

# The Senecan

## Shopping for a living = dream career

Her recent purchase was a silk dress that won't be on store shelves for several months.

She picked it up at a sample sale, promoting the latest in 2011 spring fashions. That's just one of the many benefits Jennie Carmichael enjoys as a Business Buying Associate for Sears Canada.

"I'm very lucky," Jennie says. "This is an amazing job for someone who is just starting out."

Jennie's career in retail buying started when she was a student in Seneca's *Fashion Business* program.

During her two years of study, the 24-year-old learned all about the retail fashion industry thanks to courses such as the psychology of fashion, retail mathematics and product development.

Outside of class, she practiced her craft by working at the Boutique@Seneca, a student-run fashion store located at Newnham Campus.

Jennie served as the store's general manager for a semester and oversaw all aspects of the operation from advertising to payroll.

"The boutique allowed me to put everything I learned into practice," she says. "It's one of the reasons why I chose Seneca over other schools."

With the experience she gained at the boutique, Jennie eventually went on to earn a one-year internship with Sears Canada.

While still in school, she worked for the company every Friday, researching the latest fashion trends and assisting with fashion events and presentations. After she graduated, Jennie was hired full-time.

In her current role, Jennie is in charge of children's wear and assists the senior buyer in her department with finding suppliers and negotiating prices. More than half of her time is spent dealing with numbers, and she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I love the math," she says. "I have always preferred the business side of fashion, and that's what led me



PHOTO BY RICHARD DOUGLAS

down this career path."

In the next couple of years, Jennie hopes to advance at Sears and become a senior buyer for the company.

She also has aspirations of returning to the College to teach in the *Fashion Business* program.

"I'm a huge fan of the program," she says. "It would be an honour to come back and teach at the College because it prepares students like no other institution."

To learn more about the *Fashion Business* program, visit [www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/FAB.html](http://www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/FAB.html)



## Planning for Seneca's future

A successful future comes with the right plan.

For Seneca, success begins with providing students with the best possible environment to achieve their academic goals. Planning for this environment requires answers to some important questions: How does the College make the best use of its buildings and facilities? How can Seneca optimize land use and ensure accessibility for all? Can we make it easier for students and employees to get to and from campus? Where and how should we grow our programs?

Throughout this year, Seneca will be addressing all of these issues as it develops master plans for the buildings, programs and natural environment at the Markham, King and Newnham campuses, as well as a comprehensive review of the programming and facilities at Seneca@York. The timing of this exercise coincides with the development of the College's next Strategic Plan.

A master plan includes a thorough examination of a campus's assets and serves as a broad vision for its future

development. Seneca is joining forces with the national design firm DIALOG to facilitate the research, architectural planning, program review and community consultation required for the plans. Seneca students and employees from across the College will be consulted.

"A successful master plan must include input from those who know the College best," says Seneca President David Agnev. "In order to create a sustainable learning, working and research environment, we need to hear from the Seneca community."

As part of the master planning process, steering and technical advisory committees have been established for each campus, comprised of students, faculty, administrators and support staff. As well, DIALOG will be continually engaging the College's many stakeholders through interviews and workshops.

Open forums will be held across Seneca campuses, and these events will

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## His poetic inspiration leads to writing acclaim

The first poem Bruce Hunter ever read was about a pool player who wore a hearing aid.

This was the first time Bruce had ever read about someone like himself who was living with a hearing disability — and it was enough to inspire the English and Liberal Arts professor to seek out more poetry from famous authors. Before long, he was writing his own thoughts down, and over time his hobby blossomed into a successful career as writer, editor and English professor. Not bad for a guy who used to be a gardener, equipment operator and Zamboni driver.

"I knew I didn't want to operate a chainsaw for the rest of my life," Bruce says. "I had no reason to keep writing other than one teacher who took me aside and said, 'There is talent here, but you need to develop it.'"

Bruce mastered his craft as a student at the Banff School of Fine Arts where he studied under W.O. Mitchell — the famous Canadian writer, performer and teacher best remembered for his novel *Who Has Seen the Wind*. Bruce received a scholarship to attend Banff thanks to the collection of work he'd had published in literary magazines out west.

In the early 1980s, Bruce moved from Calgary to Toronto to continue his literature studies at York University.

In his second year, his first book of poetry was published. "I didn't think it [getting published] was unusual," Bruce says. "I was too busy working hard to compare notes with aspiring writers."

