



UVIC

Annual Report

Co-operative Education Program & Career Services

May 2025-April 2026

About this report

This annual report identifies trends, developments and program statistics from May 2025 to April 2026. This report was produced in July 2026 by the Office of the Director of UVic's Co-operative Education Program and Career Services.

See uvic.ca/coop/annual-report for a digital version. For detailed statistics on individual faculties or for historical data and trends and students' competency assessments, contact coopcareercomms@uvic.ca.

Photography: UVic Photography Services & UVic co-op students. **Cover:** Biomedical engineering student Adeline Theodora (she/her) spent a co-op as a implementation specialist with Pani Energy, a Victoria-based company that leverages artificial intelligence to accelerate the world's transition to a sustainable water supply.

UVic's co-op programs are accredited by [Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada \(CEWIL\)](#).

In this report

Letter from the incoming Executive Director.....	1
Letter from the outgoing Executive Director.....	2

2025/26 in numbers

Co-op highlights	3
Career development highlights	4
Community-engaged learning highlights	5
Convocation survey results	6

Hands-on learning in action

Co-op stories	7
Career development stories	9
Community-engaged learning stories	10

2025 award winners

Co-op Students of the Year.....	11
Changemaker Award Winners.....	12
Co-op Employers of the Year	13

This year's projects

This section of the report aligns with the University's Academic Action Plan:

- **Enhancing the student experience** includes topics related to recruitment and retention, student experience & student outcomes 15
- **Fostering innovation in scholarship** includes topics related to research-enriched learning and teaching and interdisciplinary scholarship, including publications and presentations 19
- **Advancing scholarly culture** includes topics related to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging; collegiality and mentorship and reputation 21

Funding & program updates

Funding for students & employers.....	23
Co-op program updates	24

Presentations and research publications	25
--	-----------

Letter from the incoming Executive Director



As I step into the role of Executive Director, I am honoured to join a community that has long been recognized for its leadership in experiential learning, career development, and community engagement.

First and foremost, I would like to recognize and thank Andrea Giles for her exceptional leadership and dedication to Co-op & Career. Andrea's vision, commitment to students, and collaborative approach have helped shape the strong foundation we build upon today. We are pleased to share her reflections and insights in this report.

Our Co-op & Career team plays a vital role in helping students connect their academic learning with meaningful experiences that prepare them for a rapidly evolving world. Through co-operative education, career education, community engaged learning and partnerships with employers and community organizations, we create opportunities that empower students to develop skills, confidence, and purpose while contributing to workplaces and communities across British Columbia, Canada, and beyond.

Looking ahead, we are entering an exciting period of opportunity. The future of work continues to evolve, bringing new challenges and possibilities for students, employers, and post-secondary institutions alike. As we navigate these changes together, we remain committed to innovation, inclusion, and collaboration. We will continue to strengthen relationships with our partners, expand access to experiential learning opportunities, and ensure that our programs support the diverse aspirations and talents of all students.

I am grateful for the dedication of our staff, faculty partners, employers, alumni, and community supporters who make this work possible. Most importantly, I am continually inspired by our students, whose curiosity, resilience, and ambition remind us why this work matters.

In this report, you will find stories that reflect the impact of our collective efforts and the many ways our community is advancing learning, leadership, and career readiness. I invite you to celebrate these successes and join us as we continue to build new opportunities for the future.

Thank you for being part of our community. I look forward to working alongside you as we continue to strengthen experiential learning opportunities and prepare students to make meaningful contributions in their careers, communities, and the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karima', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Karima Ramji
Executive Director, Co-op and Career

Letter from the outgoing Executive Director

2025/26 in numbers



With my final day as executive director scheduled for June 30, I find myself reflecting with immense pride on all that we have accomplished together at UVic Co-op and Career. It has truly been a privilege to work alongside colleagues who bring such dedication, care, and passion to this work every day.

Over the past year in particular, I've spent time reflecting on our shared successes, milestones, and the many changes we've navigated together.

This past year has been one of both challenge and accomplishment. Despite economic uncertainty, ongoing impacts from the pandemic, enrolment pressures, and budget constraints, we have continued to move forward together.

Over 2025/26, we placed 3,738 students in work terms—bringing our total to more than 116,000 since the co-op program began in 1976. (And yes—remarkably, I have been here for more than 102,000 of those placements!). This is an extraordinary accomplishment and a testament to the consistency and strength of this program over time.

We have continued to advance our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, supporting equity-seeking students in accessing opportunities. Our Career Services team has helped thousands of students explore their career pathways, while our Community-Engaged Learning team has connected students, faculty, and community partners in meaningful, real-world projects.

As I step into retirement, I look forward to cheering on Co-op and Career, and UVic, from the sidelines as you continue to facilitate transformative work-integrated learning experiences for students and community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Giles".

