

# TALENTED<sup>YYC</sup>

## PILOT PROJECT SUMMARY REPORT



With the support of:  
Prairies Economic  
Development Canada





# PROJECT SUMMARY

## Background

Many Post-Secondary Institutions (PSIs) offer some experiential learning opportunities for students, but they are varied in their scope, application, and consistency. Employers who wanted to offer a work opportunity for students in Calgary would go to each post-secondary institution separately and PSIs often must search out employers directly. With the Government of Alberta requiring all PSIs to offer a Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) opportunity to all students by 2030, there was particular interest in finding a collaborative solution to meet that need.

By mid-2022, a project to create a centralized WIL platform was finalized with 10 partners: Ambrose University, Alberta University of the Arts, Bow Valley College, Mount Royal University, SAIT, St. Mary's University, the University of Calgary, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, the Nonprofit Chamber, and Calgary Economic Development (CED), with CED agreeing to house the pilot project. Funding was obtained from Future Skills Canada, the Government of Canada (PrairiesCan) and the Government of Alberta. The launch was announced on July 7, 2022. An executive director was hired in the fall of 2022, and the project officially began. Additional funding from the Business and Higher Education Roundtable (BHER) was accepted in Spring 2023, and a launch event to publicly announce the project was held on April 24, 2023.

The pilot ran until March 31, 2025 and had 3 main deliverables: to launch a central portal for employers to post WIL opportunities, to create a Secretariate of staff to help support the project, and to hire a third party to evaluate and measure the success or learnings of the project. The TalentED YYC pilot project (as it became known), streamlined the process for employers to post different types of WIL opportunities (internships, co-op placements, field placements, professional practicums, projects, community service learning, etc.) for students at the seven universities in Calgary.

Evidence shows that improved WIL opportunities can benefit all stakeholders. Students who have WIL opportunities are more likely to be employed in an area related to their studies, are less likely to be overqualified, and have higher employment earnings (StatsCan). Employers who offer WIL tend to have access to skilled labour at a lower cost and can find good candidates over the longer term. (StatsCan). By providing local WIL opportunities, partners also hope to improve the retention of skilled labour post-graduation. (CED)

This pilot was the most extensive WIL collaboration in Canada. The goal of the pilot was to make it easier for employers to offer meaningful work experience to student and by extension, build Calgary's talent pool and economy.

The following pages are a summary of the pilot project's work and achievements.

## OUR PARTNERS



## OUR FUNDERS



# NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

## ▶ Largest Collaborative Work Integrated Learning pilot in Canada

TalentED YYC was a collaboration between seven Calgary based post-secondary institutions, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, The Nonprofit Chamber and championed by Calgary Economic Development. The project goal was to make it easier for employers to engage post-secondary students in relevant work experiences and find a regional solution to increasing work integrated learning opportunities.

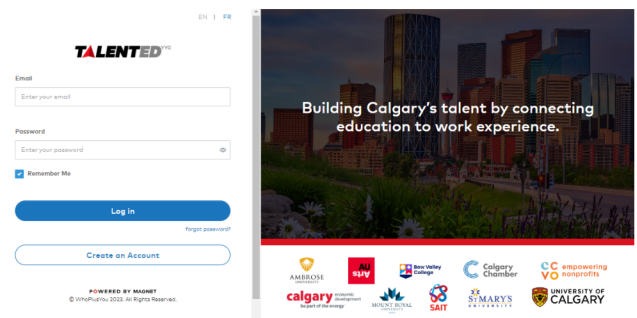


## ▶ Creation of a Calgary WIL Community of Practice

The project worked with over 70 practitioners at seven post-secondary institutions, mapped 18 processes at the 7 institutions, and held 8 workshops specifically for WIL practitioners.

## ▶ Development of a central posting portal

TalentED YYC worked with technology partners to create a portal so job postings could go to all seven Calgary post-secondary institutions (instead of employers navigating to each institution's job boards separately). This made it easier for employers to connect with talent across the city.



Program	WIL Category	Financial Commitment	Time Commitment	Start/End Dates	Institution
Accounting, Bachelor's Degree	Project	Unknown	Unknown Hours Unknown Weeks	Unknown	Ambrose
Accounting, Bachelor's Degree	Project	Unknown	Unknown Hours Unknown Weeks	Unknown	Ambrose
Accounting, Bachelor's Degree	Co-op	Min. Wage (\$15/hr)	450 Hours 12 Weeks	Jan-Apr May-Aug Sep-Dec	MBU
Accounting, Bachelor's Degree	Co-op	Min. Wage (\$15/hr)	450 Hours 13 Weeks	Jan-Apr May-Aug Sep-Dec	University of Calgary
Accounting, Bachelor's Degree	Project	Min. Wage (\$15/hr)	100 Hours 12 Weeks	Jan-Apr Sep-Dec	University of Calgary
Accounting, Certificate	Project	Unpaid	5 Hours 15 Weeks	Jan-Apr May-Aug Sep-Dec	SAIT
Actuarial Science, Bachelor's Degree	Co-op	Min. Wage (\$15/hr)	420 Hours 16 Weeks	Jan-Apr May-Aug Sep-Dec	University of Calgary
Addiction studies, Diploma	Practicum	Unpaid	180 Hours 16 Weeks	Jan-Apr May-Aug	Bow Valley College

