



HUNTER HUB FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL THINKING



IMPACT REPORT



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking

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Letter from the Acting Executive Director



This year has been one of growth and collaboration at the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking (Hunter Hub). As Acting Executive Director, I am honoured to reflect on our achievements and share a vision for the exciting opportunities ahead. These accomplishments reflect the resilience and creativity of our team and the creative and enthusiastic engagement of our participants, faculty members, mentors, speakers, and community members. Thank you for your belief in our mission to cultivate entrepreneurial thinking across every face at the University of Calgary and beyond.

Founded in 2017 through the visionary support of the Hunter Family Foundation, the Hunter Hub empowers students with transformative experiences and enables faculty to lead in innovation.

This year, the Hunter Hub team has achieved our strategic goals through expanding our programming and strengthening partnerships.

Highlights of Renewal and Innovation

- **Launchpad:** Empowering undergraduate students with the tools, mentorship, and resources they need to bring their innovative ideas to life, Launchpad continues to be a cornerstone of our commitment to supporting student innovation.
- **Map the System:** As a co-host for the Canadian Semi-Finals, the Hunter Hub became a true national hub for systems-thinking and social innovation, bringing together 20 schools from across the country to collaborate, learn, and compete.
- **Aeir:** Powered by the Hunter Hub, Aeir is the University of Calgary's premier mentorship program for turning research into impactful ventures. With customized 1:1 mentorship from seasoned academic entrepreneurs, access to exclusive networks, and purpose-built tools, Aeir empowers researchers to overcome commercialization challenges, de-risk innovations, and deliver real-world solutions.
- **Experience Ventures:** Powered by the Hunter Hub, Experience Ventures collaborates with educational institutions and ventures across Canada to provide students with entrepreneurial thinking placements. These opportunities connect students to innovators and fosters experiential learning, helping them develop essential skills, discover early talent, and cultivate a culture of innovation.

These initiatives, alongside our flagship programs, underscore our dedication to cultivating entrepreneurial leaders, fostering collaboration, and equipping students with the skills needed to thrive in any field. This work solidifies the Hunter Hub's role as a catalyst for transformation and a beacon for entrepreneurial thinking across the University of Calgary and beyond. Together, these efforts represent a focus on transforming lives, empowering leaders, and driving Canada's economy through entrepreneurial thinking.

As someone deeply passionate about entrepreneurship and education, I am inspired by the opportunities ahead. I'm grateful I continue to be a part of the team creating impact and contributing to our mission as Academic Director.

Thank you to our partners, sponsors, and collaborators for your support. Your investment in the Hunter Hub enables us to foster innovation and shape the future of entrepreneurship in Canada.

We look forward to another year of impact and invite you to join us in celebrating and advancing this important work.

All the best,

Alice de Koning,
Acting Executive Director

Programming

Launchpad

This year's Liftoff! Pitch Competition celebrated the success of the Hunter Hub's Launchpad program, showcasing six months of entrepreneurial growth among 62 teams of students, postdocs, and researchers. RespiraLink, led by Caitlin Calder-Bellamy, Behina Tabatabaei, Dr. Matthew Fung, and Faith Luu, claimed first place with their COPDWatch medical device for proactive COPD management. Minutura Livestock Inventory Management secured second place for their farmer-support platform, while Vitalize took the People's Choice Award with their wearable prenatal monitor. Through hands-on learning, Launchpad empowers participants to turn transformative ideas into impactful ventures.

RESPIRALINK WINNERS UTODAY



220

PEOPLE REGISTERED FROM 11 FACULTIES

(Cumming School of Medicine, Schulich School of Engineering, Faculty of Science, Werklund School of Education, Haskayne School of Business, Faculty of Social Work, Faculty of Arts, School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Nursing)

7 FACULTY/STAFF

10 PHD

4 ALUMNI

15 MASTERS

24 BACHELOR

5 POST DOCS

Summer Accelerator

The Hunter Hub's inaugural Summer Accelerator program supported UCalgary startups in their journey from research to real-world impact. TurnCO2, led by Nick Fylstra, Oliver Calderon, and Jack Jarvis, utilized this support to bring its carbon-capture innovation to the brewing industry, later showcasing it at the Inventures conference. MLCan, by Dr. Mohammad Abbaspour and Dr. Mohammad Mansouri, targets efficiency in oil and gas with smart-flow meters, while MHCombiotic, founded by Dr. Ali Pormohammad, combats antimicrobial resistance. This program highlights Hunter Hub's commitment to fostering scalable solutions and industry breakthroughs.

