



JANIS MONTURE

What is your current position?

After completing my Bachelor of Arts in History I continued my post secondary education by attending Algonquin College in Ottawa and receiving my Diploma in Museum Studies. I was able to apply my knowledge as Executive Director of the Woodland Cultural Centre, the largest First Nations-run cultural education centre, museum, and art gallery in Canada. Currently I am on secondment to Harbourfront Centre as Artistic Director for Planet IndigenUS, the world's largest international Indigenous contemporary multidisciplinary arts festival.

What History program did you take at Western? What year did you graduate?

I graduated in 2001 after completing a 3 Year Bachelor of Arts in History.

How did your History degree prepare you for your current position?

My History degree prepared me with the skills to research and think critically, which is incredibly important to the programming I am required to curate. Being the face of an organization requires me to be well versed in the subject matter of my Indigenous culture and history. It is also important to provide context for audiences attending one of our events, whether it is a music concert or an art exhibition.

What would you tell an incoming History student?

There are so many opportunities and paths one could take with a History degree. I never thought in a million years that I would be the Head of an arts and cultural institution, nor did I imagine I would be working as an Artistic Director. However, if it had not been for the guidance from one of my counsellors to seek a well rounded learning experience while at Western I would not have taken classes in music appreciation or contemporary studies. These opened up my mind to the arts - which eventually led to my interest in the performing arts. A History degree provides you with the tools to pursue a career in the cultural sector, as you need to understand a culture's past to help shape its future.

Any other thoughts or comments?

Be open to all kinds of learning. I think it is important not to focus just on the history degree. I recommend looking at all types of learning and not just the formal learning streams. I have been fortunate to learn through several internships and mentorships over the past 13 years since I graduated. Without these other mentoring opportunities I would not be in the position I am in now.