

FACULTY OF BUSINESS,  
COMMUNICATION STUDIES AND AVIATION

# 2025 COMMUNITY REPORT

CONNECT. INSPIRE. TRANSFORM.



MOUNT  
ROYAL  
UNIVERSITY

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Mount Royal University is situated on an ancient and storied land steeped in ceremony and history that, until recently, was occupied exclusively by people indigenous to this place. With gratitude and reciprocity, Mount Royal acknowledges the relationships to the land and all beings, and the songs, stories and teachings of the Siksika Nation, Piikani Nation and Kainai Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy, the Tsuut'ina Nation, the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney Nations of the Îethka Stoney Nakoda, and the Métis.



# DEAN'S MESSAGE

In the Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation, we believe that our true impact is measured not just by the degrees that we confer, but by the positive ripples we create in the world around us. I am incredibly proud of the success we've had this year, supporting students and moving our strategic vision forward. This could not be achieved without the talented team of scholars and staff in our faculty who are dedicated to Mount Royal University and what we are trying to achieve.

Throughout these pages, you will see how our faculty members and students are translating complex research into actionable solutions for industry partners, and how our students are stepping out of the classroom to tackle real-world challenges.

The stories highlighted in this report are not random successes. They are the intentional results of our commitment to three strategic pillars that define our mission:

- » **Sustainability:** We are championing educational opportunities that prioritize social, environmental and economic change that emphasizes long-term viability over short-term gain.
- » **Indigenization:** We are deeply committed to weaving Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing into our curriculum and community relations, fostering a path of reconciliation and shared prosperity.
- » **Internationalization:** In an interconnected world, we are ensuring our students and research have a global reach, bringing international best practices home while exporting our local innovations to the world stage.

As you explore these stories of collaboration and impact you will see how we provide our students experiences that elevate their learning through connection, inspiration and transformation.

## **Kelly Williams-Whitt**

Dean

Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation  
Mount Royal University



# ABOUT THIS REPORT

I am incredibly proud to introduce the Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation's inaugural Community Report. This document is more than a summary of activities; it is a celebration of the powerful synergy between our academic community and our partners in industry and the broader public.

In the pages that follow, you'll see the many ways we're bridging the gap between research, teaching, and our partners in the community. Whether it is through high-impact teaching opportunities like international field schools and our Student Investment Fund, or joint research ventures, our students and scholars are proving that a Mount Royal University education is a vital pathway to building stronger communities.

## **Dr. Leah Hamilton**

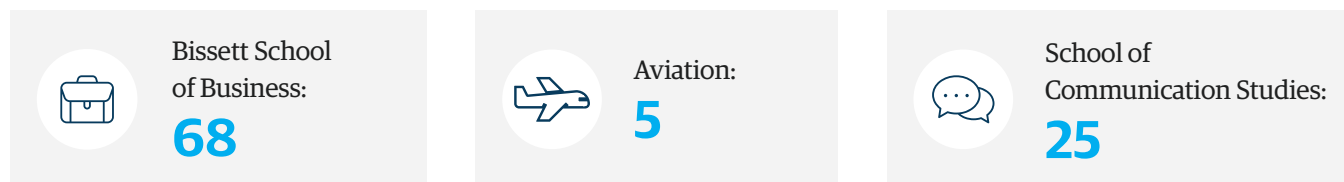
Vice Dean, Research and Community Relations  
Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation  
Mount Royal University



# ABOUT THE FACULTY OF BUSINESS, COMMUNICATION STUDIES AND AVIATION

The Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation (BCSA) consists of the Bissett School of Business and the School of Communication Studies. The Bissett School of Business is home to MRU's Aviation Program. BCSA It is highly interdisciplinary, housing three programs, more than 15 disciplines of study and 98 full-time faculty members.

## Faculty members



## ABOUT OUR PROGRAMS



### Total students:

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): **3,562** students  
Bachelor of Communication (BCMM): **769** students  
Bachelor of Aviation Management (BAM): **48** students



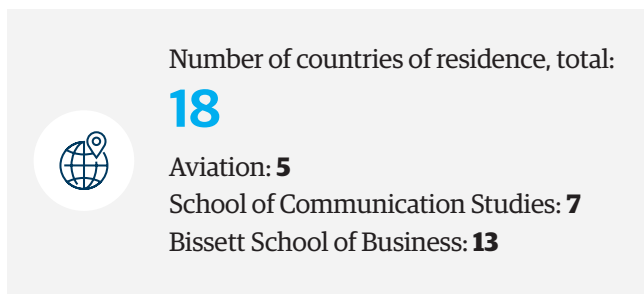
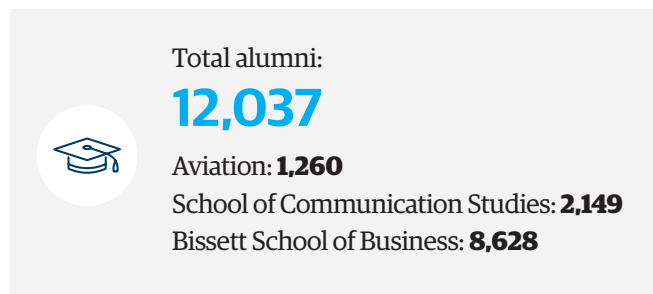
### Total graduates in 2025:

