

Humber explores options as it pauses journalism degree

Claudia Ovejero Pham
Skedline Reporter

The future of Humber College's journalism degree program remains uncertain, as the college has yet to announce if admissions will re-open in fall 2024.

The administration is currently re-evaluating the degree program after pausing admissions this year. A group of full-time journalism faculty from all three programs available at Humber met on Wednesday, Sept. 13, to begin an in-depth review of the degree and the changing profession.

Guillermo Acosta, the senior dean of the Faculty of Media and Creative Arts, said the decision to pause the degree was due to a steep decline in enrolment.

There were only seven incoming students last year. He said such small class sizes don't make for a great learning experience, which is why they are reflecting on how to make the degree an "attractive value proposition for prospective applicants."

The low numbers made Acosta ask why it was happening, especially considering the college's other journalism programs, like the three-year diploma course, are not facing the same struggles.

Genna Buck, a journalism instructor, said it's a time of uncertainty and change, "we're recognizing we have to respond a bit to the broader trends that are happening within the industry and in society, to have students who are prepared for a variety of roles."

Acosta said they need to act fast to adapt to industry trends. The degree is consulting with the Postsecondary Education Quality Assurance Board (PCAB) to explore available options around the credentials needed to find an optimal mix.

Reassessing elements like the length of the degree is not off the table, as colleges are now able to offer three-year degrees, Acosta said.

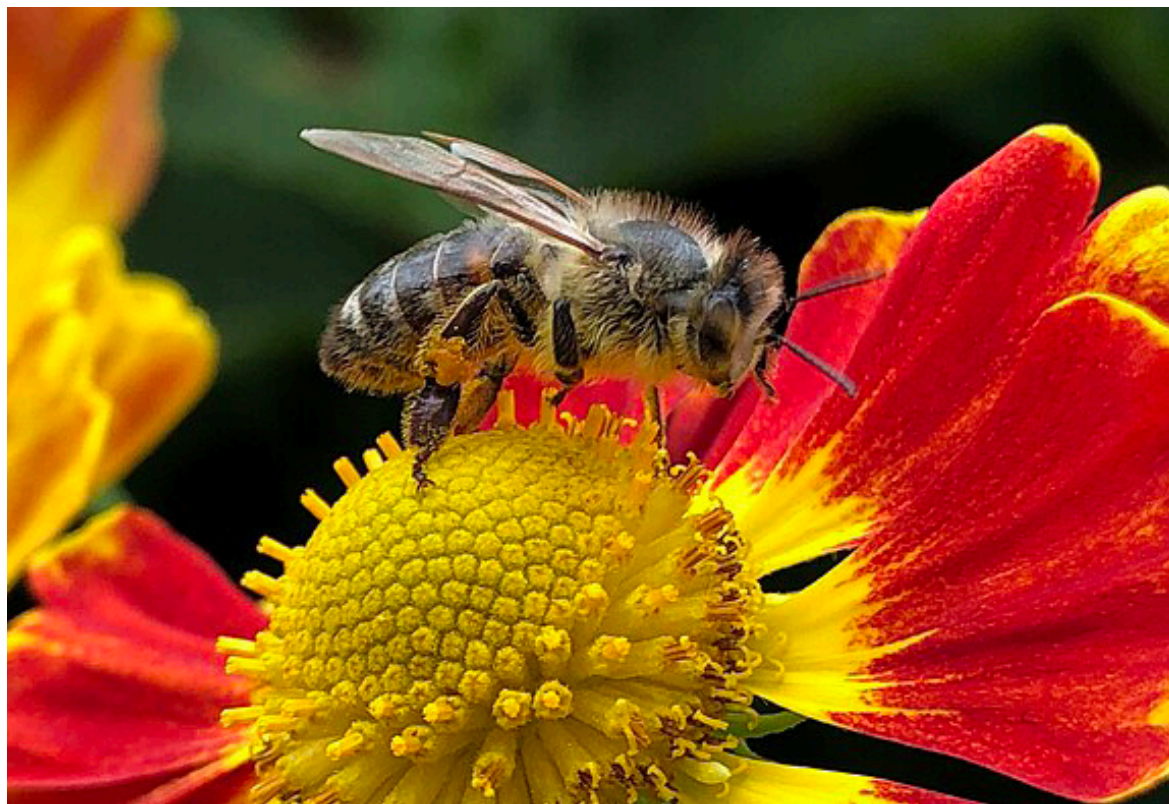
"This is the regulatory framework that we need to explore with the ministry to see where can we push boundaries to create a mix of programming that will be good for the students and the grads that also meets what the industry is requiring," he said

Acosta said it saddens him to see the state of journalism schools.

