

Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

2023-2024 Annual Report

November 2024



Thank You

As I embark on my second year as dean of the Haskayne School of Business, I am filled with gratitude for the extraordinary level of engagement from our community of donors, volunteers, alumni, faculty and staff. It has been a true pleasure to meet so many incredible people and hear about their passion for our school.

Haskayne School's collective of centres, including the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, is a remarkable asset grounded in philanthropic generosity, business mentorship, student engagement and faculty expertise. With your support, the Centre collaborated with over 1,400 students and 140 volunteer entrepreneurship advisors during the 2023-2024 academic year, leveraging industry connections to foster an entrepreneurial mindset across UCalgary.

The faces, stories, and numbers you will find in this annual report are direct results of your support and engagement. Thank you so much for sharing in our vision to be the place where people come to Choose Change.



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina Grandy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gina Grandy, PhD

Dean, Haskayne School of Business

Contents

- Thank You from the Dean 2
- What We Do..... 4
 - The Centre as a Concierge 4
 - We’re Changing the Future of Innovation in Calgary 4
 - Alumni Spotlight: Joanna Pariseau 5
 - Faculty Spotlight: Rosalynn Peschl..... 6
 - Growing the Team 6
- Entrepreneurship Experiential Learning in Action..... 7
 - Team HEAT 8
 - Mentor Connection..... 8
 - Advisor Spotlight: Brent Zuber..... 9
 - RBC Fast Pitch Competition 2024 9
 - Student Spotlight: Declan Sander, Birchbark Health 12
- Thought Leadership 13
 - RBC Teaching Fellow in Entrepreneurship..... 13
 - Alice de Koning..... 13
 - Scott Radford 13
 - RBC Teaching and Curriculum Grant..... 14
 - Grantee Spotlight: Michael Robinson 14
 - Grantee Spotlight: Houston Peschl 15
 - Grantee Spotlight: Oleksiy Osiyevskyy..... 15
- The Centre in the Community..... 15
 - Collision Conference 15
 - Inventures 16
 - The Calgary Youth Science Fair 17
- Contact..... 17

What We Do

The Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (the Centre) seeks to transform minds and to educate and empower future entrepreneurial leaders at UCalgary. It provides classroom support, entrepreneurial concierge services, ecosystem connections and ongoing support for students keen to explore entrepreneurship and innovation. It also works directly with faculty and in the classroom to create authentic experiential learning opportunities.

