ARTS | WORK | EXPERIENCE

YEAR END REPORT
April 1, 2018 – March 31, 2019

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Message from the AWE Working Group

It has been a busy and exciting year for Arts Work Experience (AWE). Our year-over-year growth and impressive student and alumni stories demonstrate AWE’s impact both on and off campus. As one of the cornerstones of our Faculty’s Experiential Learning offerings, outlined in Change for Good the Faculty of Arts 2017-2022 Academic Strategic Plan, AWE continues to provide diverse and enriching opportunities that allow students to put their skills and knowledge to work outside of the classroom. As AWE continues to grow, we are always working to improve to better serve the needs of our students. Contact AWE Working Group members with feedback or ideas, we would love to hear from you!

Pictured, AWE Working Group Members L to R: Madisen Gee - AWE Communications and Program Support Intern; Laura Kerslake - Work Experience Coordinator; Allen Ball - Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning); Amber Nicholson - Career Development Officer; Kristy Wuetherick - Senior Office Student Programs and Services

Background

Arts Work Experience (AWE) grew out of the desire by Arts undergraduate students to have an opportunity to gain skills-based professional work experience before graduation. AWE began as a pilot program in 2011. Since then, the program has grown significantly with more students joining the program and securing work terms every year.

AWE provides students with the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in workplace scenarios and to develop professional experience related to their long-term career goals. The work experience model puts the responsibility on the student to set learning objectives, to provide a valuable contribution to an employer and to reflect on how the experience will impact their long term career management. This process is guided and supported by the Faculty of Arts, AWE staff, the U of A Career Centre, our employer partners and Arts students.

Vision

Arts Work Experience programs connect students, employers and community as a first step in achieving individual, educational and organizational success. It launches Arts students as they begin a journey of innovation, problem solving and the exploration of engaged citizenship and career opportunities.

Mission

UAlberta Arts Work Experience programs provide students with a range of meaningful career development and work term opportunities in a supportive environment that builds student confidence in their abilities to achieve academic and career success. It demonstrates the value of an Arts degree, both on and off campus.
**AWE Student Stories**

Löic Cremer (BA Drama)  
Video Communications Student - PCL Construction Inc.

“As a result of participating in Arts Work Experience, I’ve been able to find work relevant to my degree while also broadening my skill set. AWE helped me get experience that I care about. The skills I’ve learned fit with my career goals, and the connections I’ve made have proven invaluable.”

Löic Cremer (BA Drama)  
Video Communications Student - PCL Construction Inc.

**Mpoe Mogale (BA Political Science)**  
Program Assistant - University of Alberta Undergraduate Research Initiative

“Participating in the Arts Work Experience has been one of the highlights of my undergrad journey. AWE offered me more than just another employment opportunity; with access to services that enhance your career development, I now possess the necessary skills for life after graduation.”

**Mpoe Mogale (BA Political Science)**  
Program Assistant - University of Alberta Undergraduate Research Initiative

**Mark Soriano (BA Psychology)**  
Child Intervention Reporting Intern  
Government of Alberta - Alberta Children’s Services

“I am so grateful for this opportunity to work with Children’s Services. Through AWE, I have developed a deeper understanding of government legislation, policy development, and program evaluation. I’ve also gained practical experience with data visualization, data analytics, using programming languages in a workplace environment. Thanks to the AWE program, I am absolutely ecstatic to see what the future has in store for me.”

**Mark Soriano (BA Psychology)**  
Child Intervention Reporting Intern  
Government of Alberta - Alberta Children’s Services

**Jocelynn Proulx (BA Criminology)**  
Communications Assistant - Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada  
Assessment Officer and Consultation Analyst - Gov’t of Canada Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency

“Arts Work Experience has really helped me in my academic path. This program allows me to relate what I learn in class to my work positions, and apply the skills that I have gained working to my school work. I am happy to be a part of AWE as it provides meaningful work experience that will prepare me for the future.”

**Jocelynn Proulx (BA Criminology)**  
Communications Assistant - Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada  
Assessment Officer and Consultation Analyst - Gov’t of Canada Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
AWE in numbers

AWE students in 2018 – 2019

**WORKED** approximately 52,360+ hours  **EARNED** $1,099,560 with an average wage of $21 per hour

- **220** AWE jobs posted (16% increase).
- **88** Work terms completed (4% increase). 91% located in Edmonton, 9% outside. Fine Arts - 3%, Social Sciences - 87%, Humanities - 10%.
- **130** New students accepted into AWE (23% increase). Fine Arts - 9%, Social Sciences - 74%, Humanities - 17%.
- **280** Total students enrolled in AWE (28% increase). Fine Arts - 7%, Social Sciences - 77%, Humanities - 16%.
- **246** Students attended AWE Information Sessions (6% increase). Fine Arts - 13%, Social Sciences - 65%, Humanities - 14%, undeclared - 8%

For individual Department statistics, please contact AWE staff.
AWE Alumni Stories

Crystal Ren ('15 BA, Economics)
Associate - Oliver Wyman, Singapore

“As an international student from China, I lacked the necessary network, skill sets, and local labour market knowledge in order to succeed in Canada. Participating in AWE opened my eyes to various industries and professions and enabled me to pivot and reposition my career interests in a short period of time with limited risk. Most importantly, I got to acquire maturity and savviness that were much needed in a competitive business field.”

