**hEDGE Part 2 Transcript**

Farah Mohd Fadzil

How has the hEDGE Conference changed and grown over the last 10 years?

Garvin Blair

Over time, as finance has increased its presence within the SAF, we found that there’s been less emphasis on students requiring skill development with regards to financial skills, technical skills, and the like, because they can get those in a myriad of other areas. So, there’s still a focus to a certain extent on that but it’s moved away from that to more, “Okay, let’s get students in front of firms who are hiring to increase viability of co-op jobs and full-time.” Increasing the knowledge as to what firms are hiring and what those firms are about. This year, we’ve increased the issue of diversity and gender parity, and the lack of progress on those areas in the financial community, so the students have been trying to bring that to attention.

Jennie L.

Yeah, I would echo what Garvin just said. I would say that over the years, hEDGE has been really good at listening to our student base and the conference itself has become more of a resource for students to seek jobs opportunities. So, in the beginning, we used to have, one of the major components of the conference was an M&A case competition. but we discovered that students probably valued having workshops and networking opportunities a little bit more, and since then we’ve optimized the conference to the three elements, which is having keynote speakers, so senior leaders talking about heir stories, so that students have an idea of what it is like to progress in their roles in finance. And then we have our workshops, in which they can learn about the different functions and service lines at the various firms that we invite, and then finally, we wrap that up with networking where they can directly now talk to employers and get some of those opportunities for themselves. and then what Garvin has also mentioned, we realized that there was a lack of diversity inclusion within the financial services community. So, this year, we had our very first women’s panel where we invited five senior female leaders from a variety of prominent firms to speak to students about their experiences, their challenges, of being in the industry for so long. I think these are tough topics that a lot of students want to hear about. When they encounter it in the workforce, how to go about navigating some of these more difficult situations. I think the takeaway from that was students really enjoyed it and its something that we look forward to continuing in the coming years.

Adam C.

And now it is really important for students to build those connections, so that’s really what the hedge conference is focusing on. Whether it’s learning about the firms, and getting phase time in front of the firms, networking with individuals from all of the firms and learning more from the recruiting functions of the different financial firms. That’s really what we’re really focused on, kind of changing and growing. We’ve been able to bring in more of our alumni to help us with representatives building workshops and grow the conference, kind of, organically, through the presence that’s been built by the previous iterations of the conference. We’ve also been able to focus on some of the more important matters at hand which are the lack of diversity in the financial markets. So, whether it’s the initiatives of the women’s panel this year, we’ve partnered with HeforShe and other diversity improving programs in the past, and that’s really kind of one of our big focuses moving forward.