

Elevation

2019-20 Year in Review

Ryerson
University

Graduate
Studies



Elevation



Graduate education is rising to new heights with more PhD programs, a global focus and enhancement of Ryerson's reputation as a comprehensive innovation university for the modern world.

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“Together, our graduate community is rising to the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary world.”

The vibrant design of this publication is based on artwork by Pam Lostracco featured in the new interdisciplinary graduate student space on the seventh floor of the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex. Expressed through vertical elements such as tall buildings, trees and colour gradients, the theme is growth and elevation.

As vice-provost and dean of the Yeates School of Graduate Studies (YSGS), I see these visuals as metaphor for graduate

Message from the Vice-Provost and Dean

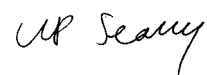
education at Ryerson: reaching new heights as we collectively build our reputation as a comprehensive innovation university that produces exceptional career-ready leaders and thoughtful global citizens.

To this end, we are expanding our doctoral programming to meet the need for critical thinkers and complex problem solvers. New PhDs in management and urban health are slated for launch – pending government approval – with several others in development. And as more highly qualified doctoral students join Ryerson, we plan to support their success with fourth-year funding.

Indeed, this is an exciting juncture for graduate education. This fall, we expanded our social media presence with the launch of a Twitter account. Search committees are currently underway for new associate deans of programs and student affairs. Multiple admission dates are planned to serve more prospective graduate students.

We are continuing to give voice to students and enrich their graduate experience through engagement initiatives such as the Graduate Leadership Institute, GRADcafé, GRADTalks, the GRADCentral D2L portal, annual student contests, the Future Smart professional skills development program and ongoing support for Indigenous outreach and experiential learning.

Together, our graduate community is rising to the challenges and opportunities of the contemporary world. Join us as we elevate Graduate Studies at Ryerson to unprecedented heights.



Dr. Cory Searcy

Vice-Provost and Dean
Yeates School of Graduate Studies



Changing his story

When he was nine, Dominic Akena was abducted and forced to become a child soldier in Uganda. His story was featured in the 2007 Academy Award-nominated documentary *War/Dance*, directed by Sean Fine and Andrea Nix. Now, he's telling his own stories as a documentary filmmaker.



What was it like being a child soldier?

It was terrifying. We were in constant fear of being beaten by the rebel soldiers who abducted my brother and me. After they separated us, I became emotionally numb but knew I had to go on. Eventually I managed to escape but I never saw my brother again. It still haunts me to this day.

Why did you want to be a documentary filmmaker?

When Sean and Andrea came to my village, I didn't know what a documentary was. But I saw them use their vision and skills to share my story with the world, and that changed my life physically, mentally and emotionally. That showed me the power of film and I wanted to learn that for myself.

How was your Ryerson graduate experience?

Ryerson played a huge role in my journey. As a community, Ryerson is woke and very supportive of students in special situations like mine. [Former documentary media graduate program director] Katy McCormick really helped me with the application process as an international student, and is a big reason why I'm here today. Ryerson gave me the opportunity to tell my story and I'm very grateful for that.

What is your thesis film *Safari* about?

"Safari" is a Swahili term for human journey, so it's about my immigration story and what it means to be a child soldier. There's the physical journey of trying to embrace life in a new culture and environment, and the mental journey of trying to compartmentalize my memories and deal with my trauma.

How did Ryerson Graduate Studies help you become career-ready?

My supervisors Dr. Gerda Kammerer and Dr. Blake Fitzpatrick were instrumental in my thesis film's success. Ryerson Graduate Studies taught me to produce films with a level of confidence and comfortability I didn't have before... I couldn't see another purpose of going through all of that, other than to tell stories that matter.

Dominic Akena

Documentary Media MFA alumnus
Faculty of Communication & Design

"Ryerson is woke and very supportive of students in special situations like mine."



Former child soldier
Dominic Akena harnesses the
power of visual storytelling.

► Watch a video about Dominic's
journey at: ryerson.ca/grad-year-review-profiles

Emily Shepherdson is developing autonomous robotic technologies for space exploration.

Watch a video about Emily's research at: ryerson.ca/grad-year-review-profiles

“We need more female engineers because we need different perspectives.”

Emily Shepherdson

Aerospace Engineering PhD student
Faculty of Engineering and
Architectural Science

Emily Shepherdson left a lucrative management career to pursue a passion that was sparked in childhood – space exploration. The recipient of the 2018 Amelia Earhart Fellowship is researching technologies that will enable robots to operate in space without humans.

Why is your research important?

As we look to send humans back to the moon and eventually Mars, there is a need to develop technologies so that spacecraft can go and assemble themselves. By autonomously building additional space stations, we can expand our presence beyond Earth's orbit and significantly reduce risk to human life.

How have your thesis supervisors supported your research?

Dr. Anton de Ruyter and Dr. Guangjun Liu have been extremely supportive. They let me take control of my research and apply my creativity to it, which I'm very fortunate for. Also, they encourage me to take advantage of opportunities that may advance my career.

What advice do you have for grad students?

Make sure you're researching something you're passionate about because it's what keeps you going through the ups and downs. Try not to reinvent the wheel as you go, and be open to exploring new areas that you didn't know existed.

How has your experience been as a woman in STEM?

I've been fortunate to have great mentors but we still have a long way to go in terms of equity and diversity. We need more female engineers because we need different perspectives. By having more women as role models, I hope young girls will realize that the world of STEM is an exciting place to be with endless opportunities.