NOW INNOVATING



13

TEAMS COMPLETED
THE PROGRAM

8

FACULTIES
PARTICIPATED



Map the System

This year, Map the System at UCalgary saw 131 students across 58 teams tackle social and environmental issues through systems thinking. First-year students Paige Thompson, Julia Brady, and Sam Padron won with an analysis of Alberta’s barriers to post-secondary education. This year also featured the involvement of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape (SAPL), which integrated Map the System into its Bachelor of Design in City Innovation program. SAPL highlighted the program’s accessibility for students of all levels to drive positive change through transdisciplinary research.

SAPL professors also participate in the Academic Form, which is led by the Hunter Hub’s Academic Director to discuss opportunities to expand entrepreneurial thinking on campus.

MAP THE SYSTEM CAMPUS FINALS



ACADEMIC FORUM STATS

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:
45 faculty members

NUMBER OF RSVPs:
Total: 75
Average: 12.5
Range: 3

NUMBER OF FACULTIES REPRESENTED: 8
Haskayne
Schulich
Law
Science
Werklund
SAPL
Cumming
Arts

FACULTY ROLES REPRESENTED:
Assistant Professor: 3
Associate Professor: 6
Director: 2
Deputy Provost: 1
Dean: 1
Professor: 3
Associate Dean: 2

Embedded Certificate in Entrepreneurial Thinking



“A key takeaway from the certificate is that no day is the same. There’s no correct path or way to go about entrepreneurship. It’s a big learning experience and you just have to embrace it. It’s a great challenge and opportunity to learn something new every day.”

– Kayla, 4th Year Operations Management Student



“For me, it’s been really valuable getting to know a lot of other people in the business sector and making connections that can help me in my future career. I’m interested in entering the tech industry and the certificate was a gateway to learning essential software and programs.”

– Theo Van der Westhuizen, 4th Year Finance Student

2
INFORMATION
SESSIONS HOSTED

29
ATTENDEES

5
FACULTIES REPRESENTED
(WERKLUND, SCIENCE,
HASKAYNE, KINESIOLOGY,
SCHULICH)

Aeir

This mentorship-driven program, powered by the Hunter Hub, has supported over 50 research teams, looking to transition their innovations into impactful, investment-ready ventures that drive change and create value across society. Many of these ventures have achieved critical milestones, such as acceptance into the globally renowned Creative Destruction Lab (CDL), underscoring the program’s ability to prepare startups for competitive, high-growth opportunities.

Through personalized 1:1 guidance, access to a stellar mentor network, and premier tools, Aeir helps academic entrepreneurs overcome challenges, focus on achieving measurable progress, and connect with critical resources.

QTI UTODAY



+55

PROTO-VENTURES
MENTORED

\$7.7M

RAISED (DILUTIVE +
NONDILUTIVE) BY AEIR
PROTO-VENTURES

9

AEIR VENTURES
ACCEPTED TO CREATIVE
DESTRUCTIVE LABS

+850

HOURS OF MENTORSHIP

11

PATENTS AND 3
TRADEMARKS FILED BY
AEIR PROTO-VENTURES

18

JOBS CREATED BY
VENTURES MENTORED
BY AEIR

+35

INVENTIONS
DISCLOSED BY AEIR
PROTO-VENTURES

TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEYS



Shabab Saad
Co-Founder/CEO at CarboMat Inc.
MSc, Chemical Engineering, University of Calgary

Motivated by a vision to revolutionize carbon fiber production, Shabab co-founded CarboMat Inc., a company turning oil sands asphaltenes into high-performance carbon fibers. This innovation cuts production costs by 60% and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 50%.

