

ALUMNA ADVOCATES FOR OPEN KNOWLEDGE

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When KELSEY Wiens arrived in South Africa by the road less travelled, she didn't plan to set out on a new career path. After seven years, she's back in Canada and ready for the opportunity to make a difference in her home country.

A Bachelor of Arts in Professional Communication (BAPC) alumna originally from Okotoks, Alta., Wiens was recently named Canada public lead for Creative Commons Canada based in Toronto. Wiens will build community, organize events and perform outreach activities through her new role.

"From BCcampus, Open North and OpenMedia, Canada has some of the best examples of organizations with open education policy and practices globally," says Wiens. "I'm looking forward to bringing the established projects together and supporting new projects interested in working in the open."

Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that helps people legally share their knowledge and creativity using open licenses that allow content to be used freely with attribution to the creator.

Wikipedia, Flickr and academic journals without a paywall are examples of content that can be accessed and shared openly thanks to Creative Commons licenses, she says. "The reason Wikipedia works so efficiently is that it's built on our open licenses. It allows all work on Wikipedia to be attributed back to the creator, photographer, researcher or writer and the ecosystem of sharing and gratitude building".

After her BAPC graduation, Wiens was hired by Tour d’Afrique as a communication manager in the field and spent four months cycling from Cairo to Cape Town with 50 other cyclists. Previously, Wiens worked as a library technician, but didn’t know where she wanted her career to go. New opportunities were in store for her when she arrived in Cape Town.

“I fell in love with the city, the people, the beaches,” says Wiens. “I took a position as an assistant researcher at the University of Cape Town and that’s where I was first introduced to Creative Commons.”

She then landed a position with Creative Commons South Africa leading Pan-African projects with an open education focus. She says she is excited to bring her knowledge to Canadian open projects.

“My job is all about community building and advocacy,” says Wiens “The communication skills I learned in the BAPC program are essential to the work—learning how to design a communication strategy, how to write an effective message, how to write a speech. All of the tools I gained at RRU, I use almost every day.”

In addition to speaking at 2015 Tedx Cape Town and being named one of South Africa’s brightest young minds by the *Mail & Guardian*, Wiens founded Open Textbooks for Africa, a project designed to support the adaption and adoption of Open University Textbooks across Africa.

Thrilled to be back home in Canada, Wiens speaks fondly of her time at Royal Roads, not only because of what she learned in the classroom, but also because of the memorable time spent riding her bike around the campus.

Source: <http://www.royalroads.ca/news/alumna-advocates-open-knowledge>