

Nathan Whitlock: Welcome to Nextcast, a podcast about teaching and learning at Humber College. I'm Nathan Whitlock, an editor at Humber Press. On Nextcast, we talk to some of the faculty and staff who are leading innovation at Humber--both inside and outside the classroom. This is a very special episode--also somewhat of a sad episode--because our guest is Kristin Valois, who has been the producer of this podcast for the past season and a half. We sit down with Kristen to talk about her transition from her time as a student here at Humber, then her internship here at Humber and now as a soon-to-be-former employee of Humber College.

Nathan Whitlock: Welcome to NextCast, Kristin. This is obviously not your first time here, but welcome anyway.

Kristin Valois: Thank you so much. It is very strange to be sitting in this seat. Definitely.

Nathan Whitlock: And there is a particular reason you're sitting in that seat and that is you are about to leave us. This is, we're in fact recording this on your last day.

Kristin Valois: Yes, so very bittersweet. I'm excited to take on a new challenge and I've loved my time at Humber, but yeah, I'm going to miss NEXTcast more than is probably normal.

Nathan Whitlock: So I want you to tell us a little bit about your journey here because you began actually as a student, what brought you to Humber?

Kristin Valois: Absolutely. I came to Humber because I was looking to work, I was looking to work as a professional and sort of restart my career. I had completed my undergraduate degree in history and English, so a ton of jobs for me to line up for. I, at one point, sort of thought I might do teachers college, so it seemed like a great idea. But after, I think, I won't say how many years after completing my undergrad, I kind of made the decision to go back to school, and Humber seemed like the right choice for me. Because the particular program that I took, obviously the professional communications, the professional writing and communications program.

Nathan Whitlock: How quickly, they forget....

Kristin Valois: [laughs] I know. I've only written it like a hundred times. It said that you would be taught by industry experts. And that's something that appealed to me as I had sat in lecture halls with 300 other people and listened to a professor who had written a book and then I had been made to buy that book for \$200. And I just wanted to talk to somebody who had worked in media, worked in communications, and was going to be able to kind of guide me and say, this is what a workplace is like. These are hard skills that you can develop, hone and yeah....You can be working professional.

Nathan Whitlock: And did it live up to your expectations in terms of like encountering and engaging with those professional industry people?

Kristin Valois: Yes, yes. I have to say I was very pleasantly surprised by not only the sort of smaller class size, but I feel like in this program, the professors really actually cared about the students and their success. And I was honestly impressed by their credentials, like: an award-winning poet, published author, communications specialist working like in the corporate field. I believe--I didn't have this professor--but recruiting investigative journalists to speak to people in this program. Like that's exactly what I signed up.

Nathan Whitlock: And after that program ended, you did an internship. Where did you do your work placement? I mean, I've already kind of spoiled it but ...

Kristin Valois: So yes, actually, and yeah. So I interned at Humber with what was then known as the Center For Teaching and Learning as a communications intern. And I met like a very warm and welcoming team and it quickly was very obvious to me transitioning from a student taking classes at Humber to working behind the scenes at Humber, how much work and preparation really goes in on the teaching side to make sure that students have a good experience here. But at the CTL I was doing those sort of projects I had hoped to do in an internship. I was looking at sort of editing the annual report and working on a podcast.

Nathan Whitlock: Well, I was just going to say just to make this more awkward. I was actually your internship supervisor during that time.

Kristin Valois: Yes and I really detested my experience. [laughs]

Nathan Whitlock: I'm aware of that. Fully aware of that. I had access to all your emails during that time as your supervisor so I was aware of what was being said. But one of the things, one of the pieces of advice I remember actually giving you at the beginning of that work placement was meet a lot of people. No matter where you're working, no matter what your actual stated duties are, get outside that box, go meet a lot of people in different programs, different areas and get a lot of experience while you're here. And fully to your credit, you did that.

Kristin Valois: Hey, thanks. Yes, that was great advice.

Nathan Whitlock: What are the kinds of things you were doing? What did you find yourself doing?

Kristin Valois: Yeah, I was very lucky to have one of the professors from the program sort of refer me to a position at the college, which was basically writing for the Humber PR and Marketing Department. And through that I was sort of like a cub reporter going to events, covering events, interviewing people. I honestly think I used every skill that I learned in the PWC Program, but also I met a ton of people at the college. And it's sort of one of the things you would also describe to me when I started is that Humber is like a small city. So yeah, those

connections were great and sort of at times parlayed into like shorter term projects where I did a newsletter for one of the faculties. I also worked on a really cool project called the Transmedia Fellowship. It was sort of toward the tail end of my internship and when I was transitioning to be an employee here.

Nathan Whitlock: And I wonder if at this point--I mean you're still technically an employee here, so you're somewhat duty bound to say nice things....