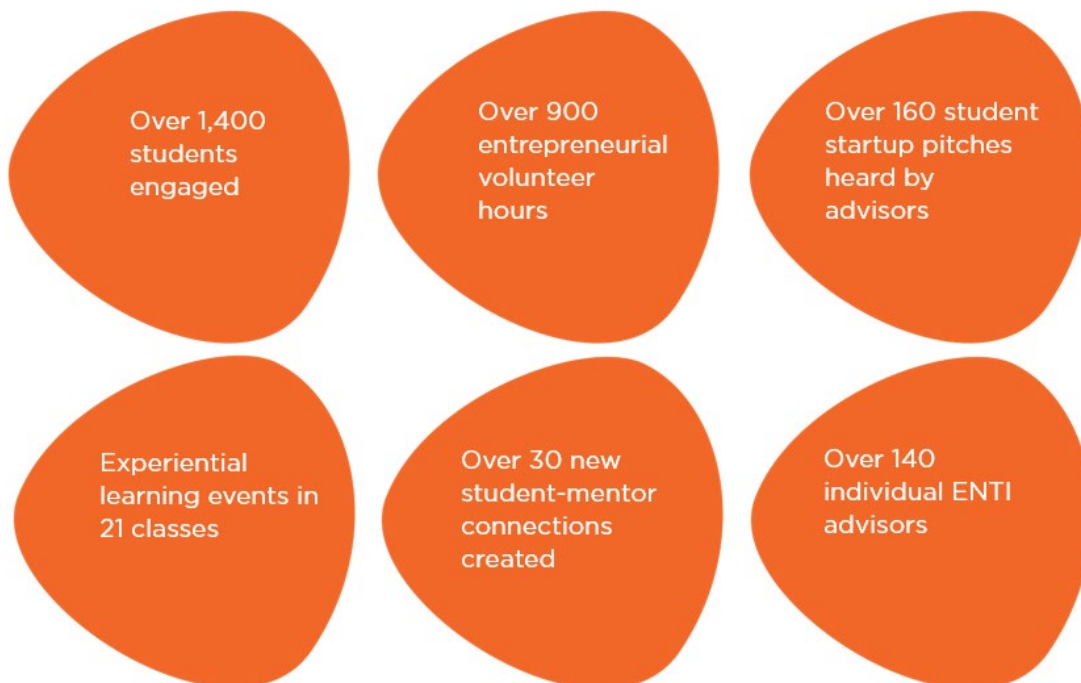
The Centre as a Concierge

One of the centre's primary roles is to act as a concierge for students interested in joining the startup ecosystem. The team leverages its networks and connects students with advisors who have direct experience in the sectors they are interested in.

The Centre assists future entrepreneurs by setting up lasting mentor connections, admitting students to entrepreneurial conferences, inviting students to networking events, and providing access to the Haskayne Centre team's extensive network of entrepreneurs, advisors, faculty, business owners, and more.

We're Changing the Future of Innovation in Calgary

The Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation has had a measurable impact on students, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset across the Haskayne School of Business and the university.



- Over 1,400 students were engaged through the Centre this 2023-2024 school year.
- This academic year, the Centre worked in 21 classrooms, providing experiential learning through advising sessions, live case studies with entrepreneurs, startup idea simulations, and entrepreneurial panels. We worked in 13 ENTI 317 classes, five ENTI 201 classes, two ENTI 672 classes, and one ENTI 405 class.
- Over 900 volunteer hours were conducted inside the classroom with our Haskayne Entrepreneurial Advising Team (Team HEAT). These advisors helped students ideate new business ventures and polish their pitches.
- Between the Fall 2023 and Winter 2024 semesters, entrepreneurial advisors listened to and advised on over 160 student pitch videos. Ideas ranged from social innovations to advances in medical technology, apps, and more.
- Over 140 ENTI advisors joined us in the classroom in the 2023-2024 year between events such as ideation advising, pitch advising, live case sessions, and entrepreneurial panels. Many advisors devoting extensively, filling over 350 volunteer positions this year.
- The Centre created over 30 ongoing student-mentor connections through its concierge services, which include students who have completed ENTI courses or the RBC Fast Pitch. Many students from ENTI 201 and 317 are actively working with Centre-provided mentors to progress their business ideas.

Alumni Spotlight: Joanna Pariseau



Joanna graduated from UCalgary in April of 2024 with a degree in Urban Studies with a minor in Commerce. Joanna is one of the students for whom the Centre provided concierge services, which helped her launch her current startup, Taste the City, a business that provides experiential restaurant tours. As the Founder and CEO, Joanna contributes to Calgary's foodie scene and supports local Calgary firms and restaurants.

The Centre first supported Joanna through ENTI 201 Introduction to Business Venturing (a course for students outside of the Haskayne School), working with her beyond the classroom to develop her ideas. The Centre provided her with access and support for numerous pitch competitions, including the University of Manitoba's Stu Clark New Venture Championship and the prestigious Queen's Entrepreneurs' Competition, which Joanna won with Taste the City.

Faculty Spotlight: Rosalynn Peschl

Rosalynn Peschl, EMSL, is Associate Professor at Haskayne who teaches entrepreneurship and innovation. Her background is in entrepreneurship and innovation, with a Bachelor of Commerce from the Haskayne School of Business and an Executive Master's of Sustainability & Leadership from Arizona State University. She has been involved in five different start-ups in as owner, founder, board member and employee.