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA): **515**  
Bachelor of Communication (BCMM): **119**  
Aviation Diploma: **36**

**167** BBA students enrolled in co-op

**118** BCMM students enrolled in work terms

## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS



## Bissett School of Business

The Bissett School of Business was formed in 2002 following a transformative gift from David and Leslie Bissett. Its programs have grown along with the number of students who have the opportunity each year to benefit from our talented and dedicated faculty. Bissett is home to two degrees and one diploma program, along with 14 minors, three certificates and seven co-op programs. Interest in the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) remains strong with 2,141 applicants for 800 available seats in 2025/26 and a competitive entry GPA of 3.3. Similarly, applications for the Bachelor of Aviation Management and Aviation Diploma far exceed available seats with 363 and 323 applicants, respectively, for the total of 120 seats available across both programs. The competitive GPA for aviation programs was above 3.9 in 2025/26.

Program	Major	Number of students
<b>Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)</b>	Accounting	617
	Finance	638
	General Management	1,451
	Human Resources	194
	International Business	79
	Marketing	372
	Supply Chain Management	211
<b>Bachelor of Aviation Management (BAM)</b>	Aviation Management	48
<b>Aviation Diploma</b>		126

### EFMD accredited

The Bissett School of Business BBA program is accredited by EFMD Global. EFMD programme accreditation is the most thorough programme accreditation system for business and/or management degrees and courses, including face-to-face, blended and online provisions. The accreditation was renewed in August 2024 for three years.



# School of Communication Studies

The School of Communication Studies specializes in connecting communication concepts and theories to real-life experiences. In addition to the four majors within the Bachelor of Communication (BCMM), the School offers five minors that can be taken by students in any program at Mount Royal. Applications for all majors is consistent with approximately two applications for every available seat. The School was pleased to launch an honours program in the 2025/26 academic year. Honours programs allow students the opportunity to gain an in-depth perspective of their discipline and hone critical thinking skills by engaging in an independent research project.

Program	Major	Number of students
<b>Bachelor of Communication (BCMM)</b>	Broadcast Media Studies	166
	Information Design	175
	Journalism and Digital Media	176
	Public Relations	252

**Other data highlights:**

- » 86 per cent of our graduates are employed in jobs related to the program from which they graduated
- » According to the Graduate Satisfaction Survey:
  - » 86 per cent of graduates are satisfied with the quality of the BBA program
  - » 94 per cent of graduates are satisfied with the quality of the BCMM program



# ADVANCING AVIATION EDUCATION

## New MRU Springbank Aviation Campus

On Oct. 3, 2025, BCSA celebrated 55 years of aviation education with a new 3,400-square-metre facility at Springbank Airport. The new campus is the result of a collaborative vision between government, private philanthropy, the aviation industry and MRU leadership working together with faculty, staff and students, to shape the future of aviation education and meet industry demand.

Supported by \$3 million from PrairiesCan, a \$1.5-million gift from the late aviation pioneer Ken Lett and \$7 million from the Government of Alberta, the hangar reflects how far the program has come. It features classrooms, study spaces and dual hangars large enough for the current fleet – with room to grow.

The new hangar is not just a place to learn, but a launchpad for future careers. More than a modern teaching space, it is a statement of intent, built on partnership. Made possible through government funding, private philanthropy, industry support and the dedication of the MRU community, the facility advances simulation-based learning, strengthens safety practices and supports a growing student body.



## Alberta Training Centre of Excellence

In 2025 we also became the post-secondary partner of the Alberta Training Centre of Excellence, a 15-year, multi-million-dollar agreement. We will be contributing academic research expertise and supporting mentorship and career-integrated student learning opportunities in partnership with CAE and WestJet.



## PARTNERSHIP WITH OLD SUN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In 2025 we celebrated our 54-year partnership with Old Sun Community College.

Since 2022 the Bissett School of Business has partnered with Siksika Nation's Old Sun Community College to advance Indigenous business leaders with a new Indigenous Business and Economic Development (IBED) concentration that is unique in Canada at the undergraduate level.

Old Sun has been working on scaling its programs and has received strong community support and interest through the development of its own Bachelor of Indigenous Leadership and Management that directly connects into MRU's IBED concentration. The partnership is strong, in large thanks to Maria Big Snake, Louise Doore and Carissa Auger from Old Sun and Dr. Rachael Pettigrew, Sam Ulmer-Krol and Dr. Adam Cave from MRU.

As we work to advance educational reconciliation at MRU, the Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation is deeply grateful to work with Oohto ki sahta (Elder-in-Residence) Hayden Melting Tallow.

Elder Melting Tallow is a member of the Siksika Nation, part of the Siksikaitstapi (Blackfoot Confederacy). A fluent Blackfoot language speaker, he has contributed to the Calgary community for more than 30 years through work in education, children's services and cultural advising.

Prior to his current role, he spent 15 years as a case manager with Siksika Family Services, supporting families and youth in his community. He has also owned a video production company and worked within the film industry. Passionate about sharing knowledge and fostering understanding, Elder Melting Tallow is dedicated to encouraging others to learn about the history, culture and traditions of the Siksika people.



# RECOGNIZING TEACHING AND LEARNING EXCELLENCE

In the Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation, award-winning educators are making a lasting impact on student learning. Through innovative teaching, mentorship and real-world application, they inspire students to think critically, engage creatively and prepare for meaningful careers. The 2025 Teaching Award recipients exemplify this commitment to excellence.

