



MaryLynn West-Moynes, who left Durham College in 2003 to become president of Mohawk College, has returned as vice-president of External Relations at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT).

RETURNING TO CAMPUS

by Christine Hiralal

ONE OF MARYLYNN WEST-MOYNES' most memorable moments as chief operating officer of Durham College was when the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) was approved. Shortly after the announcement was made and before UOIT opened, she became the president of Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario. Five years later, West-Moynes returned to campus as vice-president of External Relations at UOIT.

The 18 years she spent at Durham eased her transition into the newly created vice-president's position at the university since she already knows the campus and many people here. Since her new role is largely about communications, she spends a great deal of time fundraising for scholarships and seeking out capital donations. To do the job well she realizes she needs a thorough understanding of the university's programs and students.

"An important part of my job includes becoming familiar with the unique programs being offered at UOIT, as well as completely understanding who our students are and where they come from," said West-Moynes.

It's not the first time she has held a high-level communications position. After starting the college's daycare in 1985 and spending time in various other roles including a brief stint in teaching, West-Moynes became vice-president of Communications at Durham College and before leaving to take over the helm at Mohawk, she held the position of chief operating officer.

"An important part of my job includes becoming familiar with the unique programs being offered at UOIT as well as completely understanding who our students are and where they come from."

After being approached by a headhunter for the president's position at Mohawk, she left Durham College in 2003. At first she was unsure about picking up and moving to Hamilton while her husband continued to work in Durham Region. She eventually decided to take the job and for the next five years she and her husband took turns travelling back and forth

to spend time together on weekends. Despite the driving she says she enjoyed the job and felt it was all worth it.

"There's a letter in that purse from a student who came here from a different country and took English as a second language at Mohawk College," said West-Moynes pointing to a purse displayed in her office. "She then got into the Nursing program and I conferred her at her graduation. After walking across the stage she asked her two daughters what she could do to thank the college. Her daughters thought it would be great if the college's president carried a purse from their country."

Besides wanting to be closer to her family, West-Moynes decided to return to Durham Region because she was inspired by how the university and college have grown.

"Both institutions need to be unique and do the jobs they need to do but there is a basis for a great partnership," said West-Moynes.