

# School Supports Student Success

*If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right.*

**Henry Ford**

It may be an instructor cliché, but in my mind's eye, to this day, I can see Diana Glover in my Legal Office Assistant program. She sat in the back left corner of my classroom, observing the class quietly through lively eyes.

Diana was a good student; she arrived prepped and she asked concrete, relevant questions. Like many students, she was trying to make the career shift from the retail sector into the legal support field. Like many students, she managed part-time work while attending our full-time program. I know there were times she was bone-tired. She was also persistent and gave the best effort she could every day.

From a college instructor, these are words of high—if understated—praise. I was proud of Diana during the program, proud because as I increased the level of independence and problem-solving required to succeed, Diana increased her commitment and her abilities to meet those gradually more difficult challenges.

In the latter part of the program, she had the opportunity to spend a couple of weeks working as a receptionist in a local law firm. I remember she did very well there and that the feedback from both Diana and the employer was positive.

The most valuable part of the experience, I suspect, was the chance for Diana to develop confidence in her own abilities and to make that great leap from the world of the classroom and computer lab to the constantly changing demands of the workplace.



*Josje Andmore (standing), Program Leader of Legal Support Programs in the School of Business, Camosun College, with Diana Glover, Conveyancer at Salvador Davis & Co., Sidney, BC.*

After the program ended, Diana was tired; she chose to return to her retail position and let the job search wait a while. A few months later, I heard she was still interested in a career in the legal field but just wasn't sure she had "what it takes" to succeed.

I ran into Diana around town and learned she was really interested in real estate and conveyancing as an area of specialization, but she believed she was really "too junior" in experience for the positions she was seeing in the newspapers.

As it happened, within a few days I got a call from Laurie Salvador. Laurie and her Notary firm were looking for a junior conveyancer and were quite happy to consider hiring a new grad they could train on their systems and ways of managing conveyance files.

In response to Laurie's call, I took my usual steps. First, I spoke with Laurie and her assistant; we created an email posting describing the firm's needs. Next, I emailed this posting to the whole group of students who had just graduated. Some were actively seeking work; some were undertaking the responsibilities of that very first new job in the field.

I was moved to write a separate email to Diana, letting her know that this particular position was right up her alley and that this employer did not expect her to already "know it all." In fact, the firm was looking for someone they could continue training. On the basis that I was pretty sure this might just be "her job," I encouraged her to apply.

The rest is history. Diana was hired as junior conveyancer at Salvador Davis & Co. The Notary firm was happy with