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University of Lethbridge alumnus named to Top 30 Under 30 list for creating unique immigrant excursion program

A University of Lethbridge alumnus of the Dhillon School of Business has been recognized as one of Alberta's Top 30 Under 30 for his work in helping new Canadians adjust to life in their adopted country.

Felipe Civita Ferreira (BMgt '15) was recognized recently by the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation for designing the Wandering in Wilderness Program, which provides immigrants opportunities to access safe and inclusive outdoor experiences. Working with the Calgary Immigrant Educational Society, Ferreira and a friend were able to procure outdoor supplies from local businesses and then guide new Canadians on educational hiking tours in the wilderness as a method of stress relief.



This past summer, two groups of eight travelled to the Alberta backcountry. Leaders, including Ferreira, focused on educating the teams about the environment they were in, its history, trail etiquette and how they could return without formal guides. Ferreira says plans are underway for another cohort of hikers to go through the program this coming summer.

"It's stressful, it's heavy," says Ferreira of the immigration process facing new Canadians. "I think a lot of immigrants can't find ways to cope with that because they're working so much and also have a family to take care of."

Ferreira is an immigrant himself, and came to Canada from Sao Paulo, Brazil at the age of 17. Initially, he planned to study English for five months and return to Brazil for undergraduate studies in international relations or business. After two months in the country, he passed his English proficiency exam and sought a university that would meet his needs for an undergraduate degree.

“It sounds funny, but it was kind of meant to be,” says Ferreira as he describes seeing an advertisement for the U of L while waiting for a bus. “I went to my professor at the English school and asked him if he knew about the university. He said he had a few good friends that had gone there, and that it was a great school in a smaller city.”

Ferreira was accepted into the International Management Degree Program and over the course of the next four years, challenged himself at every opportunity through work-study trips to Malaysia, Hungary and South Korea.

“I wanted to find places that would take me so out of my comfort zone that I’d have to be patient, resilient and adaptable,” he says, adding that the experiences he enjoyed were life changing. “They positioned me to adapt to other cultures, and they positioned me to where I am now and the job I got after university – consulting for two-and-a-half years. The experiences at the U of L set me up for success beautifully.”

One of the core values of the Dhillon School of Business, social responsibility, can seem like a daunting concept, but Ferreira has been able to make a difference through a practical approach.

“When I look at social responsibility in a global environment, I look at the small scale – what can I do in my own reach that will impact my surroundings? By doing this, you contribute to the bigger picture.”

The Alberta Council for Global Cooperation (ACGC) is a coalition of voluntary sector organizations located in Alberta, working locally and globally to achieve sustainable human development. Committed to international cooperation that is people-centred, democratic, just, inclusive, and respectful of the environment and indigenous cultures, the ACGC works toward ending poverty and achieving a peaceful and healthy world, with dignity and full participation for all.

To view online: <http://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/where-adventure-leads>

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