

THOMPSON'S WORLD INSURANCE NEWS

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Zurich offers new apprenticeship program

INSURER Zurich Canada has launched a new apprenticeship program in partnership with Toronto's Seneca Polytechnic that blends education with practical work experience.

The two-year program provides successful candidates with complimentary enrolment in the school's insurance diploma program and integrates academic courses with relevant work rotations at Zurich Canada.

Graduates of the program can earn eight credits toward the internationally recognized Chartered Insurance Professional designation and secure full-time employment with the insurer.

"These journeys will allow participants to complete a diploma while launching a corporate career in the global insurance industry," said Elizabeth McSavaney, head of human resources at Zurich Canada.

"This initiative reflects our commitment to nurturing future leaders by providing both academic and practical experience."

The insurer said participants will benefit from a comprehensive package that includes tuition, fees and books fully paid by Zurich Canada. They will follow a hybrid schedule of courses at Seneca, allowing them to work parttime while completing their Ontario College Diploma. Participants will also gain access to Seneca's extensive student services and supports, including accessible learning resources, career planning, financial aid and advice.

"We are delighted that the first group of students is about to start this unique program that will prepare them to be career-ready for demanding roles in the insurance industry," said Jeff McCarthy dean of Seneca's business program.

Ostir named CEO of Western Financial Group

GRANT OSTIR is set to take over the CEO role at Western Financial Group in the new year.

He has led the broker's group insurance division for more than 15 years and has also served as its chief growth officer since 2022.

Mr. Ostir will succeed the retiring Kenny Nicholls, who has held the CEO role for roughly eight years and will remain with the firm for a transition period until the end of December.

High River, Alta.-based Western was founded in 1996 as Hi-Alta Capital by now-Sen. Scott Tannas and has roots that date to the 1950s. It was renamed Western Financial Group in 1998.

The company was acquired by Desjardins Group in 2011 and in 2017 it was sold to Trimont Financial, a subsidiary of Wawanesa Mutual Insur-

ance Co.

"Grant's extensive experience and proven track record in driving sales and growth strategies position him to lead our next phase of development," said Evan Johnston, Wawanesa's executive VP of strategy and related businesses.

"This appointment reflects our commitment to continuity and meeting our strategic objectives."

Western Financial Group provides personal and business coverages through more than 220 locations across Canada.

It opened its newest branch last month in Cold Lake, Alta.

In 2023 it expanded to the Maritime provinces with the acquisition of Saint John, N.B.-based Huestis Insurance and Associates.

TORONTO STOCK MARKETS

Closing prices for shares of p&c-related stocks in Canada*

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET VALUE†	AUG 22	AUG 29	SEPT 5	SEPT 12	YR. HIGH	YR. LOW
Co-operators Gen.	CCS.PR.C	87	20.90	21.65	21.55	21.70	22.03	16.50
Definity Financial	DFY	5,847	49.22	49.38	49.67	50.49	50.71	35.48
Fairfax Financial	FFH	38,983	1587.06	1619.00	1643.75	1668.62	1668.62	1070.00
IA Financial Corp.	IAG	9,936	101.99	102.97	104.51	105.34	106.35	77.61
Intact Financial	IFC	45,317	253.42	251.64	252.50	255.00	263.74	188.27
Trisura Group	TSU	1,939	41.28	41.67	40.12	40.37	46.75	29.05
*Westaim Corp.	WED	517	3.95	3.93	3.91	3.99	4.26	3.38
*Western Inv. Co.	WI	13	0.47	0.47	0.42	0.42	0.59	0.37

*— TSX except Westaim Corp. and Western Investment Co., which are traded on the TSX Venture Exchange.

†—Market value is approximate, in C\$millions, as of Sept. 12. All prices in Canadian dollars.

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