

Co-operative Education
Program and Career Services

ANNUAL REPORT 2021•2022



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This annual report identifies general trends, developments and program statistics from May 2021 to April 2022. This report was produced in December 2022 by the Office of the Executive Director of UVic's Co-operative Education Program and Career Services. For detailed statistics on individual faculties, or for historical data and trends, contact coopcareercomms@uvic.ca.

Graphic design: UVic Graphic Services

Photography: UVic Photographic Services and UVic co-op students

All of UVic's co-op programs are accredited by Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL).

Cover photo: **Nancy Nguyen (commerce)** spent a work term with BC Parks' Conservation Office Division, where she conducted policy research, created communication material and coordinated visitor-focused projects. BC Parks' system is the third largest in North America and includes more than 1,000 parks and protected areas.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A lot has changed since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago, from the ways we engage with students, employers and partners, to the needs of these stakeholders in a time of economic uncertainty. Yet despite facing extraordinary challenges, UVic co-op students

have continued to make waves, contributing to solutions that address everything from accessible health care and food insecurity for vulnerable populations to creating less toxic cancer treatments and showcasing how Indigenous communities are using beading to reclaim cultural identity.

As we entered into the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we found ourselves facing a unique opportunity—the chance to rethink our approach to our daily practice and processes. We took a step back and considered how we could better serve students, employers and partners both remotely and in person by listening and by exploring new approaches.

This included creating new roles focused on ensuring equity, diversity and inclusion across our co-op programs and career support teams, exploring artificial intelligence software so that students and alumni can receive on-the-spot résumé and interview feedback on their own time, a focus on developing remote opportunities with employers outside of Canada and the continuation of a pilot program for co-op students who identify as having a disability or mental health challenge.

These efforts and the incredibly hard work of our co-op team resulted in the highest ever annual placement numbers since our program was launched in 1976, as well as cumulative placements hitting more than 101,000.

We are proud of the changes we have made so far and are excited about continued adjustments that will strengthen our programs even further in the years to come.

Andrea Giles
Executive Director, Co-operative Education Program
and Career Services

CO-OP + CAREER BY THE NUMBERS (2021/22)

4,355

Number of work term placements completed in 2021/22

5,208

Number of students who accessed career support

60

Percentage of graduating co-op students who received a job offer before graduation

83

Percentage of graduating students who found career-oriented employment related to their chosen field

65.1%

Percentage of eligible UVic students who took part in co-op

\$3,151

Average monthly co-op salary

101,139

Number of co-op placements made since the program launched in 1976 (up to April 30, 2022)

2,109

Number of students who took part in our co-op preparation course

CO-OP AND CAREER IN ACTION

Jamil Bhimji (commerce) made an impact during his work term with BinBreeze, a Victoria-based company that is changing the future of composting food waste. Launched in 2019 by UVic MBA graduate Taylor McCarten, BinBreeze uses industrial wood waste and unique BC minerals that act as a 'kitty litter' for food waste, reducing the methane emissions of the waste and enriching the soil. Jamil helped BinBreeze enhance its marketing efforts by identifying municipalities who focus on composting, as well as contributing to the company's administration and sales.



Mel Granley (Indigenous studies and art history/visual studies) spent a co-op term helping to curate the Legacy Gallery's "On Beaded Ground" exhibit, which explored the essential role of Indigenous women's beading practices in the reclamation of culture, identity, stories and teachings. Mel, who is Métis on their mother's side from the Métis Nation of Alberta from Saint Albert, was asked to continue working with the gallery following their work term.



Electrical engineering co-op student Anish Sivakumar worked for General Fusion, a company that is focused on creating alternate sources of sustainable energy. Anish developed diagnostic tools for the company's compression test beds, which use an array of pistons to collapse a liquid metal vortex and compress plasma to fusion.



Recreation and health education co-op student Jacob Cook jumped at the opportunity to work with the Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence (PISE), a non-profit organization that creates active living opportunities for children and adults of all levels and abilities.

As a cycling and physical literacy summer camp leader, Cook delivered day camp programs that taught children fundamental cycling skills and bicycle safety.