Bruce used the money he earned from his book to pay his university tuition. Shortly after graduating, he worked part-time at a magazine and supplemented his income by teaching writing courses in the evening. In 1986, he



BRUCE HUNTER

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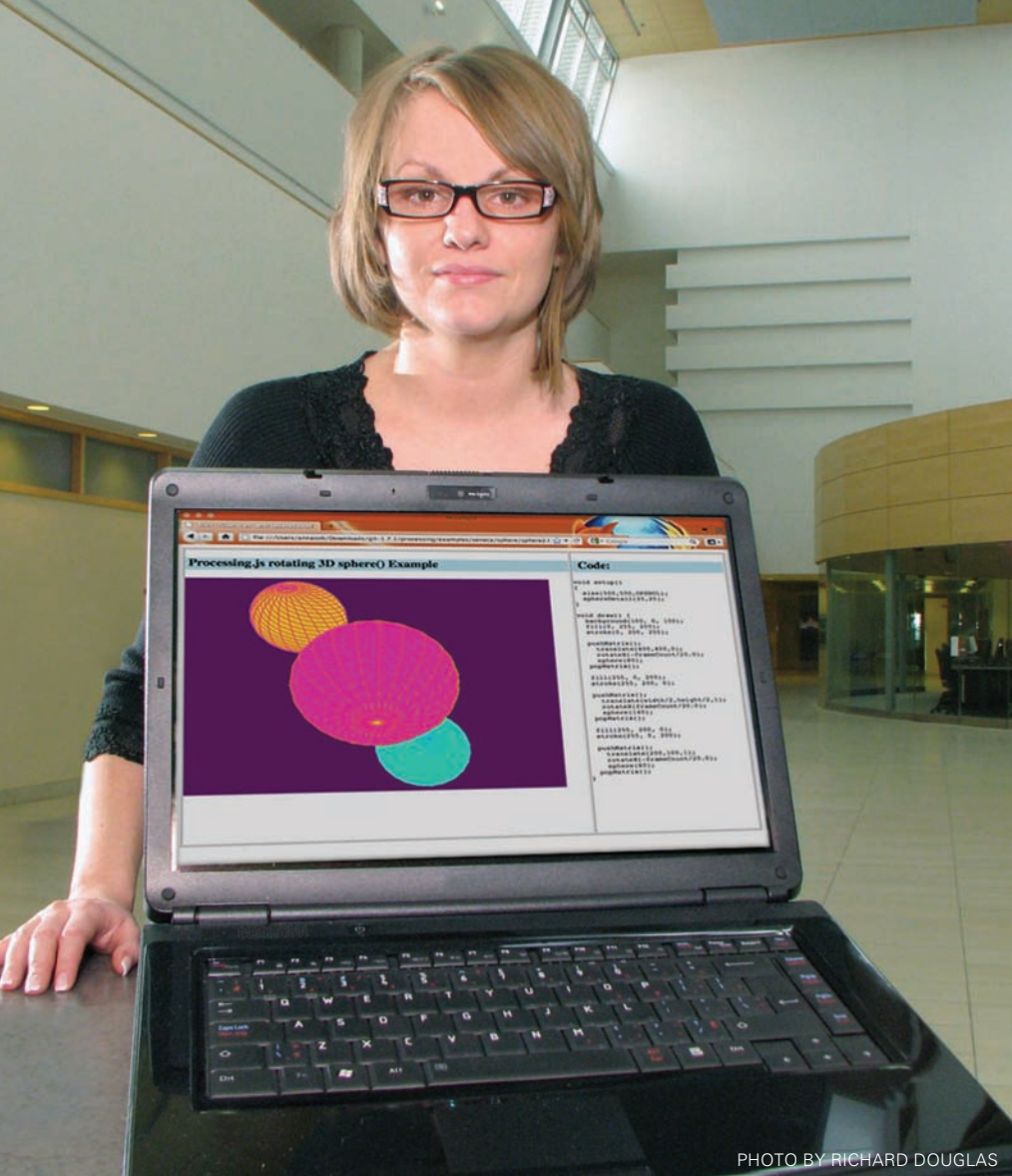


PHOTO BY RICHARD DOUGLAS

# Senecans develop

It's a ground-breaking new way of displaying graphics on the web, and it was developed at Seneca.