Rosalynn is the course coordinator for ENTI 317 Entrepreneurial Thinking. She works closely with the Centre to design experiential learning opportunities that connects student teams with business advisors throughout each semester. Her vision and flexibility are essential to the success of the Centre's work in the classroom. Rosalynn is devoted to her students and continues to support them after they complete her course. She works with a small army of ENTI 317 Teaching Assistants, guiding them as they help students through their journeys.

"The Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation has always been a tremendous support in ENTI 317. The Centre coordinates dozens of mentors and hundreds of volunteer hours every single semester. Mentors provide invaluable support to students as they develop essential entrepreneurial thinking skills. Every year, the students report back that the "advisor days" that the Centre coordinates are one of their favourite parts of the class."

Rosalynn Peschl, Associate Professor, Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Growing the Team



In 2023, the Haskayne Centres team welcomed Maddy Milne, who played a key role in delivering experiential learning opportunities for students. She facilitated over 900 volunteer hours, connecting entrepreneurial advisors with students to refine their business pitch ideas. Maddy also organized entrepreneurs for advisor panels and live case studies and led prototyping workshops. In the RBC Fast Pitch Competition, she ensured students' pitches were polished and managed the event's flow. After the competition, Maddy connected students with the startup ecosystem, guiding finalists to Inventures and fostering student-mentor relationships to advance their business ideas.

Entrepreneurship Experiential Learning in Action

The Centre supports four entrepreneurial courses: ENTI 317 (Entrepreneurial Thinking), ENTI 201 (Introduction to Business Venturing), ENTI 405 (Start-Ups and Ecosystems) and ENTI 672 (Thinking like an Entrepreneur), along with the annual RBC Fast Pitch Competition and a variety of concierge and learning opportunities.

In ENTI 201 and ENTI 672, the team conducted **‘Hour to Launch’** sessions, which tasked students to develop and pitch a business idea within one hour. Entrepreneur Tash Marshall-Bean, Founder and CEO of Authentic Instructor Training, collaborated with fellow entrepreneurs to present to students the real-world challenges they faced as entrepreneurs. Other live-case sessions featured Linda Maslechko, entrepreneur and business consultant, and Estela Dalayoan-Pinlac, Founder and CEO of MADTI Ltd.



Tash Marshall-Bean, Founder and CEO of Authentic Instructor Training, in ‘Hour to Launch’ session

The Centre team also facilitated **entrepreneurial advising sessions**, where students presented their business ideas to members of Calgary’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. For many, this was their first time pitching an idea, making these sessions pivotal in forming new connections and preparing students for their entrepreneurial journeys.

Expert panels, featuring Calgary’s most notable entrepreneurs from diverse sectors including social enterprise and fintech, provided students with the opportunity to gain firsthand insights into the entrepreneurial world.

Additionally, the Centre hosted two **prototyping workshops** for students in ENTI 201 and ENTI 317. These sessions, led by Anthony Demong, a current Biomedical Engineering MSc Student at UCalgary, introduced students to the art of create prototypes for new business ventures. Several students applied these skills to achieve success in the RBC Fast Pitch Competition.



Prototyping Workshop for ENTI 317

Team HEAT

The Haskayne Entrepreneurial Advising Team (HEAT), formerly Team Hunter, is a volunteer group of entrepreneurs, early-stage investors and industry experts passionate about supporting student-led entrepreneurial activity, including at the RBC Fast Pitch Competition. Members act as advisors, coaches and judges to encourage entrepreneurial thinking in the classroom. Since launching in 2014, over 6,500 students have benefited to date, and HEAT has grown to over 300 active volunteers serving several undergraduate and graduate courses for business and non-business students.

In 2023-2024, HEAT supported ENTI courses for over 900 hours, filling over 350 volunteer positions with 143 unique volunteers filling these positions.



TEAM volunteer, Ian MacDonald, working with FlyAble during the RBC Fast Pitch

Mentor Connection

Each year, the BMO Mentorship Program, led by the Canadian Centre for Advanced Leadership in Business (CCAL), hosts a Mentor Connection event. It offers program mentors an exclusive opportunity to connect, share lessons learned and exchange ideas. This year, Team HEAT and volunteer panellists from The Real Deal Program were also invited to the event, allowing them to engage in meaningful conversations and expand their knowledge and community connections.