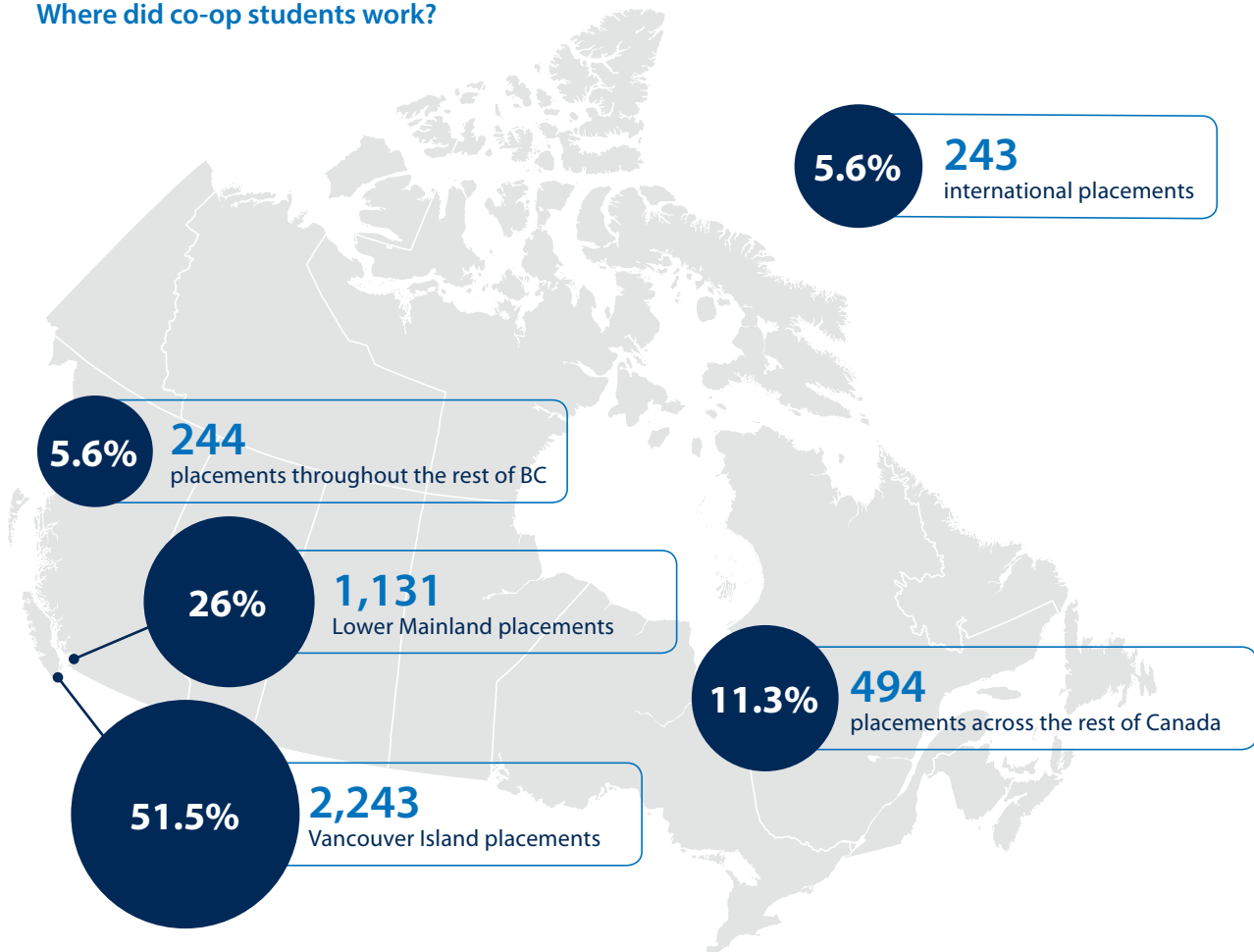
THE YEAR IN NUMBERS: 2021/22*

CO-OP HIGHLIGHTS

What did co-op look like in 2021/22?



Where did co-op students work?



Who were our co-op employers?

