

WISEST Summer Research Program

Journal of Student Research 2025



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Introduction

Each summer, WISEST places 40 young women and gender diverse, grade 11 students in a six-week paid internship called the Summer Research Program (SRP). Students are paired with research laboratories and gain experience in fields where their genders are considered underrepresented such as Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM). This year, WISEST was able to place 36 students in various research placements.

Goals of the SRP for our students

- Broaden awareness about underrepresented fields of study and diverse career options.
- Engage with other participants who share similar interests.
- Learn about the techniques and types of research conducted in different STEM fields.
- Connect with and learn from successful professionals in the STEM fields.
- Develop key professional skills.
- Contribute to trailblazing research (in the lab or in the field).
- Become familiar with academic and university life at the University of Alberta.

Our Volunteers

Our program would not be possible without the Principal Investigators who invite these students into their research, the Supervisors and Research Team Members who provide mentorship and support for the students throughout the program, and the volunteers who support our Professional Development Sessions. In 2025, 240 different people gave 6,372 hours of their time to support this program.



Thank You to Our 2025 Funders:

We are a donor and volunteer-driven Community of Catalysts!

Although based on the U of A campus, WISEST relies almost completely on donations from corporations, foundations, individuals and the public sector to develop and deliver our innovative programs.

Thank you to



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WISEST Industry Alliance

A huge thanks is due to our current WIA members, including:

The Environmental Service Association of Alberta, DIALOG, the Edmonton Space and Science Foundation, Rotary Club of Edmonton Riverview, ARC Resources, Clark Builders, PCL Construction Management and PCL Industrial Management, ISL Engineering, Graham Construction, Inception, AECOM, Capital Engineering, Amrize, Osprey Scientific and Associated Engineering.



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GRAHAM



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Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Faculty of Engineering
Faculty of Science
Faculty of ALES
Faculty of Arts

The Spirit of Dr. Armour Award

WISEST created the “**Spirit of Dr. Armour Award**” in 2019, to honour individuals whose spirit and enthusiasm for diversity in STEM is genuine, infectious and intentional. Dr. Margaret-Ann Armour dedicated her life and career to diversity and the advancement of women in the sciences. But more fundamentally, she dedicated her spirit and her passion to people. She became a beloved member of numerous groups and networks through her genuine enthusiasm for individuals and sincere belief in the power of community. She loved people and people loved her back.

“I give you my greatest wish - to go meet your dreams”

The Advocate Award

This award is presented to a principal investigator or supervisor, who through their participation in the Summer Research Program has shown advocacy in creating a more diverse STEM community.

SRP Student Award

This award is presented to a grade 11 student, who, through their participation in the Summer Research Program has shown: a genuine interest and passion in pursuing a STEM education, leadership and engaged participation in all the SRP program offers, collaborative interactions with other SRP participants, PIs, graduate students, WISEST staff, and the lab staff, an innovative and creative problem-solving approach and demonstrated resilience in overcoming barriers and obstacles.



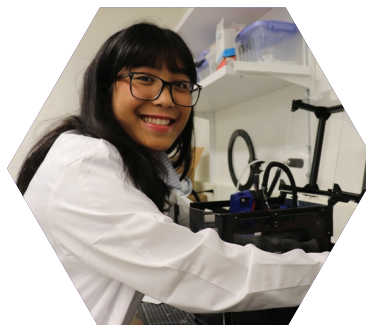
WISEST would like to recognize:
Dr. Carrie Demmans Epp (advocate),
Howard Gibbins (advocate)
and Felicia Simanjuntak
(student)
with the Dr. Armour
Spirit Awards.



**Dr. Carrie
Demmans Epp**



Howard Gibbins



Felicia Simanjuntak

We also recognize this lab group who created an amazing workplace environment for their students.

Dr. Ahmed Samir Ead & Dr. Jason Carey's Lab:
Avengers Research Team (ART)
Direct Supervisor: Cameron Scott and Ben Goodyear

Dr. Dennis Hall's Lab: Hall Research Team
Direct Supervisor: Ashley Ponich

The Summer Program

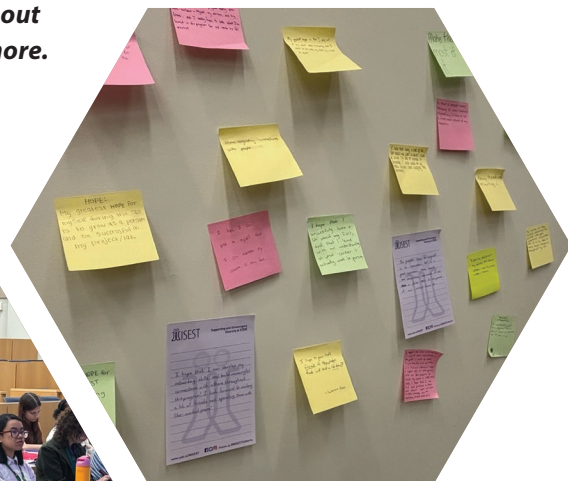
The WISEST Summer Research Program is more than just a summer job. The program calendar is full of events, sessions and opportunities that allow the students to grow professionally, meet incredible mentors and build a like-minded community of peers.

Orientation

The program began with a full day of orientation to the program and to campus. This day included introductions from staff, Campus Tours, a panel discussion with WISEST SRP Alums to receive advice and encouragement, and PI/Supervisor lab/research tours.

"I loved orientation! My favourite parts were learning all of the cool opportunities that the SRP prepares us for, but especially meeting the alumni and hearing their advice."

"I loved how the team reassured us over and over again about various things such as posters, meeting supervisors, and more. Also meeting the alumni and realizing that everyone has similar anxious and nervous feelings felt reassuring."



Professional Development

Each week, WISEST students meet to develop new skills and learn more about various science, engineering and technology career and/or education fields.

This year's professional development sessions included: Let's Talk EDI, Group Norms & Communication Styles, Dream Big, How to Make a Research Poster and Science Communication Tips and Strategies, Library 101, Practice Presenting and Feedback/Effective Presentations, The Art of Networking, Strength-Based Success, Setting Up for Success in University, Space Menstruation, ELKO Garage 3D Printing, and Career Workshop: Resume, Cover Letter, and Interviewing.

"They personally gave me a lot of reassurance and allowed me to put less pressure on myself. They also provided a lot of comfort in approaching grade 12 and beyond."

"They have benefited me a lot throughout the program, whether that was ensuring my poster and poster presentation was exceptional or just increasing my confidence! Especially with the networking session, it allowed me to understand how to do that and I gained insight for that."

