

news

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Colin Mills
Music Industry Arts Coordinator

Putting a price on student work

Program coordinators frequently solicited for free labour from outside entities

NICOLE MCCORMICK

Andrea Emery, coordinator of Algonquin's graphic design program, was sent into a tailspin when a single email from a national media outlet showed up in her inbox a couple of weeks back that she would later describe as a landmine.

"I was livid when I got it," she says.

The email was sent from a woman working for the CBC who was seeking some of Emery's students to carry out unpaid graphic design and animation work. More specifically, they wanted animation created for four to six-minute audio clips to be posted on their social media pages.

This kind of project for CBC would entail 10-20 hours of work and the going rate for a junior designer is \$1,000 per minute of animation and Emery says it would be too much of a burden for students taking a full course load and working part time jobs.

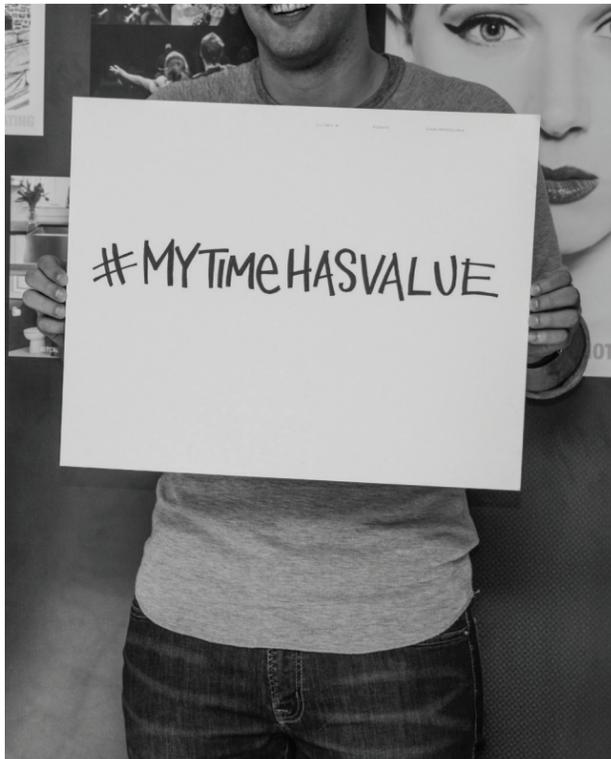
As shocking as this may seem, this is not an isolated case.

Nine program coordinators in the School of Media and Design have told the *Times* that they are solicited with requests for freelance labour from students on a daily basis.

"Every program gets this," says Emery. "We get requests probably on a daily basis for free work. I'd say I get a request at least once a day."

In Emery's case, she resisted CBC's request at first, but decided to share it with some students and grads prefaced with a warning in a private social media group after some urging on CBC's end. She says that many students went ballistic after she shared the email and some even reached out to CBC to voice their objections.

Rick Bond, a former graphic design student and professor turned small business owner, was one of many drawn into the conversation and says that although the majority of businesses in the industry truly do understand the value of good work, there are a few he hasn't



NICOLE MCCORMICK PHOTO

A student holds up the hashtag used by Registered Graphic Design Student Representatives to express distaste for requests for freelance labour

worked with who don't follow the same practice.

"I'm against it because it's exploitive, where the company receives more value than the unpaid intern," he tells the *Times*. "A small number of businesses I have heard of feel they are entitled to free work in exchange for experience and in my opinion this is damaging. It damages the intern's self confidence, the morale of other employees, and the reputation of the business."

We have to caution and tell them to say 'don't let yourself get taken advantage of'

Jeremy Atherton
TV broadcasting
Program Coordinator

CBC emailed Emery back following the backlash and told her that they had made a mistake and the animation clips would only need to be 30 seconds to a minute in length, but for Emery and her students, this was not enough as it would still devalue their work.

The *Times*' reached out to the CBC to request a comment

on their use of unpaid student freelancers but received no response by the time this story went to press.

Provincial labour laws currently prohibit unpaid work unless the individual is performing work under a program approved by a college or university program or is receiving some form of training.

This type of unpaid internship is a requirement for most media and design programs and they provide students with valuable work experience.

In fact, many Algonquin students--mainly those in the journalism program-- have good experiences with placements at CBC.

But the line is being drawn when it comes to unpaid freelancing, which is forcing students and educators to ask themselves: What is the value of a student's hard work to employers and similarly, what is exposure and unpaid work experience worth to students?

According to Karen Kavanagh, the coordinator of Algonquin's advertising program, she deals with this issue regularly as well.

"It generally starts with a huge email about what a great project it is, how beneficial it will be for the student, and

then at the end it closes with 'for free exposure.' Translation: no pay," she says. "And our students work very hard in our programs... It's a lot of extra hours. And they have the added stress of having to work part time jobs to pay for their tuition."