## **Dr. Adam Cave**

Vice Dean, Academic  
Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation  
Mount Royal University



## TEACHING AWARDS

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### **Leadership in Teaching and Learning Award**

Since starting her career as a graphic designer over two decades ago, Dr. AnneMarie Dorland, PhD, has evolved into an authority on marketing, branding and design thinking-based learning.

She joined Mount Royal in 2019 and quickly earned a reputation for making a profound impact on her students, including those in the capstone course MKTG 4850: Professional Brand Studio.

▶ *“Through MKTG 4850, AnneMarie not only encouraged my creativity, but helped . . . bring it to life through various creative exercises, agency/group meetings and workshops,” says Mount Royal alumnus Stan Nicastro. “Because of her, I am planning to pursue a career in branding, and until I had the chance to learn from her, that is not something I ever thought I could succeed at. She didn’t just teach me marketing, she taught me how to think creatively.”*

In 2021, Dorland made a notable contribution to the pedagogy with Design Thinking Based Learning: A Teaching Guide, and later secured SSHRC funding for a study on design thinking and creativity.

Dorland’s dedication extends beyond the classroom as she mentors student research assistants from across campus and drives pedagogical innovation through the development of new creativity-focused courses for both faculty and students.



## **Dr. AnneMarie Dorland**

Associate Professor, Marketing

## Innovative Pedagogies Award

It is her approach to teaching systems and its profound impact on students that has propelled Dr. Katharine McGowan, PhD, to help advance Mount Royal's reputation as a centre of changemaking, influencing national and international communities of practice.

McGowan embeds systems thinking into social innovation education, ensuring that students develop the analytical and strategic skills to address complex challenges.

▀ *“Dr. McGowan's courses . . . are designed to help students understand the interconnected nature of social issues and equip them with the tools to drive meaningful change,” says Ashley Dion, a former student and lead for Map the System Canada, a global competition that demands students and educators rethink social and environmental issues. “She seamlessly integrates theoretical foundations with practical applications, enabling students to see beyond linear problem-solving and engage with complexity in a productive way.”*

## Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) Education Foundation Teaching Award

Marli Pieterse is recognized for her profound commitment to excellence in accounting education. Through her patience and enthusiasm in foundational courses like Management Accounting I and Principles of Auditing, Pieterse creates an environment where complex financial concepts become accessible and engaging.

In her advanced-level auditing course (ACCT4225), she has successfully bridged the gap between academic theory and professional practice by implementing an innovative, team-based flipped classroom. This approach not only ensures high levels of student preparation and accountability, but also replicates the collaborative dynamics of the modern workplace.

For Pieterse, this award represents the privilege of living out her passion for teaching while directly contributing to the development of a highly skilled, community-minded workforce.



**Dr. Katharine McGowan**

Associate Professor, Social Innovation



**Marli Pieterse**

Assistant Professor, Accounting

# IMMERSING STUDENTS IN GLOBAL LEARNING

International field schools represent a cornerstone of high-impact teaching, offering students immersive, transformative learning environments that extend far beyond the traditional classroom. Recent programs in Peru and across Germany and Austria have provided students with firsthand global perspectives, bridging theoretical knowledge with real-world application through direct cultural and professional engagement.

## Peru Field School

**Dates:** May 2 to 28, 2025

**Locations:** Lima, Calca, Cusco, Maranura, Quillabamba, Machu Picchu

**Faculty supervisors:** Dr. Brad Clark, Professor, Journalism and Don Haidey, Associate Professor, International Business

This joint business and communication studies field school focused on sustainability and Indigenous ways of knowing. Participants study Spanish while developing an understanding of Peru's history and colonial context in Lima. The program then connects students with campesinos and campesinas in the Sacred Valley, where they learn how traditional agricultural practices continue to shape the production of coffee, potatoes and other crops today. Through fieldwork and academic study, students build intercultural competence. In October, students presented their work to family members, classmates and MRU faculty. School of Communication Studies students published a Focus on Peru edition of their human rights magazine, *Article 1*, while Business students developed one of their projects into a research poster.



## Rosenheim Cross Cultural Social Enterprise/ Social Innovation Field School

**Dates:** May 5 to 10, 2025

**Locations:** Rosenheim & Munich, Germany; Kufstein & Salzburg, Austria

**Faculty supervisor:** Dr. Katharine McGowan, Associate Professor, Social Innovation

This field school brought together students from Bavaria, Montreal and Calgary to learn about and engage with the area's social economy, from the perspectives of start ups, established social impact businesses and policy makers. The goal was to foster cross-cultural dialogue among students about how social enterprise and social innovation can be useful tools in their respective communities.