"I feel like the PD sessions gave the most valuable information that I will be able to use for a long time, or info I have not heard of before. Also they were quite engaging and I found myself with motivation and inspiration afterwards."

Mentorship and Role Models

The Summer Research Program students have many opportunities to meet and network with a wide variety of STEM students and professionals at all stages of their academic and professional journeys. Students participated in one virtual role model panel session, a networking mixer, as well as role model sessions tailored to 2SLGBTQIA+ students in STEM. Additionally, each student was matched with an SRP alum from a previous program for additional mentorship and support.

"As an introvert, this event was very helpful to help me step outside my comfort zone, connect with others, and learn about fields in STEM that interest me."

"I had an amazing time during this event and it taught me that networking isn't nearly as intimidating as I originally thought."

"I loved getting to hear each mentor's different experiences and paths, and it was great that we got the opportunity to ask questions and find some clarity."



On Campus and Industry Tours

In addition to their own research labs, students were given opportunities to meet lab teams in other faculties and departments and tour these facilities. Additionally, students were taken to the Capital Engineering, Micralyne Inc., InnoTech Alberta, Gilead Sciences, and ATCO as a way of seeing how STEM can be done in Industry settings.

"The Industry Tours on August 12th were informative and inspiring, offering a valuable glimpse into real-world STEM workplaces. They helped me better understand potential career paths and the practical applications of research and technology."

"I really enjoyed the tour and found it very educational and engaging. I also found our guides to be very welcoming."

"This was the coolest lab that I have ever been to. The work they were doing has real world impacts and was just ridiculously cool and awesome."



Social Events

In an effort to build a cohesive and supportive cohort and community, WISEST hosted several social events over the course of the summer. The program first kicked off with a Scavenger Hunt designed to acquaint students with campus. These fun-filled events dedicate time for students to unwind after work and meet each other in a more informal and casual setting. Other social events included a SRP Heritage Day, Paint Night, Ice Cream, Board Games & Socializing, Karaoke, a Bubble Tea Night with WISEST's sister networks, WiSER and UA-WiSE, and cohort/building cohort lunches. The six-week program culminated in the See Ya Later banquet, with food, photos, shared memories, and student-led entertainment.

"I loved heritage night. It was a night where I got to see everyone within their own culture and it was a beautiful experience. It was also a night where I connected a lot with my peers in the cohort and genuinely enjoyed myself."

"Paint Night. It gave us a chance to get to know each other both as people and as artists in a low pressure scenario. It also gave us lots of laughs and smiles."

"My favorite social event was the WiSER Bubble Tea Night -- it was so nice to meet really accomplished individuals that were willing to share more about their experiences, I felt I learned a lot from them and got a better idea of my research, co-op, and pursuing higher education. I also really enjoyed my drink!"



Research and Celebration of Research

Each student was placed in a STEM research lab. The student's experiences, while unique to each project entailed things like working with lab members, learning specific skills such as coding, gel electrophoresis, data analysis, effective communication of results, among so many others. Each student created a final poster that encapsulated their project, and these were presented to friends, family, dignitaries, research teams, teachers and the general public on the final day of the program.

"My favourite memory from the program was the CoR, as it was the culmination of all my work and learning over the summer. I felt proud of what I had achieved, and it was incredibly rewarding to present my research and share my findings with mentors, peers, and other participants."

"... [My favourite memory from the program was at the] CoR because when I left, I felt a confidence that I've never felt before."



Residence

Students from outside the Edmonton region stayed on campus in the St. Joseph's College dormitory. Students living in residence create a close-knit community through their shared experiences, and together they explore all Edmonton has to offer while participating in numerous fun social activities.

"My favourite memory from the program was my time in residence when I was laughing with my roommates over funny stories and jokes. It was so simple, but building these relationships was really one of the best aspects of the program for me."

"I was certainly given the chance to form a community with like-minded peers. The cohort and building lunches, combined with all of the extra fun events we got to do in residence were very community-building."





Our SRP Students Researchers

Take a moment to meet our SRP Students and let their enthusiasm and reflections on their experience inspire you. These capable young people are building a strong foundation for their future success, contributing to a stronger STEM community, and preparing to change the world.

Salieem Abraham

High School Archbishop MacDonald High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title Interpretation of Relative Sea Level Fluctuations in the Devonian Through Geochemical Datasets

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82308>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Glenora Rotary Club



Talk about another part of the program that was meaningful to you.

One of the most significant things about the program was the people themselves. I was able to meet and network with mentors, peers, and professionals who had such a wonderful and inspirational learning environment. The encouragement, support, and guidance that I received not only made the internship worthwhile but also made me feel like I belonged in STEM. The friendships and networks that I built are just as valuable as the skills and experience that I gained, and I am grateful to have been with people who care to see each other succeed.

Describe a Professional Development session that you gained new insight or learned from. What will you take away from it into the future?

The Job Fair professional development sessions gave me crucial information that I didn't know before. I learned about how AI systems often screen resumes, which means tailoring applications is essential to even get noticed by employers. I also learned about the "hidden job market" and how networking and making personal connections can open opportunities that aren't publicly posted. Moving forward, I'll take away the importance of being intentional with how I present myself on paper and in person, and of building relationships that can lead to future opportunities.



Meg Adams

High School Bev Facey High School

Town Sherwood Park, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Renewable Resources, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science

Project Title Effects of Nitrogen and Sulfur Fertilizers on Soil Fertility and Crop Yield in Alberta

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82309>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & WISEST

Describe the impact finding a like-minded community had for you.

Like minded community showed me that my hobbies and interests were things to be proud of and share. It allowed me to open up and learn from those around me without the fear of being judged or saying too much. Having this community has supported me and helped me grow into a more confident and inquisitive person because it showed me I am not alone.

What was the Celebration of Research and/or the See Ya Later like for you?

The Celebration of Research was the day I had anticipated for the whole program. At the beginning of the day I stressed about needing to talk to people and worried that I would mess up. But by the end of the day I was proud, confident but also somewhat sad; I was proud because I had survived the day and felt the true joy of sharing my research with others but sad to see this amazing summer come to a close.

