

FPAA Voices



Sara & Modar Saleh
A Syrian Success Story

Katie Durvin
On Women Refugees

Our Top Grads for
2016



Carleton
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF
Public Affairs

Welcome to FPA Voices

Message from our Dean



As we work closely with students who are pursuing a degree, there is always the sense that we have only a short window of time to help them prepare for their future.

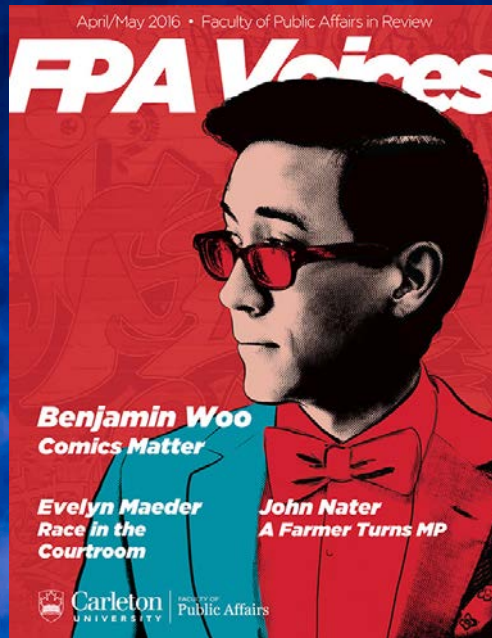
And when convocation time arrives, we see that window close, as they leave their program to pursue their next chapter of adulthood.

From the student's perspective, we can all remember the feelings of excitement, of

innovation and uncertainty in beginning a new phase of your life. Years of hard work are coming to an end and it's time for you to take charge of your life in a way you never have before.

Our graduates leave the Faculty of Public Affairs and Carleton University as informed citizens, with invaluable knowledge and skills that will help them address our greatest societal challenges. My hope is

Previous Issue



Front Cover: Sara and Modar Saleh.

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that they will recognize that they have the capacity to change the world— and that they will see it as their responsibility to do so.

If they'd like some inspiration, they need look no further than FPA's *75 for the 75th* project, which is profiling 75 of our most inspiring alumni in honour of Carleton's 75th anniversary in 2017.

These alumni are working to make Canada

and the world a better place. I trust this year's graduates will soon join them.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'André'.

André Plourde
Dean, Faculty of Public Affairs
Carleton University

FPA People

Sara Saleh, Combined Honours, Bachelor of Arts, Communication Studies and Political Science

Modar Saleh, Bachelor of Arts, Economics

In November of 2011, siblings Sara and Modar Saleh received their international student visas at the Canadian embassy in Damascus. Soon after, the embassy was closed and never reopened. This year, they are graduating with degrees from Carleton: Modar with a good standing and Sara with a High Distinction designation.

What was happening in Syria when you decided to study abroad?

Sara: We applied to Carleton University in early 2011, before the Syrian crisis unfolded. Studying abroad meant having better post-secondary education and better opportunities for entering the labour market. I chose Carleton because it has one of the top schools for journalism and communication studies and has educated many leading personalities in the field.

However, we had no idea what was about to happen in our country when we applied here.

You grew up in Damascus, Syria. Did you see any signs that a protracted conflict was brewing?

Sara: Damascus has always been a safe city—a city where you can walk home at 3 a.m. without worrying about anything. Before the crisis, Syria was ranked one of the safest countries in the world. So there were no indicators—not even alarming signs—of what was about to happen.

The day I wrote my grade 12 exams, the high school was protected by soldiers to ensure we were secured inside. This was the first time I came across a sign of something unusual, something we weren't used to seeing back then.

Modar: I was studying business administration at a university about 50 kilometers away from the city of Daraa. I eventually stopped attending my classes because that city was the scene of tensions and it was no longer safe to go to university. At that time, it was hard to understand exactly what was going on.



What was your transition like when you arrived at Carleton?

Modar: I found it difficult at the beginning because my spoken English was not that good. I didn't feel comfortable enough to attend my professors' office hours because I couldn't express myself well.

But I received a lot of help from the Student Academic Success Centre, the International Student Services Office and language workshops offered in the library. "As international students that's one of the reasons we chose Carleton."

By second year, my English improved significantly and I made friends. I also started visiting my professors and TAs during their office hours so my grades really went up. I'm now working on developing my French.

Sara: "Transition" is a tricky word and world. For me, it has been an ongoing process. At the beginning you resist transition because you mistakenly equate it with relinquishing your homeland identity. Carleton helped me celebrate rather than resist my differences and it made me explore this new world.

