

Lessons in Leadership: Three Emerging Health Leaders Graduates Share Their Stories

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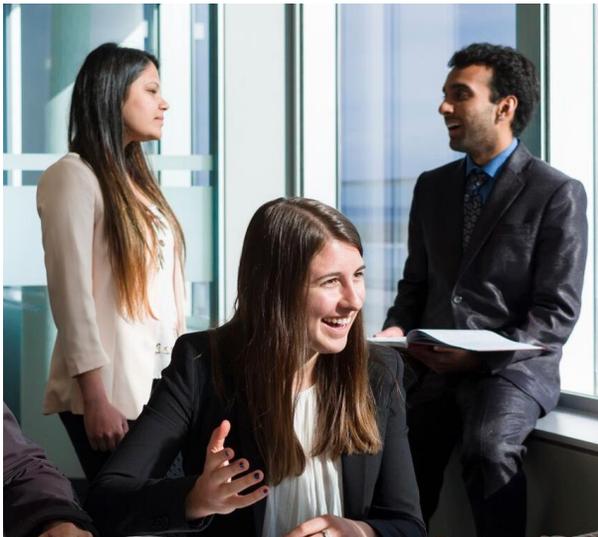
Article by Mr. Gordon Pitts

The three people have three paths.

One is a high-tech entrepreneur showered with accolades and seed money. Another is a fanatical hockey player shooting to apply her team skills to medical studies.

The third possesses interests from computer science to philosophy, but ultimately wants to help build a more technology-enabled health system.

They share an aspiration to be leaders in the medical sector – which is what drew them to the Emerging Health Leaders (EHL) Program at McMaster University’s Michael G. DeGroote Health Leadership Academy (HLA).



Rachel Bierbrier, second-year medical student at McMaster University, laughs with peers at the Emerging Health Leaders Program at the Ron Joyce Centre.

“This has stretched my brain in a way it hadn’t been before” said the hockey player, Rachel Bierbrier, a second year student at the McMaster’s Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine.

This program offered by the HLA – itself a joint venture of the DeGroote School of Business and the Faculty of Health Sciences-- is a two-week residential immersion

into cutting-edge leadership thinking.

Aimed at qualifying undergraduate and graduate students, the program offers a range of experiences – from teamwork and self-reflection to the insights of experienced leaders.

These three graduates came to the program with a personal history of academic and extra-curricular success, but saw gaps in their leadership repertoire. After two weeks of living and breathing leadership, they feel they have tools that are already paying off.

Sarosha Imtiaz is a McMaster life sciences student who, through a zig-zag path of ever broadening opportunities, has emerged as a founding partner in a Hamilton startup that helps businesses optimize their online presence.



Sarosha Imtiaz, co-founder of Aiva Labs, talks with peers at the Emerging Health Leaders Program.

She came to the leadership program just as she was making the transition from Bachelor of Health Sciences undergraduate degree to full-time involvement in her tech startup, Aiva Labs. The Emerging Health Leaders Program promised to discuss “the intersection of business, health policies and technology,” Sarosha said.

The program did not disappoint. Like the other students, she was fascinated with design thinking as a development tool. She enjoyed the

expert speakers, and got a grounding in change management that will help define future roles.

Also, she gained a network of colleagues, from a wide range of backgrounds, with which to share ideas.

Bierbrier is back at medical school knowing that her passion for science is complemented by broader exposure to soft skills including design thinking as a tool in building innovation.

The program “challenged the way I thought about tackling those big multi-factor challenges. The program gets you out of your comfort zone and that is where you grow the most.”

Krish Bilimoria is graduating this year from McMaster’s Bachelor of Health Sciences program, with insights that challenged everything he thought he knew about leadership.

He had been involved in a lot of conference and event organization in high school and at McMaster, but he learned he needs to be collaborative.

In high school, he said, “I thought the definition of leadership was to give orders, call the shots, stand the highest,” but he never entirely trusted the work of others.



Krish Bilimoria, research assistant at McMaster University’s Genetic & Molecular Epidemiology Lab, talks at the Emerging Health Leaders Program.

Michael G. DeGroot
HEALTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



At the EHL program, je was able to frame his leadership style and learned how to develop tools to get the best out of everyone.

“The biggest thing was changing my model of understanding human organization from that of a machine to an ecosystem.”

Bilimoria has taken his new approach to an Innovation by Design program offered by the Health Leadership Academy. He has been working with a student team at Toronto’s Hospital for Sick Children looking to design ways to integrate personal protective equipment, thus reducing the incidence of hospital-acquired infection. He is far more sensitive to individual interactions and the complexity of institutions like Sick Kids.

Bierbrier is mulling over life after medical school, which may just include a degree in business administration or in public health.

Sarosha Imtiaz may be immersed in business technology, but she maintains a passion for the medical sphere. Meanwhile, as a tech entrepreneur, she is learning to engage in those difficult conversations with people around her.

The next offering of the Emerging Health Leaders program will be August 19- September 1 2018 with an expected cohort of 30 interdisciplinary students.