Private sector **70%**

6.3% not-for-profit organizations
63.8% private business

Public sector **30%**

7.6% federal government + agency
21.4% provincial government + agency
0.9% municipal government

How many work terms were completed by Indigenous and international students?

62

placements by Indigenous students

730

placements by students from international pathways

176

placements by students who self-identify as having a disability or mental health challenge

CAREER DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Over 5,200 students and alumni connected with Career Services in 2020/21. Note: Engineering and Computer Science Co-op and Career did not have an active career educator during this period.

How did students access career support?



5,208

students accessed career support overall



1,583

appointments with a career educator



2,509

students attended career-related workshops and presentations



144

workshops on résumé and cover letter writing + interviews



5,194

career positions posted in the portal

What did our year of career events look like?



2

major career fairs



4

major networking nights and career panels



90+

employer information sessions



5,510 +

students attended career development and co-op events



600+

employers and employer organizations took part in events, mock interview clinics and more

*Detailed statistics, including trends and historical data, can be found in the "Trends and historical data" report, available by contacting coopcareercomms@uvic.ca.

CONVOCATION SURVEY RESULTS

Every June and November, we survey graduating students to gather feedback about our services. This survey poses questions about students' employment status and anticipated salaries, as well as whether students participated in co-op and the impact of this experience on their employment status. 781 students responded to the 2021 surveys.

CAREER OUTCOMES FOR ALL UVIC GRADUATES

51%

of graduating students had received offers of employment by their date of graduation



Of the students who received job offers,

40%

received more than one offer

83%

reported that their positions were career oriented and in their chosen field



68%

had accepted entry-level professional positions

27% mid-level professional/manager,

3% senior level professional/manager,

2% executive level professional/manager



66%

had obtained a salary of over \$40,000 per year

43%

had found work within Greater Victoria



59%

of students who responded to the survey had used one or more career-based service during their degree

CAREER OUTCOMES FOR CO-OP STUDENTS

42%

of students who responded to the survey had participated in the UVic Co-op Program

60%

of graduating co-op students had received an offer of employment before graduation

16%

of students found their post-graduate position through an employer connection made during their co-op experience

CO-OP AND CAREER IN ACTION

As a technician with Ecofor's Natural Resources Team, **geography and biology** co-op student **Abby Matheson** put her skills into play. Abby conducted stream assessments as well as wildlife and vegetation surveys across Carrier Territory, Haisla Territory and Treaty 8 Territory in Northern BC. "I drew on my biology minor to identify local plants and species. My geography knowledge laid the groundwork to understand how GPS systems were used in the field."