Andrea Giles
Executive Director, Co-op and Career

86%

of co-op students said that co-op was beneficial to their career journey

3,738

co-op work terms completed

8,866

students accessed Career Services

10,581

students enrolled in experiential learning courses

\$3,960

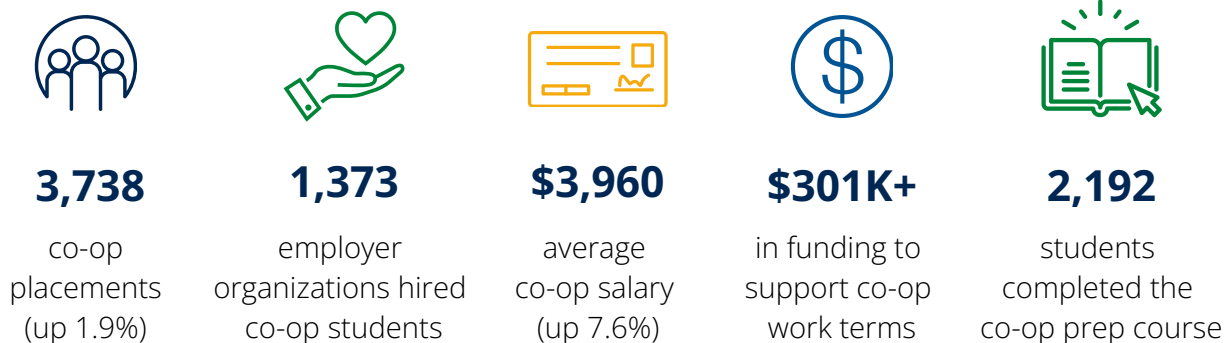
average monthly co-op salary

80%

of graduating students found a career-related roles in their chosen fields

CO-OP HIGHLIGHTS

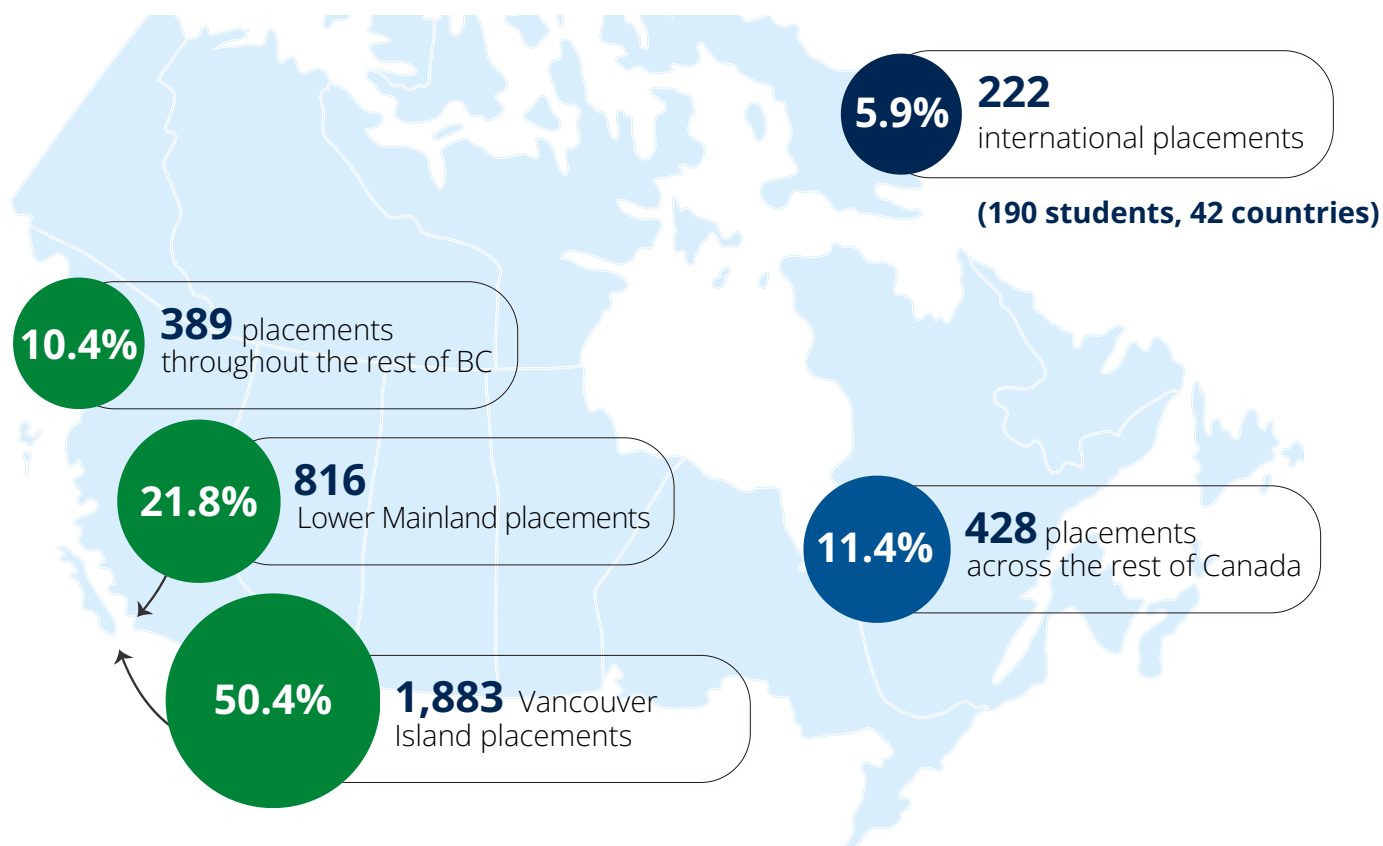
What did co-op look like in 2025/26?



How many work terms were completed by specific student groups?



Where did co-op students work?



Who hired UVic co-op students?

74%
private sector

- 68.5% private business
- 5.5% not-for-profits

26%
public sector

- 7.2% federal government + agency
- 17.2% provincial government + agency
- 1.6% municipal government

CAREER DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

UVic's Career Services offices provides dedicated career development support to students and alumni through one-on-one appointments, pop-up events, targeted workshops and presentations, a self-directed Brightspace course called [Your Career Starts Here](#), and a range of other programming.

The team supports students from all faculties and departments, as well as students in Continuing Studies and UVic alumni.

How did students access career support?


2,259

appointments
with career
educators


5,090

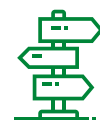
students attended
workshops and
presentations


930+

students
attended
career fairs


587

students accessed
the [Your Career
Starts Here](#) course


8,866

students accessed
career programming
overall

What programs and events were offered?


5

career
fairs


42

career events &
workshops


20

employer information
sessions


385

employers met
students at events

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING HIGHLIGHTS

The Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) Office creates and supports opportunities for faculty members, students and community partners to collaborate on initiatives that advance experiential learning in academic courses.

CEL supports faculty through internal granting programs like the Experiential Learning Fund (ELF) and the Emergent Activities Funds, and supports faculty, students, and community partners through external funding the team applies for.