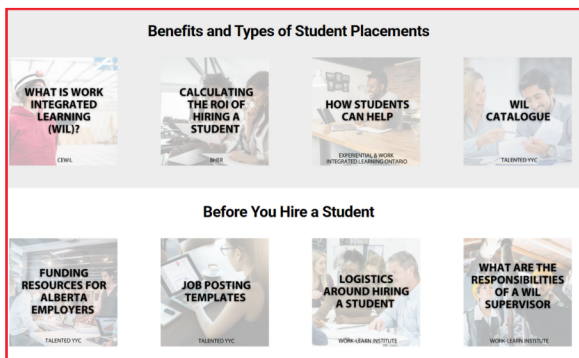
## ▶ Catalogue of 430+ WIL offerings in Calgary

The WIL Catalogue helped employers find students with specific skill sets or education across different institutions in Calgary. Prior to TalentED YYC work, only 11 Calgary WIL offerings were listed on the national CEWIL database.

# NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

## Creation of a central list of funding options

A centralized list of more than 20 funding delivery partners (like the Alberta WIL Vouchers program) that offer financial incentives for Alberta employers to hire a student was created. This simplified the process for employers to find relevant funding opportunities.



## Collection of 370+ publicly available resources

TalentED YYC created a central place on the website for employers to access WIL resources, including new resources created for the project and a compilation of existing resources.



## A dedicated team of Employer Engagement Specialists

The team of 3 specialists, one coordinator, and one manager assisted local employers with one-on-one, personalized support. This included ideas around scoping a role, where to find relevant funding opportunities, how to connect with the programs and schools, and advice on hiring a student.



## Generated 8 million advertising impressions about student talent

A dedicated marketing & communications team ran more than 15 campaigns, gained over 2300 LinkedIn followers, received more than 3700 resource clicks, added more than 500 subscribers to an email newsletter list, and welcomed 32,000 (cumulative) website visitors.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

### Created the ConnectED Expo

TalentED YYC hosted the first event of its kind in 2024 where employers could meet with post-secondary representatives and funding delivery partners at the same time. This event was held a second time in March 2025 with approximately 175 attendees.



### 50+ Hosted or Co-Hosted Events

TalentED YYC was eager to spread awareness of WIL and supports available and an estimated 1500 people attended events supported by the project. In addition, the team also offered 25 workshops and attended over 120 events in the community.

### Conducted Unique Research

In addition to liaising with the 3rd party reviewer, the team oversaw several pieces of unique research including student surveys for all innovative WIL student experiences, a WIL catalogue analysis, local research to better understand WIL in Calgary specifically, and a literature review on WIL in Calgary's non-profit sector.



### Directly offered WIL experiences to students

TalentED YYC also directly offered student work experience opportunities including 17 internship positions, projects where the organization acted as an employer, and numerous innovative WIL experiences.

FINAL RESULTSPROJECT KPIs February 2023 - March 2025

\*Please note that these statistics will be different than what was reported by HESA in their project report as their report was based on December 2024 information.

**▶ 3268 WIL Opportunities Generated**

The total number of opportunities created. This includes both traditional WIL (internships, co-op, practicum, field placement, project, community service learning) and registrations for innovative WIL (bootcamp opportunities, design competitions, simulated WIL, and projects).

**▶ 1513 WIL Opportunities for Equity Deserving Students**

This includes the total number of students (in both traditional and innovative WIL opportunities) who identified with an equity deserving group such as visible minorities, newcomers, women in STEM, Indigenous students, etc.

**▶ 461 Employers Creating Opportunities**

This includes the number of employers who created any sort of opportunity for a student to engage in work integrated learning and includes new employers, returning employers, and those who hosted an innovative WIL experience.

**▶ 2194 WIL Placements & iWIL Completed**

While over 3000 opportunities were created, not all of the opportunities were filled or completed by all the students. This number indicates the number of known traditional placements or iWIL opportunities that were completed (and reported by the student or employer).

