

CELEBRATING ALUMNI PROFILE

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Education Abroad Fosters Local Success



Commercial Banking Manager and NIC Alumni Kelsey Anderberg splits her time between CIBC’s Comox Valley and Campbell River branches. Photo by: Island Life Photographics

Kelsey Anderberg believes global citizenship starts at home. The NIC alumni says the personalized attention and increased exposure to international opportunities that she received as a student widened her horizons and launched her career as a commercial banker.

She completed her business degree at NIC in 2011, one of the first cohort of students to be awarded a bachelor of business administration in a degree program that now boasts over one hundred graduates.

She credits instructor Nick Robinson for her involvement in two international exchanges, first at the Warsaw School of Economics in Poland, and in a subsequent year at Kapiolani Community College in Hawaii.

Robinson helped her obtain an Irving Barber Scholarship to fund her international experience, and gave her valuable advice and direction to ensure she got the most out of her exchanges.

“Nick had actually gone there and done the research ahead of time,” she said of her exchange to Poland. “He’s very active on the world scene and promotes NIC on a global scale. He was a project planning officer with the Government of Papua New Guinea for 2 years. Having someone like him teach us economics helped me see what was possible.”

Anderberg was in Poland for six months studying economics and international business, living in a dorm that housed 600 students from across Europe, North America, and Asia. This experience, along with her Hawaiian exchange, helped build her confidence communicating across cultures.

After graduating from NIC, she went to work at CIBC, quickly propelling through the ranks. In early 2015, she was promoted to Commercial Banking Manager, with a territory that extends from Qualicum to Port Hardy. She splits her time between CIBC’s Campbell River and Comox Valley branches.

“This position would not have been offered to me had I not had a business degree,” she said explaining that the opportunities she received at NIC were invaluable to her career. “The international experience and the cultural diversity on my resume is massive.”

According to the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE), the skills gained through international studies are highly sought-after in today’s economy. The top soft skills gained abroad

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include: interpersonal skills, cross-cultural competency, adaptability, self-awareness, and communication.

Of those surveyed, 88.4 per cent of respondents agreed education abroad experience increased their career opportunities and 60 per cent of hiring managers cited international experience as an important attribute.

Intercultural experience is increasingly important in the workforce. According to the European Commission, 2014, the number of employers indicating experience abroad as an important factor grew from 37 per cent to 64 per cent between 2007 and 2013.

Anderberg's international experience gave her a new way of looking at herself and the world. Her experience in Poland was especially instrumental in broadening her understanding of the global marketplace. As a commercial banking manager, she is able to take this understanding to the local level, building diverse relationships in the community to foster a thriving business environment.

"My job is not a job everyone gets at a young age. It really is a destination position," she says. "The clients are special. When you're talking to an owner about their business, it's exciting because it's their baby. It's a real privilege to be part of that."

Her experience travelling internationally has enriched her appreciation for the North Island. After travelling thousands of miles from home, she is happy to have her feet planted firmly in her hometown. As a lifetime resident of the North Island, she enjoys a work-life balance that includes hunting, fishing, and fitness. She volunteers with Ducks Unlimited as an advocate for wildlife conservation and the preservation of wetlands and estuaries, and is an active member of the Young Professionals of Campbell River.

As NIC alumni, she has been a strong proponent of the business program, where she gained a solid foundation in financial analysis, marketing and human resources, skills that gave her confidence to pursue her goals.

"You don't come out of school feeling like you know all the answers but they teach you how to learn," she says. "If you have the educational background that teaches you how to learn and how to understand people, you will be successful. NIC is so great because if you want to apply yourself in any way possible you have a lot at your fingertips."

Learn more about NIC business programs at www.nic.bc.ca/business. For more information on opportunities to study abroad, visit www.nic.bc.ca/studyabroad

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