Called Processing.js 1.0, it makes it easier for web browsers (Firefox, Internet Explorer, etc.) to display two- and three-dimensional graphics online.

Seneca's School of Computer Studies worked with Mozilla Corporation on the project, a continuation of the College's long-standing partnership with the creator of Firefox.

Faculty and students have spent the last year refining Processing.js, an open source programming language and environment for those who create web-based images, animations, and interactions. The new Processing.js 1.0 allows digital art, interactive animations, educational graphs, video games and more applications to work using web standards and without having to download

special plug-ins that are sometimes used to convert these files for browsers.

"They've built a huge and important bridge between the open web and the world of electronic art and design," says Mark Surman, Executive Director, Mozilla Foundation.

The development of Processing.js 1.0 was built into the curriculum of the *Software Development* program, allowing students to work on the initiative during the last two semesters.

"What's exciting is that students got to work on the cutting edge of both graphics and web technology," says Dave Humphrey, School of Computer Studies Professor. "They were able to take a fantastic prototype and see it through to the completion, giving them real-world experience and a great addition to their resumes."

Anna Sobiepanek (pictured left) led her fellow students on this project and was hired at the end of the semester as a research assistant to continue her work at Seneca's Centre for Development of Open Technology (CDOT).

## Vaughan Campus opens

The Vaughan Community Campus officially opened its doors on January 28. The new campus will offer Vaughan residents a range of services, including academic upgrading, employment services and workplace essential skills training for professionals, as well as a centre for entrepreneurship.

"Seneca is York Region's post-secondary institution," says Seneca College President David Agnew. "With the opening of the Vaughan Community Campus, we are pleased to offer a one-stop shop for academic upgrading, employment services and professional skills upgrading for employers and current professionals."

The opening of Seneca's Vaughan Community Campus, located at 1490 Major Mackenzie Drive West, Unit D5, was attended by a number of local leaders and honoured guests including (from left to right) Stan Talesnick, Dean of Seneca's Faculty of Workforce Skills Development; His Worship, The Honourable Maurizio Bevilacqua, Mayor, City of Vaughan; Peter Vecchiarelli, Senior Constituency Assistant to Greg Sorbara, Member of Provincial Parliament for Vaughan; David Agnew, Seneca College President; The Honourable Julian Fantino, Minister of State (Seniors) and Member of Parliament for Vaughan and Gaspare Provenzano, Vaughan Community Campus client.



## Success the second time around



Cheryl Palermo returns to Seneca every semester to share her success story.

As part of her discussion, she always talks to students about the one thing all successful entrepreneurs have in common: perseverance. It's a trait that has come to define this Senecan, having climbed back from her own failed business venture.

While graduating from Seneca's *Entrepreneurship and Small Business* program, Cheryl started her own rock climbing business, signing the lease hours before accepting her diploma.

During her first year in business everything was going great, but that all changed when Cheryl's partner walked out. For the next two years, Cheryl

maintained ownership of the business, singlehandedly managing all aspects of the operations. However, things started to slow down, and it wasn't long before the landlord locked her out for falling behind on the rent. What came next was a series of court cases, personal bankruptcy and eventually temp work. Yet, despite all this, Cheryl was convinced her business could work if she made a few adjustments.

So she found a new partner, focused her business on children and opened Kidz Rock Climbing & Party Centre. Located in York Region, the indoor facility hosts birthday parties, camps and

children's groups.

"It's a fantastic little business," Cheryl says. "I'm very proud it. We have done really well."

On an average weekend, Cheryl will have 200 kids come through her new place. She employs 10 people and is turning a regular profit.

During her talks at Seneca, she reminds students that 90 per cent of all small businesses will fail in their first year. The lesson she says is to crash and learn, not crash and burn.

"As an entrepreneur, you have to get used to failure," she says. "Unfortunately, it is part of the path to success."

For anyone who is thinking about starting their own business, Cheryl is quick to recommend Seneca's *Entrepreneurship and Small Business* program, which she credits for helping her find success as a small business owner.

"I refer back to my courses almost daily," she says. "I still have the textbooks believe it or not."

To learn more about the *Entrepreneurship and Small Business* program, visit [www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/BAS.html](http://www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/BAS.html)

# ing revolutionary web languages

“The release of Processing .js.1.0 was the icing on the cake after so many hours spent on the project,” she says. “It’s been so great to manage this for Seneca and Mozilla.”