Aeir’s tailored mentorship helped Shabab and the team refine the venture’s strategy and secure a coveted spot at CDL Energy, propelling his company toward meaningful societal impact.



Dion Kelly
Co-Founder/CEO at Possibility Neurotechnologies
PhD, Neuroscience, University of Calgary

Dion’s personal drive to address neurological disorders inspired her venture, Possibility Neurotechnologies. Her team has developed a groundbreaking neurostimulation technology empowering children with cerebral palsy to perform everyday tasks—like turning on lights—with their thoughts.

Aeir’s guidance helped Dion and the team navigate the complexities of startup development and secure her position at CDL Prime (Rockies), advancing her mission to improve lives.



Jordan Smith
Co-Founder/CEO at Quantized Technologies Inc.
MSc, Physics, University of Calgary

Jordan’s passion for and deep understanding of quantum physics and emerging cybersecurity threats led him to launch Quantized Technologies Inc. QTI creates cybersecurity solutions to protect data and networks from future quantum computing threats, focusing on industries like finance, healthcare, and telecommunications. With Aeir’s expert mentoring and access to premier resources, he honed his pitch and secured placement at CDL Quantum, establishing a strong foundation for his venture’s growth.

Experience Ventures

Experience Ventures, powered by the Hunter Hub, enables college and university students to make an impact alongside real-world innovators through entrepreneurial thinking placements. The Hunter Hub is leading the delivery of 8,395 entrepreneurial thinking placements across 13 schools nationwide.

“Entrepreneurship and innovation are vehicles that empower students to change the world and change themselves. Experience Ventures gives students that all important ‘hands-on’ entrepreneurial experience, working with real businesses on real challenges and opportunities. We are excited to work in partnership with the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking to bring these opportunities to Atlantic Canada.”

– Michael Sanderson, Director, Arthur L. Irving Entrepreneurship Centre, Saint Mary’s University

“This experience was crucial as it equipped me with essential skills necessary for my future professional endeavors. Being able to articulate and present ideas effectively is pivotal, whether in the context of pitching a startup or contributing to a work environment. Learning how to develop, refine, and present ideas not only enhanced my communication skills but also provided insights into collaboration and teamwork. The ability to present ideas confidently and coherently is a skill that transcends industries and roles.”

– Experience Ventures Student Participant at York University



Toronto Metropolitan University

Ontario Tech University

6,295

PLACEMENTS COMPLETED AS OF JUNE 2024

1,000

OVER 1,000 PARTNERSHIPS DEVELOP WITH VENTURES, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES

13

SCHOOLS ACROSS CANADA

Events

TC Energy Ingenuity Speaker Series

Made possible thanks to the generous support of TC Energy, the Hunter Hub for Entrepreneurial Thinking started the TC Energy Ingenuity Speaker series in 2023. It was created with the purpose of sharing the knowledge and experience of inspiring entrepreneurs and innovators to the UCalgary community.

One of this year’s events featured Holly Singer, a UCalgary alumna and founder of Milk Jar Candle Company. With more than 50 people in attendance, Holly was a proud representation of the community-driven and resilient speakers that are highlighted during this series.



Map the System National Semi-Finals

The Hunter Hub co-hosted the Map the System National Semi-finals, welcoming over 20 schools from across Canada for a weekend of systems-thinking and social innovation. UCalgary’s selected team of first-year students—Paige Thompson, Julia Brady, and Sam Padron—connected with like-minded peers from across Canada. As part of the event, they also attended a summit in Banff, engaging in discussions on systemic change and strengthening the interdisciplinary impact of Map the System across the UCalgary campus.

12 LAUNCHPAD SESSIONS

8 MTS SESSIONS

1 SLT EVENTS



Marketing and Communications

The Hunter Hub's marketing team is dedicated to highlighting the achievements of its participants. Over the past year, the Hub produced several UToday stories, but one that truly stands out is the inspiring journey of Emmanuel Amaechi. His initiative, Street2School, provides mobile, accessible education to underprivileged children in Nigeria.

