Seeing the whole picture
For one young alum, Huron developed broad range of skills

1. How did you hear about Huron? What appealed to you?

I first discovered Huron at a university fair in Toronto. What ultimately drew me to Huron was its intimate atmosphere—the small class sizes, the approachability of staff, and the strong sense of community. I was also very lucky in being awarded a scholarship valued at $20,000, which played a significant role in helping me finance my education.

2. What degrees did you complete during your time here?

In the end I completed an Honour’s double major in political science and biology, as well as Huron’s scholar’s electives module. My choice to switch out of global development came about because I realized, after taking the required first-year courses for both political science and global development, that political science is a better fit for my interests and career goals. The scholar’s electives module is an interdisciplinary program that allowed me to explore the ways in which my two very different majors intersect. For example, in the last two years of my degree I had the privilege of working one-on-one with a faculty mentor (Dr. Bradford in Huron’s political science department) as I researched and wrote an undergraduate thesis on First Nations health care policy in Canada.

3. What were the advantages of combining arts/social sciences with STEM?

In my experience, combining the liberal arts with a science allowed me to explore different ways of thinking, learning, and approaching problems. My biology courses required considerable memorization, problem-solving, and critical thinking. I applied the scientific method in order to answer questions. On the other hand, my political science courses were less about uncovering objective facts and more about learning to develop and articulate strong arguments. The liberal arts enabled me to better comprehend the political, administrative, and discursive environment in which scientific research takes place and in which new knowledge is disseminated. In my opinion, this capacity to see the whole picture is one of the biggest benefits of an interdisciplinary education. Another would be the development of a broad range of skills, including reading, writing, problem-solving, memorization, and analysis.

4. What's next? What are you doing in Sioux Lookout?

For the next fourteen months I’ll be working as part of a research team in Sioux Lookout studying health in northern communities. I’m really excited to be putting the skills I have cultivated over the past four years into practical use, especially since the work I’ll be doing will help address some very important needs. This opportunity was made possible through a connection I made at a career mentoring event
hosted by Huron, in which a Huron alumnus put me in touch with my current supervisor. I plan on returning to school in September 2016, though whether for graduate studies or a professional program remains to be seen.

5. What advice would you give to any future student considering pursuing arts and STEM?

Do what you love and have fun! Use your first year to take a wide variety of courses and explore new horizons. Don’t be intimidated when people look at you and say, “That’s a weird course combination!” The best advice I was given when entering university is ‘do what you enjoy’, since it is much easier to do well if you are passionate about your area of study.