And it's not just design programs at the college.

It's also happening to Colin Mills, coordinator of music industry arts which is one of the most expensive and intensive programs offered at Algonquin.

"I regularly receive requests like this and since our industry has been suffering with the perceived value of music steadily decreasing, I am strongly against anyone working for 'exposure,'" he says in an email to the *Times*. "I usu-

ally try and convince whoever is inquiring that a musician, sound engineer or student instructor has some value to them and that they deserve to be paid for their time. Very rarely the individual inquiring changes their mind and may offer up a (usually) small honorarium for the students' service but most of the time the call ends fairly quickly."

Despite the mostly negative feelings within the faculty, Jeremy Atherton, who is the TV broadcasting coordinator says his program has taken a slightly different stance on the subject. He says that they get many calls regarding unpaid projects, but they don't automatically reject them. They take it case by case and see if the project would be a good fit for students.

"There are some good fits so it's not everyone is just looking to exploit students. Some are really looking to partner with our program and are trying to develop an industry and skill set within the industry," says Atherton.

"We have to caution and tell them to say 'don't let yourself get taken advantage of,' because there's a perception inside arts that you'll just give it away for free for portfolio work and we try hard to turn that perception around, at least in the student's minds."

But even with coordinators looking out for their best interests and filtering these requests, many students are being solicited themselves for work in exchange for exposure.

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ALGONQUIN COMMONS THEATRE
COMEDY SERIES
2016 • 2017

BRYAN CALLEN
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2016

AN EVENING WITH
TOMMY CHONG
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 24TH, 2016

JON RUDNITSKY
WITH SPECIAL GUEST JAKE NORDWIND
FRIDAY JANUARY 27TH, 2017

PIFF THE MAGIC DRAGON
THURSDAY MARCH 9TH, 2017

Students' ASSOCIATION Algonquin Commons Theatre TICKETFLY
18+ EVENT. TICKETS AVAILABLE ONLINE THROUGH ALGONQUINSA.TICKETFLY.COM OR IN PERSON AT THE ALGONQUIN COMMONS THEATRE BOX OFFICE

Blondie & Bonner

Public relations students launch reboot of Liv and Viv show

YANNICK ISMAEL

Welcome to the Blondie and Bonner show, hosted by Brian Bonner and Chelsea Rutherford. Like a phoenix, the online-based show rose from the ashes of public relations students Liv and Viv show to its current incarnation.

The hosts of the Liv and Viv show both graduated last June which left a vacuum in which Rutherford and Bonner -- also PR students -- seem to thrive.

"We are trying to stay with the same tone because last year, it was such a great way to communicate to students," said Rutherford, in his second-year of the program.

"The show came out of the necessity of wanting to showcase what the Student Association does, because we do so much," said Bonner,

the SA marketing assistant.

"The theatre, the Starbucks and a lot of events that goes on in the school are actually run through us," said Bonner.

Their main purpose is to deliver information to students in a relatable way with weekly videos uploaded to Facebook and YouTube on Fridays.

"I watched the show progress so I understand what I was coming into. We're not trying to be them, but we're trying to carry on the legacy," said Jordan Wiens, the SA videographer.

Wiens worked with Liv and Viv last semester, as did Rutherford.

"It's a great way to get information out to the students while also having a fun time. We wanted to showcase what the Student Association does for



YANNICK ISMAEL PHOTO

PR students Chelsea Rutherford and Brian Bonner host their show. They are continuing Liv and Viv's legacy.

students on campus," said Blondie.

To promote this year's food cupboards ahead of Thanksgiving, Bonner and Rutherford tried the cinnamon challenge in the attempt to demonstrate one of many things which are harder to do than donate food to the less fortunate.

You can bring your non-perishable foods to the SA front office in the Student Commons throughout October.

"We want to emphasize that the SA does put on a lot of stuff for students, so come out to events and use the health plan," said Rutherford.

Putting a price on student work

Continued from page 3

April Bennett, a second year graphic design student was forced to face it head on when she was contacted on Twitter by an individual who was impressed by her artistic talent and requested she draw something for them. The only catch was that no compensation would be given. She politely declined the request, but the individual pressed on and told her they were trying to help her grow her business and she should be thankful for the interest. When she politely declined the request a second time, the user became volatile, telling her she was "nasty and entitled" and that her work was not very good, along with a slew of profanities.

This angered Bennett so much that she decided to share screen grabs of her conversation with her 12,400 twitter followers, which earned her over 27,000 retweets and 54,000 favourites.

Unfortunately for Bennett, this was not the first time she had been asked to carry out work for free.

"I've actually been approached by video game developers before asking for me to do 'spec work' for them — drawing the character concept illustrations and developing an aesthetic for their game," she says.

She adds that turning down these non-paying jobs is often met with harassment.