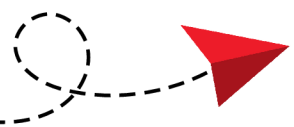
**▶ 1533 Employers Connected to TalentED YYC**

TalentED YYC worked hard to raise awareness of WIL, and the need for more employers to offer meaningful experiences to local students. While not all created an experience, this number indicates those who received some information or support about working with student talent.

**▶ Estimated Economic Impact of \$16M**

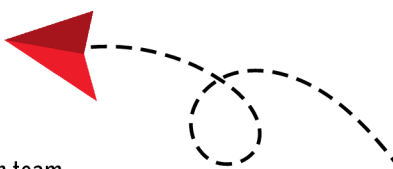
Based on an economic impact analysis of data from February 2023-February 2025, the TalentED YYC pilot project is estimated to have contributed \$16M to Alberta's GDP at basic prices (value added).

PROJECT SCOPE  
**Explore a path to scale regional work integrated learning**  
**Creation of a Secretariate Team**  
**Development of a central job posting portal**  
**Completion of a 3rd party evaluation**

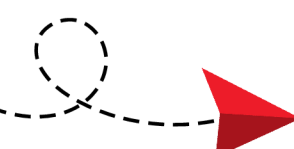
TESTIMONIALS

“Through our connection with TalentED YYC, we were able to seamlessly apply for funding and hire two skilled interns for the Summer Term...The students gained important on the job skills and experience that will be valuable in their future careers, always under the guidance of their supervisor and with support from their work colleagues. The interns contributed significantly to CCC operations, leading projects which improved the reporting and record keeping of the research database by updating and building codes which streamlined the whole process for reporting data. Additionally, one of these interns has been offered an extension to their internship and will stay with us for the Fall semester, resulting in reduced hiring costs, easing our staff workload and bringing fresh perspectives into our organization.” - Calgary Counselling Centre

Whilst we have a great track record of working with students, TalentED has helped provide easy access to a pool of students from a more diverse set of institutions. - TalentED YYC Client

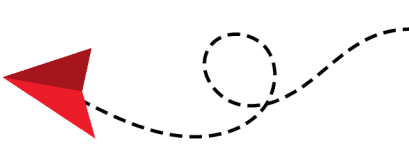


“The TalentED YYC project has really allowed us to leverage the resources, time and skill of the outreach team to create greater awareness of opportunities for SAIT students to get involved in workplaces in the city of Calgary. The greatest benefit has been allowing us to connect with other WIL practitioners in Calgary, and share and leverage common resources. Students bring in fantastic energy and can really invigorate a workplace. Employers can tap into that energy just by contacting TalentED YYC to get in touch with the post-secondaries and find out how to bring students into the workplace.” -Lara Schuelke (SAIT)



“I have found amazing students to work with. They are a pivotal resource for my organization. As a matter of fact, coupled with (a) student hire grant they have made our survival and growth possible.” - TalentED YYC Client

“We have been privileged to have three students through the Talented YYC program...Thank you for amazing services, amazing support and amazing students that you send out to us.” - Dr. Dami Adingupu



“TalentED YYC has been a valued partner in the work of bridging the gap between educational institutions and local organizations such as ELIXR Simulations. They have dramatically simplified the process for businesses and nonprofits to work with student talent. For us, this has meant accessing their centralized list of available subsidies and utilizing their job board to post and recruit for student talent in Calgary. Access to these resources has enabled our organization to expand our reach and Protégé program opportunities to students, recent graduates and immersive tech businesses in Calgary. As an Edmonton based organization, this collaboration has facilitated our mandate to support the production and adoption of immersive technology in all of Alberta.” - ELIXR Simulations

## Team Members as of March 2025

### Executive Director:

D'Andre Wilson-Ihejirika, P.Eng, PMP.

### Employer Engagement:

Megan Kinal (Manager), Koli Agbing, Nihal Amin, Marie St. Antoine, Alfredo Valecillos

### Marketing & Communications:

Megan Matthies (Manager), Kyle Carbert, Judy Uwiera, Beth Legese, Maddie Murch

### Strategy and Evaluation:

Tang Choy (Senior Manager), Jose Tolosa (Manager), Lucas Maliniak, Jason Brooks, Maryam Revington, Olaleye Ojo, Rochana Ramanathan, Oyungoo Ganbaatar

### Past Team Members:

Hilary Krygsman (Process Enhancement Team Manager), Dubam Afonya, Alena Schock, Holly Vicary

### Past Interns:

Freshta Akbary, Simon Mack, Ayesha Rashid, Kyle Matechuk, Bridget McNaughton, Monique Phaneuf, Patrisha Hingada, Manning Tran, Jamille Miranda, Fatehvir Sandu, Rica Bandigas, Luv Sehgal

### Project Advisors

Dexter Lam, Nicholas Newnes