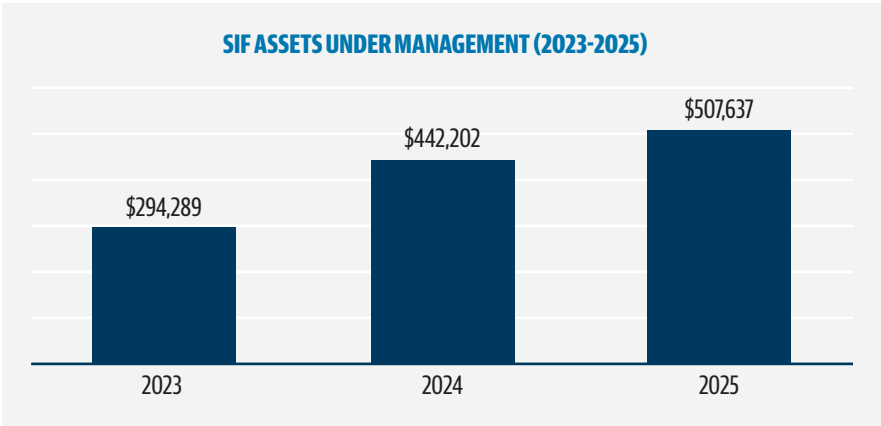
# LEARNING THROUGH REAL-WORLD INVESTING

The Student Investment Fund (SIF) is a transformative program that enables students to apply classroom knowledge to real-world investing by managing a live equity portfolio within Mount Royal University's endowment. The fund's focus is on Canadian equities. Participants conduct in-depth equity research and financial analysis across industries, engage in rigorous weekly discussions, and make investment decisions guided by ethics, best practices and team consensus. Through active portfolio management, students develop practical skills in valuation, risk assessment and market analysis while navigating the complexities of real-world capital allocation.



Total funds under management as of Jan. 1, 2025: **\$507,673.07**

Gains since SIF was established (2022): 63.2% (10.6% annualized)  
**63.2% (10.6% annualized)**



**Faculty lead:**

Elias Foscolos  
 Assistant Professor, Finance



**SIF students and faculty** (left to right):

Rajiv Chumber (expected graduation Spring 2026), Carson Gorst (expected graduation Winter 2027), Zeyad Hammo (expected graduation Fall 2026), Milo DaSilveira (expected graduation Fall 2027), Hannah Seely (expected graduation Winter 2027), Xander Cayer (expected graduation Fall 2026), Braedy Finnigan (expected graduation Winter 2027), Anna Tsan (expected graduation Winter 2026), Jaime Falk (expected graduation Winter 2027).  
 Not pictured: Luka Sampson (expected graduation Fall 2027).

### **Hannah Seely**

Fourth-year student, Bachelor of Business Administration, Finance

▶ *“Being part of the Student Investment Fund has been the most rewarding experience of my university career. The program’s hands-on, highly collaborative approach has allowed me to translate classroom concepts into real-world investment decisions while representing women in finance. I’m incredibly proud to be part of a program that empowers students to think critically, act with accountability and contribute to meaningful outcomes.”*



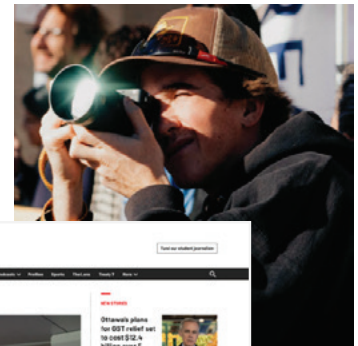
### **Academic Advisory Committee**

- » Dr. Kelly Williams-Whitt, Dean of the Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation, Mount Royal University
- » Dr. Reza Chowdhury, Chair, Accounting and Finance, Mount Royal University
- » Dr. Carlton Osakwe, Associate Professor of Finance, Mount Royal University
- » Elias Foscolos, MBA: Assistant Professor of Finance, Mount Royal University; Faculty Advisor for the SIF

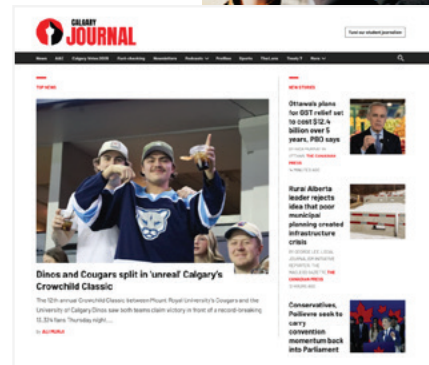
### **Industry Advisory Committee**

- » Jestine Payne, CFA: Institutional Associate Portfolio Advisor, Jarislowsky, Fraser Ltd.
- » Sohail Shakeel, CPA: Senior Risk Analyst, Kingston Midstream
- » Steven Kim, CFA, MBA: Vice-President and Portfolio Manager, QV Investors
- » Stephen Kallir, CFA: Chief Investment Officer, Bluesky Equities
- » Bruce Edgelow: Founder and Managing Partner, EdgeMark Capital and Advisory Services Inc.

# CONNECTING CALGARY THROUGH STUDENT JOURNALISM



For 50 years, students at Mount Royal University have published the *Calgary Journal*. Each year, the journal publishes hundreds of news stories, fact checks, photo galleries, videos, podcasts and more. Our reporters and editors work with a journalist-in-residence to produce in-depth reporting on our city. Additionally, the *Calgary Journal's* fact-checking sorts fact from fiction, adding complexity to our understanding. In 2025, the *Calgary Journal* began publishing timely Canadian Press wire stories to offer our audience up-to-the-minute news, photos and video clips.



The *Calgary Journal* offers a community news service produced by students and supported by faculty and staff in Mount Royal's journalism and digital media program. We tell multimedia stories about Calgary and the rest of the world that you won't find anywhere else, while providing a supportive environment for emerging journalists to publish their work.

In 2025, the *Calgary Journal's* audience nearly doubled. Views for the online news site increased 49 per cent to 267,000. Plus, visitors to our news website jumped by 44 per cent to 195,000.