What were your favourite courses?

Sara: One of my favourite courses was on communication and diasporas, taught by Professor Karim Karim. In this class, I had the opportunity to bring back my homeland memories in the form of a research paper.

Modar: When I first came to Canada, the Canadian dollar was worth about the same amount as the U.S. dollar and then it dropped, which made me want to learn more about monetary policy. My favourite course on that subject was taught by Raúl Razo-Garcia, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics.

What are your plans for the future?

Modar: Long term, I'm considering doing a Master's degree in Economics and I'm currently planning on becoming a CPA.

Sara: I'm starting a summer job with the The International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) and I'll continue to volunteer for MP Niki Ashton on Parliament Hill. I'm planning on graduate studies, as well, but still deciding between communications and political science.



Sara and her brother Modar with a view of Damascus

Field Notes

Katie Durvin

MA International Affairs

Norman Paterson School of International Affairs

In 2012, Katie Durvin was working as a volunteer in the Dzaleka Refugee Camp in Malawi, helping students who had been chosen to immigrate to Canada and pursue university studies prepare for their departure and new life in Canada.

But when she wasn't doing volunteer work, her attention was drawn to the plight of the women and girls living in the camp.

“My professors at Carleton University challenged me to become a better writer, thinker, and public servant”.

“I saw many women my age or younger who already had several children and were living with complications of childbirth and other debilitating sexual and reproductive health issues,” recalls Durvin, who was a Program Assistant with World University Service of Canada (WUSC). “The availability of sexual and reproductive health services in the camp was very poor, which sparked my interest in women’s health issues.”

That experience prompted Durvin to apply to NPSIA with the intention of studying sexual and reproductive health and rights.

“I wanted to investigate how particular sexual and reproductive health policies had been implemented in different humanitarian emergencies,” says Durvin, who completed

a Major Research Project at NPSIA. “I found that in countries like Chad, Indonesia, Haiti, and Jordan, the level of implementation of the policy often depended on the strength of the national health system and availability of sexual and reproductive health services prior to the crisis. This makes investments in emergency preparedness critical for women and girls.”

Not only did Durvin win a TD Fellowship in Migration and Diaspora Studies, but her research and growing expertise in this area helped her secure a co-op position with Global Affairs Canada (GAC) in the Global Health Policy and Nutrition Division. Upon graduation from NPSIA in December, she was hired to work as a Policy Analyst in the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Division of GAC, where she provides strategic analysis and advice on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

“The focus of my Master’s research and practical experience in the field really helped me prepare for this position, as I gained a deeper understanding of key issues affecting sexual and reproductive health and rights in emergencies”, says Durvin. “I feel really lucky to be in this role, working on a topic I am passionate about with fantastic colleagues who have mentored and supported me. I am also incredibly thankful to my professors at Carleton University, who challenged me to become a better writer, thinker, and public servant.”



Purchasing tomatoes from a woman in Dzaleka refugee camp's bustling central market (Malawi).



Young adolescent girls walking along the roadside in the Malawian hills.



Outside of Shabani's restaurant run by a family of refugees living and working in Dzaleka refugee camp (Malawi).

Convocation. Commencement. Valediction. Graduation.

Call it what you'd like, but the Faculty of Public Affairs is proud of its hundreds of graduates who are about to embark on a new chapter in life. Below, we highlight a few of our many notable graduates.

Khadija Ahmed, Combined Bachelor of Arts Honours (Law and Legal Studies and Gender Studies)

Khadija Ahmed always knew she wanted to study law as a vehicle for social justice.

"I believe in social change and want to be a part of it, but I wanted a tangible way to accomplish it," she says.

So she enrolled in the Law and Legal Studies program, which provided a solid foundation in Canadian and international law. This enabled her to "connect the dots between various social issues through the law" as well as identify the overarching social issues and narratives within a domestic and international legal context.

Khadija also had the chance to view the Canadian system from an international perspective as an intern in Washington D.C. and an exchange student in Istanbul, Turkey. Since Khadija's exchange in Turkey, she was inspired to consider a career in international law.

"I think a lot about human rights and the obligations we have to one another. My goal is to be a social engineer within law."



Cassandra Erichsen, Master of Social Work

Cassandra was working as a front-line worker at an addictions centre in Winnipeg when she reached the point of emotional exhaustion. “We weren’t able to provide the services for clients that they needed. There were incredibly long wait lists for counselling and housing,” she recalls. “I really struggled with that.”

