



## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RE: Amherst deputy town clerk helps NSCC students prepare for the real world

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – For the past two decades Natalie LeBlanc has returned to the Nova Scotia Community College each year with one goal in mind – helping the next generation succeed.

“If it wasn’t for the Nova Scotia Community College, I wouldn’t be where I am today,” LeBlanc, the Town of Amherst’s deputy clerk and a NSCC graduate, said on Dec. 4, prior to participating in some mock job interviews with the current crop of business administration students attending the Cumberland Campus.

“I enjoy participating because I have a desire to give back to the college that helped me so much. I also like participating because I’m helping the next generation coming up. I want them to know what the real world is like.”

Preparing the students for the real world is the goal of the exercise, faculty member Lisa Gower said.



**Natalie LeBlanc and Supriya Minocha listen intently to a response during a mock job interview staged for business administrative students at the Nova Scotia Community College's Amherst Campus. LeBlanc, the Town of Amherst deputy clerk and a NSCC graduate, has volunteered to be part of the mock interviews for 20 years. (Tom McCoag / Town of Amherst)**



“We’re simulating real life as close as we can get,” she said, adding the 13 students had to prepare covering letters and resumes for the jobs they were “applying” for, all of which were local employment opportunities that appeared recently on job sites like Career Beacon or Indeed.com.

The covering letters and resumes were read by LeBlanc and the three other members of the interview panel – Gower, Mallory O’Neill, a human resources recruiter with Sunset in Pugwash, and Supriya Minocha, who is also employed by the college – prior to the interview.

During the interviews, each applicant was asked several questions by the panel, which graded the answers, just as an interviewer would do in the real world. Following the interview, the panel gave the students feedback on their performance.

Gower said the interviews wouldn’t be as realistic as they are if it wasn’t for the industry partners, like LeBlanc, who agree to participate.

“They provide the students with an applied experience that helps them learn far beyond what the textbook provides them,” Gower said.

Knowing the panel members are all NSCC graduates who have succeeded in their respective careers also provides incentive to the students, she said.

LeBlanc, who graduated from the NSCC office administration course in June 1998 and joined the town staff a month later, said providing inspiration to the students is another reason she participates annually in the mock interviews.

“I was a single parent, who worked part time while in school, yet graduated with honours,” LeBlanc said. “I’m pretty proud of that, and if I could do it anyone can with a little hard work and determination.”

Student Ariane Caissie, who will graduate in June, said she was definitely inspired by LeBlanc and the other panelists.

“Knowing that the education they received here at NSCC has helped them in their position, their life, their career is exciting to see first-hand,” Caissie said. “Being able to see where they are



**NSCC student Ariane Caissie answers a question during a mock job interview on Dec. 4. The panel Natalie LeBlanc, Supriya Minocha, Mallory O’Neill and Lisa Gower, are all former NSCC graduates. (Tom McCoag / Town of Amherst)**



today, and to know that maybe one day I can be a panelist is definitely inspiring.

“You could tell that in their career roles they must interview others because they were quite calm and knew what they were asking.”

Participating in the mock interviews was extremely beneficial for the students as those who were fresh from high school and have never did a job interview before gained valuable experience, while those, like her, who have been through the interview process were reminded that being prepared is a necessary part of being successful, Caissie said.

“Going through the interview process is fun because you got to meet new people,” she added. “If I get to network or meet new people, I absolutely love it.”

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