

Rosser Prize winner bitten by 'political bug'

Dean Morin plans a public relations career, but has his sights set on City Hall and maybe Parliament, writes
MEAGAN FITZPATRICK.



PAT MCGRATH, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

Dean Morin credits the NHL strike for helping him get better grades in his graduating year at Algonquin College.

According to Dean Morin, some good may have come out of the failed NHL season after all.

"That's probably why my grades went up this year — there was no Senators to watch," says the new graduate from Algonquin College's public relations program.

But a lot more than the absence of hockey contributed to Mr. Morin's success. For example, hard work. Before enrolling at Algonquin, the 24-year-old completed a degree in communications and geography at the University of Ottawa. Not ready to enter the workforce at that point, he decided to build on his communications degree and study public relations.

"I took public relations because if you do it well, you can really make a difference. It's a heartwarming feeling to know you can make a difference."

He speaks highly of Algonquin's two-year program, saying the teaching by professionals in the industry was exceptional and prepared him well to work in the field. "I give full credit to Algonquin for being able to get hands-on skills to help me get a job."

He also appreciated the small class sizes and accessibility of the instructors, circumstances that aren't always possible at universities.

The Ottawa native, who graduated from St. Patrick's High School in 1999, has always enjoyed writing, and believes that over the past two years, he has fine-tuned his skills, improving his ability to write concisely. He's also gained experience in public speaking and interacting with clients.

Mr. Morin says he enjoys all aspects of public relations, from writing press releases to fundraising, but wants to work in corporate communications. A placement at PCI Geomatics, a

software company with offices in Toronto and Gatineau, confirmed that interest and even led to a part-time job.

Mr. Morin juggled that job with schoolwork, another job on weekends, and his role as vice-president of the Algonquin College Students' Association. "I really developed my time management skills this year."

Despite all of his extracurricular activities, Mr. Morin still managed to get straight As. It's no wonder he was chosen as this year's winner of the President Rosser Prize, a distinction honouring a graduating student at Algonquin who demonstrates outstanding leadership, participation in student activities and high academic standing. Mr. Morin says he is honoured and humbled by the award, which is one of the college's top prizes.

In the short term while he hunts for a full-time job, Mr. Morin wants to improve his French, perhaps do some volunteer work, and work on his website, deanmorin.com, where he plans to offer consulting services. In the long term, however, Mr. Morin has his sights set on a very specific job — Ottawa city council. In fact, the young man doesn't rule out running for Parliament one day. But right now he figures he should start at a local level, contributing to the city in which he grew up.

"I have a bit of a political bug in me."