Anna Bacso

High School Glenmary High School

Town Peace River, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title Hesperornithiformes: Bones Betray Behaviour

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82310>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & International Paper

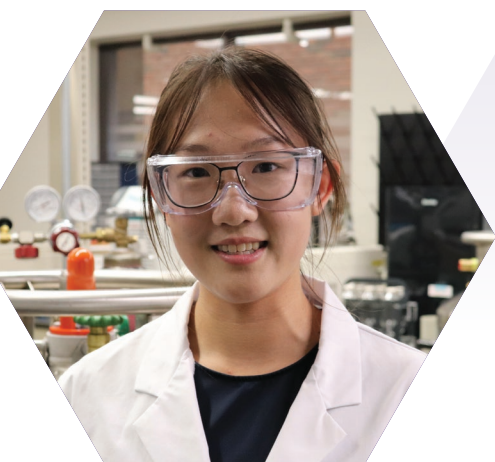


Describe the impact finding a like-minded community had for you.

One of the biggest goals I had in mind when applying for the WISEST SRP was to find other girls who were dreaming of STEM careers, just like me. My small rural community offers no STEM programs, in school or out, so finding that community at home was more than difficult. I'm happy to say I was very satisfied by the outcome, as everyone I met was a "nerd" in the best way, and I made friendships that are sure to last past my university years!

Say thank you to someone who had an impact on you this summer.

I'd like to offer a BIG thank you to my lab team; to my supervisor, Howard Gibbins, for making the lab a place of curiosity and calm. To my lab partner, Connor Matula, for being so helpful and encouraging in my project (and for all the fun side quests). And to my PIs, Corwin Sullivan and Philip J. Currie, for giving me what time they had in their busy schedules to offer insights and resources. I couldn't have done it without you all!



Jessica Bai

High School Old Scona Academic High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science

Project Title Evaluating Pre-Analytical Factors in Wood Metabolomics Through Untargeted Analysis Using GC×GC-TOFMS

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82311>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Harynuk Lab

Describe a Professional Development session that you gained new insight or learned from. What will you take away from it into the future?

The "Setting Up for Success in University" session gave me valuable insights into effective time management, helpful study techniques, and seeking support as a student. I'll take these strategies with me to my future studies, helping me stay organized, motivated, and confident as I navigate university and beyond.

Talk about another part of the program that was meaningful to you.

Another meaningful part of the program was the mentorship I received in the lab. Working closely with my supervisors not only helped me develop technical skills and gain confidence in my research, but also gave me insight into the daily life and career paths of STEM professionals. Their guidance, encouragement, and feedback made the lab a supportive environment where I felt comfortable asking questions, taking on challenges, and exploring my own interests in chemistry.

Rachel Bergman

High School Ross Sheppard High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering,
Faculty of Engineering

Project Title AI-Driven Construction Scheduling: Mitigating Weather Delays in Canadian Homebuilding

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82312>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Motorola



Describe your favourite social event. Why was this your favourite?

My favorite social event was karaoke night. It was super fun to hangout with people and it was run by an SRP alum who was super fun. I felt really connected with people after scream singing piano man by Billy Joel with them.

Tell us about your favourite tour (lab or industry) and why it stood out for you.

My favorite tour was the Rehab Robotics tour. This lab works to develop medical equipment to enhance accessibility. This lab stood out because it is exactly the type of work I want to pursue and they were making differences in peoples lives.



Keara Billing

High School J. Percy Page High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

Project Title 4D Printing of Smart Materials: An Investigation of Shape Memory

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82313>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Motorola

Describe how you felt during orientation vs. how you feel now.

Orientation was quite intimidating at first! 35 other high achieving students that you've never spoken to before can make you feel like one small fish in the vastest of oceans. Especially as you're about to enter a research project at the university level on a subject you know nothing about! But as the program continues, you begin to connect with these people, form lifelong friendships, complete university-level research as a high schooler, and accomplish things beyond what you initially believed you were capable of!

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

I would like to remind future students that you are not here by chance - you absolutely earned your spot in this program! And that it is perfectly okay and normal to initially feel like you don't belong. You have achieved excellent grades throughout your high school career, made it through an application process of 200+ students, and you stood out to your employers among over 200 other individuals. And not only this, but you've overcome countless obstacles throughout your life before coming to this point, and you still succeeded. You ARE capable, you ARE worthy, you ARE intelligent, talented, and greater than you know! Believe in yourself - you will go far!

Tsega Gebremedhin

High School Edmonton Christian High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title Characterization of YiaD proteins in Escherichia coli for the development of novel antibiotic targets

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82314>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Raivio Lab/WISEST



Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

When I got this email stating that I was accepted to this program I was in pure disbelief, I was genuinely speechless, and even doubted my abilities of taking on research. But as orientation day arrived and the program progressed, I quickly realized that I was more than able to take on the challenges with research. I was able to develop a newfound confidence in myself and my abilities, as my initial doubts and fears disappeared.

Describe your favourite social event. Why was this your favourite?

Each social night was incredibly fun and I enjoyed every single one. However, I think heritage night would have to be my favorite as we got to share a piece of who we are and celebrate each other's backgrounds. That night was enriched with so many diverse cultures and its warm and welcoming atmosphere allowed us to create deeper bonds with each other. I especially loved tasting the delicious foods from all over the world and seeing everyone wearing their unique and beautiful traditional clothing!



Gurleen Gill

High School Harry Ainlay High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Computing Science, Faculty of Science

Project Title What Google Tells Students: Analyzing Online Advice for Assessment and Wellbeing

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82315>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & ACME Lab/WISEST

Describe your favourite social event. Why was this your favourite?

The see you later was my favourite social event because it had little quirks that made it really special like the personal awards that were handed out, sharing thoughts about the SRP experience, and the food and drinks that were served. But most of all, coming early to play Blitz with the friends from my lab who I've gotten to know and connect with on a deeper level, then playing it after the PD, then again before the event for one last time was really memorable, and something that I miss already.

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

The SRP can get a bit intimidating and stressful at times, especially with the lab work and the poster making, but it is just such an amazing opportunity to grow and push yourself out of your comfort zone. The feeling you get when you've worked so hard and now you can see the outcome is so empowering and makes you feel proud of all that you've pushed through.

Cara Giroux-Living

High School Peace Wapiti Academy

Town Grande Prairie, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title What Machine Data Can Tell Us About Birds and Vegetation on Abandoned Wellsites

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82316>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & International Paper



Describe a panel or networking session that had a profound impact on you and your STEM trajectory.

At the very first panel there was someone who was in medical physics. I had no idea what that was, but after researching more into it I found out that it was something I'd love to do. That changed my plan for what I want to do after high school.

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

You deserve to be in this program, and you will have an amazing time in it. As the deadlines approach and you may feel anxious or even burnout, you can get through it and have a wonderful poster as a result. And go to those social events, they are so much fun and you will probably make some friends there.