## Dr. Brooks DeCillia

Assistant Professor, Journalism

- » Robson Fletcher, Deputy Managing Editor
- » Amber McLinden, Deputy Managing Editor
- » Archie McLean, Faculty Advisor
- » Brad Simm, Production Supervisor

## "Some place to go" project

In November 2025, the *Calgary Journal* held a pop-up event featuring a community meal, clothing giveaway, live music and a relaxed place to hang out for a few hours. We gave away roughly 50 winter coats, 50 toques, mitts and socks, and fed about 60 people.

As part of the event, which was held at the BLOX Arts Centre, our journalist-in-residence, Doug Horner, moderated a panel of community leaders who discussed the role of day spaces in serving the city's homeless population.

To learn more about the *Calgary Journal* and access the latest issue see [calgaryjournal.ca](http://calgaryjournal.ca)





# BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CLASSROOMS AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Experiential learning is a hands-on approach that allows for deeper understanding of concepts through action and reflection. As a part of the BCSA 2023–2028 strategic plan, the Faculty is shifting from ad hoc to purposeful experiential learning, looking for opportunities to further support student development by expanding experiential learning opportunities and increasing practical, hands-on learning experiences.

## TRAINING FUTURE PILOTS

As an aviation educator, it is critical for me to connect classroom theory with real-world practice. I could not bridge this gap without the experience I gained flying all over North America. As a bush pilot, I was faced with important decisions and problems almost every day. These varied from operational pressures to be on time, weather pressures, customer pressures, mechanical issues and more.

I reference these issues and pressures daily in class. Whether it is connecting Canadian Air Regulations to real-world scenarios, addressing time and customer issues with safety concerns, or understanding the mechanics of the machine, my professional experience deepens the stories that I use to emphasize points of importance in class. It is one thing to know what the law says one can do and totally another thing when the students are presented with case studies and asked to decide, “What would you do?”

The depth of flight experience contained within our department is truly Mount Royal Aviation's primary differentiator and strength. There is an old saying in aviation:

“*Student pilots are granted a full bag of luck and an empty bag of experience.*”



We aim to assist in filling their “experience bag” through our lived experience.

**Mark Benson**  
Assistant Professor, Aviation



## BISSETT SHOWCASE 2025

The third-annual Bisett Student Showcase was held at Grey Eagle and brought together students, faculty and industry partners, with over 100 attendees. The event featured a panel of industry partners and highlighted posters and project work by business students. The showcase was a great success, offering an excellent opportunity to celebrate student achievement and industry collaboration.

### Marli Pieterse

Assistant Professor, Accounting  
Organizing Committee Lead

The event's success would not have been possible without the Organizing Committee and the leadership of Marli Pieterse. Recipient of the 2024 CPA Education Foundation Teaching Award, Pieterse has a passion for the development of future accounting professionals.



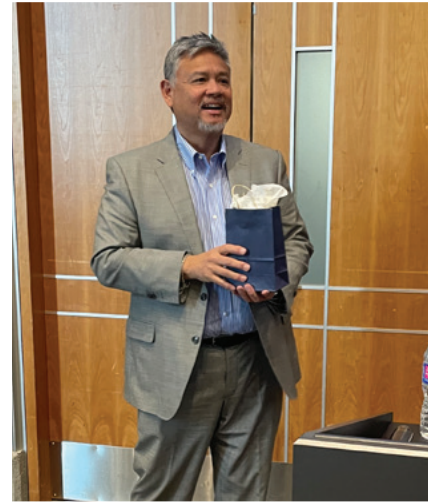
## 2025 RMA COMMERCIAL LENDING CASE COMPETITION

Organized by faculty member Cathy Roy-Heaton, the competition by Risk Management Association (RMA) is an annual event for senior finance students to analyze real-world commercial loan scenarios, providing hands-on experience in credit analysis, risk management and pitching recommendations to industry professionals. This year was a close competition. The 40 student competitors and 10 to 12 student volunteers all had the opportunity to meet and network with our alumni, in addition to the other professionals who served as mentors and judges. In total, we welcomed 17 industry professionals to campus for this case competition.



## ADB VISIT

Faculty member Shane Jaffer organized a visit by ADB. Samuel Tumiwa, representative for the North American Office of the Asian Development Bank, visited MRU in March 2025. During his visit to students, Tumiwa outlined the ADB's work in advancing inclusive, resilient and sustainable growth across Asia and the Pacific. He also spoke with students about career opportunities with the ADB and highlighted the region's growing importance to Canada.



## COMMUNITY-CENTRED JOURNALISM

In collaboration with the *Calgary Journal*, Dr. Gabriela Perdomo Paez's Community-Centred Journalism classes presented the event Aging in the Media - Complicating the Narrative: Sharing stories and conversations about aging in our city. This event took place in the theatre room at The Campus of Currie Green. Read the [Calgary Journal article](#).

### Roles and Practices in Contemporary Communications

Students from four sections of Roles and Practices in Contemporary Communications, taught by Dr. Amanda Williams, Jamie Vaughan and Patricia Edgar, presented their community service learning projects to 35 partners including non-profits, mall businesses and internal MRU organizations.

