



"I was highly motivated by all aspects of the IB programme. It made me want to thrive, in a wonderfully supportive and resourceful environment. My final project was really what got me interested in research and scholarship."

Elise Paradis

2002 IB Diploma Programme graduate
Collège François-Xavier-Garneau
Québec, Canada

From diverse experiences and unbridled learning, a scholar emerges. For Elise Paradis, the challenging and balanced array of courses in the IB Diploma Programme led her to the University of Toronto, where she earned an honours bachelor of arts degree in the history of science and mathematics, graduating with high distinction. She then earned a master of arts degree in sociology from Stanford University, where she is completing a PhD in the sociology of education.

Elise's fascination with global social issues all started with the IB, beginning as a student in the Middle Years Program and later the Diploma Programme. "In the Diploma Programme, the geography course opened my eyes to geopolitics, geology and empirical research; theory of knowledge and philosophy courses helped me choose my major and influenced my dissertation work; the advanced math classes were extremely useful in college and still are today," she says.

Elise's doctoral dissertation is tentatively titled *To be, or not to be, fat? The dual nature of the obesity epidemic and possible educational strategies to address it*. She combines insights from the medical literature on the effects and prevalence of obesity in the United States with a sociological, historical and political critique of our cultural obsession with weight. Through document analysis and interviews with obesity experts, she is shedding light on the evolution of the medical and lay populations' understanding of obesity, and changing norms surrounding bodily appearance and management practices.

In addition, as part of the IB Diploma Programme creativity, action, service element, Elise travelled to Haiti to teach science to teenagers, co-created an electronic political journal that reached 500 subscribers, and got involved with student government. "All of these things, I think, helped me get my college scholarship—a US \$60,000 TD Canada Trust Scholarship for Outstanding Community Leadership and a Canadian government Millennium Scholarship," she says. The Canadian government has awarded her an US\$80,000 doctoral fellowship as well.

Elise says the IB prepared her for the rigours of postsecondary education and gave her an edge when she arrived at the University of Toronto in 2002. "For the third year I am a teaching assistant for the Honours in Education Program at Stanford, and I see how well prepared I was, even compared to Stanford seniors."

"I had already developed research methods, a reading strategy, had read many of the classics, had good maths training...it was lovely, all that I could do in a university besides school and still have great grades."



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