CEL is part of academic coursework and students receive academic credit. At the core of EL is the reciprocal, mutual beneficial partnership among community, faculty, and students. The activities that take place in CEL courses contribute to community initiatives and provide mentorship opportunities for community partners to work with UVic students.

See summaries of this year's initiatives, funding and more on pages 10, 18 and 20.

How did students take part in community-engaged learning?



10,581

students enrolled in CEL
or experiential courses



38

departments offered CEL
or experiential courses



50

students supported
by iHUB grants

What funding was available through CEL?



\$57.3K

in Experiential Learning Fund (ELF)
grants (a total of \$477K awarded over
the past 10 years)



\$93K

in CEWIL iHUB grants to support
students doing community-engaged
projects and courses

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.

Career outcomes for all UVic graduates



41%

of graduating students received a job offer before graduation

Of these students,

32%

received more than one offer

80%

found career-related positions in their chosen field



52%

obtained a salary of more than \$60,000 a year



50%

found work in Greater Victoria



27%

of students had accessed Career Services during their degree

Career outcomes for UVic co-op graduates

86%

of co-op students said that co-op was beneficial to their career journey

13%

of co-op students who graduated with a job found their position as a result of a co-op experience

40%

of students who responded to the survey participated in co-op

Hands-on learning in action

More than 10,000 students engage with UVic's co-op program, career development team and community-engaged learning office each year. Hands-on learning plays a major role in the UVic experience.

Over the next few pages, you can **see examples of student experiences** in three areas: co-operative education work terms, general career development and community-engaged learning.

CO-OP STORIES

Managing coastal waterways

Biology co-op student **Piper McWilliam** (she/her) spent a co-op term as an environment and sustainability coordinator with the Prince Rupert Port Authority.

Her tasks included monitoring the presence of invasive species and measuring underwater noise from passenger ships in the harbour. In this photo, she is conducting a vertical net tow to capture zooplankton, as a way to monitor the larval stages of aquatic invasive species like the European Green Crab.



Supporting professional athletes

Kinesiology student **Olivia Bowyer-Smyth** (she/her) became the first UVic co-op student hired by the BC Lions Football Club, working as a strength and conditioning and medical assistant during their training camp in Kamloops.

"I helped players in the gym with their lifting programs, assisted with field setup and was part of the medical staff. Co-op is an amazing opportunity to explore your interests, make connections, and apply your knowledge in real-world settings."



Contributing to fish health studies

Priyanka Kahlon (she/her) spent a full year working as a molecular biology research assistant in the Molecular Genetics Lab with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in Nanaimo. The **biochemistry** student helped manage a coast-wide fish health surveillance project involving thousands of samples.

"This experience not only deepened my understanding of molecular biology but also shaped my academic focus and future research interests, making my learning more meaningful and connected to real scientific impact."



Engineering through an Indigenous lens

Leo Dougan (he/him) is working toward a future where all Indigenous communities have access to safe water. The **civil engineering** student spent a co-op at Indigenous environmental engineering firm Gwaii Engineering, where he connected with Indigenous communities and agencies, built models and map projects, performing construction inspections and field monitoring.

Leo is from the Red River Metis Nation in Manitoba, and is also Cree-Metis, Ojibwe, and Saulteaux.



Challenging discrimination and bias in law

Fiona Wong (she/her) is a UVic **law** graduate with a passion for labour and employment law who works as a civil lawyer in Vancouver, BC. During her time at UVic, Fiona founded the First Generation Network to reduce barriers for law students who are the first in their family to attend post-secondary.

Fiona was a guest on season three of Work It: A Career Exploration podcast. She talked about facing discrimination as an Asian student and lawyer, how her identity shapes her career in law, and more.



Helping create a sustainable water supply

Biomedical engineering student **Adeline Theodora** (she/her) spent a co-op as a implementation specialist with Pani Energy, a Victoria-based company that leverages artificial intelligence to accelerate the world's transition to a sustainable water supply.

Adeline's work focused on providing data to reverse osmosis plants around the world that use the Pani platform. "Co-op is so helpful in understanding just what is needed to work as an engineer and how to apply what you have learned into complex, real-world situations."



Read more about these students experiences at uvic.ca/coop/stories.



Listen to co-op grads on the Work It podcast at uvic.ca/career-services/podcast.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT STORIES

Finding support through Career Services

Leigh Kowalchuk (she/her) makes a point to check in with Career Services every semester—it's a part of the **computer science** student's career development process. After first dropping by for an impromptu appointment, she booked a longer meeting with her career educator to take a detailed look at her résumé and cover letter.

"I truly believe I wouldn't have been as successful as I was in my job search without Karae's advice. I went from getting no interviews to nothing but interviews. Not only that, but she strengthened my confidence in my interview skills and I was able to land my first co-op at a dream company of mine.

After seeing Karae, I found that I already had great skills and experience; I just needed her professional touch to make it come across better to hiring teams."

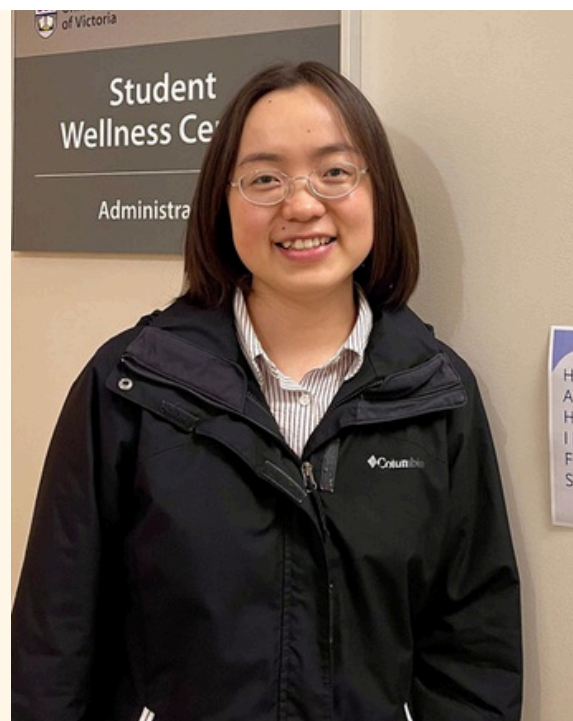


Learning to thrive in job interviews

When **Yunhui Ye** (she/her) was applying for co-op positions as part of her **political science PhD**, she felt like she was hitting a wall. After applying non-stop but not booking any interviews, she decided to turn to her career educators for support.