The event featured a workshop led by Jenn Lofgren, an executive and leadership coach for the Forbes Coaches Council and one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women. The workshop enhanced coaching and active listening skills, supporting mentors and advisors in fostering leadership and entrepreneurial skills in Haskayne students.



Jenn Lofgren, an executive and leadership coach, led a workshop at Mentor Connection.

Advisor Spotlight: Brent Zuber

“A valued member in my network introduced me to the [Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation] several years ago. I have since had the privilege to be an advisor during numerous ENTI classes. While I offer my best insightful questions, I find that following each volunteer session I am energized and enlightened with a renewed optimism, as the students share their ideas, energy and unbounded creativity to many of the issues they interact with daily. It is amazing to watch the evolution of each student through a semester, and I believe that regardless of their future choice of an opportunity within a large company or to start their own business, their entrepreneurial competencies will be an exceptionally positive addition to their talent set.”



Brent Zuber on his work with the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation

RBC Fast Pitch Competition 2024

The annual RBC Fast Pitch Competition, supported by the RBC Foundation, is a longstanding tradition at the Haskayne School of Business. Students work in collaborative teams to identify compelling problems to solve, to work towards innovative solutions, and to develop a business model that could make those solutions feasible and impactful.

The event took place on April 25, 2024, and over 1,400 students in 50 teams applied to compete. Of those teams, 23 advanced to the semi-final. Six teams advanced to the final round. The event was emceed by Breanna Triebel, a chemical engineering and entrepreneurship student, and Derek Atabayev, a computer science major and previous RBC Fast Pitch Competition winner.



Team Woofler, the first-place winner



Team Fly-Able, the third-place winner

The top six finalists competed for over \$20,000 in cash and in-kind prizes generously supported by the RBC Foundation. Check out the amazing array of the winning teams below with a link to their pitch.

First Place: [Woofers](#)

Woofers is an app that facilitates dog adoptions by efficiently matching dogs from resource strapped shelters with potential adoptees in one, easy central application process.

Second Place: [Birchbark Health](#)

Birchbark Health addresses the lack of effective telehealth options in rural, remote Indigenous communities.

Third Place: [Fly-Able](#)

Fly-Able aims to improve the flying experience of a disabled person through a docking system for wheelchairs on board airplanes.

People's Choice: [NaturaVials](#)

NaturaVials tackles the plastic waste issue generated by the pharmaceutical industry through their innovative bio-plastic pill bottle.

The judges for the final round included: Sara Moharjerani (a board member of the Venture Capital Association of Alberta), Lourdes Juan (serial entrepreneur and current Founder and CEO of Knead Technologies), Anshita Rai (Manager of Business Markets at RBC), Krista Edmunds (Freelance Marketer and Founder of Access Tribe), and Jerome Morgan (Associate Director of the Social Innovation Hub at Innovate Calgary).

Faculty member Rosalynn Peschl also moderated a panel discussion featuring three past competition winners, Kathy Bui (2017 winner and founder of CareFind), Kristy Wong (2019 winner), and Chloe Potter (2022 winner and founder of Cole's Shirt). The past winners talked about how they leveraged the skills and mindsets learned in ENTI courses and RBC Fast Pitch in their academic and career journeys.



Volunteer judges for the final round of 2024 RBC Fast Pitch



A panel discussion featuring three past RBC Fast Pitch winners, moderated by faculty member Rosalynn Peschl

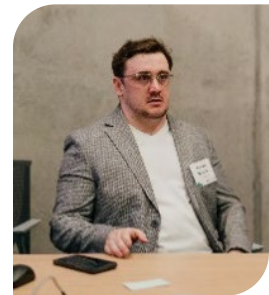
"The RBC Fast Pitch competition pushed me to innovate creative solutions to modern problems. It helped me unlock my passion for entrepreneurship, particularly in the sustainability space, and the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation gave me the resources that I needed to succeed. I truly hope to bring a product to market one day, and the RBC Fast Pitch has been an incredible milestone on my entrepreneurship journey."