Interdisciplinary teams of three to four students spanning journalism, broadcasting, information design and public relations spent the semester developing creative solutions to real-world challenges. Deliverables included videography, journalistic stories, photography, infographics, website redevelopment and social media campaigns. The showcases demonstrated how professional excellence developed through academic programs translates into meaningful community impact.





# ENGAGING COMMUNITIES THROUGH RESEARCH

## 2025 MRU SUSTAINABILITY FORUM

In October 2025, we hosted the third annual Sustainability Forum, which brought together students, faculty and industry representatives to engage in meaningful dialogue and collaboration. Faculty member Dr. Mauricio Latapi Agudelo also launched the *Spot on Sustainability* podcast in collaboration with Sustainable Calgary, which has helped expand our outreach to students and create a new platform for sharing conversations and research on sustainability. The Forum saw strong interest and participation from students, faculty and staff, with a total of 286 people registered for the keynote, workshops and exhibits.

This year, the keynotes featured Dr. Myrle Ballard from the University of Calgary and Dr. Carlos Montana-Hoyos from the Rochester Institute of Technology, RIT Dubai. Our workshop and exhibitions included external partners: Sustainable Calgary, Consulate General of Switzerland in Vancouver, KPMG, SDSN Canada, Mitacs, WaterSMART, Energy Futures Lab, Biomimicry Alberta, Clean Resource Innovation Network, and more.

As a result, MRU's 2025 Sustainability Forum marks a significant step toward broader engagement with sustainability initiatives across campus and is set to become an annual event, with additional forums planned over the next several years.





## THE END OF CBC? A NATIONAL DEBATE

In April 2025, Mount Royal University hosted a nationally [live-streamed debate](#) on the future of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) following Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre's promise to defund the national broadcaster. Held in Ross Glen Hall on the MRU campus, the audience of approximately 120 people included faculty, students and community members, with another 30 joining online via live stream.



Journalist Rupa Subramanya of *The Free Press* argued in favour of Poilievre's motion while Max Fawcett from the *National Observer* argued against it. The event was co-organized by journalism assistant professors Dr. Gabriela Perdomo Paez and Dr. Brooks DeCillia. Perdomo Páez also moderated the debate.

The event reinforced the university's role as a forum for informed public dialogue on nationally significant policy issues, fostering respectful civic engagement and critical discussion among academic and community audiences. By combining scholarly moderation with public participation and national access through livestreaming, the debate expanded MRU's visibility as a convener of balanced, evidence-based conversations on media, democracy and public policy.



## TREATY LAW SCHOOL

In August 2025, the four day Treaty Law School was directed at treaty law advocates with a national focus to include a history of treaties and treaty-making with the Crown. The Treaty Law School provided a forum for treaty talks based on sovereignty. It also initiated research and preservation for treaty leadership and governance archives.

Special guests included Lewis Cardinal, Minor Chief (Councillor) Steven Crowchild, Dr. Jerry Fontaine, Sheldon Krasowski, Ron Lameman and Gary Laplante. The event welcomed 30 to 50 guests throughout the conference, organized by the Indigenous Business and Economic Development Chair at BCSA, Dr. Evelyn Poitras.

# INTERNATIONAL VISITING SCHOLARS

Thanks to the BCSA Inbound International Visiting Scholar program developed in November 2023, we brought in two international visiting scholars in 2025.



## Professor Mia Lindgren

Mount Royal University successfully hosted Dr. Mia Lindgren, PhD, professor from the University of Tasmania and RMIT University as an International Visiting Scholar from April 23 to May 5, 2025. Lindgren, a leading international researcher in podcasting and audio journalism, was invited and hosted by Dr. Gabriela Perfomo Páez, PhD, assistant professor in journalism. Over six days, Lindgren's visit featured a diverse program of activities designed to engage multiple audiences across the university and the broader community. Activities included keynote presentations, faculty workshops, interactive lectures, individual mentoring sessions, collaborative research work and public engagement through podcast recording.



## Carlos Montaña-Hoyos

Dr. Carlos Montaña-Hoyos, PhD, came to visit Mount Royal University in October 2025, as part of BCSA's Visiting Scholar Program and in collaboration for the Sustainability Forum 2025. During Montaña-Hoyos' visit, he led two faculty research talks (one of them as keynote of the Sustainability Forum), delivered a lecture to two sections of information design classes, and worked on a joint research project (a peer-reviewed article) with his host faculty member, Dr. Carlos Fiorentino, PhD. Throughout his stay, Montaña-Hoyos actively collaborated on a joint research publication, contributed to classroom learning, and strengthened ties with MRU's community, the Biomimicry Alberta network and with colleagues from other post-secondary institutions.





# DRIVING IMPACT THROUGH RESEARCH



## THE PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT

### Dr. David Finch

Professor, Innovation and Marketing  
Director of Research and Policy, and Executive Board Member of  
The Productivity Project

The Productivity Project is a collaboration among the Alberta Centre for Labour Market Research, LearningCITY Collective, Canada West Foundation, Mount Royal University and the University of Calgary's School of Public Policy. Together, we address a pivotal question: How can human capital drive Canada's productivity?

This transdisciplinary project and community-engaged research brings together a diverse team of researchers and partner organizations. The team produces policy reports in multiple accessible formats – including a full report, executive summary, audio summary and op-ed – designed to spark engagement across stakeholder groups. Each report is also developed into an academic manuscript, balancing timely community impact with the slower pace of scholarly publishing. To date, six policy reports have been released, with five corresponding manuscripts currently under review.