"I booked appointments with Social Science Career Educator Darcie, as well as Graduate Career Educator Samantha, and Accessibility and Inclusion Co-op Coordinator Niels. My goal was to get feedback on my résumé and cover letter to improve my chances of securing an interview invitation."

Yunhui's conversations with the Career Services team gave her a sense of direction. "Through their thoughtful questions and feedback, I reconnected with my core values, dug into my past experiences and identified the brightest and most relevant parts of myself to align with employers' needs."



COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING STORIES

Working with Indigenous youth to address the impact of climate change

As a recent **Doctor of Philosophy** graduate in the Faculty of Social Sciences, **Maeva Gauthier** (she/her) is also a two-time CEL program participant in the SOSC: Students in Community course.

Maeva's PhD research focuses on using participatory video to engage Inuvialuit youth in Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories, on climate change. A documentary about this work, called, "Happening to Us" is currently in post-production. Maeva is also co-authoring a journal article with the youth co-researchers.

"The overall goal of my project goes beyond the research; it aims to develop youth agency and leadership skills, bridge lived experiences of climate change with policy, and value their knowledge in those spaces," says Maeva.

"It is a privilege to collaborate with communities and support work that reflects their priorities, knowledge, and aspirations."



Hard at work: filming at midnight with lots of sun.

PSYCH 493 provides connection and community

Molly Mifsud is the volunteer services coordinator at **Mount St. Mary Hospital**, a long-term healthcare home that provides compassionate palliative care to residents in Victoria. In 2026, she partnered with UVic professor **Dr. Maria Iankilevitch** through **PSYCH 493**, welcoming community-engaged learning students to develop proposals that will support her work.

"Dr. Iankilevitch demonstrated exceptional leadership throughout the course," says Molly. "She was highly collaborative, organized and proactive in her communication, which made the partnership seamless and meaningful for our organization."

Molly was also impressed by the students. "They brought a high level of skill, creativity and professionalism and made a lasting impression on our team. Their ability to engage thoughtfully with our setting and contribute in meaningful ways speaks to both the strength of the program and the quality of instruction."

"Community Engaged Learning is clearly a vital component of both student education and community impact. I strongly encourage continued support and investment in these programs."





CO-OP STUDENTS OF YEAR

Each year, we recognize co-op students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in their co-op work terms. Learn more at uvic.ca/coop/studentawards.



Jack Taylor (commerce) **Business Co-op**

As a member of the Red River Métis, finding meaningful work supporting Indigenous communities is a major focus for **Jack Taylor** (he/him). For his first co-op work term, Jack joined the team at mechanical engineering firm AME Group as a marketing and communications co-op student.

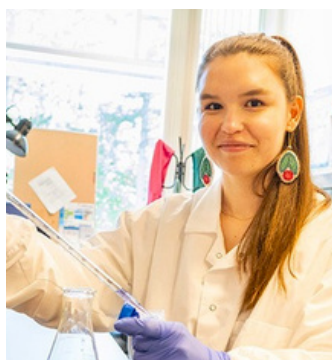
"I developed branding guidelines, created outreach materials, and built a national contact database. I also met directly with schools and tribal councils to walk them through the program, answer questions and tailor our services to best fit program needs."



Meghan Whyte (mechanical engineering) **Engineering and Computer Science Co-op**

During her co-op work terms with Platinum Engineering and Introba, **Meghan Whyte** (she/her) contributed to over 30 projects with engineers across Canada. She gained hands-on experience in HVAC and plumbing design, LEED accreditation, site reviews, system simulations and traction power systems.

"Work-integrated learning has been pivotal in shaping me as a future engineer. Co-op has allowed me to apply engineering in a way that is collaborative, hands-on and in the best interest of the community."



K'sana Wood Lynes-Ford (biology) **Optional and Professional Co-op**

After receiving a research internship award from the International Brain Research Organization and Centre for Brain Health (IBRO-CBH), **K'sana Wood Lynes-Ford** (she/her) worked with supervisors Dr. Laura Arbour and Dr. Leigh Anne Swayne to study the impacts of genetic variants on the health of the Gitxsan People.

"This project's subject matter has personally affected me and my loved ones and because of this research I can personally aid in the effort to understand health issues affecting my community. Throughout my time with the CGRP and Swayne Lab, I have visited the Gitxsan First Nation on two separate occasions to share my research contributions with my community."



CHANGEMAKER AWARD WINNERS

In 2025, UVic Co-op and Career launched the Changemaker Awards to celebrate co-op students who have made significant contributions in 4 key categories:

- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)
- Reconciliation
- International student award

See the full stories AND contribute to the Changemaker Awards at uvic.ca/coop/changemakers.



Reconciliation category

Chynna Tran (biochemistry and microbiology)

When Chynna (they/them) was looking for their first work experience term, they knew they wanted to work with a team committed to inclusivity and education. Chynna found a strong fit with Science World in Vancouver, where they worked as a science facilitator with the Visitor Experience Team.

As part of their work term, Chynna supported a partnership with Girls in STEAM, a non-profit organization that encourages girls, women, gender-diverse people and the LGBTQ+ community to pursue education and careers in science, technology, engineering, art, design and math.



UN SDGs category

Jack Morel (public administration)

Jack Morel is something of a climate superstar—he made such a difference during his first work term as a climate change policy analyst with the Ministry of Forests that he was asked to stay on for eight additional months.