Japji Gondara

High School Dr. Anne Anderson High School

Town Leduc County, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Renewable Resources, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science

Project Title Effects of Sulfur Fertilizers on Crop Yield, Microbial Populations, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82318>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Riverview Rotary Club

Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

Participating in the SRP had been a dream of mine for years, so I was over the moon when I received my acceptance. Yet going into the program, a part of me was still intimidated by the word "research" and everything that I thought it entailed. However, this experience has challenged so many of my preconceived notions about what STEM is like and taught me that scientists are regular people—just like you or me—who constantly challenge themselves because they have such a passion for what they do.

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

This program will be over before you know it, so explore as much as possible, build lasting connections within your cohort, and remember that it's okay to feel a bit lost sometimes. Know the WISEST selected you for this program because of your ambition, enthusiasm for STEM, and incredible potential. You are extraordinary and I have no doubt that you have a successful summer and bright future ahead!

Helen He

High School Dr. E.P. Scarlett High School

Town Calgary, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Renewable Resources, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science

Project Title Biochar Enhances Soil Health and Enzyme Activity to Reduce Methane Emissions

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82319>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Isomass Scientific Inc.

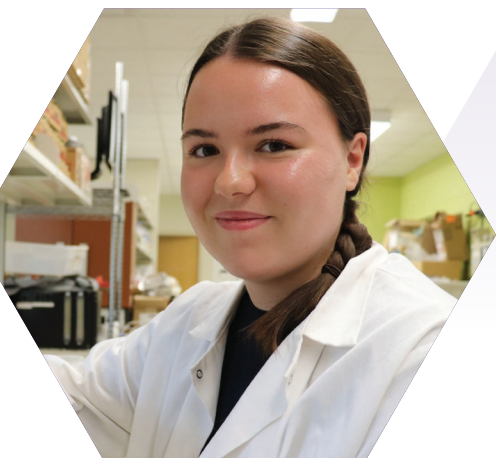


Describe a Professional Development session that you gained new insight or learned from. What will you take away from it into the future?

I really enjoyed the Space Menstruation Project PD Session -- it opened the possibilities of STEM to me. I had thought there was rigid categories on what STEM entailed, but this session showed me that the realms within STEM were endless and could be tailored to my own interests.

Talk about another part of the program that was meaningful to you.

I am grateful for the lessons I've learned through this program, as they have shaped my academic and personal growth. While navigating the research and living on my own was difficult at first, I believe overcoming these challenges will support my future success.



Abbie Healey

High School Centre scolaire Samuel-de-Champlain

Town Morrisdale, New Brunswick

Lab Placement Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title The Transition To Organic Agriculture: Soil Health and GHG Emissions

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82320>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & WISEST Industry Alliance

Describe how you felt during orientation vs. how you feel now.

At orientation, I barely knew anyone, and that made me nervous about fitting in. Walking around on the university campus tour, I remember thinking everything felt huge and unfamiliar, and then seeing the summer calendar packed with professional development sessions, industry tours, social activities, and more added to how overwhelming it all seemed. Over the weeks, I built friendships, learned to navigate the campus, and figured out how to balance my schedule so I could stay organized and present. Now I feel much more confident in my ability to adapt, connect with others, and succeed in environments that once seemed intimidating.

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

One thing I want future SRP students to know is not to be intimidated by titles or accomplishments. During the networking fair and even while working with my supervisor and PI, I realized that people who seem so far ahead are still just regular people who make mistakes, laugh, and enjoy sharing their stories. Once I started conversations, networking went from feeling intimidating to becoming one of the most valuable parts of the program. You might even come across a project someone is working on that you find really interesting and exciting, like I did, and that can spark new ideas for your own path. By the end, you will leave not only with new connections but also with the confidence to be ambitious about your future goals.

Mylie Holmes

High School Jasper Junior Senior High School

Town Jasper, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science

Project Title Love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life: Colour bias affects nest-building decisions

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82321>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & WISEST Industry Alliance

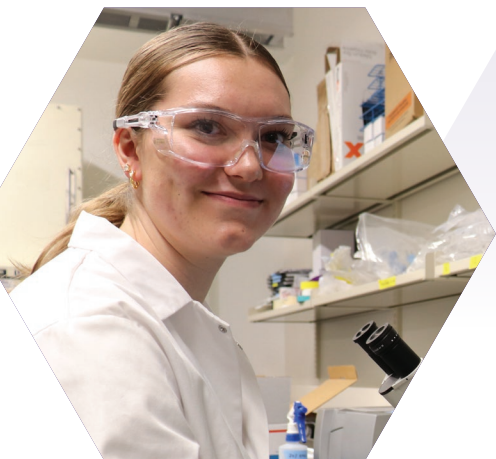


Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

When I was first accepted into the WISEST Summer Research Program, I assumed it was an accident and I waited patiently for a follow-up email explaining the mix-up. It didn't fully click to me that I deserved to be there until Fervone Goings' PD Session "Dream Big" where she explained imposter syndrome and assured us that we were all accepted for a reason. All I really needed was that confirmation and I very quickly felt ready to take on this program.

What was the best part about residence?

The best part about residence was being able to experience city life with people from small towns. Being in a rural area limits the activities you have access to and everyone in residence really took advantage of Edmonton while we stayed here. From escape rooms, to board game cafes, to festivals, to multiple mall trips, we really took everything the city had to offer.



Abby Holt

High School Jasper Place High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biomedical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

Project Title Mesenchymal Stem Cell-Conditioned Media Enhances Dermal Papilla Cell Proliferation: Implications For Hair Regeneration

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82322>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Glenora Rotary Club

Describe a Professional Development session that you gained new insight or learned from. What will you take away from it into the future?

My favourite PD session was probably the Setting Up for Success in University session and the panel that followed. Not only was I able to gain valuable insight into what the next step of my life might look like, I also got to see a glimpse of the laughter and love that many of the panellists shared through that experience. They made me feel comfortable, reassured and excited about the future.

Talk about another part of the program that was meaningful to you.

Some of my favourite moments of the SRP were the unscheduled moments with the other members of the cohort. Whether it be lunches, or the time before our social nights, or the transition periods between activities, they allowed us to get to know each other a little better and let loose.

Oludunni Idowu

High School Strathcona Christian Academy Secondary

Town Sherwood Park, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Computing Science, Faculty of Science

Project Title Words That Matter: Developing a Tier 3 List of Computer Science Vocabulary using Natural Language Processing

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82323>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & EdTeKLA Group /Motorola



What is something you want future SRP students to know?

