



FAST Times

SEPTEMBER 2025

DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Colleagues,

As swiftly as summer arrived, we are now turning the page to welcome fall and another exciting academic year!

The beginning of a new term always brings a sense of anticipation and excitement. Whether you're returning for another year or joining us for the first time, it's a chance to dive into fresh ideas, collaborate with peers, and explore new paths for learning and growth.

A warm welcome to all new and returning staff, faculty, and Program Advisory Committee (PAC) members. We're grateful for your dedication to creating an exceptional student experience, both inside and outside of the classroom, and for your ongoing contributions to enriching, informing, and positively shaping FAST.

At our Welcome Back meeting, we came together to reflect on the past year, commemorate our achievements and celebrate the recipients of the President's Awards and FAST Excellence Awards that recognize outstanding accomplishments and contributions of our faculty and staff who embody excellence in their work.

While the summer encourages us to slow down, our faculty and staff continued to support our students, explore initiatives and build new opportunities for collaboration.

In this issue, we highlight our associate dean, Francis Syms who travelled to Korea to represent Humber on the global stage. The Barrett CTI and Humber Arboretum hosted engaging summer camps and faculty members celebrated new accreditations and published papers. Our Home Sweet Humber section highlights fun initiatives that filled our campus over the summer months and spotlights moments captured from our inaugural First-Year Engineering Orientation to ensure our students start strong and build their confidence to make their engineering journey at Humber a great one.

As the end of summer signals the beginning of a fresh season of growth, discovery, and learning, I'm excited for what's to come and the new initiatives we'll achieve together.

Welcome back!



With gratitude,
Paul Griffin
Senior Dean



PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

The 2025-2026 Academic Year launched with a grand celebration of leadership and excellence when three FAST community members were awarded President's Awards!

The President's Awards epitomize the pinnacle of achievement, recognizing a diverse array of categories that reflect Humber's Core Values. These prestigious awards are designed to honor the exceptional contributions of all employees, ensuring inclusivity and broad eligibility.

Congratulations to Ali Owayid and Savdulla Kazazi who were awarded the Distinguished Faculty Award and to Khaled Ibrahim for receiving the Support Staff Distinguished Service Award.

We are truly grateful for your contributions to FAST and appreciate your dedication and commitment to our students and the Humber community!



2025 FAST EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The FAST Excellence Awards recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements and contributions of our faculty and staff who embody excellence in their work.

In addition to the Faculty and Support Staff categories, this year we introduced the Team of Excellence Award that recognizes the combined contributions of a group of people towards a shared goal and encouraging members to work together and support each other.

Faculty and staff were nominated by their peers for their exceptional contributions to the FAST and Humber community and who have continually demonstrated a deep commitment to delivering excellence.

The selection committee, comprised of faculty and staff, carefully reviewed all nominations, and selected the following recipients.

SAVDULLA KAZAZI - FACULTY OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

Recognizes FAST's inspiring educators who have continually demonstrated a deep commitment to excellence in teaching, supporting students, and making outstanding contributions to education.

TIANA GREGORY - SUPPORT STAFF OF EXCELLENCE

For outstanding service to FAST, a dedication to improving the work of the Faculty, and work to enhance the college experience for students, faculty members, and/or staff in accordance with the College's mission.

CARRIER DRIVE - TEAM EXCELLENCE AWARD

Alvin Borlado

Randy Duran

Eric Ilano

James Passafiume

Brent Rennie

Danny Cunha

Jan Fontz

Tyler Levasseur-Martins

Allen Ramsden

Ryan Smith

Recognizes the combined contributions of a group of people towards a shared goal and encouraging members to work together and support each other.





HUMBER ON THE GLOBAL STAGE AT APEC 2025 WOMEN IN STEM SYMPOSIUM IN KOREA

When we inspire women to pursue STEM, we don't just close a gender gap — we open a world of innovation shaped by diverse minds and bold perspectives.