Jack joined a small team to develop an internal climate adaptation policy initiative for the Ministry of Forests. The project aimed to embed inclusivity, informed decision-making, and Indigenous Knowledge, interests, and values across the Ministry's policy development.



International student category

Lucia Rivera (computer science)

At the start of her co-op at BC Ministry of Citizens' Services, Lucia Rivera (she/her) had little knowledge of cybersecurity. But by the end of two work terms, the computer science student became an expert. As a security analyst co-op student, Lucia helped develop an AI-powered cloud security playbook designed to automate the processes of assessing Software as a Service (SaaS) programs for security vulnerabilities.

"This project not only benefited the organization but also highlighted my growth in a technical field that I initially knew little about."

CO-OP EMPLOYERS OF THE YEAR

Each year, we recognize employer organizations that offer extraordinary learning opportunities to UVic co-op students. Read more about these employers at uvic.ca/coop/employerawards.



Urban Solar

Employer hiring for 5 years or less

As North America's leading manufacturer of solar-powered lighting and battery-powered digital display systems for bus stops, Urban Solar is lighting the way for student inclusion and safety at every stop.

Since becoming a UVic co-op employer in 2020, Urban Solar has hired 14 students in engineering and business roles to work on projects that provide communities with lighting and real-time information on public transit routes. Two of these former students have returned to Urban Solar as full-time employees. Managers and team members actively mentor students, fostering a safe, fun and collaborative environment where learning is prioritized.



The team also works closely with UVic's accessibility and inclusion co-op coordinator, adapting its hiring, onboarding and retention practices through a neuroinclusive lens.

“

“Our co-op students bring a great deal to the table and we aim to repay that through rewarding work that allows them to solve real-world problems and help make communities across North America better places to live and commute.”

- Urban Solar Engineering Manager Graham Ball

”

Dr. Pegado Inc.

Employer with fewer than 50 employees

From day one, co-op students who join the team at Dr. Pegado's paediatric ophthalmology clinic are trusted with responsibilities that matter, including patient workups, diagnostic imaging, managing clinical documentation and supporting procedures. The team's strong mentorship culture means that every task becomes a learning opportunity, fostering students' confidence, independence and problem-solving skills in ways that extend far beyond the classroom.

The clinic has hired close to 50 health information science, biomedical engineering, biology and biochemistry/microbiology students over the past five years. Students are integrated into the full continuum of care, gaining exposure to everything from triage and diagnostics to surgical follow-up and IT troubleshooting. Many students describe their time at the clinic as a transformative experience.

Island Savings

Employer with more than 50 employees

As a local leader known for its inclusive hiring and retention practices, it's no surprise that Island Savings is also a stand-out co-op employer. The Vancouver Island-based division of Tru Cooperative Bank (formerly First West) has hired more than 40 students since 2017, providing co-op learning opportunities for students studying commerce, computer science and psychology.

Throughout their work terms, students are paired with mentors who provides regular coaching and career development support. Students also attend leadership talks, lunch-and-learns, financial literary sessions and on-site member visits to better understand how Island Savings supports the financial wellbeing of people across Vancouver Island and the Southern Gulf Islands.

Students learn practical skills that align with their academic goals, including conducting industry analyses, supporting IT operations and working on community impact projects. Island Savings was also named the 2025 Industry Partner of the Year by the Association for Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning BC/Yukon (ACE-WIL).



Aga Khan University (AKU)

International partner

As a global university operating across Asia, East Africa and UK, Aga Khan University (AKU) is one of the world's largest development networks dedicated to improving quality of life in underserved communities.

AKU is also a long-time UVic partner: UVic co-op students contribute to applied research, education, and development initiatives at the Aga Khan University, gaining experience across diverse global contexts aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Additionally, through the AKU's International Internship Programme established in 2008, UVic and AKU have facilitated over a decade of sustained student engagement, including more than 20 placements across healthcare research, education, communications, and institutional initiatives.

“

“Partnerships such as this demonstrate the value of experiential learning that is both globally grounded and locally relevant, enabling students to contribute meaningfully across diverse academic and development contexts.”

- Fareena Feroze, Director of Global Engagement, AKU

”

ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

This section includes developments related to recruitment and retention, student experiences and success and student outcomes.

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Overall co-op placement numbers reach 116,000

By spring 2026, historical co-op work term placements reached 116,000. We continue to see program growth from student and employers.

Interview exercises support co-op students' work search

All co-op students take part in an interview exercise prior to applying for their first work term. In 2025/26, 179 employers volunteered their time to provide one-on-one feedback to 1,326 UVic co-op students.

ConnectAble program supports neurodiverse co-op students

C+C's Accessibility and Inclusion Co-op and Career Coordinator Niels Melis-de Lamper launched a pilot program called ConnectAble in 2026. Designed to support students in co-op who self-identify as having a disability, this program brings together a cohort of up to 10 people. Students attend workshops focused on self-advocacy and networking and receive one-on-one coaching. They also hear from guest speakers and alumni and have access to an ongoing Microsoft Teams channel for continued support.

The ConnectAble program will run again in the summer and fall of 2026.

C+C staff take part in unconscious bias training

As part of C+C staff professional development, the team took part in interactive sessions to explore the impact of unconscious bias on their daily interactions and decision-making. Through guided activities, reflection and discussion, participants gained tools to recognize and challenge hidden biases, deepen self-awareness, and further develop their Cultural Intelligence (CQ).

LimeConnect collaboration supports students with disabilities

The accessibility and inclusion co-op and career coordinator worked with Lime Connect to set up a best practices session for C+C staff around supporting students with disabilities. This session brought together campus partners from across the U.S. and Canada to share strategies for providing disability-specific career guidance and support on campus. Lime Connect is a global not-for-profit that helps professionals and university students with disabilities to navigate the workplace.