Okay, what I'm about to say may be a bit cliché, but step out of your comfort zone! I'm an introverted person, but I made the effort to get to know the people of my cohort, and it definitely paid off! I've made friendships that I know are going to last beyond the summer.

Say thank you to someone who had an impact on you this summer.

I want to say a special thank you to my PI, Carrie Demmans Epp. She really mentored me this summer, also giving me a lot of advice as a woman that also wants to go into computer science. Because of her, I feel not only better equipped for the university applications process, but in general when it comes to my post-secondary pursuits.



Fiona Le

High School Colonel Gray Senior High School

Town Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Lab Placement School of Public Health

Project Title By Rural Youth, For Future Change: A Climate-Health Toolkit

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82324>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & WISEST

Describe a panel or networking session that had a profound impact on you and your STEM trajectory.

Networking, 10 letters that open endless opportunities, 10 letters that connect me with top individuals in their fields, and 10 letters that ignite something within me I never knew I had. The networking panel was spectacular, and it inspired me to chase my dreams no matter how ambitious they may seem. At the end of the day, whether your path is not straight or you have to change direction, what truly matters is the happiness you feel when doing something you are deeply passionate about :)

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

Trust the process! It doesn't matter if you got your first choice or your third choice lab placement because everything happens for a reason. At the end of the day you will be surprised by how much you learned, how much you grew, and how grateful you are for the placement you received, because it was never about the lab itself but rather what you took away from the experience :)

Yumin Lee

High School Edwin Parr Composite School

Town Athabasca, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

Project Title The Angle of Success: Testing Method of Braided Composite Wings

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82325>

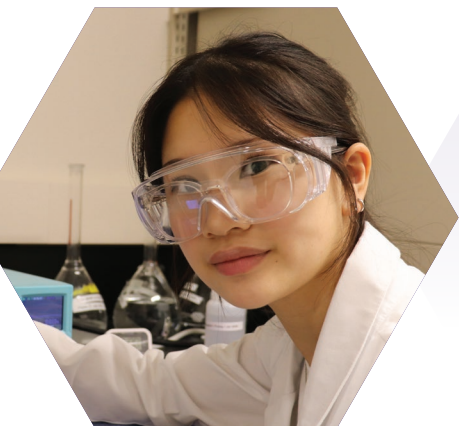
Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Motorola

What was the best part about residence?

I was very grateful for the opportunity to be a residence student, as it greatly enhanced my SRP experience. Living with roommates helped me establish meaningful connections even before meeting the full cohort, and having these close friends throughout the program was truly valuable. I also appreciated how the residence group developed especially strong bonds, often embarking on random side quests and enjoying each other's company in various settings.

Say thank you to someone who had an impact on you this summer.

It is difficult to select just one person to thank, as I had the pleasure of meeting many wonderful individuals over the course of six weeks. I would like to specifically thank my supervisors, Cameron Scott and Ben Goodyear, for their ongoing efforts to make my experience within the program meaningful. Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to my PI, "Captain" Ahmed Samir Ead, who taught me the valuable lesson that a community of dedicated, supportive individuals is one of the greatest assets in any environment. The entire ART Team also deserves recognition for creating a safe and stimulating environment that enabled me to continuously learn and grow.



Fiona Mack

High School Lillian Osborne High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Chemical and Materials Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

Project Title Electrolyte Engineering of Nickel-based Electrodes

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82326>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & NRGMATs Lab/Motorola

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

This experience is truly what you make of it. The more effort you put into connecting with other students, researchers, and professionals, the more you will gain from the program. Take every opportunity to ask questions, try new things, and step outside of your comfort zone, you'll be surprised by how much you can learn. As well, even if your project isn't in the exact field you thought you'd be interested in, the skills and lessons you take away will still be incredibly valuable and transferable to any path you choose inside and out the lab. One of the most important things I learned is that sometimes the experiences you least expect end up shaping you the most. I went in to the SRP thinking I would learn so many different techniques

and parts of research, but the thing that made the biggest impact on me was the skills that I had built and refined.

Say thank you to someone who had an impact on you this summer.

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to extend a huge thank you to my mentor, Ula Suliman. From the very first day, she provided me with reassurance, encouragement, and support in countless ways. She patiently guided me through new material, even when it meant answering endless questions, and always made me feel comfortable learning at my own pace. Beyond helping me with my research project, she also shared valuable insight about her own experiences in STEM, especially what it means to navigate the field as part of a minority group. Hearing her perspective helped me see STEM through a broader, more diverse lens, and I feel truly grateful to have had her as a mentor.

Catherine Mao

High School Old Scona Academic

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement College of Natural and Applied Sciences Chemistry, Faculty of Science

Project Title Investigating the Effects of Boronic Ester Electronics on [2+2] Photocycloaddition

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82327>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Hall Lab/WISEST



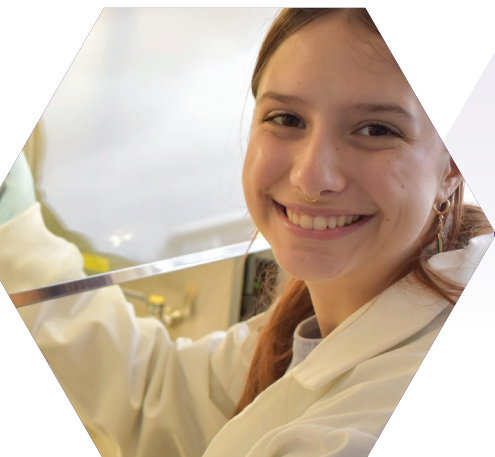
Describe your research and project in 5 sentences or less. Be sure to say why this research is important or impactful.

I worked in an organic chemistry lab this summer which specialized in boron containing organic compounds. Boron containing compounds are relatively new and important developments for medical drugs. My project included synthesizing boronic esters and investigating whether electron richness impacts their ability to react in [2+2] photocycloaddition, a reaction which can make large and complex drug molecules. Through this, we aimed to

predict which boronic esters could be helpful in making complex molecules and improve our current application of boron containing compounds in medicine.

What was the Celebration of Research and/or the See Ya Later like for you?

The Celebration of Research was a culmination of what we all achieved this summer. I felt pride in what I accomplished, and the Celebration of Research ran incredibly smoothly. Many people talked to me about my poster, and I am grateful I got the chance to teach others about my research.



Anushka Marvin

High School W.P. Wagner High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title Sugar Signaling Does PolySialic Acid Aid T-Cell Migration?