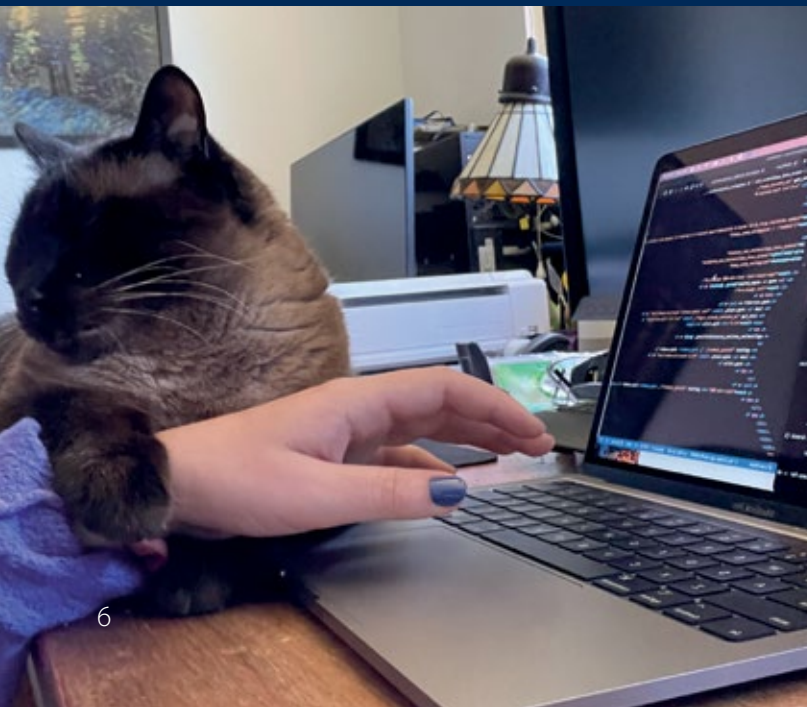


Philosophy student **Alistair Howes** worked as a site manager with Food Eco's My FED Farm Program, a registered charity that works to address food insecurity on southern Vancouver Island. Alistair coordinated a team of 35 volunteers to deliver more than 350 free vegetable garden kits to people at risk of food insecurity across Victoria. He also created social media content and developed material for the company website.



Abby Flint (software engineering and computer science) worked remotely as a software developer for OneFeather, an Indigenous technology company that seeks to empower Indigenous Peoples with sovereign digital solutions. As the company's first co-op student, Abby worked along a small team of developers to launch a product that helps Indigenous Peoples from across Canada apply for status cards online.

As a Masters' student in **nursing and health informatics** who is also a mom to young children, **Melissa Skirten** found the right fit for a co-op work term in a remote role with the Provincial Health Authority's Office of Virtual Health. She was able to work from her home in Cranbrook, BC, where she used remote patient monitoring technology to support vulnerable patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.



NEW THIS YEAR

DEVELOPMENTS FOR STUDENTS IN 2021/22

Annual placements hit record high

In 2021/22, UVic placed 4,355 students on co-op placements—the highest number of annual placements since the co-op program launched in 1976 with 58 placements. This was a 17.1 per cent increase over last year's overall placements and a milestone in the program's history. As of April 30, 2022, overall co-op placements over time have reached 101,139.

New roles focus on equity and diversity

Several new positions were created in 2021/22 to provide support related to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for both students and employers. This included a new employer development officer focused on EDI, an EDI career advisor and an accessibility and inclusion co-op coordinator. These new team members have begun identifying opportunities for growth around resources and education. EDI content is being developed for co-op preparation courses and the web-based career development curriculum.

Artificial intelligence (AI) software supports students in their work search

In response to COVID-19 and the shift to online learning, UVic Co-op and Career began piloting AI software that provides tailored résumé and interview feedback in a digital space. This type of software allows students to engage with interactive and accessible work search support on their own time. It also allows for Co-op and Career staff to shift their focus to more individualized career support. In 2021/22, more than 2,400 students taking part in the co-op preparation course were invited to use an AI program called Quinncia as they developed their co-op résumés. Quinncia continues to be assessed and a decision about formalizing an AI will be made in 2022/23.

New website to improve student access to career support and co-op opportunities

In fall 2021, UVic Co-op began working with University Communications and Marketing to tackle a comprehensive redesign of the Co-op and Career website. The project aims to create a fully accessible resource hub that supports students in their career development. This will include replacing all remaining PDF resources with content that meets provincially legislated web accessibility standards. Stakeholders from across campus are collaborating on this project and students, employers and staff are being consulted through the discovery process.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR EMPLOYERS AND PARTNERS IN 2021/22

Virtual fair partnership continued to offer employer connections

UVic continued to work closely with colleagues from Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia to run virtual fairs for students and alumni from all three post-secondaries. Joint fairs were run in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 with more than 1,000 students from UVic and more than 600 employers taking part. The partnership will continue into 2022.

Co-op and Career identifies initiatives and experiences that align with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)

In 2021/22, Co-op and Career staff mapped ongoing initiatives, projects, partnerships and student experiences from the past three years to the 17 UN SDGs. This included data from an employer survey where employers identified the ways their work connected to the SDGs, as well as whether co-op student projects contributed to these goals. This mapping can be viewed at uvic.ca/coop/sdgs and will be reported annually moving forward.

Allison Benner hired as Associate Director of Career Services

In spring 2022, Dr. Allison Benner was hired into the newly created position of Associate Director of Career Services. This position is focused on building a Career Services that can provide comprehensive future ready career exploration for UVic students. Allison has previously served as the co-op coordinator for the Humanities and Fine Arts Co-op Program and as the Acting Associate Director for Optional and Professional Co-op programs. She will be exploring Career Services models at comparator universities and working closely with the career educators to create a new delivery model for students.