Gustavson School of Business launches new co-op approach

In the fall of 2026, the Gustavson School of Business' commerce program adjusted its co-op requirements from requiring three co-op work terms as part of its curriculum to requiring a single work experience term. Two terms are recommended and students can choose to complete a third term to graduate with co-op designation.

Co-op programs rearranged within UVic's new Faculty of Health

Some of C+C's co-op programs shifted home faculties as part the launch of UVic's Faculty of Health on May 1, 2025. Specifically:

- the Kinesiology, Recreation and Health Education, and Health Information Science Co-op programs are now housed within the Faculty of Health
- the Public Administration Co-op Program moved to the Faculty of Social Sciences
- Child and Youth Care (graduate co-op) shifted to the Faculty of Education

Hi-Tech Fair continues to facilitate key connections

In February 2026, ECS Co-op hosted a two-day career fair that brought 40 organizations and 124 representatives to campus. More than 950 students attended the fair.

Summer networking event in business connects students and employers

In the summer of 2025, the Business Co-op team hosted a networking evening that focused on accounting, banking and finance. Thirty-nine employers from 19 companies attended the event, with 75 students attending.

Breakfast at the House continues to build community

Indigenous Co-op Coordinator David Busch led several Breakfast at the House events for Co-op and Career staff in 2025 and 2026. Staff were invited to learn from Elders and share their lived experiences and identities, while learning about topics like how to support Indigenous students in their work search and how to speak with employers about decolonizing their hiring and recruitment efforts.

International co-op placement guide streamlines processes for staff

The Indigenous, International and Accessibility team created a Brightspace guide for staff to ensure consistency when placing students on co-op terms outside of Canada. This guide includes information about the Global Experience Course and Sustainable Goals in Action courses that students take before working abroad. All staff are now given access to this course.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

587 students take part in second year of free career development course

After a pilot period in 2024/25, Career Services formally launched the Your Career Starts Here course on Brightspace for undergraduate and graduate students. This self-led course helps students answer 4 big questions: What do they love?, What are they great at?, What does the world need?, and What can they be paid for? In January 2026, a new version of the Your Career Starts Here course was released specifically for graduate students. Four-hundred and seventy undergraduate students and 117 graduate students took part in Your Career Starts here in 2025/26. A third version of the course is being developed for alumni.

Career programming and workshops support students and alumni

The Career Services team hosted a series of events this year, including Résumé Day drop-ins, LinkedIn Labs, Career Doctor pop-ups, and more. These events provide on-the-spot support to students at different stages of career exploration and complement regular appointments with career educators.

Career Fair and Interview Clinic for Indigenous students continues to grow

In fall 2025 and spring 2026, 131 students and 33 employers took part in the Career Fair and Interview Clinic for Indigenous students, an increase of 54% in student participation and 45% increase in employers over last year. Employers were selected based on their demonstration of supportive and Indigenized hiring practices. Students attended a career fair and took part in mock interviews with employers.

Second year of Build a Career in Canada event for international students

For the second year, Co-op and Career partnered with the International Centre for Students and the UVSS to run a session for international students on the topic of building a career in Canada. The session included a panel of employers who hire international students as well as employers who started off as international students and have carved out careers in Canada. Sixty-four international students and six panelists attended the event.

Career exploration podcast releases third season

Co-op and Career released the third season of "Work It: a career exploration podcast", including interviews with three recent UVic graduates who are making a positive impact through their careers, as well as two ask-an-expert episodes where we spoke with career educators about what to do with your degree and how to change career paths. Season 4 of "Work It" will be released in fall 2026. Listen to Work It at uvic.ca/career-services/podcast or anywhere you listen to podcasts.

West Coast Virtual Fair wraps up after six years and 10 fairs

Beginning in 2020 and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UVic partnered with teams from Simon Fraser University and the University of British Columbia to run virtual career fairs for students and alumni from all three post-secondaries. This partnership continued with one to two virtual career fairs per year through to the spring of 2026; UVic is focusing on in-person experiences for the 2026/27 academic year, but we continue to explore ongoing opportunities for collaboration with UBC and SFU.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING (CEL)

CEWIL iHUB Grant provides \$93,000 to support community engagement projects

In May 2025, the CEL team received an iHUB grant from CEWIL to support two terms of students participating in curricular Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) or conducting Community-Engaged Research. The program focused on climate action and community resilience and was open to upper-level undergraduate and graduate students at UVic. Students had the opportunity to collaborate with community partners on climate-focused initiatives.

The funding provided stipends for 50 students and supported the development of workshops designed to enhance their community-engaged learning experience. Four workshops were offered: Foundations of Community Engagement, Anti-Stigma Training (in partnership with The Existence Project), Knowledge Mobilization, and Arts-Based Reflection. In December, the CEL office hosted a "CELebration," where students showcased their projects and shared their learning.

The funding also provided honoraria to community partners who collaborated with UVic students. Community partners benefited from student contributions to their programs and knowledge mobilization activities. The mentorship that community partners provided to students supported new endeavours and capacity building opportunities for the community partner.

CEL podcast launches first season

To diversify CEL storytelling and offer new ways for students, faculty, and community partners to learn about community-engaged learning (CEL), the CEL Office launched a new podcast, called the CELebrate Learning Podcast.

This podcast highlights diverse perspectives on and experiences of CEL, aiming to provide useful insight, tools, and inspiration to students, faculty and community members alike. Episodes cover a range of topics, such as intersectionality, reflection, the spectrum of engagement, and the value and power of learning with and in community, helping to deepen understandings of CEL possibilities for students and the broader community in Victoria.

A five-part episode called the Spectrum of Engagement highlights faculty from across UVic who have incorporated CEL into their teaching at various points along the spectrum of engagement. These experienced CEL instructors share their insights and provide guidance for instructors who are new to or curious about CEL and share the benefits it can offer to students.

FOSTERING INNOVATION IN SCHOLARSHIP

This section includes developments related to research-enriched learning and teaching and interdisciplinary scholarship.