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82328>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Prakash Mullick

Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

I was so incredibly excited when I saw that I was accepted. It was something I had been working toward for so long, and now it had become a reality. As the first day approached I was incredibly nervous, but WISEST did everything to make me feel comfortable, along with all the wonderful people I met.

Talk about another part of the program that was meaningful to you.

The mentorship and support I received from my supervisor, PI, and all the WISEST staff was amazing. They were always there if I had questions or needed anything. Never at any point in the summer did I feel alone or like I had no supports.

Connor Matula

High School St. Andrew's School

Town High Prairie, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title Old Bones; New Life, A Faunal Analysis of Two points in Southern Alberta

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82329>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & International Paper



Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

When I was accepted into this program I felt like I had somehow swindled the markers, because how else would I be surrounded by so many amazing talented people, when I'm just me? As the program went on, my confidence in myself grew tremendously. By the end I learned to recognize the talent in myself, the skills I already possessed,

and the new traits that emerged as I flourished in the SRP.

What was the best part about residence?

The best part about residence was finding "my people". I met so many amazing minds with similar interests that I never thought I could in my small town. Staying in residence, gave me the space I needed to stretch my wings and fly. Through all of our social activities both official and unofficial, we forged deep social bonds with friends who began to feel more like a second family!



Hannah Nilsson

High School Grande Prairie Composite High School

Town Grande Prairie, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title Harmful Becomes Helpful: Using Genetic Engineering to Express *Enterococcus cecorum* Carbohydrates in *Escherichia coli*

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82330>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Szymanski-VaxAlta Lab/International Paper

Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

When I was first accepted to the program, I was shocked and I honestly thought that it must have been a mistake because I applied assuming I wouldn't be accepted. Even when I got to Edmonton, I still felt as though I didn't deserve this opportunity that I knew would be life changing. At the end of the program, with the knowledge that I was chosen for a reason and the experiences from the summer, I felt more confident in myself than I ever would have thought possible.

Describe the impact finding a like-minded community had for you.

It was a shock that when I showed people my socks covered in math problems or talked about books with others, no one was trying to escape the conversation or tease me like I was so used to them doing. As much as my community back home is amazing, it was completely different coming into a program where people are more than happy to listen to you talk about whatever new thing you learned. I felt as though I just clicked with almost everyone I met and felt so supported with anything I choose to do in the future.

Tammy Oyebanji

High School Kings Edgehill School

Town Halifax, Nova Scotia

Lab Placement Department of Computing Science, Faculty of Science

Project Title Decoding Student Distress: A PsychBERT-Seance Analysis of Mental Health and Assessment Stress on Reddit

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82332>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & ACME Lab/WISEST



What was the best part about residence?

The best part of residence was being in such close proximity to campus and part of my cohort. I loved how you could easily explore Edmonton with your friends. I have been able to make life lasting friendships from this and also the weekend events from residence.

Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

I felt extremely elated when I got accepted into the SRP, and I remember running straight to my parents to tell them I got in. This feeling has not changed throughout the program. I have been so happy and grateful for this opportunity.



Kavya Patel

High School Westwood Community High School

Town Fort McMurray, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Computing Science, Faculty of Science

Project Title Developing an Evaluation Protocol for a Tier 3 Computer Science Vocabulary List

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82333>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & EdTeKLA Group/Motorola

What was the best part about residence?

The best part about residence was always being surrounded by people and having the chance to build friendships so quickly. It made it easy to connect, hang out, and support each other. Living in that community made the whole experience feel more fun and welcoming.

Describe a Professional Development session that you gained new insight or learned from. What will you take away from it into the future?

One professional development session that stood out to me was about effective communication and active listening. I learned how much of an impact it makes to really focus on understanding others before responding. Going forward, I'll carry that with me by being more intentional in how I listen and communicate, especially when working in teams.

Alma Radah

High School Archbishop MacDonald High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Renewable Resources, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science

Project Title The Effect of Adding Biochar to the Urban Forest on CO2 Emissions and Tree Growth

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82334>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Prakash Mullick

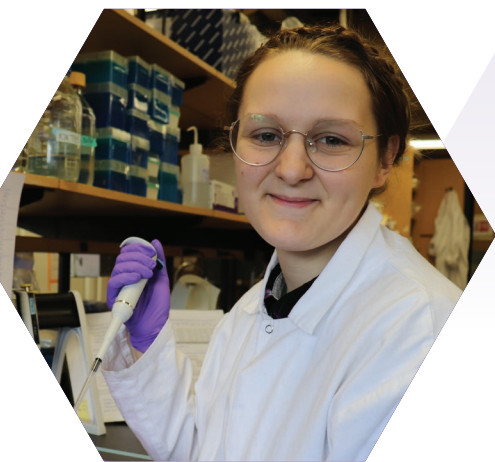


Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

When I first got the email from WISEST, I was bracing myself for the rejection opener because there was “no way they would choose me”. That feeling continued with the first few days of the program, but not long after starting the program, I realized that everyone, including my Principal Investigator and Supervisor, were all just as human as I am and that I was just as deserving of my spot in the SRP as the rest of my cohort. I quickly caught on to the notion shared in the program that perfection is not the goal, as I had convinced myself when submitting my application, but rather perseverance, eagerness, and openness to be uncomfortable and try new and unfamiliar experiences.

Say thank you to someone who had an impact on you this summer.

I would like to thank the WISEST team and my entire cohort for being there for me when I might not have been there for myself. You showed me what support, encouragement, professionalism, eloquence, fun, and fulfillment in STEM look like. You gave me people that I can always talk to and be honest with no matter what, because we’re all on this journey together. I would like to extend my thanks to my teacher (Mrs. Grijo), who wrote my reference immediately after getting back from a trip, and my church pastoral assistant (Shelly Barabash), who agreed to be my reference in a very busy time, for their continuous and unwavering support that directly contributed to one of the most unforgettable summers of my life. Thank you also to my parents whose support and love made my final decisions leading up to my acceptance so easy and much more confident.



Wendy Ritz

High School Saint Michael's Catholic School

Town Pincher Creek, Alberta

Lab Placement Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science (AFNS), Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science

Project Title No Galls Allowed: Salicylic Acid as a Clubroot Disease Management Strategy

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82335>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & WISEST Industry Alliance

Describe the impact finding a like-minded community had for you.

Everyone at SRP was so easy to talk to. I knew that whoever I went up to, we’d share at the very least a love for STEM and an ambition to succeed. I got to nerd out about Star Wars, Mycology, The Hunger Games, historical fashion, dog breeds, microscopy, chemistry, and so much more with the people I talked to every day. I found myself initiating conversations when before I’d rarely had the courage to approach anyone.