Karima Ramji awarded the Dr. Graham Branton Research Award

Associate Director, International, Indigenous and Strategic Initiatives Karima Ramji was the recipient of Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada (CEWIL)'s Dr. Graham Branton Research Award in 2021, an award that recognizes significant contributions to scholarly research in the fields of co-operative education and work-integrated learning. Ramji has led the creation of Co-op and Career's cultural intelligence (CQ) curriculum, helped develop UVic's unique Indigenous International Work-Integrated Learning Exchange Program, and has published a series of articles on the impact of intercultural knowledge exchange. This award has only been awarded 12 times since its creation in 1989.

PROJECTS FUNDED BY THE BC MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

In June 2019, BC's Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training invested \$9 million to support co-op and work integrated learning (COWIL) opportunities throughout the province, followed by another \$5.5 million infusion in early 2021. Over the two funding rounds, post-secondary institutions put forth project proposals and UVic projects were awarded \$2.39 million (or 16.5 per cent) of total funding—the most funding received by any single institution. Several UVic initiatives supported by this funding have continued as multi-year projects.

The following ongoing UVic-led projects focus on *student priorities*.

Pilot focused on supporting students who identify as having a disability continues into year two

The CanWork program continued into its second pilot year in 2021 following a first cycle that saw 88 students participate. An innovative collaboration between CanAssist and Co-op and Career, the program is funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training. The program supports UVic students who identify as having a disability or mental health challenge to take part in paid, degree-related work experience. Job coaches help students throughout their work experience and a dedicated co-op coordinator works closely with students and employers.

Indigenous Work-Integrated Learning Resource Hub launches

The Indigenous Co-op/Work-integrated Learning Resource Hub (IRH), a project conceived and led by UVic, was developed to support Indigenous student access, retention and success in WIL programs and placements across British Columbia. Some of the resources are for student use, while others are for employers recruiting Indigenous people. In 2021/22, four new video resources were created and the hub was made available at acewilbc.ca/projects/indigenous-wil-resource-hub.

The following ongoing UVic-led projects focus on *employer priorities*.

Partnership with the Digital Technology Supercluster continued

Co-op and Career continued to work with Canada's Digital Technology Supercluster in 2021/22 to identify ways to address equity, diversity and inclusion concerns in the engineering and computer science sectors. Students and employers were surveyed to identify EDI concerns and areas for improvement; results were published in 2022.

Co-op and Career partners with Talent Match to encourage opportunities in arts, culture, tourism and hospitality

In 2022, Co-op and Career entered into its second year of leading Talent MATCH, a partnership between BC post-secondary institutions (PSIs) and three associations representing arts, culture, tourism and hospitality. The four-way partnership includes ACE-WIL BC on the post-secondary side and g2HR, BC Arts Council and BC Museums Association on the industry side. The program developed a set of resources to help these sectors successfully recruit from PSIs.

AWARDS

2021 CO-OP STUDENTS OF THE YEAR

Each year, we recognize co-op students from each of our three major program areas who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in their academic and workplace performance.



Business Co-op Student of the Year

Danielle Lowe (commerce)

In her final year of her Bachelor of Commerce, Danielle Lowe founded Doodlebug, a cricket-based dog treat business that combined her love for dogs, passion for sustainability and skills in business development. Doodlebug has since won 10 business competitions and sells across Canada. Danielle's entrepreneurial work term introduced her to all aspects of the business world, from crafting financial projections to graphic design and shipping products across the country. "Work-integrated learning gave me the opportunity to apply in-course material to real-life situations and personalize my academic achievements."

Engineering and Computer Science Co-op Student of the Year

Haneul Jang (mechanical engineering)

Third-year engineering student Haneul Jang put his interest in mechatronics and computer-aided engineering to use during a work term with UVic's Department of Mechanical Engineering, where he researched and designed upgrades for the third-year undergraduate vibration laboratory. He was tasked with designing a lab that would improve student learning and engagement, which meant applying his practical knowledge about vibrations, signal analysis and control systems. "The depth of learning from this single work term was far deeper than in the labs for my courses."



