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**Distinguished Alumni recipient advises graduates to be kind, creative, innovative, happy and giving**

Edmonton – When Justin Yaassoub graduated in 2011 with his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science he never thought he would become a member of the Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) as a Special Forces operator.

“After I graduated I accepted a position with the Government of Alberta as a public affairs officer,” said Yaassoub. “But, I quickly realized that office life was not for me.” He decided to serve the public in a very different way and joined the CSOR. “Shifting careers to the Special Forces was not easy, but it was full of the unexpected—the rush, the moments of calm, and even my success.”

Yaassoub was deployed to multiple regions, including North Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. While he was deployed on an international operation, he risked his own life to save an injured soldier and was awarded the Medal of Bravery by the Governor General. He also received the Commanders and Task Force Commanders Citation for his teamwork and leadership during operations.

No longer in the CSOR, he founded All Around Consulting, which provides leadership and team-development guidance to small businesses and emerging leaders. As members of MacEwan’s Fall 2018 graduating class are set to begin their next steps, Yaassoub encourages them to also embrace the unexpected by focusing less on a specific career path, and more on personal development.

“Looking back to when I graduated, I never thought I would go down the entrepreneurial path. Instead of picturing yourself as the next accountant or economist, picture yourself as your best version of what a human should be—kind, creative, innovative, happy and giving. Focus on who you are, and you will find success regardless of what you do.”

The Distinguished Alumni award is presented to graduates who exhibit outstanding achievements or make significant contributions in one or more of the following areas: service to the community, business, the arts, human development, the environment, lifelong learning, post-secondary education and/or government.

Yaassoub will receive his Distinguished Alumni Award during the university’s Fall Convocation ceremony on Tuesday, November 20.

*Founded in 1971, MacEwan University inspires its students with a powerful combination of academic excellence and personal learning experiences. Offering more than 65 programs including undergraduate degrees, applied degrees, diplomas, certificates, continuing education and corporate training, the university provides a transformative education in a creative, collaborative and supportive learning environment where creativity and innovation thrive. Located in Edmonton, Alberta Canada, MacEwan University offers a unique student experience that opens up diverse pathways for achievement and growth.*