Ayushi Choudhary, People's Choice Award Winner (NaturaVials), RBC Fast Pitch 2024



"The Fast Pitch challenged me to adopt the same innovative process within myself that I used to shape my idea. Overcoming obstacles meant embracing creativity, adapting quickly, and pushing boundaries."

Steven McMeekin, RBC Fast Pitch Finalist (DataGuard), RBC Fast Pitch 2024



"I loved the pitch competition. [...] The RBC Pitch Competition was a unique and rewarding experience that allowed me to step out of my comfort zone, work on my public speaking and problem-solving skills, and build meaningful connections with like-minded people and experienced professionals. It was an experience I'll never forget."

Sophia Grewal, Third Place Winner (Fly-Able), RBC Fast Pitch 2024



Student Spotlight: Declan Sander, Birchbark Health

Declan placed second in the RBC Fast Pitch Competition 2024 with a revolutionary Indigenous health app.

Birchbark Health confronts a significant challenge in remote Indigenous communities: the lack of effective telehealth options. These communities often face a choice: outsource their telehealth needs to large-scale providers like Telus Health, Maple, or Tia Health, which can lead to a disconnect from local medical expertise or rely on traditional phone calls that lack the comprehensive care telehealth can provide.

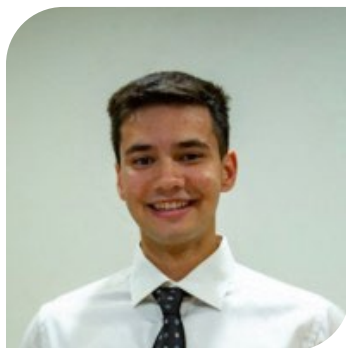
Birchbark is a virtual care platform developed with the Blood Tribe Department of Health that fills this gap. It offers tailored telehealth services that not only connect patients with local doctors and healthcare professionals but also integrate seamlessly with the unique healthcare needs of these communities, ensuring both access and quality in remote healthcare.

Declan secured a pre-seed capital investment of \$1.2 million before joining the competition, while completing his full-time studies.

He is supported by Dr. Esther Tailfeathers, a Canadian physician who is the medical lead of the Indigenous Wellness Core at Alberta Health Services (AHS) and a changemaker for indigenous health.



Watch Declan's pitch video for Birchbark Health from the RBC Fast Pitch



"The heart of this initiative lies with the people around us. By actively involving the community with every aspect of the platform, we are not just building a healthcare platform; we are fostering a community-centred revolution in healthcare."

Declan Sander, Birchbark Health, RBC Fast Pitch 2024 Second Place Winner

Thought Leadership

At the Haskayne School of Business, faculty members collaborate with the Centre to produce innovative research and thought leadership around entrepreneurial thinking.

RBC Teaching Fellow in Entrepreneurship

The RBC Teaching Fellow in Entrepreneurship, generously supported by the RBC Foundation, is one example of how the school advances teaching and thought leadership that promotes entrepreneurial thinking to students and the community. Held by faculty members Alice de Koning and Scott Radford, these fellowships support faculty in contributing to the entrepreneurial thinking curriculum and expanding entrepreneurship teaching and learning.

Alice de Koning

Dr. Alice de Koning is the Academic Director of the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking and Senior Instructor at Haskayne School of Business. She has taught courses in entrepreneurship and strategy at the graduate and undergraduate levels. In addition to emphasizing the core concepts for both disciplines, she implements a variety of experiential pedagogies in her classes.

Dr. de Koning's current research projects include metaphors in the public discourse of entrepreneurship, sustainable models for social enterprise, provincial regulation and recreational cannabis business, and place-based, community-engaged, experiential learning pedagogies.