Optional and Professional Co-op Student of the Year

Ocean Han (biochemistry and physics)

Fourth-year student Ocean Han spent a co-op term working alongside medical physicist Devika Chithrani to research less-toxic cancer treatments using gold nanoparticles. "Throughout my education, I have worked with diligence and curiosity to learn science in the classroom," he says. "But I never got to merge that passion and knowledge with purpose to serve until my experience with the co-op program." With the encouragement of Chithrani, Ocean presented his research at the International Conference on Nanotechnology in 2021, where he won the best paper award. He has since prepared and submitted two manuscripts of his research to academic journals.

Watch a video about this year's recipients at uvic.ca/coop/studentawards.

2021 CO-OP EMPLOYERS OF THE YEAR

Each year, Co-op and Career recognizes four employer organizations that have gone above and beyond in offering extraordinary learning opportunities to UVic co-op students. Here are the 2021 award recipients.

Employer with more than 50 employees

Agriculture and AgriFood Canada – Summerland Research and Development Centre

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)'s Summerland Research and Development Centre has long supported co-op student learning through unique research opportunities and meaningful mentorship. Co-op students work on projects that mitigate environmental pressures and integrate sustainable production and processing systems to deliver high-quality wine grapes and tree fruits. Between 2011 and 2021, Summerland RDC has provided 122 co-op work term placements. Many students who completed their first co-op with Summerland RDC have continued on as part-time staff.

Employer with fewer than 50 employees

Dusanj & Wirk CPA

Every work term at Dusanj & Wirk CPA has one thing in common: an incredible learning experience. The chartered professional accounting firm considers co-op students as true full-time employees and assigns the same responsibilities from day one. The firm offers many specialized training sessions and one-on-one mentoring to complement students' academic knowledge. The team also provides opportunities to meet with staff accountants, managers and partners. Currently, 15 UVic alumni (30% of their staff) are working on the team, 11 of whom began their career as co-op students with the firm.

New employer (hiring co-op students for five years and under)

Shawn Veltman & Associates

Shawn Veltman is the owner and founder of Shawn Veltman & Associates Inc., which specializes in helping companies create high performing sales and marketing teams. Shawn has recruited seven co-op students for a total of 12 placements over the past four years. Work terms begin with a full month of one-on-one training with Shawn, ranging from sharing knowledge of specific software applications to developing students' abilities and skills to work remotely. Students are then introduced to smaller projects and by month three they are fully immersed in the work. Many former co-op students find work with start-ups and established companies after their work terms.

International Employer of the Year

Canadian Chamber of Commerce Thailand

Despite a shift to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Thailand (CanCham) in Bangkok, Thailand, continued to welcome co-op students to the team. Students complete a variety of tasks for the Chamber, including conducting market research and writing business reports for Canadian organizations and the Embassy of Canada in Thailand. Students are also involved with identifying potential co-op or internship opportunities at CanCham member organizations by connecting to Canadian employers in Thailand, which has led to increased co-op opportunities in the region.

Learn more about the award at uvic.ca/coop/employerawards.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

FOR STUDENTS

The following projects and initiatives are part of Co-op and Career's annual strategic student outreach.

- **Career Services support:** Our five career educators provide a range of services to students from every UVic program area. Support includes one-on-one career drop-in sessions and appointments, regular workshops and targeted networking and career exploration events. In 2021/22, **more than 5,200 students accessed these services.**
- **Mock interview clinics:** All co-op students take part in a mock interview clinic before applying for their first work term. **277 employers** volunteered their time to provide one-on-one feedback to **1,174 UVic co-op students**, including **10 Indigenous students.**
- **International exchange opportunities:** In 2021/22 UVic placed **183 students** in **243 international work terms** in a total of **31 countries.** Many of these experiences were arranged through Co-op and Career's six regional streams:
 - ▶ **CANASEAN-COOP** (Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam)
 - ▶ **CANASIA-COOP** (China, Japan and other Asian countries)
 - ▶ **CANCOM-COOP** (Africa, Australia, New Zealand and other Commonwealth countries)
 - ▶ **CANEU-COOP** (Austria and Germany and other European countries)
 - ▶ **CANSAM-COOP** (Brazil, Chile and other South American countries)
 - ▶ **CANUSA-COOP** (Silicon Valley and across the United States)
- **Competency assessment framework:** UVic is the only institution in the world to use a competency-based framework to assess co-op learning outcomes. All UVic co-op students set competency-based learning objectives at the beginning of their co-op work terms. Students and their workplace supervisors then assess students' competency development at the start, middle and end of the work terms. Detailed competency assessment data for 2021/22 can be requested from the Office of the Director of Co-op and Career.