To learn more about the *Software Development* program visit [www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/BSD.html](http://www.senecac.on.ca/fulltime/BSD.html). To learn more about CDOT, visit [http://zenit.senecac.on.ca/wiki/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://zenit.senecac.on.ca/wiki/index.php/Main_Page)

## PBS turns to CDOT and popcorn is the answer

When PBS wanted to present an enhanced version of President Barack Obama’s State of the Union Address to its online viewers, they turned to only one post-secondary institution for help—Seneca College.

The U.S.-based Public Broadcasting Services station used Popcorn.js, a JavaScript programming language created at Seneca’s Centre for Open Source Development that allows for far more integration of multimedia in web videos without the need to download a plug-in.

In the past, PBS would post a video of the President’s address online with links allowing readers to view pundits’ comments.

Using Popcorn.js, they were able to incorporate the comments automatically into the video during the speech.

“I give PBS a lot of credit for being open to working with Mozilla and Seneca on this,” says Seneca Professor David Humphrey. “These are new technologies, new techniques, and the timing was crazy.”

David says his team of researchers, which included Senecans Anna Sobiepanek and Scott Downe, worked all night to write the code for the enhanced State of the Union web video.

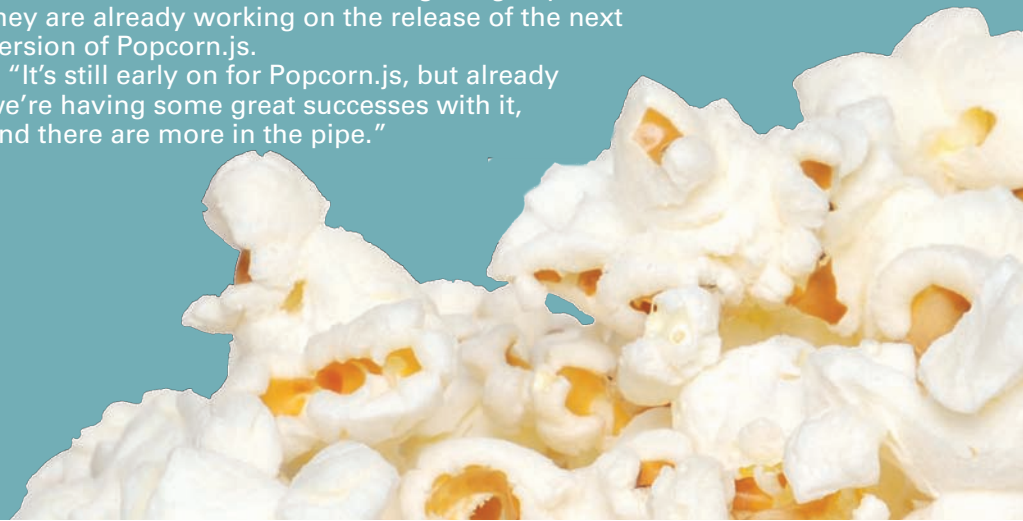
Although it may sound simple, he says the process was anything but, considering PBS contacted them the morning of the address.

Despite every technical glitch imaginable, David and his team got the job done.

“I can’t tell you how proud I am of my students,” he says. “They aren’t afraid to build things this important, or try experiments this crazy and time pressured. It inspires me every day to work with them.”

David and his students won’t be getting any rest soon, as they are already working on the release of the next version of Popcorn.js.

“It’s still early on for Popcorn.js, but already we’re having some great successes with it, and there are more in the pipe.”



## Professor brings ECE classrooms to Jamaica

At first glance it looks like any regular early childhood education classroom.

There are toys scattered around the floor, a reading and play area for the kids to enjoy and plenty of natural light coming through all the doors and windows. So it’s hard to imagine that this bright and vibrant classroom, located in Jamaica, was originally a metal shipping container. Yet, in a compound that is home to children with HIV/AIDS and children with special needs, there it stands. The group at the forefront of this innovative project is Students Crossing Borders, an organization led by Seneca’s Lynn Caruso.

“Before this, I never would have thought to make a school out of something like that,” Lynn says. “It’s truly amazing, as was the generosity of so many who donated furniture, supplies, and everything you could possibly need for an early childhood centre.”

The Early Childhood Education Professor and her team of volunteers sent over their first “ECE container” to Jamaica in 2009. The construction portion of the project was funded by Mustard Seed Communities, an international Catholic charity.

