



## SCS 1665-137 University Lecture Series (ULS)

Winter 2026

**Date:** January 23

**Speaker:** Mark Blevia, A Senior Executive at Commissionaires  
Great Lakes

**Title:** Beyond Service: Integrating Veterans and Reservists for a  
Competitive Workforce



Canada's veteran and reservist community represents a significant, often underutilized talent pool. They bring transferable skills—teamwork, leadership, adaptability, and operational excellence—that can strengthen any organization.

Mark will share firsthand insights from Commissionaires, Canada's largest employer of veterans, and demonstrate how this not-for-profit has thrived for a century in a competitive for-profit industry by leveraging military experience. You'll leave with practical strategies for integrating veterans and reservists into your workforce and cultivating a strong military-civilian culture.

Whether you're an HR professional, operations leader, or business executive, this session will help you build a more competitive organization while supporting those who have served.

### **Biography:**

Mark Blevia is a senior executive at Commissionaires Great Lakes, where he leads key functions including finance, legal, IT, partnerships, marketing, governance, and facilities. His work builds on a rich background in security, public affairs, and digital communications.

Previously, Mark spent over a decade specializing in brand and reputation management, online advocacy, and litigation support. He was a frequent media analyst on digital influence in politics and public affairs, appearing on CTV, CBC, and in major publications. During this period, Mark conducted extensive Canadian-centric research on digital activism, online movements, and the impact of technology on public opinion.

He co-authored the Amazon bestselling book TOUCH: Five Factors to Growing and Leading a Human Organization, which explores how to bring humanity into tech-driven interactions.



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His career has included unique experiences with Canada's military, including sailing aboard HMCS Calgary and participating in an Executrek program at CFB Petawawa. As one of Canada's first podcasters (2005), Mark became a community builder, conference organizer, and a voice on digital engagement.

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**Date:** January 30

**Speaker:** TBA

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**Date:** February 6

**Speaker:** TBA

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**Date:** February 13

**Speaker:** Steve Orsini, President and CEO

**Title:** Ontario Universities: Partnering for Jobs and Growth

This presentation outlines how Ontario's universities are partnering with the province to drive talent, innovation, and economic growth at a time of rising student demand and mounting financial pressures. It highlights universities' contributions to key provincial priorities—from advanced manufacturing and clean energy to life sciences, critical minerals, and AI—while detailing the significant revenue declines stemming from funding and revenue constraints, inflation, and reduced international enrolments. The presentation underscores growing domestic demand, the growing number of unfunded students, and the cuts universities have already made, and it sets out a funding plan to sustain student access, research, commercialization capacity, and Ontario's long-term competitiveness.



### **Biography:**

**Steve Orsini** is President and CEO of the Council of Ontario Universities. Prior to this role, Steve held several leadership positions in the Ontario Public Service, including Secretary of the Cabinet, Deputy Minister of Finance and Secretary of the Treasury Board, and Deputy Minister of Revenue. Steve also held several leadership positions at the Ontario Hospital Association, including Vice-President of Policy and Public Affairs. Steve is a member of the [Fiscal Federalism Policy Network](#), a Board Member of the [Ontario Brain Institute](#) and [Canadian Ditchley Foundation](#), and a [Senior Fellow](#) at the C.D. Howe Institute.



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Steve holds a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Urban and Regional Planning and a Master's in Environmental Studies.

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**Date:** February 20

**Speaker:** TBA

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**Date:** February 27

**Speaker:** Joe Wong, Vice-President, International

**Title:** Inclusive Development: Why It's the Cornerstone of Democracy

What makes democracy truly thrive? Professor Joseph Wong argues it's not just free elections; it's inclusive development. Inclusive development means improving lives through education, healthcare, jobs, and opportunities—ensuring no one is left behind. In his acclaimed book *From Development to Democracy: The Transformations of Modern Asia* (with Dan Slater), Wong explores why inclusive development is the ultimate foundation for political stability.

Drawing on research in over 35 countries through the Reach Alliance, Wong brings this idea to life. His powerful stories and real-world examples reveal what it takes to “leave no one behind,” and why inclusive development is essential for strong, resilient democracies in Canada and around the world today.

Learn more about the [Reach Alliance](#).

### **Biography:**

Joseph Wong is Vice President, International, and Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto. He previously served as the Ralph and Roz Halbert Professor of Innovation at the Munk School of Global Affairs & Public Policy and held the Canada Research Chair in Democratization, Health and Development.

His research focuses on comparative public policy and political economy, with work published in leading journals such as *The Lancet*, *Governance*, and *Comparative Political Studies*. He is the author of *From Development to Democracy: The Transformations of Modern Asia* (Princeton, 2022) and several other books on innovation, health, and development.





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Professor Wong founded the Reach Alliance and has led initiatives on poverty, innovation, and global development. He previously directed the Asian Institute at the Munk School and received the Faculty's Outstanding Teaching Award in 2013.

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**Date:**        **March 6**

**Speaker:**   **TBA**

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**Date:**        **March 13**

**Speaker:**   **Charlie Keil, is Principal of Innis College and a Professor in the Cinema Studies Institute and the Department of History at the University of Toronto**

**Title:**        **Has Streaming Killed the Movie Star? How Digital Platforms Changed Hollywood**

Are movie stars still the kings and queens of Hollywood? Has streaming killed dulled their shine? In the golden age of the studio system, stars like Clark Gable and Bette Davis guaranteed box-office success, and studios built entire films around their power to pull in audiences. Even after the studio system collapsed, stars remained central to film marketing and persisted as cultural icons.

Today, things look very different. Franchises dominate, algorithms rule, and many wonder if the era of the movie star is over. This lecture briefly touches on the rise of film stardom from cinema's early decades to its glory days during the studio era. It then focuses on the decline of the movie star, exploring how streaming platforms like Netflix have reshaped the economics of fame. Join us to uncover what happened, and what this shift means for the future of film and celebrity culture.

### **Biography:**

Charlie Keil is Principal of Innis College and a Professor in the Cinema Studies Institute and the Department of History at the University of Toronto. His research centers on early and silent American cinema, but he has also published on documentary, stardom, and film modernism. His most recent publication is *The Oxford Handbook of Silent Cinema* and his current projects include an exploration of the origins of Hollywood and an anthology devoted to the work of film scholar David Bordwell.





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Professor Keil teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses in film history, analysis, and historiography. He is a recipient of multiple teaching awards, including the University of Toronto's President's Teaching Award and the Society for Cinema and Media Studies Distinguished Pedagogy Award.

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**Date: March 20**

**Speaker: TBA**

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**Date: March 27**

**Speaker: TBA**