FOR EMPLOYERS

While some regular employer engagement activities were put on hold in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the following 2020/21 projects and initiatives supported Co-op and Career's ongoing employer outreach.

- **Partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce:** For the past ten years, UVic Co-op and Career has partnered with Camosun to promote co-operative education to employers across the region. Through sponsorship agreements, we collaborate with the Victoria Chamber, Westshore Chamber of Commerce and Saanich Peninsula Chamber to engage with current and prospective employers.
- **Employer Appreciation Event:** In April 2022, we celebrated our 2021 co-op award winners with a video celebration that showcased students' experiences and the impact of their real-life learning.
- **Employer outreach trips:** Each year, Co-op and Career staff travel across Canada and around the world to engage with prospective co-op employer organizations as well as alumni. This includes trips with other university units as well as local, provincial and federal partners. In 2021/22, these connections were made virtually.

FUNDING THAT SUPPORTS STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS

Co-op and Career facilitates several funds and scholarships that help students engage in unique work experiences outside of Canada. In 2021/22, some of this funding was not awarded due to COVID-19 travel restrictions but will be administered again in 2022/23.

Graham Branton Co-operative Education Endowment Fund: Established in 1996 in memory of Dr. Branton, the co-op program's longest-serving director who dedicated 17 years to the development of UVic Co-op, this fund supports students who undertake international work term placements in developing countries where there is often little remuneration. This funding was not awarded in 2021/22 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

President's Asia Partners Fund: This funding supports students as they pursue co-op work terms and internships in the Asia Pacific region. The President's Asia Partners Fund was put on hold in 2021/22 due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Thouvenelle scholarship: This scholarship is given to students who take part in co-op work terms related to community development or service learning both in and outside of Canada. **23 students received this scholarship in 2021/22.**

Strategic Framework Experiential Learning Fund (SF-ELF): UVic's SF-ELF funding supports a range of work-integrated learning opportunities for students. In 2021/22, Co-op and Career awarded the following:

- **24** students were awarded a \$1,000 travel stipend through the **Co-operative Education Travel Award for Work Terms in Canada but outside Victoria**
- **13** students were awarded a \$3,000 travel stipend through the **Co-operative Education Travel Awards for Work Terms with Not-For-Profits outside Canada**
- **16** students were awarded up to \$5,000 for approved entrepreneurial co-op work term through the **Co-operative Education Wage Subsidy Program for Entrepreneurial Work Terms**
- **9** employers who hold charity or not-for-profit status were awarded up to \$3,000 to cover a portion of the cost of hiring a co-op student through the **Co-operative Education Not-for Profit Wage Subsidy Program**
- **4** Indigenous community organizations were awarded up to \$5,000 to cover a portion of the cost of hiring a co-op student through the **Indigenous Co-operative Education Wage Subsidy Program**

LOOKING TOWARDS 2022/23

Indigenous International Work-Integrated Learning Exchange program to re-launch

This unique program, which connects Indigenous students attending UVic with co-op opportunities at partner institutions in Australia, was put on hold while travel was restricted due to COVID-19. The program will launch again in fall 2022.

Partnership with Continuing Studies

Later in 2022, Co-op and Career will begin providing career support services to students in Continuing Studies. This will include hiring a career educator for one-on-one support, as well as providing access to job postings and events in the Career portal.

Podcast series to be developed

Co-op and Career is planning a podcast series that will focus on the career adventures of students and alumni. Planning will kick off in September 2022 with the release planned for fall 2023.

 uvic.ca/coopandcareer

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