

We can ALL help scout for talent - Thomas Matthews' approach

Here at CWB Financial Group, we encourage staff to explore creative opportunities to demonstrate our commitment to career development. Read on to hear how Thomas Matthews participated in the University of Alberta's Job Shadow program helping to increase CWB's visibility on campus and deepen our connection to competitive candidate pools.



I completed post-secondary nearly 20 years ago. About five years back, I enrolled part-time and graduated from the University of Alberta's Faculty of Extension Management Development program in 2017.

Being an alumnus of the U of A not only opened some doors for me that I didn't realize were closed, but allowed me to "pay it forward" and share my career experience in the most rewarding of ways. Fast forward to today, I learned that the U of A Career Centre runs [Job Shadow Week](#) twice a year and gives students the opportunity to join an Edmonton business for a few days. We previously placed a U of A student into the Cyber Security team as an intern (and eventually hired as a full-time CWBer) so I knew right away that this was something I wanted to do.

After getting support from IS Leadership and our HR Business Partner, I signed up and was matched with third-year Bachelor of Computing Science (B.Sc.) student **Vanessa Peng**. Vanessa has an interest in cyber security and is

also focusing on emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning. Did you know that the [U of A is one of the top universities in the world](#) when it comes to AI research and innovation?

One chilly morning not too long ago, Vanessa sent me a text that she was downstairs in the lobby of our Corporate Office tower. We previously agreed upon a two-day job shadow and it was a whirlwind, to say the least. The IS Security Services division has two primary teams that were involved: **Governance, Risk, and Compliance (GRC)** and **Cyber Security Operations (Ops)**.

Vanessa and I sat together first, where I was able to tell her all about CWB culture and mission. We did a quick tour of the 23rd floor and then my team members took over. Throughout the two days, Vanessa spent most of her time with GRC and Ops. Vanessa was able to experience cyber security awareness training development, cyber policies, and our risk assessment processes. Our Ops analysts showed Vanessa what we do when conducting email phishing incident response, our alerting and reporting dashboards – what we spend a good portion of our day looking at – and malware analysis where they deconstructed a virus to figure out how it works.

Surprised by the different skillsets required, Vanessa was most impressed with the Ops team and their investigative abilities. I stole some of her time and brought her to a few meetings with the Project Management Office (PMO), Corporate Services, and Infrastructure Services which gave her some great exposure to various departments within the organization.

During lunch on the first day, I learned what Vanessa was working on in school – an Android mobile app called **MDBook** – which is a proof of concept app where medical patients are linked up with doctors who can provide advice in real-time. When I was in school, they had us building computer networks and installing operating systems – times have changed! Before we knew it, the two days sadly came to a close. Vanessa and I held a debrief and concluded the experience was quite rewarding for both of us. She learned what it was like to work in an constantly evolving (and fast growing) IT department and I learned that CWB can benefit from a recruiting and career development perspective.

I'd like to say thank you to Christine Sereda, Robert Bychkowski, and John McGuigan who were open to the experience of having a student sit with them for a part of their day! Most importantly, a big thank you to Vanessa for choosing to shadow CWB. The U of A Job Shadow Week has grown from 38 job shadows in 2010 to over 300 for the 2018-2019 academic year. I really enjoyed being a host and getting CWB's name out there – there needs to be more opportunities for CWB personnel and students to mix in the onset of their careers and prepare them for work. Do you want to be involved? If you're a U of A alum and are interested in being a job shadow host toss me an email and maybe next year we'll get more students to join us!

Thomas Matthews
Manager, IS Security Services