Thanks to Hunter Hub programs such as Launchpad, Aeir, and Map the System, Amaechi developed the entrepreneurial skills necessary to turn his vision into a meaningful social impact venture. His story is a powerful example of how the Hub empowers students to create innovative solutions to global challenges, underscoring UCalgary's ongoing commitment to fostering entrepreneurship.

STREET2SCHOOL
UTODAY



1841 INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

3231 LINKEDIN
FOLLOWERS

569 FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

1678 X FOLLOWERS

31,912 IMPRESSIONS
ON INSTAGRAM

53,257 REACH ON
INSTAGRAM

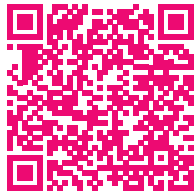
68,197 IMPRESSIONS
ON LINKEDIN

Entrepreneurial Thinking at UCalgary and Beyond

Cannon LaChapelle Award

The Cannon Lachapelle Award in Entrepreneurial Thinking, established in 2019 by Dr. Elizabeth Cannon and Dr. Gérard Lachapelle, recognizes undergraduate students who demonstrate creativity and entrepreneurial thinking. This year, the award has expanded to four recipients, each receiving \$10,000 to further their work. The Hunter Hub proudly celebrates these changemakers for their innovation and impact within the UCalgary community and beyond.

CANNON
LACHAPELLE
AWARD



Ronaar Qureshi (Cumming School of Medicine) is a third-year bioinformatics student and co-founder of an education business focused on the prevention of youth cannabis abuse. His work demonstrates the power of entrepreneurial thinking in addressing societal challenges.



Qaim Khalfan (Haskayne School of Business & Faculty of Arts) is a fourth-year business and political science student and independent music artist. His entrepreneurial journey includes founding JustMusic and competing in the 2023 RBC Fast Pitch, with aspirations of becoming an entertainment lawyer.



Ramin Kahidi (Cumming School of Medicine) is a bioinformatics student who applied his classroom knowledge to real-world biotech challenges. His team's success in competitions, including the Bangkok Business Challenge, showcases the impact of entrepreneurial thinking in the biotech field.



Thanishque Harshaa (Schulich School of Engineering) is a second-year software engineering student. His project, Snap Greens, aims to promote biodiversity through an incentivized mobile app, reflecting his ambition to expand beyond software development into entrepreneurship.



Hunter Hub at Collision

The Hunter Hub represented the University of Calgary at Collision, North America's fastest-growing tech conference, held in Toronto, Ontario from June 26 to 29. The Hub organized UCalgary's presence at the event, highlighting the university's innovation ecosystem. Key activities included a live demonstration of a 3D printer from the Maker Multiplex and a panel discussion on tech talent development in Calgary through Quantum City. The event also showcased the entrepreneurial success of UCalgary alumni, with Syzl, a platform for connecting food makers with commercial kitchens, winning the prestigious PITCH competition. This trip underscored the Hunter Hub's role in fostering UCalgary's growing impact in the global tech and entrepreneurial landscape.

COLLISION UTODAY



Inventures

At Inventures, held in June, the Hunter Hub presented the TC Energy Ingenuity Competition, showcasing innovative ventures from the university's entrepreneurial ecosystem. The competition, sponsored by TC Energy, highlighted the university's commitment to fostering groundbreaking ideas.

One of the standout winners, Turn CO2, developed a technology that captures CO2 emissions from breweries, turning waste into a resource. This innovative approach provides a sustainable and cost-effective alternative for the brewing industry, with potential far beyond the sector. Turn CO2 received \$30,000 to further develop their technology and scale their impact.

INVENTURES UTODAY



End of year stats

LAUNCHPAD

220

PEOPLE REGISTERED
FROM 11 FACULTIES

18

TEAMS CONTINUED
WORKING ON THEIR
VENTURE AFTER THE
END OF LAUNCHPAD

SUMMER ACCELERATOR

\$600K

RAISED IN FUNDING

6

PATENTS CREATED

21

JOBS CREATED

EVENTS

51

EXTERNAL EVENTS
HOSTED

347+

MEETING ROOMS BOOKED

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

7319

COMBINED FOLLOWERS
ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS OF
JUNE 30, 2024

1719

NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS

30

NEWSLETTERS SENT



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