Scott Radford

Dr. Scott Radford is Associate Professor (Marketing) at the Haskayne School of Business. His research interests are in the areas of consumer culture theory, product design and innovation, and environmental sustainability. His work has appeared in the Journal of Product Innovation Management, Building and Environment, European Journal of Marketing, Marketing Letters, and Journal of Consumer Culture.

Dr. Radford teaches courses in marketing management, marketing communication and digital marketing at the BComm, MBA, EMBA, and PhD levels. He also teaches in executive education programs, including the Rozsa Arts Management Program, the Strategic Leadership Development Program, and the Director's Education Program. Dr. Radford has won several teaching awards, including the Students Union Excellence in Teaching award, the Commerce Undergraduate Society Award for Outstanding Teaching and Learning, and the University Teaching Award for Educational Leadership.



RBC Teaching and Curriculum Grant

With generous support from the RBC Foundation, the Centre administers the RBC Teaching and Curriculum Grant program. This program aims to enhance entrepreneurship and innovation education at Haskayne by providing faculty members funding for new initiatives, materials development, and wider dissemination of learning. The primary goal is to improve student learning opportunities through curriculum changes, new courses, faculty development, and innovative learning experiences.

Grantee Spotlight: Michael Robinson

Michael Robinson is Professor Emeritus of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. He was awarded a grant in 2022-2023, which assisted the writing of his book [*Founder's Guide to Governance: Beyond a Good Idea*](#). The publication aims to provide entrepreneurs and their supporters with the knowledge and skills needed to increase their chances of success. His book was completed in 2023 and is available to purchase internationally.

“Over the past five years, my understanding of the critical importance of governance to the success of a start-up was reinforced through my work as the first Site Lead of the Creative Destruction Lab Rockies program. Using data gathered from that program, I gained a deeper understanding of the importance that sophisticated investors place on governance when deciding whether to support a venture. In conducting this applied research, I was supported by many individuals and corporations. I was provided with a Fellowship by Dr. Chen Fong, Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary, with an RBC Teaching and Curriculum Development Grant and a Big Ideas Grant from the Haskayne School.



These funding sources allowed me to hire a number of research assistants (RAs) to gather and analyse data that formed the basis of many of the ideas in the book. In addition, these RAs identified unique business situations that I was able to use to develop a series of case simulations that are in use in both credit and non-credit course offerings. The funding also allowed me to refine my thinking by conducting detailed interviews with thought leaders from across Canada, and the quotes provided by those individuals are distributed throughout the book. I believe that having received funding from these wonderful people and institutions helped legitimise my research project and opened doors to allow me to access the interviewees. “

Michael Robinson, Professor Emeritus, Entrepreneurship and Innovation

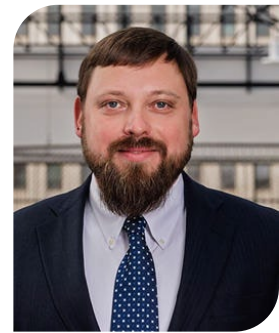
Grantee Spotlight: Houston Peschl

Houston Peschl, MBA, is Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. He has used the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 RBC grants to research his newly created course, ENTI 217 Design Your Life. The goal of this course is to help first-year students explore their values and define their personal life goals. Through applying entrepreneurial thinking skills, students ideate multiple life paths, prototype elements of careers that interest them, and take small steps to try out the paths. The course differs significantly from other BComm courses in that it takes a more progressive approach to student grading.



Grantee Spotlight: Oleksiy Osiyevskyy

Dr. Oleksiy Osiyevskyy is Associate Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. He focuses his work on innovation management and consults with established start-ups, providing actionable advice on innovation strategy. The 2023-2024 RBC grant supported his project *Hearing Minority Voices: Incorporating Diversity and Representation into Haskayne MBA Entrepreneurial Thinking Curriculum*. This project seeks to enhance learning opportunities for students in entrepreneurship and innovation, focusing on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Its primary goal is to incorporate EDI perspectives on explaining new venturing performance in diverse communities into the Entrepreneurial Thinking graduate curriculum at Haskayne.



