



Coffee With Professor Kathleen Slaughter

Is there an Ivey prof, current or retired, who you'd like to have coffee with? Send your suggestions to intouch@ivey.uwo.ca

“Ivey has a great future in Hong Kong, but we need more people over here, writing cases, doing research, connecting with the business community.”

Kathleen Slaughter worked at IBM for eight years after graduating from Western, and then spent seven years at home while her sons Jason and John were both in school. She joined Ivey to teach management communications in 1983, and quickly became a popular and well-respected teacher. After stints as Director of the HBA program and the executive program Accelerating Management Talent, she moved to Hong Kong in 2003 as Associate Dean, Ivey Asia.

How did you end up teaching at Ivey? When I graduated, I said there were two things I would never do—live in London and teach. The lesson is, never say never! In 1983 Peter Newson, MBA '68 and Jim Erskine, MBA '67 were putting together a

program in communications to replace a report writing program that had been taught for many years. When I was in sales with IBM, I had the opportunity to be a guest instructor in sales training and I really enjoyed the experience. Joe DiStefano was associate dean and when he called, I said I would take the job, but only for one year. That year, my teaching ratings weren't great and the program was only fair. I was so upset I stayed another year—and 27 years later I'm still here.

What have you enjoyed about Ivey? Everyone is supportive and positive, and I made good friends at the School. I love the environment and can't imagine finding a better place to work. I get along well with the students and love to watch them change over the course of two years.

Was it hard to establish communications as an important business skill? When I first arrived, communications was the lowest rated course in the School. It was an uphill battle, but the key was changing the focus from restrictive clauses



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and copula verbs, to presenting ideas logically and connecting with people through writing and presenting.

Why did you decide to take up the assignment in Hong Kong? It was a big step for me—I had a good reputation at the School, the kids were grown up and my husband was retired. We had a beautiful house that we loved and a great life in London. But I didn't want to look back and wonder what would have happened if...

And why have you stayed in Hong Kong? I like the energy. The whole city has a buzz about it. The business activity is amazing—there's just so much going on. Being here, I've had all kinds of opportunities I'd never have in Canada. As president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce here, I had the opportunity to introduce Stephen Harper in November. I've had dinner with Jean Chrétien and Brian Mulroney. I meet regularly with all kinds of influential people. And I learn something new about the culture every day. It's very exciting.

What do Canadians need to learn about China? That it's a really important place. We're so focused on the U.S.-Canada relationship we're not preparing young people for a world where China is a superpower. People still think that China is a developing country. There's nothing 'developing' about it.

What do you do when you're not working? Ron and I love to hike here. There are lots of beautiful, well-kept trails in lovely countryside a few minutes outside the city. We travel a lot too. Our eldest son is living in the U.K., and our youngest is at Ivey finishing his MBA. They come here every year for Christmas and on Boxing Day, we all travel somewhere in Asia together.

What's next for you? The only thing I'm sure about is that when I leave Hong Kong I'm going to rest for a while. It's really a daunting pace here. You go seven days a week, and sometimes you realize that you've worked 20 days in a row. Beyond that, we'll see.

www.ivey.uwo.ca/Faculty/Kathleen_Slaughter.html