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Data dashboard transforms Co-op and Career's reporting process

C+C's Director of Operations Leo Spalteholz transformed the way that data is reported within the unit in 2025/26. A custom data pipeline generates automated reports and feeds a series of PowerBI dashboards that pull information from Co-op and Career's portal, with the goal that every role will have a custom dashboard with data that is relevant to their daily work. Results of this work was presented at the CEWIL 2026 conference and is continuing to be expanded to enhance efficiency and democratize data access.

Employer Symposium showcases UVic C+C expertise to our partners in education

In October 2025, Co-op and Career hosting a week-long virtual employer symposium that included sessions on: universal design principles to enhance hiring practices; best practices around hiring Indigenous, international students and neurodiverse students; and the impact of AI on hiring and retention. The symposium included a keynote conversation with Canada's Chief Accessibility Officer. All sessions were recorded and are available for viewing at uvic.ca/coop/hire-a-student/career-fairs-and-events/employer-symposium.

Partnerships with local Chambers of Commerce conclude after 20+ years

For more than two decades, UVic Co-op and Career partnered with Camosun College and local Chambers of Commerce to promote co-operative education to employers across the region. Through sponsorship agreements, we connected directly with members of the Victoria Chamber and Westshore Chamber of Commerce. In light of budget reductions, C+C concluded this formal partnerships in 2025 but continues to be active members of both Chambers.

Co-op and Career continues to identify initiatives and experiences that align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs)

In 2025/26, Co-op and Career staff continued to map ongoing initiatives, projects, partnerships and student experiences 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.

Awards Luncheon celebrates co-op students & employers

In April 2026, we celebrated our 2025 co-op award winners with a luncheon that showcased students' experiences and the impact of hands-on learning. More than 40 students, employer partners and staff came together to celebrate. Read stories about this year's recipients on pages 11 to 14.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Brainstorm survey provides Canadian data on students' career goals

UVic C+C continued to partner with the Brainstorm Student Interests Report in 2025/26 by inviting all UVic students to respond to a survey about their career motivations, experiences and future plans. The survey provides UVic with insights on enrolment choices, academic confidence, skills development, campus experiences, and the connections between education and career goals. More than 800 students responded to the survey last year, with results finding that 64% of students choose a post-secondary to prepare for a job or career and 49% to take part in work-integrated learning.

Partnership with Government of Canada leads to on-campus recruitment

UVic C+C staff worked closely with representatives from the Public Service Commission of Canada, the Canada Border Services Agency and the Canadian Coast Guard to facilitate several on-campus and virtual information sessions. This included presentations about working for the Government of Canada, co-op opportunities and more.

COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING (CEL)

Experiential Learning Fund (ELF) helps 81 faculty members connect their classes to community

The Experiential Learning Fund (ELF) is now in its 11th year of supporting UVic faculty and staff to redesign courses to be community-engaged or to design field-based learning courses. Over the last 11 years, the CEL office has administered a total of \$477K to 81 faculty and staff members. Successful ELF grant recipients receive up to \$7,500 to support CEL course development and field-based courses.

In March 2026, the CEL Office awarded \$57,300 in ELF grants to eight UVic faculty members developing courses and programs that strengthen community partnerships and expand CEL and field-based learning opportunities for UVic students.

New CEL Community of Practice

In September 2025, the CEL Office started a monthly Community of Practice for faculty and staff who are interested in engaging in discussions about teaching CEL courses, assessment, enhancing the visibility of CEL on and off campus, and sharing their knowledge and experience in building community partnerships. The first year of the Community of Practice has been a generative and uplifting experience, leading to the planning of a CEL Spring Forum in April 2027 that will bring together students, faculty and community partners.

ADVANCING SCHOLARLY CULTURE

This section includes developments related to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging; collegiality and mentorship; and reputation. It includes information from the co-op, career development and CEL teams.

IIA team continues partnership with CIFAL Victoria and UNITAR

Co-op and Career's Indigenous, International and Accessibility (IIA) team continued to partner with CIFAL Victoria, a training centre connected to the United Nations' Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), to give students who do co-op terms outside of Canada that advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals with the opportunity to receive UN accreditation. Students organize a community engagement activity where they use their cultural intelligence to advance UN SDGs.

CEWIL accreditation process and course audit underway in 2026

UVic's co-op programs are accredited through Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL Canada); every six years, co-op programs submit an application for ongoing accreditation. The Director's Office is currently leading the C+C accreditation project for this cycle. As part of this review, C+C is also performing an audit of all co-op preparation and career development courses to ensure consistency around curriculum delivery and assessment.

Andrea Giles receives Albert S. Barber Award from CEWIL

C+C Executive Director Andrea Giles was awarded the Albert S. Barber Award from Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning (CEWIL) Canada in 2025. With over 30 years of transformative leadership in work-integrated learning, Andrea has not only shaped WIL policy and practice but elevated the national and international profile of UVic's WIL ecosystem. This has included spearheading landmark initiatives such as the CanWork program to reduce barriers to co-op for students with disabilities, creating a province-wide WIL database in partnership with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, facilitating record growth in Indigenous co-op placements and aligning co-op programming with global priorities like the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

IIA team recognized with multiple awards

C+C staff continue to champion access to work-integrated learning and were recognized for their initiative with the following awards:

- **2025 Open Door Group:** *Untapped Workplace Inclusion Awards – Inclusion Champion:* Niels Melis-de Lamper (accessibility and inclusion co-op coordinator)
- **2025 Canadian Bureau of International Education (CBIE):**
 - *North Star Award:* Sarah McQuillan (international co-op and career coordinator)
 - *Sustainable Development Leadership Award:* IIA team
- **2025 PIEoneer Awards:**
 - *Sustainability International Impact Leadership Award:* IIA team
 - *International Impact Award:* Karima Ramji, in recognition of her contributions to the establishment of the Co-op Program at the University of Central Asia

EDI Committee supports staff engagement

UVic Co-op and Career's EDI committee continued to meet in 2025/26 to identify ways to enhance collaboration and learning opportunities. In 2025/26, this included:

- Increasing opportunities for staff input and decision making and connection with leadership
- Increasing support for staff with disabilities
- Holiday swapping to allow for equitable access to days off for religious reasons
- Improving our own equity surveying and connection to Better Data Project
- An ongoing series called **"Let's Talk About It"** where staff share their experiences and processes

Working group updating generative AI information in centralized curriculum

The Co-op and Career AI Working Group has been meeting monthly since March 2025. A sub-committee is creating an update to the GenAI information on the Career Services website.

