Gilbert, the internships made possible by the NOHFC gave them the opportunity to stay close to home while obtaining the experience they needed for the future.

“I built a little network here and didn’t want to have to start that all over again, I wanted to stay in Sudbury,” Gilbert said.

Gilbert had one place on her mind from the start, applying for multiple positions at Science North. Through funding from the NOHFC’s Youth Internship and Co-op Program, she received a one-year internship with the organization.



Ontario

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du patrimoine du Nord
de l'Ontario

“This is the type of organizational culture that I like to fit into,” Gilbert said. “I could see myself staying here.” Craig, who had applied for positions across Ontario, found the light at the end of the tunnel also in the form of an internship at Science North. The placement was perfect for her given she had hoped to find work experience close to home.

“When I was in university I ultimately thought I was going to move down south,” she said. “I’m glad it ended up this way because I was born and raised in Sudbury, all my family is here. I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Taking the Next Step

After a year and over 900 hours invested gaining the work experience the interns needed, they were able to land permanent positions at Science North. Gilbert stayed on as a client services assistant and Craig netted a job as a Sales Leader.

Neither would be where they are today without the initial support of the NOHFC’s Youth Internship and Co-op Program.

“I would definitely recommend it,” Craig said. “It’s a great stepping stone. It’s a short period of time and it’s a great starting point. It’s a great opportunity to get a feel for what the work environment is like. I wouldn’t overlook it.”

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For more information on the NOHFC’s Youth Internship and Co-op Program,
call 1-800-461-8329 or visit www.nohfc.com