But unlike Bennett, many others are still lured in to the trap and are met with unfortunate consequences.

Some advertising and animations students have indicated that many unpaid projects that bring students on board often fizzle out before completion. As a result, those involved are left with disappointment, wasted time and without anything to show for it in their portfolio.

One third year advertising student told the Times that he has experienced exactly this time and time again and has come to regret the decision.

"It hasn't been worth it," he says.

Enrolment at Pembroke reaches new heights this year

HIMANSHU TALWAR

Algonquin's Pembroke campus has been seeing gradual increases in enrollment and Fall 2016 is no different, with the campus setting a new record for enrolled full-time students.

This fall, Pembroke has over 950 students enrolled, an increase of nearly 100 students from the 853 enrolled in 2010.

"There are a lot of pressures on colleges to increase enrollments because of changing demographics

and increasing competition from other schools," said Jamie Bramburger, manager of Community and Student Affairs at the AC Waterfront Campus.

The Waterfront Campus in Pembroke opened in late 2012, and has helped the

college attract new students in the smaller community, said Bramburger.

"A good mix of programming has assisted with attracting more out-of-town students as well, and there are now two privately owned and operated student

residences in Pembroke, helping the college provide housing to the almost 50 per cent of its students that relocate to Pembroke to study at the campus," said Bramburger.

Pembroke isn't stopping construction there however.

"A third privately owned and operated residence is currently under construction and will open for Fall 2017, when the Pembroke

campus introduces three new full-time programs," said Bramburger.

"The Waterfront Campus is nearly at its capacity for a student population," said Bramburger. "However the goal is to consistently have more than 1,000 full-time students enrolled each fall, which is an excellent enrollment for a campus of our size in a smaller community."

Students by day, warriors by night

PHI HOANG TRINH

The room was large and rather empty. Eight people stood into a circle, each with a wooden European-style sword nailing into the ground. Their eyes were fixed at two men in the middle, who were pointing blunt swords at each other. They stabbed and slashed, but at the speed of people who practice Tai-chi.

It is just a regular scene that happens every Wednesday night at Algonquin's room P121.

The college's chivalrous sword handling course opened its first class of the year on Sept. 28 which saw a modest number of eight attendees. To those who think chivalry is dead, it is the chance for them to revive the tradition by becoming a sword master.

Safety was emphasized for these trainees as they will receive much more combative instruction from primary instructor Jeff Greenwood and his

assistant Dave Atkinson in the coming weeks.

The course arose out of interest in medieval culture in medieval culture.

"People's interest in HEMA [Historical European Martial Arts] started to rise when the movie The Lords of the Rings debut," said Greenwood.

Also according to him, the hit HBO show Game of Thrones didn't stir any wave in enrollment for the course, despite its worldwide success for depicting a fantasy medieval world full of knights and dragons.

"Like with most fantasy, the moves (the fight choreography) have large motions, acting as if the weapon is heavy when it is actually quite light," commented Greenwood. "This is common for the majority of movies attempting to depict European based fantasy."

Although it is labeled as a general interest course, sword handling follows a strict discipline.



PHI HOANG TRINH PHOTO

Dave Atkinson and Jeff Greenwood, instructors for the chivalrous sword handling class, display some basic sword movements in front of their students.

Instructors can take slightly unpleasant measures to ensure safety in practice and goodwill in manner.

"Do not stand leaning on your sword like Charles Chaplin with his baton," Greenwood told the students.

Added Atkinson: "You never know when somebody would come across and kick it, and suddenly you are disarmed and displaced."

"So from the second class on, if I see anybody standing like that I'd just kick the sword," Greenwood said.

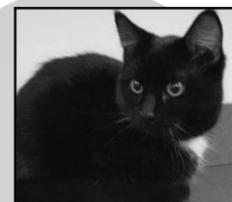
Like other martial arts courses, practice fighting is the main

activity, but it is also essential for learners to know how to qualify in edged weapons and how to maintain them. Lessons are packed into a two-and-a-half-hour time frame, which Greenwood tries his best to exploit.

Only at the Level 2 course in the winter term can students get into real combat under protection of armor. Unfortunately, not a lot of students say they will continue on to the second term.

"In the next level, students would engage in more combative training," said Greenwood. "They are also required to self-equip a set of armor."

THESE COOL CATS ARE LOOKING FOR LOVE



Name: Dynamo
Age: 8 months old
Sex: Male
"Party King"



Name: Rosie
Age: 19 months old
Sex: Female
"Gentle Soul"



Name Ugo
Age: 2 years old
Sex: Male
"Super Pal"



Our adorable kitties are looking for a warm loving home. Will you open your heart and be their love connection?

Contact: Emma Slater
Phone Number: 613-727-4723 ext. 7201
slatere@algonquincollege.com
Website: algonquincollege.com/healthandcommunity/pets-for-adoption