Learn more at [learningcity.ca/productivityproject](https://learningcity.ca/productivityproject)



## HUBMETA

### Dr. Hadi Fariborzi

Assistant Professor, Innovation and Entrepreneurship  
Co-Founder of HubMeta

HubMeta is a web-based, AI-enabled research platform designed to support systematic reviews and meta-analysis. Developed by experts, the platform helps researchers organize literature searches, screen studies, extract data, train research coders and perform meta-analytic calculations within a single integrated workflow.

- » **8+** years of innovation
- » **50+** publications
- » **6,500+** researchers supported
- » **2,000+** research projects



## BISON SUPPLY CHAIN INNOVATOR

**Dr. Rajbir Bhatti**

Associate Professor, Supply Chain Management

The supply chain management program has recently reached a new milestone, thanks to a generous donation of \$150,000 from Bison Transport Inc., which established the Bison Supply Chain Innovator, a vital program that focuses wholly on work-integrated learning opportunities.

By connecting MRU's supply chain management students with Bison Transport's leadership in Calgary, the program offers invaluable hands-on experience and professional mentorship. Students gain meaningful exposure to the logistics sector through co-op internships, practicum placements and data-driven projects that apply classroom learning to real-world challenges. Mentorship from industry professionals strengthens their understanding of practice, expands professional networks, and supports equity, diversity and inclusion by creating opportunities for underrepresented groups. The initiative also fosters student and faculty research that advances supply chain management practices while supporting evidence-based decision-making for industry partners.

Bhatti is also the faculty lead behind the Fluor Graduate University Support Program, a generous donation of \$200,000 that supports supply chain management students developing strong relationships with leaders at Fluor, leading to robust talent development.



## SCALEUP

**Dr. Simon Raby**

Professor, Innovation and Entrepreneurship  
Founder of the ScaleUp project

ScaleUP Week is a business growth initiative and annual gathering designed to support high-growth companies transitioning from startup to scale-up stage in Western Canada. It brings together founders, senior leaders, investors, policymakers and ecosystem partners to exchange insights, build networks and accelerate business expansion through masterclasses, peer learning, networking events and awards recognition. The program aims to strengthen Canada's scaleup ecosystem by providing evidence-based strategies, collaboration opportunities and practical tools that help companies scale sustainably and compete globally.



ScaleUP Week 2025 featured 80 speakers and 30 unique events across multiple regions, with over 1,500 program registrants. The three-day program culminated in the Awards Gala, which welcomed more than 300 attendees. Drawing 100 applicants from across Western Canada, the event recognized 24 founder-led finalists across 10 award categories.



## STATIC: A PARTY GIRL'S MEMOIR

### Meg Wilcox

Associate Professor, Journalism;  
Co-Director of Community Podcast Initiative

*Static* is a [four-part podcast series](#) co-created by Meg Wilcox and Ashely King, Inside Out Theatre and Chromatic Theatre as part of Wilcox's thesis project. Adapted from the play *Static: A Party Girl's Memoir*, the dark comedy follows King's real-life experience of suddenly losing her sight at age 18 and learning to rebuild her life. The podcast received the Rosie Award for Best Podcast at Alberta's Film and Television Awards in November 2025, presented by the Alberta Media Production Industries Association. *Static* won an International Women's Podcast Award in June 2025 – runner-up (silver) for Comedy Gold!



## CO-DESIGNING STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION RESOURCES WITH IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS TO FOSTER SOCIAL INCLUSION

### Dr. Ran Ju

Professor, Public Relations  
Funder, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Ju collaborates directly with immigrant entrepreneurs and community partners to co-design practical strategic communication resources that support business development and social inclusion. Using interviews, workshops and participatory design methods, the project identifies strategic communication barriers and develops culturally responsive tools to help immigrant entrepreneurs build relationships with diverse publics, enhance visibility, and improve access to economic and social opportunities.



## EXPLORING MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION BACKLASH IN AVIATION

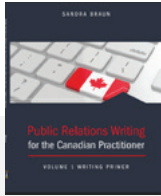
### Dr. Ozge Yanikoglu

Assistant Professor, Aviation

Yanikoglu's work examines governance, strategy and institutional structures in aviation, with a recent focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and gender representation, and gender representation, aiming to understand and support a more inclusive and equitable workforce in aviation. Her study examines how media coverage portrays the backlash against DEI initiatives in the aviation industry through an analysis of 96 news articles. The findings show that opposition is often framed around safety concerns and political polarization, with debates frequently focused on race, alongside tensions related to gender and disability inclusion. By identifying common narratives and misconceptions shaping public discourse, the research offers practical insights for aviation organizations seeking to communicate DEI strategies more transparently and build trust while addressing industry concerns.

# TEXTBOOKS AND EDITED COLLECTIONS

Our faculty members in The School of Communication Studies continue to shape the global discourse through an impressive collection of recently published textbooks and edited volumes. These timely works tackle the most pressing challenges of our digital age, offering students, practitioners and scholars alike cutting-edge insights.



**Braun, S. L. (2025). *Public relations writing for the Canadian practitioner*. Kendall Hunt.**

This writing primer provides practical tools and principles for effective public relations writing in the Canadian context. This accessible and student-friendly text discusses the writing process, grammar, workplace expectations, theories for persuasive writing and writing for the Canadian context. Instruction is reinforced with discussion questions, practice exercises and commentary from Canadian PR professionals. It also features interviews with graduates from Canadian PR programs.