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

The intention you put behind your words and actions isn’t always evident to those around you. Be mindful of how the diverse group of people around you at work, in residence, and at social events might interpret the things you say and do. If you misstep, use it as an opportunity. Be willing to learn. Be courageous enough to apologize and make amends.

Susanna Rose

High School École Secondaire St. Albert Catholic High School

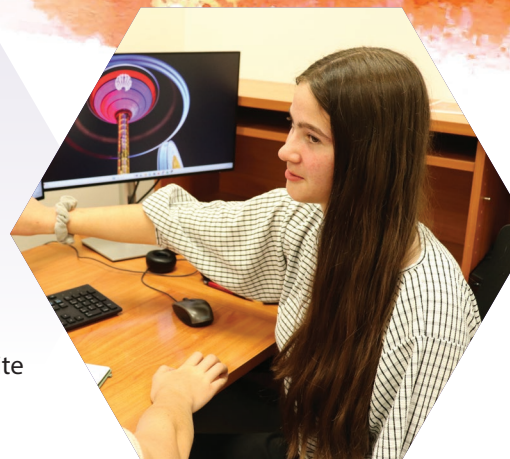
Town St. Albert, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

Project Title Breaking the Bottleneck: Using Machine Learning to Predict Construction Site

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82336>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Simulation Lab



Describe your research and project in 5 sentences or less. Be sure to say why this research is important or impactful.

I worked to create machine learning models that can predict the rate of productivity on a construction site. This work is crucial as a basic understanding for how factors such as weather, congestion, and safety impact each other, and productivity as a whole. Through this research three models were created, predicting the impact of factors that

have previously been missed in other factor predicting models' in the construction industry.

Describe a panel or networking session that had a profound impact on you and your STEM trajectory.

The first panel of wisest alumni who discussed what helped them and what to expect from both wisest and the university life is what first made me truly realize I belong here simply for showing up to the challenge and putting in all the work.



Felicia Simanjuntak

High School Millwoods Christian School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

Project Title Smart Materials: 4D Printing and Characterization

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82337>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Motorola

Describe how you felt when you were accepted into the program. How has that changed throughout the program?

I was ecstatic. I screamed of joy realizing that I had been accepted and chosen to participate in such a prestigious and immersive program. I understood that this was my opportunity to bloom in STEM, and throughout the program, the joy I felt transitioned more into a passion and a purpose—it was a place for me to belong.

Describe a Professional Development session that you gained new insight or learned from. What will you take away from it into the future?

The networking session had given me new insight into what research looked like for undergraduate and graduate students, and what STEM fields look like. I learned a lot about the discipline required for such paths, but also the importance of learning throughout. Being able to talk to those who are experiencing such STEM fields gave me a sense of what I want to do, and most importantly, the confidence to do it.

Kaitlynn Sisson-Pau

High School Wainwright High School

Town Wainwright, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Computing Science, Faculty of Science

Project Title Adapting Visuals to Better Understand Untrustworthy Analytics

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82338>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & EdTeKLA Group/Motorola



Describe how you felt during orientation vs. how you feel now.

I was glad that I already had the chance to get to know my fellow rural researchers, as seeing some familiar faces at orientation helped to ease my nerves. Now I'm beyond grateful that I got to experience such a transformative program with the greatest cohort I could ever ask for.

What was the Celebration of Research and/or the See Ya Later like for you?

I already knew the program was coming to an end, but SYL really put it in to perspective that I was about to leave the students and the coordinators that had come to be a second family to me. I remember thinking I was going to hold it together until I got home that night, but at one point Dunni told me "I'm really gonna miss this" and there was no coming back after that.



Katelynn Standell

High School Crescent Heights High School

Town Medicine Hat, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Agricultural, Food and Nutritional Science (AFNS), Faculty of Agriculture, Life & Environmental Sciences (ALES)

Project Title Food Insecurity in Canadian Households with Children Who Have Undergone Liver, Kidney or Multi-visceral Transplantation

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82339>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs and WISEST

Describe your research and project in 5 sentences or less. Be sure to say why this research is important or impactful.

Over 10 million households in Canada face food insecurity with 1 million children being adversely impacted. Food insecurity can impact diet quality and lead to many adverse health effects which can impact the graft survival of individuals who have had organ transplants. However, currently there is little known about the relationship and prevalence of food insecurity in households with children who have had liver, kidney, or multi-visceral organ transplants. A 30 question survey was distributed to parents and caregivers of children who had received a liver, kidney, or multi-visceral organ transplant, this survey had questions about general transplant information,

sociodemographic characteristics, food insecurity, diet quality, mental health, etc. This survey contributes to a major gap in knowledge and help us better understand the relationship and prevalence of food insecurity in households with children who have had liver, kidney, or multi-visceral organ transplants.

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

Don't forget to breathe, take time for yourself, and reach out if you need anything (literally anything), the WISEST team is here for you and everyone wants you to succeed! While it can be tempting to throw yourself into all of these new experiences and push yourself outside of your comfort zone, don't forget to prioritise yourself!

Leah Terry

High School Holy Trinity Academy

Town Drayton Valley, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry

Project Title Comparing Transformation Efficiency between *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and its Probiotic Variant, *Saccharomyces boulardii*

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82340>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Prakash Mullick

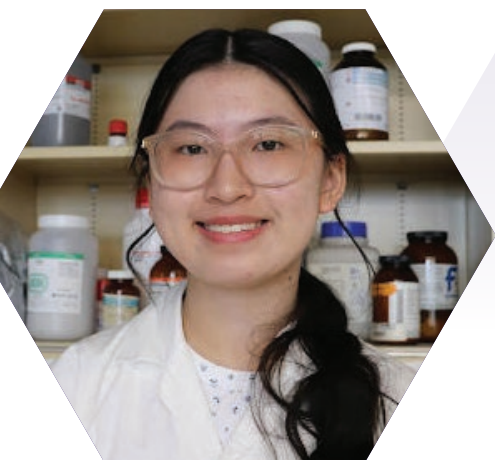


Tell us about your favourite tour (lab or industry) and why it stood out for you.

My favourite tour was of the Rehab Robotics Lab. Previously, I always steered away from the technology part of STEM, but being shown how it could be used to help people and improve accessibility to healthcare made me see it in a new light. That lab had a lot of great ideas coming together, and I think the projects being worked on have a lot of potential that I'm excited to see come to life.