“It’s amazing the difference this classroom can make,” Lynn says. “Without it, these vulnerable young girls and boys would never get the opportunity to play and learn in such a unique, play-based environment.”

Anyone who knows Lynn will attest to the fact that she has a passion for helping others. It’s a passion that she instills in her students, fellow faculty and community members through her involvement with Students Crossing Borders. The organization, which was started in 1991, is a work/study program for students, teachers, alumni or anyone else interested in providing assistance in some of the most impoverished areas of Kingston, Jamaica.

Seneca students have been supporting the initiative since 2004, when Lynn took over — and each year the number of volunteers from the College keeps growing.

In addition to the container initiative, Seneca volunteers work in an orphanage, homes for teenage mothers and special needs children and in a number of basic schools (ages 2 – 6). One of the schools closest to Lynn’s heart is the Riverton Meadows Early Childhood Centre, which is a basic school built in a community at Kingston’s working landfill site. With the ongoing support of Students Crossing Borders, and the partnership with the Centre’s dynamic principal, Junior Rowe, the Centre has been able to realize most of its goals, including a parent-child drop-in centre.

Junior says without Lynn’s passion and drive his centre would not be the success it is today.

“On behalf of the Riverton community I want to thank Lynn and her team for coming to Jamaica and making a difference,” he says. “Under Lynn’s leadership, Students Crossing Borders has made a significant impact on the lives of the children.”

Lynn says she plans to continue her volunteer work with Students Crossing Borders and its partners in Jamaica for as long as she can.

“If we weren’t making a difference I wouldn’t go back, but we are making a difference and we are helping the communities in the region move forward.”

To learn more about Students Crossing Borders, visit <http://studentscrossingborders.ca>



Early Childhood Education Professor Lynn Caruso stands inside an early childhood education classroom that was originally a metal shipping container.

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started teaching at Seneca and has been with the College ever since. Needless to say, during this time, Bruce hasn’t stopped writing.

In 2009, his first novel *In the Bear’s House* was released and won the Canadian Rockies Award at the Banff Mountain Festival.

The coming of age story, which took Bruce years to write and research, is about a deaf child who is sent to live in the wilderness on historic Kootenay Plains in Alberta.

He followed that up in 2010 with *Two O’clock Creek – Poems New and Selected*, which brings together the best of the author’s previous books of poetry, as well as exciting new work that shows the

continual development of this life-long poet.

*Two O’clock Creek* has been highly acclaimed by *Books in Canada*, the *Calgary Herald*, *The Globe and Mail* and *Canadian Literature* magazine.

“The response has been incredible,” Bruce says. “And the really cool thing about this – it’s really young people who are responding to my work.”

Bruce says the secret to his writing success has been hard work.

Today, the advice he gives to his students and other young writers is the same advice his teachers gave him, which is to “keep trying.”

“That’s what it’s about,” he says. “Keep going, don’t stop and never be quiet.”

### PLANNING FROM PAGE 1

give the College community an opportunity to voice thoughts about Seneca’s future direction.

The first of these events took place on January 31 at the Senecentre, where more than 200 guests met with the DIALOG designers and planners to learn about the master plan and have their say about how to improve Seneca in the years to come.

“This is an exciting time for the College,” says President Agnew. “We are really taking a close look at all the opportunities available at our campuses and how we can leverage our assets to serve our students and communities to the fullest extent possible.”

To learn more about the master planning process, visit [www.senecac.on.ca/about/masterplan/](http://www.senecac.on.ca/about/masterplan/)

# NEWS DIGEST



## PREMIER'S AWARD WINNER

Seneca alumnus Drew Hayden Taylor was selected from more than 100 nominees to receive one of the Premier's Awards for outstanding college graduates. Drew graduated from Seneca's Radio-TV Broadcasting program in 1982 and is now an author, playwright, screenwriter and commentator. He has written 11 plays, 20 books, edited three compilations of native literature and writes for publications across Canada. Drew is also a writer for film, television and radio. The Premier's Awards are presented annually to graduates of Ontario's colleges and honour their important social and economic contributions.

