ASK THE SONIC COACH (Q&A)
Career Advice for Aspiring Health Researchers
December 2007

From a Financially-Strapped Student: How do I figure out how much it’ll actually cost to go to university?

SONIC Coach: There are many expenses to consider when calculating the cost of your university education. Not only will you have program expenses—tuition, textbooks, and ancillary fees—you’ll also need to include living expenses—food, accommodation, clothing and sundries, transportation, entertainment, etc. You may wish to use online program and education cost calculators (from Canadian Business < http://www.canadianbusiness.com/my_money/planning/education/university_cost/tool.jsp> and the Government of Canada’s CanLearn site < http://tools.canlearn.ca/cslgs-scps/cln-cln/35/fp-pf/clnindex.jsp?langcanlearn=en&bundle=stu>, for example), and consult financial planning books and resources available from your banking institution, to identify all the costs that apply to you. Approach a trusted school friend who is already at university, a parent, or family friend, to help you with the details of creating a budget.

From a Student with Specialised Training and Skills: I am a qualified lifeguard (National Lifeguard Service certification from the Royal Life Saving Society) and certified swimming instructor. Is there any chance of me finding part-time work at university with these qualifications?

SONIC Coach: You are wise to focus on your expertise in aquatics as a way of finding work at university. Most universities have swimming pools and many offer full-blown aquatics programs; they need people with your qualifications. Since students like to keep their part-time jobs from year to year, and employers prefer to rehire good staff, the competition may be stiff. But openings do occur when student lifeguards and instructors graduate (usually in the spring). So don’t wait until September to approach the Aquatics Director. Do it as soon as you know which university you will be attending.

From a Student with a Special Interest in Military Science: I come from a long line of military people and I’m interested in serving my country like my mother and father have. But I also love science and want to earn a university degree. What are my options?

SONIC Coach: These two interests are quite compatible. The Canadian Forces has special subsidized programs for the university-bound. Through their Regular Officer Training Plan < http://www.forces.ca/v3/engraph/resources/subsidized_education_en.aspx?bhcp=1>, for example, you would attend the Royal Military
College (or other approved Canadian University) as a full-time student, and participate in summer officer training courses. In addition to receiving a monthly salary, your tuition, books, instruments, uniforms, dental care and healthcare would be fully subsidized. And when you graduate, you are guaranteed a job as a commissioned officer.

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