What was the Celebration of Research and/or the See Ya Later like for you?

The COR and See Ya Later were both very bittersweet events. Throughout the summer, we all worked incredibly hard on our projects and made so many great connections that knowing it was all over soon was sad, but it was also a time to be proud of our growth and achievements. I was heartbroken to leave my lab and residence behind, but at the same time, this program filled me with so much hope for the future that I know it's not truly the end.



Cindy Tong

High School Hunting Hills High School

Town Red Deer, Alberta

Lab Placement College of Natural and Applied Sciences Chemistry, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Science

Project Title Feathers for Function: Modifying Keratin for Tailings Treatment

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82341>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & WISEST

Describe your favourite social event. Why was this your favourite?

The Bubble Tea Night networking session had a profound impact on me! After talking and learning about the experiences of many members of UA-WISE and WISER, I realized it is okay to not have my entire future mapped out and gained the confidence to take risks.

What was the best part about residence?

Living at Saint Joseph's College this summer was one of my favourite parts of the program! The weekend social events, group dinners, and, of course, living together made it incredibly easy for the residence kids to connect. I made so many lifelong friendships and will forever cherish my residence experience.

Tanishka Vadia

High School Lloydminster Comprehensive High School

Town Lloydminster, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science

Project Title Bird Architects: Does Preference Impact the Urge to Continue Building?

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82342>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs and WISEST Industry Alliance



Describe a panel or networking session that had a profound impact on you and your STEM trajectory.

One panel that had a profound impact on me was the networking session with women in STEM who shared their career journeys. Hearing their challenges and successes made me realize that there are many different pathways to success and that persistence matters as much as talent. It inspired me to envision myself in a STEM career with more confidence and determination.

Describe your research and project in 5 sentences or less. Be sure to say why this research is important or impactful.

My project was related to Zebra Finches and their behavioral changes through bias. We had 2 different colours of string, and they were tested according to their biases in multiple ways. This research in reality concluded that birds do have biases, which means that they are capable of far more things than we expect them to do. Keeping this in mind this research is important since it shows that birds possess complex cognitive abilities, challenging assumptions about animal behavior and expanding our understanding of their intelligence.



Abeera Wasif

High School Bassano School

Town Bassano, Alberta

Lab Placement The Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical sciences

Project Title PROTACs vs. Inhibitors: Hijacking lung cancer cells' protein degradation machinery

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82343>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Dr. Andrea Macyk-Davey

Describe your research and project in 5 sentences or less. Be sure to say why this research is important or impactful.

This summer, I had the privilege of working in the Velazquez Lab with lung cancer cells. I tested two treatments, inhibitors and PROTACs, that specifically target a protein called Forkhead Box M1 (FOXO1). This research is impactful because lung cancer is the most common cancer in Canada and the leading cause of cancer-related deaths. FOXO1 is highly overexpressed in lung cancer and acts as a transcription factor that drives tumor growth, cancer

spread, and chemotherapy resistance. By targeting FOXO1, we aim to develop more effective therapies and treatments for lung cancer patients.

What is something you want future SRP students to know?

I want future SRP students to know that you absolutely belong here—your curiosity and ideas matter. This program will challenge you in ways you didn't expect, but it's also a place where you'll grow and discover what you're capable of. Most importantly, you'll form connections with mentors and peers who will support, inspire, and motivate you throughout the entire experience.

Kaitlin Wilson

High School St. Peter the Apostle

Town Spruce Grove, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

Project Title Exploring Mechanical Properties Testing Tensile Strength of Tubular Braided Composites

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82344>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & Motorola

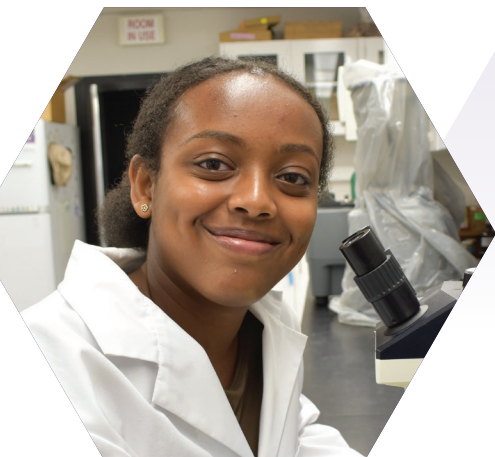


Describe a Professional Development session that you gained new insight or learned from. What will you take away from it into the future?

The Setting Up for Success in University and Student Panel afterwards gave me a surge of motivation for grade 12. I remember leaving that day excited for school to start instead of dreading it. I can't wait to try out each study method we were taught in grade 12.

What was the Celebration of Research and/or the See Ya Later like for you?

See Ya Later and Celebration of Research were exciting, but also had me tearing up half the time. I knew that after the program ended, I would feel empty, as if a piece of me was just gone. But I felt so much joy seeing how everyone grew, I was more excited for the future than sad about the program being over.



Elizabeth Wolde

High School Eastglen High School

Town Edmonton, Alberta

Lab Placement Department of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science

Project Title Biting Into the Problem: Predicting Flea Beetle Damage in Canola

Final Project <https://doi.org/10.7939/82345>

Supporter Canada Summer Jobs & WISEST Industry Alliance

Describe the impact finding a like-minded community had for you.

Initially joining this program in search of role-models and a STEM community that I could turn to for support and guidance, I found that this program surpassed my expectations. Through countless thoughtful conversations and shared experiences, my doubts about whether I could thrive in a male-dominated STEM space began to fade. The confidence and passion of those around me were contagious, making me more confident and inspired to pursue STEM. Being surrounded by people who shared a genuine curiosity for science and a drive to learn made me feel more empowered and understood. It was encouraging to know that others were just as passionate and eager to grow. This supportive environment not only made the

experience so much more meaningful but also pushed me to challenge myself and embrace new opportunities.

Say thank you to someone who had an impact on you this summer.

I'd like to thank the Evenden lab for welcoming me this summer and always being so enthusiastic about answering my questions and sharing their projects and passion for STEM. I'd also like to thank my PI and supervisor, Dr. Maya Evenden and Alexandra Liber, for their invaluable mentorship and support throughout the summer, allowing me to learn from their experiences and mentoring me throughout. I'd like to extend my thanks to Nebiyu Wolde and my family for their constant encouragement, support, and enthusiasm throughout this journey. I'd also like to thank Precious Ajilore, and the entire WISEST Team for adding so much more to this truly transformative experience in this program.