The Centre in the Community

Collision Conference

Collision, an annual global conference for technology start-ups, was held in Toronto in June 2024. The Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation jointly hosted a UCalgary booth in partnership with Innovate Calgary and the Hunter Hub. The Centre's Associate Director of Programs in attendance was able to explore collaborative opportunities and gain insights into leading institutions and entrepreneurial organisations' operational frameworks and organisational strategies. As the Centre continues to align with the newly updated Haskayne School of Business strategic priorities, the knowledge and connections gained at Collision will contribute to advancing the Centre's strategic objectives and collaborative potential.



Inventures

An annual conference hosted by Alberta Innovates, Inventures brings together entrepreneurs, thought leaders, startups and investors to connect, foster new collaborations and spark deal-making opportunities. It was held in Calgary in May 2024. The Centre team participated in the conference with a group of Haskayne undergraduate business students who were finalists from the RBC Fast Pitch Competition.

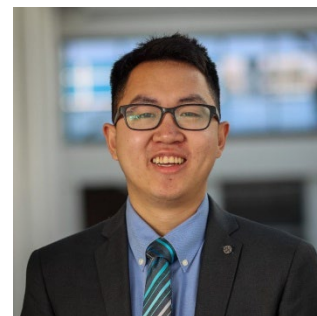
Student and Fast Pitch finalist Samson Hua attended sessions on prototyping and startup growth. Declan Sander of BirchBark Health attended workshops on growth, investment, and pitch competitions. Gabriela Alvarez of Woofer participated in a presentation on the most advanced human robot. She used the event as a networking opportunity to find mentors to grow her startup idea. The sessions inspired the students to continue their entrepreneurial pursuits and learn about innovation. The Centre team also attended over 20 events, including sessions on women in tech, the art of mentorship, and many others. After three days of listening to Mayor Gondek, Juno award winner David Usher, and countless pitch presentations, the team and students left full of information, connections and inspiration.

“Attending Inventures 2024 was an incredibly inspiring and influential experience for my career development. As my first innovation event, I was impressed by the diversity of experiences and the opportunities to expand my network. Unexpectedly, I also connected with old colleagues who were in attendance, catching up on the exciting startups they are pursuing—highlighting the powerful networking opportunities these events provide.”

I spent most of my time attending live pitches, ranging from fellow students to mid-career founders and was inspired by the diversity, passion, and ideas presented. Seeing how others crafted their elevator pitches left me feeling more confident and knowledgeable about how to create effective and compelling pitches. After attending more than four pitch sessions at Inventures, I am eager to apply what I've learned.

This experience bridged the gap between classroom knowledge and real-world application, inspiring me to develop my entrepreneurial talents further and broaden my perspective on what's possible. I am profoundly thankful for this opportunity and am confident that it has shifted my mindset on how to apply entrepreneurial thinking in a real-world context.”

Samson Hua, RBC Fast Pitch 2024 Finalist



The Calgary Youth Science Fair

The Centre annually sponsors the elementary and junior high consumer science awards at the Calgary Youth Science Fair. It is a 100% volunteer-run charitable organisation that raises money yearly to support the future of Calgary's scientific minds. UCalgary is also a platinum sponsor partner and a longstanding supporter of the fair and the university students, faculty, and staff participated in the 2024 fair as speakers, award sponsors, judges, presenters, and volunteers.



Lasha Hache, Haskayne Centres Community Engagement Lead, attended the 2024 Calgary Youth Science Fair and presented the winning student teams with consumer science awards.

Contact

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this report, please contact:

Jessica Bergen, MBA

Senior Director, Haskayne Centres

E jessica.bergen@haskayne.ucalgary.ca **T** 403-620-8497

Gladys Loo, CFRE

Associate Director of Development, Haskayne School of Business

E gladys.loo@haskayne.ucalgary.ca **C** 403-604-4674