

Chamber of Commerce celebrates 75 grads who improved skills with university partnership



The Aurora Chamber of Commerce celebrated another success story last Thursday afternoon when they welcomed 75 people from across Ontario to Aurora in order to celebrate their successful completion of the Business Acumen Certificate Program through the Schulich School of Business at York University.

The program is a partnership between the Chamber and York University to allow employees of businesses in many sectors to continue to learn and hone their skills, and was made possible through grant funding via Ontario's Skills Development Fund.

The Chamber received \$391,000 from the Province to get this program off the ground and was a resounding success.

"The feedback I received from local participants and the HR and executive teams at the companies [at which they are employed] has been incredibly positive," said Sandra Ferri, President & CEO of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, at a reception held at the Royal Venetian Mansion. "I congratulate the participants for their commitment to personal and professional development as it is that commitment that sets you apart. I applaud the companies for investing in their employees and recognizing the time away from their daily positions would be offset by the skills developed through this program which will serve as a solid foundation for future growth. I encourage all of you to become life-long learners, be open to opportunities and challenges and know that you're capable of taking on those challenges."

Words of encouragement were also offered by assembled dignitaries including MPPs Michael Parsa and Dawn Gallagher Murphy, as well as Mayor Tom Mrakas.

Addressing "current and future leaders" among the graduates, Parsa said "we value you, you're integral to the success" of Ontario.

"More than 90 per cent of our economy is dependent on the work that you do at your companies and organizations," he said. "To the management that came forward and nominated individuals to be a part of this program, congratulations to you as well for recognizing these individuals."

Gallagher Murphy saluted both the grads and the wide-array of industries and companies they represented, stating that each of the business demonstrated the value of investing in its employees.

"This is what this program is all about: investing in your employees to further enhance your skillsets and that results in a win for the employee, for the business and, of course, a win for Ontario because we are all further building our economy and investing in Ontarians," she said. "That is the most important way our Province can be the best possible place to live, work and raise a family"

by investing in our people.?

Added Mayor Mrakas: ?I think we all know how competitive an economy it is right now and learning new skills to strengthen your business acumen is critical to success. It is not just critical to you, it is critical to our entire community as you play such a vital role in making our towns and cities amazing places to live.?

These words were echoed by Carlo Sicoli, Director of Business Development and Partnerships with the Schulich Executive Education Program, who said there is ?no longer one single transition from graduation to work.?

?Many years ago, you'd graduate and then you just go to work. That's what my dad told me to do,? he reflected. ?Life has changed, it is a very competitive market and you need new skills. I commend you for taking 30 hours of your time to do it, but it gives you that body of work. Your new skills are a body of work you bring to your job every day

?We have worked with a number of organizations such as this and the stories that you hear about people developing new skills and taking on new projects at work, or moving into new roles, it is a material benefit to the community. I would like to thank the Government of Ontario for taking that step. This is a real game-changer.?

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