



# The Path to Professional Administrator:

## A Discussion with Cindy Archer, P.Adm.

Cindy Archer, P.Adm. recently completed the Professional Administrator Program. Cindy is Executive Assistant to the Executive Vice President, Administration & Corporate Secretary of Eldorado Gold Corporation. Below, Cindy discusses her experience in the program and how she prepared to ensure success.

### Tell us a bit about your background.

My background provides me with a diverse set of skills. My formal education and first career centered around social work and following a few years, I was craving a new challenge. I really excelled at the administrative part of my job and enjoyed supporting people, so I decided to apply for a position as an administrative assistant within the mining sector. Following a 12-year career in the sector, I applied for a position with Eldorado Gold Corporation.

### Can you confirm your work experience in governance?

My governance experience started with my second position within Eldorado Gold, following a meeting with my now boss, Dawn Moss FCIS (Executive Vice President, Administration & Corporate Secretary). I was looking for a new opportunity that would allow me to grow, while remaining within the organization I was enjoying. Dawn's background, interest in ongoing learning and work ethic was what encouraged me to approach her. I wanted to be a part of her team, to learn from her.

### What made you decide to start the ICOSA's P.Adm. program?

I am a life long learner, so as soon as I started in my new role of supporting the Corporate Secretary's team I wanted a stronger understanding of Governance. I attended some workshops provided by the Canadian Society of Corporate Secretaries that provided a good foundation.

Once I started to get comfortable in my role and had a clear view of the career goals I wanted to accomplish, I sat down with Dawn to discuss the best route to achieving them. Upon her suggestion, I decided to enroll in the P.Adm. program.

### How much time, on average, would you say you spent preparing for the exam?

I made a study timeline based on the learning outcomes of each module for the year. With a few exceptions, I spent 1 hour per night, 5 nights per week for the first six months, then 1-3 hours per night for the final 6 months.

## Member Profile

### What resources did you use when preparing?

In addition to the study guide, I read all the CGQ articles and did my own internet research. I also visited the library to do some additional reading on governance. My colleagues were excellent resources for assistance with new concepts, especially finance.

### What was your biggest challenge in the program? How did you manage it/overcome it?

Working independently was difficult. It was helpful knowing that I could reach out to the National Office for support and I also discussed my studies with colleagues, in order to gain different perspectives.

I had to schedule time to get the readings done. There are a lot of them! I challenged myself by:

- Forming the learning outcomes into questions

Once I completed all the readings within a module, I would go back and answer the learning outcome questions I had made.

- Setting a goal of one hour of reading per night

This got me into a regular routine, almost every weekday.

It can be daunting to take in another hour of reading after a long, brain stimulating day of work; but with each article I was finding more and more relevancy between what I was learning and the activities at work. The process of completing the program enhanced my performance, by facilitating my understanding.

I am currently taking some time off to enjoy my summer outside of a busy work schedule but I do look forward to continuing on with my education. My confidence has grown and I continue to learn at work, demonstrating my deeper knowledge.

### Do you have other advice you would like to share with anyone considering or already working through the program?

Read the articles. They contain valuable insight that is relevant to what you do at work. The information offered will come in handy when you are writing the exam.

The exam is not easy and it takes time. I took approximately 8 hours to complete and fully review the 100 questions. I wrote in my office on a Sunday, to ensure I had no distractions and had all the administrative comforts

necessary. I found 2 monitors helpful, 1 for the exam and the other for my research and review of the study guide.

During the 24 hours, it is important to take some time off to do something completely different. Reviewing the exam with a fresh set of eyes is very helpful.

The Candidate Success column runs in each edition of the CGQ, we look forward to sharing best practices with you!

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