"I will use my position as senior in this faculty to really continue strengthening journalism and interest in journalism because it's a pillar of democracy," he said.

Fernando Bossoes, a second-year journalism student, said he hopes the degree will explore ways to collaborate with other journalism programs at Humber because this would create more opportunities and foster a desire to work in the industry.

There is no announcement on the status of the degree for 2024 yet while faculty and administration continue working to consult grads, students, and industry. Current students should not be affected by any decisions made in the coming months.



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Not only bees, but also butterflies, moths, beetles, and other insects are essential for the pollination of plants.

Local gardening centre uses grant to support pollinator insect population

Thaïs Grandisoli
Skedline Reporter

Months after receiving a grant from the city of Toronto in April, this local environmental association is showing results in their community garden.

Their goal is to increase the number of habitats for these insects to contribute to more genetic diversity among different breeds of plants.

Not only bees, but also butterflies, moths, beetles, and other insects are essential for the pollination of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and various crops, including wild plants.

In Canada and around the world, these insects have been suffering from a huge population decline. The implications of their struggle to survive are seen in many areas relating to our own survival as humans.

One of the most significant issues is the supply reduction of healthy, natural, non-industrialized foods.

"Did you know there are over 10,000 different species of tomatoes?" says Nancy Durrant, co-chair of The Lakeshore Environmental Gardening Society (LEGS), "We don't hear about that because it's always the same ones being sold in supermarkets."

LEGS started over fifteen years ago, some members have been around since the beginning, but new members and volunteers are always joining our efforts

says Nancy Durrant, co-chair and speaker at their bi-monthly meeting, usually held at the Long Branch public library.

The LEGS co-chair had a presentation prepared about heirloom vegetables, which are old, openly pollinated varieties that usually get passed down from generation to generation.

According to a study published earlier this year by the Environmental Health Perspectives, this crisis has caused a three to five per cent loss of fruit, vegetable and nut production around the world.

The scientists said that the lower consumption of these foods could contribute to about one per cent of yearly deaths, all due to pollinator loss.

Julie Stoyka is a teacher and head of the committee managing the money got from the PollinateTO grant.

Since early summer, Stoyka, among other volunteers, has been working to clean up a large space ceded by the Daily Bread food bank in New Toronto. They have now successfully turned it into a garden.

"We have plums, pears, and blackcurrant, and about 30 different types of flowering and berry-bearing plants," says Stoyka, pointing to a pie that she brought, "It's chokeberry pie!"

The head of the committee, then explains that usually at their meetings, members will bring food with ingredients grown and harvested by themselves in one of their gar-

dens.

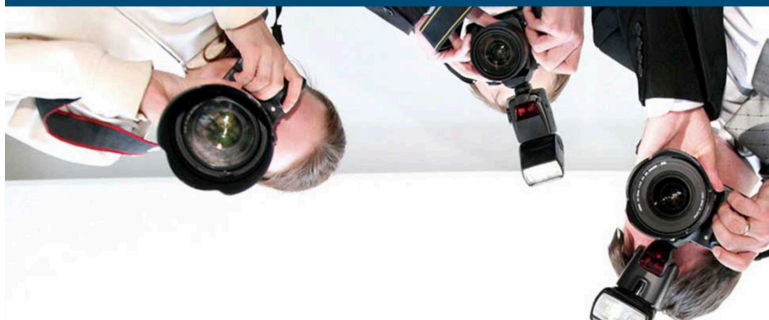
At the end of the meeting, the members gathered to exchange heirloom seeds, so they could each try their luck growing these different flowers and vegetables.

While she gathers the remaining seed packets, Durrant's son gets excited at the prospect of growing black cherry tomatoes in his own garden, so he asks to have one. Durrant quickly complies, making sure not only the seeds but her passion for the environment and gardening will also be passed down from generation to generation.



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Screengrab of the program closure announcement made by FMCA.