When she decided to pursue her MSW, Cassandra chose to study the shame and burnout experienced by social work students like herself. She ended up winning Carleton’s 3MT competition with her 3-minute thesis presentation.



“Many students felt shame if they failed to cope emotionally with the work. They felt the pressure to hold it all together and to be a provider, not a receiver of services,” she explains. “These ingrained expectations threaten our ability to practice long-term.”

With her Master’s degree in hand, Cassandra has now moved into the policy realm, conducting research for an organization in Toronto that serves homeless youth.

Farida Hassan, Combined Bachelor of Arts Honours (Economics and Political Science)

As someone interested in international public policy, Farida has taken full advantage of her undergraduate experience.

Not only did she complete an internship with the German Parliament last summer, she also volunteered for a Canadian MP, where she conducted a comparative study on proportional representation. She says both experiences contributed to her future plans.

“International public policy is where government, civil society and business intersect. That goal came from what I learned here: put yourself out there and doors will open.”



Farida was also an active member in Carleton’s Mobility and Politics Research Collective, a group of undergraduate and graduate students who share an interest in research on refugee issues. She plans to build on her undergraduate experiences as she pursues a graduate degree at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin in the fall.

Kevin Koudys, Bachelor of Arts Honours (Criminology)

One of Kevin's most valuable experiences was his internship, where he discovered he did *not* want to become a lawyer.

"I interned with a criminal lawyer and I went to jails, to mental health consultations and even spoke in front of a judge," he says. "I'm glad I did it because I realized it wasn't for me."

Carleton also gave Kevin the chance to develop his leadership skills. He worked on summer and fall orientation and was a team leader for Alternative Spring Break in New Orleans.

Instead of law school, Kevin will pursue his Master's in Sociology this Fall. He plans to study impaired driving—inspired by his parents' experiences within their careers of policing and firefighting.



Craig Lord, Bachelor of Journalism

Starting out, Craig wasn't sure what his career would look like. But his experiences as an undergraduate led him to one of the most prestigious names in journalism: *The Globe and Mail*.

"I was in a program that made opportunities available and I succeeded because I was able to take advantage of those opportunities," says Lord. "It can be scary, but that's not a reason not to do something."

In particular, Craig cites his experience with alumni mentor Mike Curran of the *Ottawa Business Journal*. Mike put Craig in charge of a news site for Ottawa's tech community called *Techopia*. Craig was its first web editor and created written and video content.

"When I interviewed with *The Globe*, I told them about *Techopia* and I think a light went off in their heads. That's what they were looking for."





Hilary Martin, Master of Political Management (MPM)

After graduating with a BPAPM degree, Hilary wanted to learn more about the nuts and bolts of political work. Her experience in the MPM program introduced her to specific skills, but also offered insight into the ethics and responsibilities of those in politics.

She's now applying that knowledge in her role as an assistant to an Ottawa-area MPP, where she's planning events, writing press releases, preparing briefing notes and more.

Eventually, she'd like to conduct public opinion research or even run for political office. She believes her experience in MPM has prepared her well.

"A lot of us found the connections we made with people from different political parties were extremely valuable because we had to find a way to get along and work together," she says. "We developed valuable connections for the future."

Michelle Musindo, Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management (BPAPM)

Michelle was drawn to the international studies stream of the BPAPM program. What she didn't anticipate was the complexity of it.

"We were taught to look at international issues in a holistic fashion— examining development, international relations, and law all together—and I really liked that. It wasn't just one-sided."

Michelle adapted that approach for her Honours Research Project, which focused on the internationalization of sexual violence against women and girls in conflict, and how that affected domestic policies and legal jurisdictions. She presented her research in the *180HRE* competition—a three-minute defense of undergraduate research.

This summer, she's working as a Research Assistant on the implications of regionalism and international law. Next fall, she'll head to the Munk School of Global Affairs in Toronto for a Master's degree.

Christine Pellerin, Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership (MPNL)

As the Director of Development and Partnerships at The Theatre Centre in Toronto, Christine was looking for a Master's degree that would "add value" to her career and wouldn't require her to uproot her life.

That made the MPNL online degree program ideal. It also introduced her to her future research topic: social finance.

"Before I started the program, I had never heard of social finance. My whole career had been in the arts, but coming here and meeting professionals from other backgrounds really broadened my horizons."

Christine ended up focusing her Master's research on social finance, which led to a fellowship with the Metcalf Foundation to explore the use of social finance as a new revenue stream for the arts sector.

"In a time of increased competition for an ever-dwindling pool of grant money, social finance has opened the door to other possibilities."