## Students showcase event talents at annual AIDS fundraiser

Glam, glitz and a lot of hard work sum up what students in Seneca's *Event Management - Event and Exhibit Design* program have been up to this semester. The program has provided students with the opportunity to plan, organize and design décor for some of the biggest social and charitable events held in Toronto this year. Most recently, the students lent their talents to Bloor Street Entertains, an award-winning gala that raises approximately \$500,000 annually for vital AIDS research. The event featured a Venetian theme, which included marionettes, gondola poles, live performances and video projections of Venice. Students from the *Firefighter Pre-Service* program were also on hand and volunteered to dress as gondoliers.



## Seneca Professor receives event leadership award

John MacBride, a Professor in the School of Fashion and Merchandising, has received a Leadership Award from the International Special Events Society (ISES) – Toronto Chapter. Each year, ISES recognizes three to four individuals for their contributions to the industry and the Society.

John has worked in the special events industry for more than two decades. He was instrumental in the development of the College's graduate certificate in *Event Management - Event and Exhibit Design*.

Since its launch three years ago, students have lent their talents to events such as the Scarlett Ball, the Black and White Gala, Unmasked, Canstruction, Bloor Street Entertains and the World AIDS Conference.

## Habitat for Humanity CEO visits Seneca to talk leadership

Habitat for Humanity (Toronto) CEO and Seneca Alumnus, Neil Hetherington, visited Seneca's Markham Campus on January 25 to talk to students enrolled in the *Leadership in Society* course. Taught

by Professor Sandy Naiman, the course is designed to give students a greater understanding of the leadership roles they can play in society through volunteering. Neil spoke to the students about what makes a good leader and the work his organization is doing to help local communities in Toronto build affordable housing.



## Prof. Devon Code wins prestigious literary prize

Devon Code, a Professor in the School of English and Liberal Studies at Seneca@York, has won the Writers' Trust/McClelland & Stewart Journey Prize.

Devon received the \$10,000 award for his short story "Uncle Oscar," which is about a lonely boy's longing for a male role model.

The Journey Prize is one of Canada's most prestigious awards for young and emerging authors. The prize honours the best short story published in a Canadian literary journal each year. The award has served as a launching pad for past winners such as Yann Martel, Alissa York and Timothy Taylor.

Devon's work has appeared in journals, magazines and anthologies in Ireland, England and Canada. *In a Mist*, his debut collection of short fiction, was published in 2007 and selected by the *Globe and Mail* as a notable fiction debut of 2008. In addition to teaching at Seneca, Devon reviews fiction for *Quill & Quire*, Canada's magazine of book news and reviews.

## College Ombudsperson appointed

Seneca President David Agnew announced the appointment of George Fry as Seneca's new Ombudsperson, effective January 10. George will succeed Liz MacLennan who has served as Seneca's Ombudsperson since 2002.

George retired from Seneca in 2008 as a Chair in the Faculty of Continuing Education and Training. A graduate of Seneca and York University, he started at the College in 1973 serving in several roles, including Associate Registrar, an Academic Chair and King Campus Principal. George returned in 2009 as the acting Bookstore Operations Manager. Seneca's Ombudsperson receives and investigates complaints in an independent, objective, impartial and confidential manner when all other College resources have been exhausted. The Ombudsperson attempts to solve issues through investigation and mediation rather than formal procedures, and where appropriate makes recommendations about changes to policies and procedures. The Ombudsperson can be reached at ext. 2029 or by e-mail at [ombuds@senecac.on.ca](mailto:ombuds@senecac.on.ca).

## New Aviation, Communication Arts chairs named

Lynne McMullen has been named the new Chair of the School of Aviation, while Mark Jones is the new Chair of the School of Communication Arts. Lynne has been a faculty member at Seneca for 10 years where she most recently held the position of Chief Flying Instructor (CFI), providing exemplary leadership to the flight line team. In addition, Lynne has been a key member of the Aviation NSERC research team working on the *Innovation Through Simulation: Enhancing Canada's Next Generation of Pilots* project. Prior to Seneca, Lynne worked for Empire Aviation and Spectrum Airways, where she served as CFI at both organizations.

Mark started his career at Seneca in 2002 as a faculty member in the Digital Media Arts program. He came to the College as an award-winning veteran of the new media field, having worked as an educator, producer, artist and writer. From 2000 to 2004, Mark was Executive Director of OnTarget, an Ontario-wide initiative providing career development and education support programs for the digital technologies industries. In 2002, he was awarded the ITAC Community IT Hero of the Year Award and the Canadian New Media Award as Industry Advocate of the Year.

**Seneca**

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