Kristin Valois: I am very much still ... No, honestly, it's ...

Nathan Whitlock: But I'm wondering if you can kind of reflect a little bit on that shift from being a student: someone coming here to get connections, to get connected to an industry, get connected to a role as a writer, as a communicator, and then to start actually doing it. And I wonder if you can reflect on that transition in yourself and... How did you see yourself when you started the program? What do you remember about your own sort of feelings about where this would go and how do you see it now?

Kristin Valois: Excellent, excellent question.

Nathan Whitlock: Thank you. I have a good producer that puts me in this spot.

Kristin Valois: [laughs] I do really remember very clearly when I began the program because I wasn't sure if even this would be something I enjoyed doing. I was like, I sort of, I had written enough essays that I knew I could string a sentence together. But in terms of communications on behalf of anybody else, aside from myself, I didn't know if it would be something that I enjoy. Throughout the internship process I think, and subsequent work, I think the chance to just complete tasks, not for marks has been a real confidence booster for me. And I think one of the first lessons I sort of learned in my internship, I was chatting with a friend from the program and we were talking about how you don't ... It's now the real world. Like it's either you did it or you didn't do it.

Kristin Valois: I think that's one of the most important lessons I've learned and one of the most valuable for me is that there's no grade. When you submit something to your boss or something needs to be done, it's either done or not done. Or the feedback will be like, okay, let's work on this a little bit more. Or like let's approach this from a different angle. There's no grade to sort of stress over or it doesn't matter. It's more like this is your career and you kind of have to take hold of your own learning and own that.

Nathan Whitlock: But I would hope that the feedback you were getting in the course is somewhere still in the back of your head as you're handing in those tasks.

Kristin Valois: Oh my goodness. There are so many things I have, like every time I write something I'm like, so what? Why am I writing this? Don't bury the lead. I think there was an exercise specifically in--I'm not just sucking up--but it was in your

class, the storytelling exercise. Something about headlines and doing a proper like hed and dek for an article, or for anything being like funny about it is so hard, but so good. It's such a good skill to have. I'm still working on it.

Nathan Whitlock: Well, I should just say you are obviously free to suck up on this on this podcast.

Kristin Valois: I guess.

Nathan Whitlock: Again, you are still an employee of Humber College as of this moment and what are you feelings now you're going to be leaving? I mean, you said you are feeling somewhat sad and excited, I would imagine. But this is, I mean you've stopped being a student a while ago, but now you're stepping away from this institution where you were a student, so in a way that is kind of a graduation day for you.

Kristin Valois: It really is. I was joking, like with friends that I met through the program, I'm kind of like the kid that didn't really leave home, like everyone else went away to school and I stayed. I still like get to be in contact with profs from the program and like sort of keep everyone updated on what's going on. But yeah, I am really excited for a new opportunity, but mostly because I feel like this environment has been very like supported and really warm and welcoming.

Nathan Whitlock: So you want the opposite?

Kristin Valois: I'm ready. No, it's like I've been nurtured. [laughs] Yeah, throw me into the cold, dark world. Which actually, and I mean I actually will be working alongside a friend from the PWC Program, and I believe part of my responsibilities will be looking after the intern from the PWC Program. So I am leaving the nest, but I still do feel very connected.

Nathan Whitlock: And I have just one last question for you. Have you started hearing the NEXTcast theme in your sleep yet?

Kristin Valois: I hear it all of the time.

Nathan Whitlock: Can you hear it right now? Rising up beneath this....

Kristin Valois: I can hear the swell of the lead up music for sure.

Nathan Whitlock: Well just before it swells to a completion, let me thank you for being on the podcast and thank you for doing such an amazing job producing this podcast. I did it myself for a little while and I know exactly how hard it is and I have been very, very grateful to just be a host. To be the on air talent that just shows up, gets in the makeup chair and then sits down with the questions you have crafted. So I thank you so much for this.

Kristin Valois: Well thank you Nathan, honestly, for everything.

Nathan Whitlock: NEXTcast is produced by Kristin Valois for Humber Press. To listen to previous episodes of NEXTcast and to read issues of NEXT Magazine, go to [humberpress.com](http://humberpress.com). You can also find free downloadable transcripts of every next cast episode at [humberpress.com](http://humberpress.com). To suggest stories for future episodes of NEXTcast, or just let us know what you think, email [humberpress@humber.ca](mailto:humberpress@humber.ca). That's [humberpress@humber.ca](mailto:humberpress@humber.ca). Thanks and see you next time. That is still not a pun.

Kristin Valois: Bye.

Nathan Whitlock: Bingo.

Kristin Valois: That's so hard. Oh my God.

Nathan Whitlock: I told [crosstalk 00:14:02].

Kristin Valois: What am I saying? I don't know why I'm saying it. My face is red.