[he.kendallhunt.com/product/public-relations-writing-canadian-practitioner-volume-1-writing-primer](https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/public-relations-writing-canadian-practitioner-volume-1-writing-primer)



**Williams, A., Napier, K., & Radzikowska, M. (2025). *Media history in Canada*. Mount Royal University.**

The history of communication is defined by pivotal technologies that have transformed how people share knowledge and shape society. This textbook traces that evolution from oral traditions and early printing to newspapers, photography and film, then to radio, television, computers, the internet and social media. Alongside these developments, it examines how communication systems have influenced cultural identity and power, particularly in Canada. Special attention is given to the representation of Indigenous peoples, the persistence of oral traditions and contemporary movements for story sovereignty.

[pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/media-history-canada/](https://pressbooks.openeducationalberta.ca/media-history-canada/)



**Radzikowska, M., Ruecker, S., Meyer, G., & Dobson, T. M. (Eds.). (2025). *Clever design in critical times: Conceptualizing the Callidocene*. Bloomsbury Publishing.**

This edited volume identifies and establishes the idea of the Callidocene, which the authors position as an epoch that both includes and extends beyond the current conception of the Anthropocene.

[bloomsbury.com/ca/clever-design-in-critical-times-9781666962291/](https://bloomsbury.com/ca/clever-design-in-critical-times-9781666962291/)

# CELEBRATING OUR ALUMNI

With more than 12,000 alumni living and working in 18 countries, graduates from the Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation are making an impact in industries and communities around the world. In 2025, three outstanding alumni were recognized at the MRU Alumni Awards for their leadership, innovation and commitment to giving back.

## CRAIG O'NEILL

### Charting a flight path for Indigenous aviators

Aviation Diploma, 2002

Since earning his wings, Craig O'Neill has flown short- and long-haul routes on De Havilland, Boeing and Airbus aircraft, and today is a training captain with Air Canada. A proud member of the Otipemisiwak Métis Nation, O'Neill co-chairs Air Canada's Indigenous Employee Resource Group, supporting colleagues and guiding the airline's work with Indigenous communities across Canada. Despite a demanding career, O'Neill has never strayed far from Mount Royal. Since 2014 he has volunteered on MRU's Aviation Partnership Council, advising on industry trends and future-proofing the aviation curriculum. O'Neill further supports the next generation of aviators as a mentor through the Iniskim Centre, the aviation program and informally with many students. "Craig has routinely provided his time in aviation classes to mentor students on subjects such as professionalism, good citizenship, leadership, volunteerism and navigating professional pilot training," says Chris Gillanders, associate professor of aviation.

In 2025, O'Neill established the O'Neill Indigenous Aviator Award and championed efforts to endow a legacy scholarship in honour of Mount Royal Aviation's 55th anniversary.



## AISLINN GRANT

### Leadership for female founders to build better brands

Bachelor of Business Administration – General Management, 2016

Aislinn Grant's contributions benefit many communities, including the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship's JMH LaunchPad competition for rising Mount Royal entrepreneurs. The founder of the Calgary-based Grant Design Branding boutique studio was the first female student to compete in LaunchPad in 2013 and has since served as a judge and mentor. She was also the first LaunchPad alumni to provide an award, to date contributing \$75,000 in branding services to winners. The self-taught graphic designer is a vital community-builder; she co-founded Play Big & Jam, a group of entrepreneurial women who meet for advice, support and to celebrate each other's wins, and she's a vocal advocate for underrepresented groups such as those with disabilities and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. "I'm humbled to watch Aislinn elegantly juggle motherhood, business ownership and community service," says Ray DePaul, the Institute's executive director. "We have quietly shifted from a mentor-mentee relationship to a mentor-mentor relationship and I'm very thankful for her contribution to MRU".



# ASHLEY KING

## Facilitating greater inclusion in the arts

Bachelor of Communication – Journalism, 2018

In 2011, Ashley King was on a gap year, travelling the world, unaware she'd one day become a leading voice for accessibility in the arts. At 19, King lost her eyesight after unknowingly drinking methanol-tainted alcohol at a Bali bar. Years later, MRU's journalism program gave her the foundation to tell her story, which culminated in *Static: A Party Girl's Memoir*, a play about loss, resilience and methanol poisoning awareness that premiered in Calgary in 2024. Collaborating with Mount Royal journalism professor Meg Wilcox (whom she hadn't met until after graduating), they adapted *Static* into a podcast. "While Ashley had never made a podcast, she embraced the project with her usual energy, grace and humour, committing significant time to developing the concept, conducting interviews, hosting and adapting the actor performances for podcast," Wilcox says. "Through this work, she's learned another way to produce and tell stories beyond reporting and theatre." The four-part series topped Apple's Personal Journeys chart in Canada in December 2024. An artistic associate at Inside Out Theatre, King champions inclusive performances and works with theatre companies to increase accessibility across Calgary's arts scene.



We have many collaborators and donors who give generously of their time and provide financial support to ensure our students receive the best possible education during their time with the Faculty of Business, Communication Studies and Aviation. This year, we would like to extend a special thanks to donors who have made significant contributions in 2025/26.

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4825 Mount Royal Gate SW,  
Calgary, AB, T3E 6K6