Duncan McCrostie ('19 BA, Political Science & Economics)
Analyst - MNP, Calgary AB

“My two co-op terms gave me a sense of the type of work environment and industry I wanted to work in. Through AWE I developed professional work search skills and I learned how to effectively market myself in resumes and cover letters, and interviews to be competitive. Arts graduates have the ability to be interdisciplinary in the way we approach problems. Our research, writing, critical thinking and analysis skills give us an edge.”

Rowley Zhou ('17 BA, Planning)
Planner I - City of Edmonton, Edmonton AB

“Working for the Government of Alberta, was a truly unique opportunity to see the real impacts that planners make in the lives of everyday Albertans. Being part of AWE really provided me with the confidence that I would be better prepared to start a career in planning after graduation. Today as a Planner with the City of Edmonton, I am constantly applying and expanding upon the fundamental skills and abilities that I gained from my work term.”

Rachel Wieringa ('18 BA, English)
Certification Program Writer - Government of Alberta, Edmonton AB

“Through AWE it was confirmed to me how valuable an Arts degree is in today’s workplace. I didn’t realize the skills I had until I had to put them to use in my work experience. The transferable skills I learned from my Arts degree are critical to my job and directly impact the quality of work. AWE doesn’t end once you’ve completed your work experience -- you take every skill and piece of knowledge you’ve learned throughout. I feel extremely grateful to the university for this opportunity and to the fantastic advisers that helped me get the most out of my work experience.”
Year in Review

AWE continues to grow and to better reflect the diversity of our undergraduate student population. This year, there was a 71% increase of representation by Fine Arts students and a 38% increase in international students enrolled in AWE. There was also an increased number of students also secured AWE work terms outside of Edmonton, including AWE’s first work term in Africa at Aga Kahn University in Nairobi, Kenya.

In addition 2018/19 saw the implementation of a couple of key initiatives. In the fall of 2018, we launched a revised AWE visual identity based on new Faculty guidelines. This included updating our brochure, employer information sheets, banners and web based promotion. In January 2019, in partnership with the Dean of Students and the Career Centre, we launched campusBRIDGE a new data management and program application system. The implementation process required significant planning and testing to ensure a positive user experience.

The AWE Working Group continues to evaluate and refine administration, communications and employer relations strategies based on program growth, accreditation requirements, and student survey recommendations. Selected highlights are included below.

Administration

- Launched campusBRIDGE, a co-op data management and program application system
- Developed, delivered and evaluated AWE Student Experience Survey, sent to students upon degree completion
- Developed supervisor/employer experience survey that will be sent out at the end of each work term

Career Education

- Offered AWE students and alumni free admission to the 4th biannual ArtsWORKS Career Development Conference
- Developed and executed a new workshop series, including a guest employer panel on interviewing and LinkedIn Basics

Diversity and Inclusion

- Worked with Indigenous Student Recruitment and Retention Advisor and First Peoples House to host events to encourage Indigenous student participation in AWE
- Held meetings and presentations with Department contacts to grow participation in AWE across the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Fine Arts.
Communications and Marketing

- Increased presence of AWE students on social media, with a particular focus on featuring 20 unique student experience stories on Instagram
- Implemented the Faculty of Arts new visual identity on AWE promotional materials including student and employer brochures, other print material, social media and swag
- Developed supervisor/employer experience survey

Employer Relations and Partnerships

- Increased partnership with Government of Canada Departments such as Indigenous Services Canada, Service Canada, Environment Canada, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Partnership with University of Alberta International to offer individual Queen Elizabeth scholarships of over $7000 for international work terms - Arts Co-op Program one of two Faculties chosen as program pilot
- Worked with Community Service-Learning on promotion of Pathways Internships with non-profit organizations to students and employers

Looking Ahead - Goals for 2019 - 2020

- Continue to participate in campusBRIDGE Steering Committee, led by the Dean of Students, to diversify campus collaboration and ensure system is running at full capacity
- Evaluate feedback from first AWE Supervisor Exit Survey
- Continue to grow and develop internal and external communication strategies
- Meet or exceed growth targets for student participation
- Redevelop AWE website for usability and transferability to new content management system
- Increase employer outreach, engagement and recognition
- Revisit AWE staffing and program expansion plans with AWE Working Group

On the Cover

Nina Legesse (BA English)
Professional Development Student - PCL Construction Inc.

“AWE has given me the tools and opportunities to explore what my skills can bring to various industries. I could have never imagined the career options that I see now thanks to my eye-opening work experience term.”

ON THE BACK: Sabrina Tharani (BA Political Science) & Srosh Hassan (BA Sociology)
International Relations Interns, University of Alberta International
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