Our associate dean of Information & Communication Technology, Francis Syms had the privilege of joining the APEC 2025 Women in STEM Symposium in Korea.

As an ally, he presented on “Empowering Women in AI: Policy, Collaboration, and Impact”, where he highlighted Humber Polytechnic’s initiatives to support women in STEM — from faculty representation to mentorship programs, inclusive curriculum design, and student-led clubs such as “Women in Engineering.”

It was an inspiring gathering of leaders, educators, and policymakers across the Asia-Pacific, and he is grateful to have shared Humber’s story and Canada’s commitment to equity in technology and education.



- Major platforms (OpenAI, Google DeepMind, Meta, Anthropic) are led by men
- Women are underrepresented in AI ethics teams, shaping critical decisions
- AI systems affect everyone — in hiring, healthcare, justice, education





HUMBER ARBORETUM

+ CENTRE FOR URBAN ECOLOGY



SUMMER NATURE CAMP

It was another great summer of outdoor exploration at the Arboretum, with over 150 young people between the ages of 5 and 15 participating in Nature Camp and camp leadership training. Every week campers took nature walks, observed and identified plants and animals, explored life in the ponds and river, played games, sang songs, and made lasting friends and memories. Special themed activities included a visit to Barrett CTI, meeting birds of prey from Wild Ontario and reptiles from Scales Nature Park, learning about native turtle species with the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre, and learning about bees and pollination with Humber's own beekeepers. Thank you to all of the camp leaders and to the campers themselves for a fantastic summer. See you for March Break!



HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE FOR HORTICULTURE STUDENTS

Thank you also to the nine first-year horticulture students who spent their summer working alongside Humber Arboretum staff to keep the gardens looking their best. Under the guidance of Horticulture Technician Lucas Allen (himself a Humber grad who worked at the Arb as a student), the 2025 crew gained a solid summer's worth of valuable hands-on experience with planting and garden maintenance before beginning their second year of studies. They also had the opportunity to learn about the food garden and assist with landscape construction projects.



NEW WOODLAND ENTRANCE

On your next arboretum walk, keep an eye out for the beautiful new pergola at the middle entrance to the woodlands. The new entrance was designed by Humber Arboretum Landscape Construction and Maintenance Specialist Talete Gallo, and built by Gallo with key assistance from experienced student employee Teyven Blackmore and help from other students on the summer garden crew.



FOOD GARDEN DONATIONS SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

For the second year in a row, excess food grown in the Humber Food Learning Garden is being donated to support local food security. By the end of summer, well over 300 kg of peppers, cucumbers, leafy greens, and other fresh veggies had been donated to support the Rexdale Community Health Centre's food bank, under the guidance of Greenhouse and Horticulture Technician Dean Ruhnke. With the return of students to campus, the continuing fall harvest will support both Rexdale CHC and Humber and Ignite's Soup Bar.



TRCA YOUTH CORP

The Toronto Region and Conservation Authority (TRCA) is one of the three managing partners of the Humber Arboretum, along with Humber Polytechnic and the City of Toronto. This summer, the eight enthusiastic members of the TRCA's Conservation Youth Corp spent two weeks working on a variety of projects with Humber Arboretum Ecological Stewardship Specialist Claudia Ashie. The Youth Corp built bird boxes, planted native plants, and removed invasive species such as Phragmites, Buckhorn and Honeysuckle, including helping out at a public event.

WILD (AND NOT-SO-WILD) ANIMAL RESCUE

With so many wild animals calling the Humber Arboretum home, it's not surprising that sometimes a few of them need a hand. Staff at the arb are committed to ensuring wildlife receive care from licensed wildlife rehabilitation facilities whenever possible. This summer that included an injured young Cottontail rabbit who was transported to Shades of Hope Wildlife Refuge and a flightless Canada Goose taken to the Toronto Wildlife Centre.