FUNDING FOR STUDENTS & EMPLOYERS

Co-op and Career facilitates several funds that help students engage in unique work experiences.

Graham Branton Co-operative Education Endowment Fund: Established in memory of 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. **Four students** received this funding in 2025/26 for a total of **\$4,000**.

President's Asia Partners Fund: This funding supports students pursuing co-op work terms and internships in the Asia Pacific region. **Four students** received a total of **\$12,500** in 2025/26.

Thouvenelle scholarship: This scholarship is given to students who take part in co-ops related to community development or service learning. **30 students** received a total of **\$25,033** in 2025/26.

Strategic Framework Experiential Learning Fund (SF-ELF): UVic's SF-ELF funding supports a range of work-integrated learning opportunities for students. In 2025/26, UVic awarded **\$244,996** in funding to the following:

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

Community-engaged learning funding: See pages 18 and 20.

CO-OP PROGRAM UPDATES

Engineering and Computer Science (ECS)

Employer in Residence program continues: The Engineering and Computer Science Co-op Program continued its popular Employer in Residence program this year, where employers from five organizations spent an hour meeting one-on-one with students to discuss their industry and provide career advice and hiring tips. Fifty-one students participated in 2025/26.

Interview clinic provides practice opportunity for co-op students: ECS Co-op staff coordinated optional interview clinics to give co-op students the chance to practice their interview skills. Twenty-seven employers from 20 organizations interviewed 78 students this year.

Exercise Science, Physical and Health Education (EPHE)

Third highest number of co-ops registered in summer 2025: The summer of 2025 saw the third highest number of EPHE and Graduate Education co-ops registered at 65 placements. In 2016, there were 66 co-ops registered and in 2017 there were 68 co-ops registered.

UVic RHED student wins the Graduating Student of the Year award through BCRPA: Devin Stokes was selected by EPHE faculty for this award and received \$3,000, a free British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association Symposium registration and a 1-year BCRPA membership.

Territory Acknowledgements incorporated into co-op posters: EPHE students were asked to start including their own Territory Acknowledgement on their co-op posters for the land in which their co-op took place. Students commented that they appreciated having the opportunity to practice their own Territory Acknowledgements.

Employer development at BCRPA Symposium: EPHE co-op coordinator Natalie Haddow traveled to the BCRPA Symposium in Whistler in 2025. She developed a connection with Whistler Sport Legacies, whose team then posted a co-op position for fall 2025 and received the Non-Profit Employer Wage Subsidy.

Kinesiology co-op outreach leads to increased participation: In the spring of 2026, EPHE co-op coordinator Natalie Haddow spoke to students in EPHE 297 about the benefits of co-op, leading to ten more students joining co-op for summer 2026.

Health Information Science (HIS)

Health Tech Night connects students with co-op employers: On March 31, 2026, UVic's Health Information Science Co-op team partnered with the School of Health Information to host a Health Tech Night event. Eighty-five students, staff and faculty attended this event, which included a presentation by HIS co-op staff called Building the Next Generation of Digital Health Professionals.

Co-op and Career staff regularly contribute to academic papers and give presentations on the team's unique contributions to work-integrated learning. In 2025/26 this included:

Presentations and workshops

- Bond, J., & Farghali, A. (2026). Building the Next Generation of Digital Health Professionals. Panel discussion at Health Tech Night (University of Victoria, March 2026).
- Benner, A., and Ogrodnik, S. (2026). Adapting Career Education for the Graduate Context: A Campus Partnership Model. Presentation at the ACE-WIL & CACEE 2026 Joint Conference (May 25, 2026).
- Hilperts, R., and Benner, A. (2026). UVic's Option in Community Engagement: A case study in program design and collaboration supporting curricular work-integrated learning. Presented at the ACE-WIL & CACEE Joint Conference (May 26, 2026).
- Jamal, N. (2025). Using the Design Thinking Framework: Involving Students as Consultants and Researchers for WIL Program Improvement. Presentation at the CEWIL Conference (June 2025).
- Sachkowsky, T. (USask), Knockwood, S. (UBC), Livernoche, R. (UVic), Busch, D. (UVic) and Macaulay, S. (ULeth). (2025). Rooted in Relationships: Visiting with the Indigenous WIL Community of Practice. Presentation at the CEWIL Conference (June 2025).
- Thompson, M. and Benner, A. (2025). Beyond Linear: Collaborative and Iterative Approaches to Curriculum Design, Development and Evaluation. Presentation at the CEWIL Conference (June 2025).
- White, K. and Ogrodnik, S. (2026). Generative AI in Practice: Supporting Post-Secondary Career Development. Presentation at CACEE West PD Event (April 22, 2026).
- White, K. (2026). AI and The Future of Hiring: What Employers Need to Know. Presentation at the UVic Employer Symposium (Oct 16, 2025).
- White, K. (2026). Career Detectives: Recognizing Talent in Your Clients. Presentation at the Western Canada Career Development Association (April 8, 2026).

Publications

- Proctor, F., & Pringle, L. (2025). Experiential Learning: Law School Learning Beyond the Classroom and Why It Matters. National Association for Law Bulletin (June 2025).



uvic.ca/coop &
uvic.ca/career-services



[uviccoopandcareer](https://www.facebook.com/uviccoopandcareer)

UVIC