Shay Erlich

Child and Youth Care MA graduate
Faculty of Community Services

Shay Erlich's master's research focused on understanding social circus – using circus arts as a medium for social justice – as child and youth care practice. With fellow wheelchair user Jen Roy, Erlich co-founded the Cyborg Circus Project, a disability-led dance, circus and social-service organization with the mandate to provide supports and services that allow disabled young people to thrive.

Why did you choose Ryerson?

Ryerson has always had a strong focus on social innovation and the impressive Child and Youth Care (CYC) MA program really attracted me. They helped me to not be so afraid of taking leaps. It made me feel that if I didn't feel satisfied with what I saw out in the world, that I could go out there and dream something of my own into being.

How did faculty support you as a graduate student with a disability?

The professors at Ryerson are adept at systems navigation and helped me overcome many accessibility and systemic barriers. I could not have asked for better folks than Kiaras [Gharabaghi] and Jennifer [Martin, former CYC graduate program director]. Without their support there would have been much more struggle.

My supervisor Dr. Stephanie Griffin was also pretty fantastic. She has a circus background and really helped me to crystallize my research vision.

What advice would you give grad students?

It's important to go in with a clear understanding of what your goals are and how you want to accomplish them. For me, this meant saying no to a disability-focused internship that wasn't actually the best fit for my goals, but doing so eventually led to an even better placement. Also, it's always beneficial to seek out opportunities beyond your department, particularly if your goals fit between multiple departments and programs.

“Ryerson has always had a strong focus on social innovation.”

Shay Erlich empowers disabled youth as co-founder of the Cyborg Circus Project.

► Watch a video about Shay's research at: ryerson.ca/grad-year-review-profiles

Envisioning a better world

Dr. Karen Spalding leads the Master of Health Administration (Community Care), a new 16-month program designed for working health-care professionals.

► View additional video content at: ryerson.ca/grad-year-review-profiles



“It’s a privilege to be at Ryerson Graduate Studies and work with these students.”

Dr. Karen Spalding

Director, Master of Health Administration (Community Care)
Ted Rogers School of Management

Before helping to launch the Master of Health Administration (Community Care) (MHA(CC)) in 2018, Dr. Karen Spalding led the development of the Master of Nursing (MN), the first graduate program in the Faculty of Community Services. As director of the groundbreaking, modular MHA(CC), Dr. Spalding is driven to fill gaps in educational opportunities for students.

How has the response been to the MHA(CC)?

Students have said the program provided exactly what they needed to learn and expanded their perspective on health care, which is what you want for graduate students.

The first cohort has just finished so it’s very exciting to watch what they accomplish in their careers, much like the MN alumni.

How do you support graduate students as a supervisor?

Recognizing that graduate students in this day and age have multiple responsibilities, I am there to support them via regular meetings, setting expectations, giving feedback and working as a team, but also pushing them to think broadly.

I learn a lot from my students as well so it’s a privilege to work with them. Also, I miss working with patients and families so indirectly improving their situation through my students is rewarding.

What advice do you have for graduate students?

Make the most of all the resources available to you as a grad student. At Ryerson, there are lots of opportunities to get involved, such as committees, YSGS and Faculty events, etc.

Get to know your fellow graduate students. I’ve kept in touch with people from my master’s and PhD programs and to this day we continue to share ideas and support each other.

Celebrating Excellence

Sharing your stories

YSGS honours the winners of the My Grad Story and My Motto contests.

Top photo, from left: Michael Mercer, molecular science MSc student; Charlotte Ferworn, biomedical physics PhD student; Joseph Fida, chemical engineering MASc student; Niko Casuncad, urban development MPI student; Dr. Cory Searcy, vice-provost and dean, YSGS; Masooma Ali, urban development MPI student; Dr. Janice Waddell, interim associate dean, student affairs, YSGS; Melanie Zuzarte, child and youth care MA student; Justin Rain, policy studies PhD student; and Kimia Rashidisisan, literatures of modernity MA student.



Lauding our leaders

Recognizing the recipients of the Jennifer Mactavish Graduate Student Leadership Awards.

Bottom photo, from left: Dr. Jennifer Mactavish, former vice-provost and dean, YSGS; Arvin Jagayat, psychology PhD student; Adisa Julien, molecular science PhD student; and Brittany Jamieson, psychology PhD student. Not pictured: Kira Brown, film + photography preservation and collections management MA student.



Supporting student success

Congratulations to the 2020 recipients of the YSGS Outstanding Contribution to Graduate Education Award, recognizing faculty excellence in mentoring graduate students.

Dr. Miranda Campbell
Faculty of Communication & Design

Dr. Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee
Ted Rogers School of Management

Dr. Mehrab Mehrvar
YSGS Interdisciplinary

Dr. Maurice Roche
Faculty of Arts

Dr. Alireza Sadeghian
Faculty of Science

Dr. Sharareh Taghipour
Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science

► Learn more about our outstanding graduate community at: ryerson.ca/grad-year-review-celebrating

Graduate Studies at a Glance

Programs

42 Master's

18 PhD

4 PMDip

New PhD programs*

Management

Urban Health

2,926

Students[†]

1,124

YSGS members[†]

\$5.5M

Federal and provincial scholarship support[†]

289

Federal and provincial scholarships[†]

12

Vanier Scholars[‡]

*pending government approval

[†]2019-20 data

[‡]total to date



Graduate education is a collaborative responsibility between YSGS and the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Communication & Design, Faculty of Community Services, Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science, Faculty of Science and Ted Rogers School of Management.

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► View videos and additional content at: ryerson.ca/grad-year-review

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