Garden staff also found a pet turtle who had been abandoned at the Arb and transported them to the domestic reptile sanctuary, Little RES Q. Please never release a domestic animal of any kind into the wild; it's not safe for the animal and can cause lasting damage to the ecosystem. If you can no longer care for a pet, rehome them responsibly.





NOW RECRUITING HUMBER ARBORETUM AMBASSADORS-IN-TRAINING

Students from any year or program who would like to get outside this semester while they make new friends and develop their skills are invited to apply now to volunteer as a Humber Arboretum Ambassador-in-Training. The group will be meeting weekly on Tuesdays at 12:30 during the fall semester. Applications are due October 1. Please visit [here](#) for more information.

EVENTS AT THE ARB

Summer events included a plant identification workshop with the Etobicoke Master Gardeners, an invasive plant removal event held in partnership with Humber Sustainability, and a Bat Walk with education staff from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

See more events [here](#).

- **Saturday, September 20:**
Etobicoke Master Gardeners workshop - "Exploring Trees and Shrubs"
- **Tuesday, September 23 & Tuesday, September 30:**
Humber Arboretum Ambassador-in-Training Info Session and Tour for students
- **Saturday, October 4:**
(for City of Toronto Ravine Days):
Etobicoke Master Gardeners workshop - "Supporting Biodiversity: The Power"





BARRETT CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

THE BARRETT STEAM ACADEMY

The Barrett STEAM Academy is a 12-week immersive program designed to provide students in Grades 6–12 with hands-on experience using some of Ontario’s and Canada’s most advanced technologies.

Offered at a cost of just \$100 for the full program, the Academy ensures accessibility while delivering high-quality learning opportunities. Throughout the 12 weeks, students will engage in a wide range of activities from robotics and coding to virtual world creation, 3D modelling, and fabrication techniques.

The program culminates in a capstone project, which participants will present at a showcase event titled “Powered by STEAM. Driven by Purpose.”

This unique experience empowers students to explore innovation, creativity, and problem-solving, preparing them with valuable skills for the future.

For more information, visit the [Barrett STEAM Academy](#).





Congratulations

FAST CELEBRATIONS

Congratulations to Hadeel El-Kassabi who earned her Professional Engineer (P.Eng.) designation.

This significant achievement reflects her commitment to engineering excellence, ethical practice, and ongoing professional development. The P.Eng. designation is a mark of distinction and responsibility in the engineering profession across Canada.

Please join us in congratulating Hadeel on this milestone accomplishment!

Congratulations to Jordan Dimitrov whose design paper "Circuits Help Get or Verify Matched Resistors" is published in [EDN](#), an electronics community for engineers, by engineers.



Hadeel El-Kassabi

FAST Times

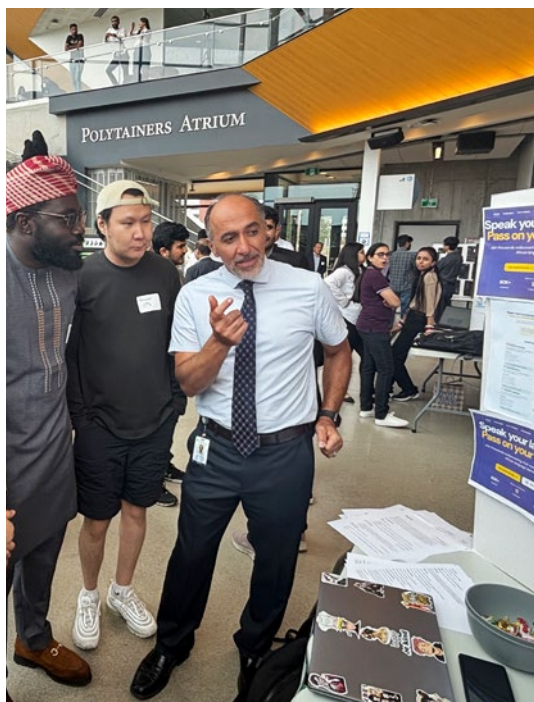
SEPTEMBER 2025



HOME SWEET HUMBER

Celebrating and showcasing life at North Campus and Carrier Drive!