Ece Yilmaz, Master of Arts, European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (EURUS)

Ece was drawn to the EURUS program for its strong co-op and internship program—and she took full advantage of it.

"My first internship was with a non-governmental organization in Brussels that was working on digital diplomacy initiatives," she says. "While I was there, I had a phone interview for a co-op position back in Ottawa. As I explained my knowledge, they offered me the position."

That co-op was with Global Affairs Canada, in the foreign affairs division that covers Russia, Turkey, the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. Her experience in bilateral relations there led to a contract that began before graduation—as a Desk Officer in the Eastern Europe and Eurasia Division at Global Affairs Canada.

"EURUS gave me so many experiences that I was able to figure out what I wanted to do in life," she says. "I feel really lucky to have this opportunity."



The combination of being in the National Capital, the expertise within the Faculty, and the access to everything in Ottawa makes Carleton a natural place to study public affairs. It enabled me to get to where I am today • If you want to understand a region, nothing can replace the day in, day out living, breathing experience • In the field of economics, there's a tendency to present things as being cut and dried, but I believe it's important for economists to be humble about what they know and curious about what they don't know • Whether you're looking at economics or politics or human behaviour, the record of the past is a critical reference point. You need to understand that record. And you need to explain it in terms that will resonate with people and persuade people to act on its lessons • Every day I come to work and think, 'I'm doing something pretty amazing • Something that I take to heart is that I'm here to represent people who are fighting back and whose voices are often not heard or are silenced • The surest way to produce the worst future is to believe there's no hope • I have a sign in my office that asks, 'How many people have you helped today?' We are very much in the helping business • Again and again, when people reconnect with their First Nations or Inuit ancestral way of life, we see a positive change happen. There's just an opening, but it's so exciting • Throughout my life, I have had many mentors who have challenged and inspired me: mentors who allowed me to see that change happens when you believe it can happen, encouraged me to be a lifelong learner and to understand the importance of giving back • I'm just an observer who takes the information that's there, interprets it, and tells a story • Everything I learned at Carleton was applicable in one way or another. It was an immersive experience of dreaming, thinking, writing, and examining • I became hooked on policy because it was incredibly interesting and it was an area where you could really make a difference • I always told my kids to follow their heart. You want to be really engaged and enthusiastic about what you're doing • Carleton gave me that break. They gave me a degree, professional contacts and confidence, which is no small thing. They really stood me up as a young woman • That was part of where I came from, and we need to understand as Canadians that our identity, our history, our present, and future are tied to the inequality and injustice the First Nations face • In the end, though, I believe it all goes back to our beliefs and what makes our lives meaningful. Trying to understand those belief systems and how they change is my preoccupation now • We have to give people a sense of possibility • I tell the youth that I speak with in my community and elsewhere that if they ever want to come over and talk, I'm there. I'm trying to convey hope and pride and not allow them to let go of that • We can't let our ancestral teachings get lost in mainstream Canada • I don't tell their stories, it's their story to tell. I amplify their voices

Meet our 75
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Thomas
Homer-Dixon



Niki
Ashton



Darrell
Bricker



Gilbert
Whiteduck



William
Robson



Nahlah
Ayed



Timothy
Lane



Yaprak
Baltacioglu



Sue
O'Sullivan

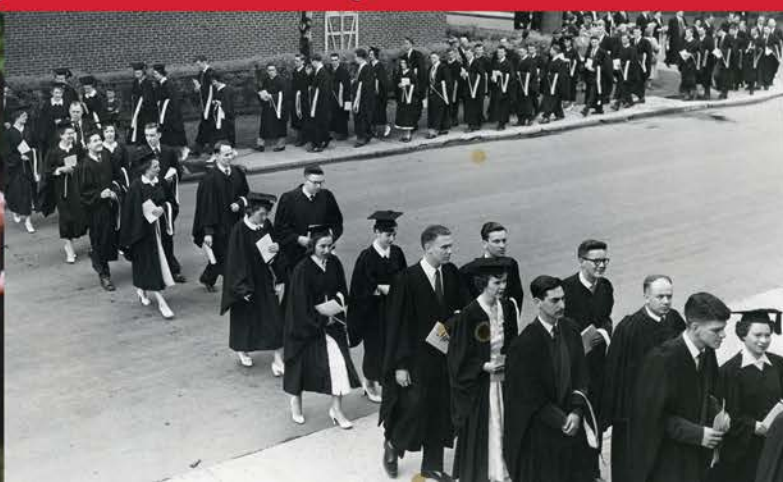


Jim
Watson



Convocation through the years

Can you find yourself here?



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