ICT CAPSTONE EXPO





HOME SWEET HUMBER (cont'd)

IEEE WOMEN'S DAY EVENT



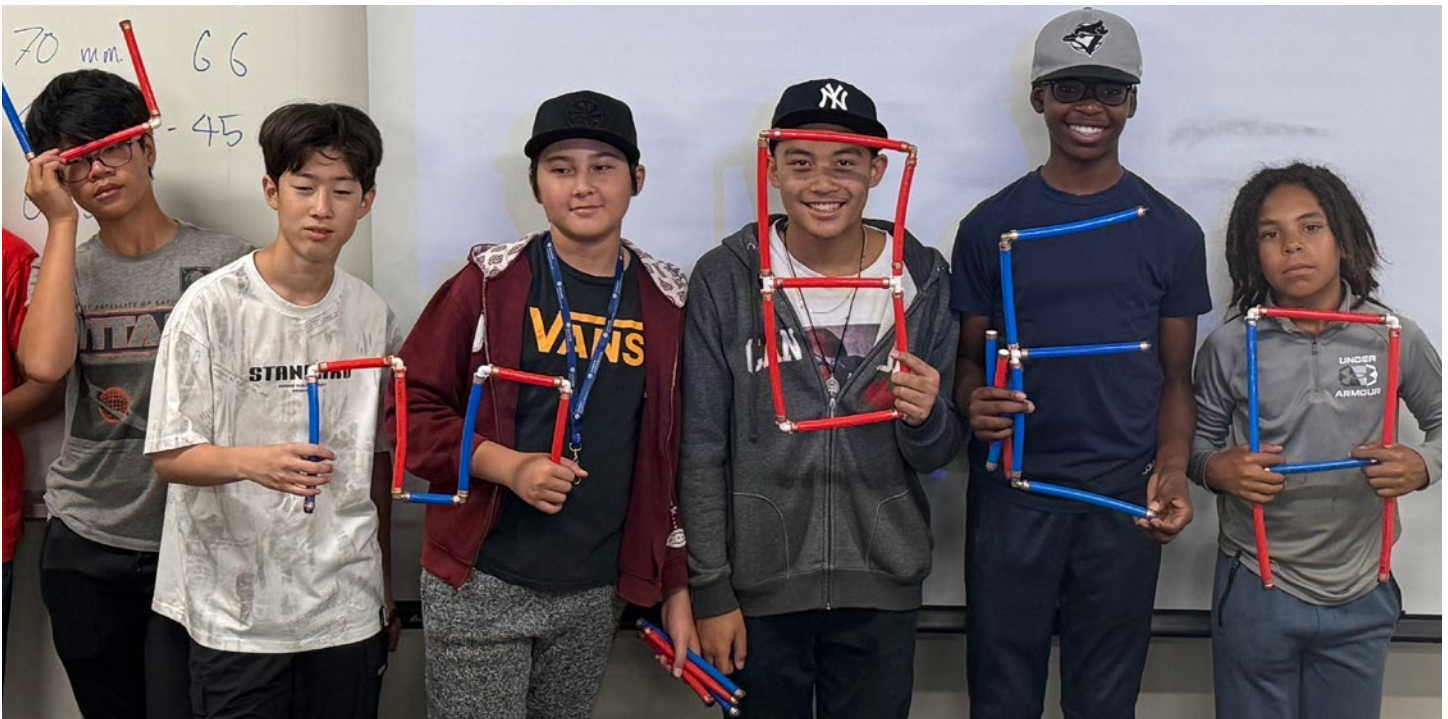
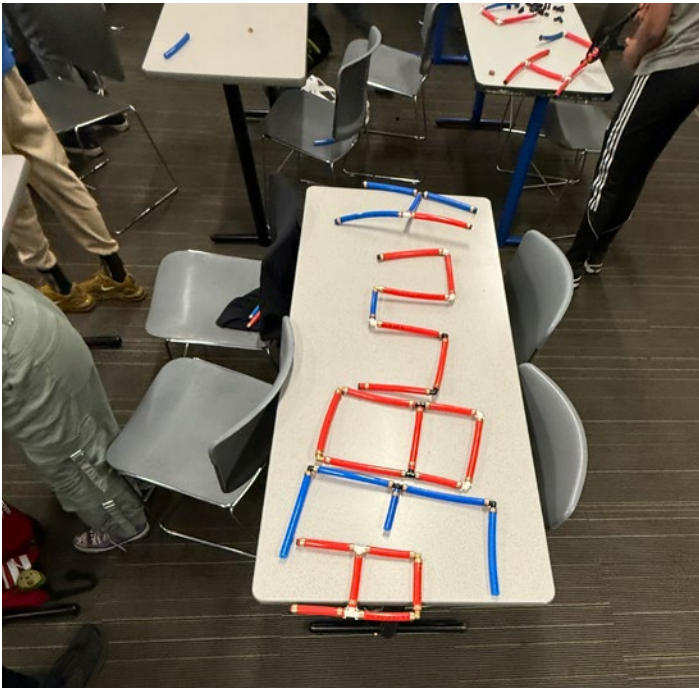
MPP CHARMAINE WILLIAMS, ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF WOMEN'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, VISITS CARRIER DRIVE





HOME SWEET HUMBER (cont'd)

SKILLED TRADES CAMP AT CARRIER DRIVE





HOME SWEET HUMBER (cont'd)

FIRST-YEAR ENGINEERING ORIENTATION



Share your life on campus
images in the next FAST
Times issue! Please submit
to Jennifer Buchalter:
jennifer.buchalter@humber.ca



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SEPTEMBER 2025



WELCOME TO FAST

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to the following new full-time faculty & staff members!



INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY CLUSTER

- Soosan Naderi Mighan, ICT Faculty

ENGINEERING

- Stefania Ieraci, FT Scheduler, Engineering
- Amar Sawadi, Faculty, Bachelor of Engineering, ICT

SKILLED TRADES & TECHNOLOGY CLUSTER

- Ryan Smith, Technologist
- Elizabeth Russell, PSO
- Tabitha Pifer, LSA

BARRETT CENTRE FOR TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

- Tianna Persaud, Business Operations Manager

WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING

- Caroline Zhang, Operations Specialist

FAST MILESTONES

Congratulations to the following FAST members who are celebrating a career milestone in August and September! We truly appreciate your contributions to the Humber FAST community and congratulate you on reaching this important milestone!

AUGUST

20 years

Ron Granelli
Dino Angelakos

5 years

Muhammad Alam

10 years

Patrick T. Penman
Randy Duran
Jaroslaw Wawrow
Ian Maclachlan
Michael Guido
Chris Dimitrakopoulos
Mohammad Al-Rady
Peter Villalta
Mihyar Hesson
Hassan Hassan
Vasillaq Xoxa

1 year

Edward Ruan
Milan Romic
Bradley Way
Mehrnaz Zhian
Trevor Burke
Ahmed Al-Ani
Ana de Oliveira
Rodrigues
Weijing Ma
Ned Huang

SEPTEMBER

15 years

Dragos Paraschiv
Richard Zoltek



UPCOMING EVENTS

September 22-25

Active Attacker Drills and Training

September 30

Orange Shirt Day

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

FAST Times recognizes and celebrates the achievements of our faculty and students. To share your successes with us, please submit stories and images to the Office of the Senior Dean, Julie Pasquin: julie.pasquin@humber.ca

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