

Co-operative and
Experiential Education

ANNUAL REPORT

2023



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

Co-operative and
Experiential Education

OUR VISION

Connecting imagination with impact for a better world through global leadership in co-operative and career education, experiential and work-integrated learning (WIL).

OUR MISSION

By developing talent for a complex future, advancing research and strengthening Waterloo's sustainable and diverse communities, we will equip and empower learners for the future of work and lifelong learning.

We will do so through the work of our multiple units, including:

- › Advancement
- › Brand, Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives
- › Centre for Career Development
- › Centre for Work-Integrated Learning
- › Co-operative Education
- › Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
- › Indigenous Relations
- › International Strategic Initiatives
- › Office of the Associate Provost
- › Strategic Enablement Team
- › Work-Learn Institute

FROM THE ASSOCIATE PROVOST

uwaterloo.ca/associate-provost-co-operative-and-experiential-education

In 2023, we celebrated the 65th year of co-operative education at the University of Waterloo! As global leaders in co-operative education and WIL, CEE is a cornerstone of the University. The University and CEE have a shared vision to provide co-op and WIL at scale and with impact for the global future.

In a year when the employment landscape faced new challenges including the mass adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) into the workplace, our CEE team has demonstrated adaptability and flexibility. We hosted our inaugural Employer Impact Conference where our staff, students and industry partners offered sessions focused on the emerging talent in the workplace.

We continue to take an innovative approach to our work while remaining focused on our commitment to empowering students and helping them explore their purpose through meaningful work experiences. The power of our portfolio was recognized with gold in the QS Reimagination Education awards, a testament to our leadership in this space.

I was especially proud to host the 2023 WACE World Conference here in Waterloo. WACE is the premier international organization to support co-operative education and WIL programs.



It was an honour to host more than 250 attendees and presenters, including global leaders in industry, government and academia to discuss the conference theme, The future of work: engaging work-integrated learning to achieve innovation, entrepreneurship and economic recovery in an uncertain world. The conference was a unique opportunity to showcase our expertise and reinforce our dedication to advancing WIL on a global scale.

In CEE, we continue to evolve and innovate in the programs we provide for students. Our programs help students to build their capacity and skillsets for the future of work. I look forward to our continued innovation, partnerships and research in exploring the social impact of intergenerational changemakers in the workplace.

As we reflect on the accomplishments of 2023 and look forward to the future, I invite you to join me in celebrating our resilience, innovation and unwavering dedication to excellence. Together, we continue to shape the future of education and employment at the University of Waterloo and beyond.

DR. NORAH MCRAE
ASSOCIATE PROVOST
CO-OPERATIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

In Co-operative and Experiential Education, our work is guided by five strategic priorities:



Demonstrate global leadership

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Advance research for global impact

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Future proof students

PAGE 6



Future proof employers

PAGE 10



Future proof ourselves

PAGE 12



DEMONSTRATE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

At CEE, we leverage our resources, expertise and leadership to foster the growth and enhancement of the global experiential learning landscape. Through active participation in associations and strategic collaborations with industry partners, we persist in our mission to lead on a global scale.

Highlights from 2023 include:

- › The Routledge International Handbook for WIL included CEE staff as co-editor, authors and reviewers.
- › First bilateral WIL agreement of its kind with Suranaree University of Technology in Thailand.
- › New Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism (EDI-R) Community of Practice for WIL professionals from post-secondary institutions.



250+ DELEGATES
from 24 countries attended the 2023 global WACE conference in Waterloo



Waterloo hosts global WACE conference to advance work-integrated learning

In June 2023, CEE hosted the global WACE conference on Waterloo's main campus. The conference encompassed 100+ sessions and a keynote talk from The Right Honourable David Johnston, Canada's 28th Governor General.

Award-winning leadership:

- › Gold – QS Reimagine Education Award for the Power of Partnerships
- › WACE Outstanding Professional Contribution Award: Dr. Judene Pretti, Director, Strategic Enablement Team
- › United Way Spirit of Community Award for Co-op for Community
- › 2023 Universum Student Experience Certificate of Recognition for Reputation
- › 2023 Universum Student Experience Certificate of Recognition for Employability

“We are incredibly proud that CEE has been recognized among our peers on a global stage with this gold award. The important work we do would not be possible without our outstanding industry partners.”

**DR. NORAH MCRAE,
ASSOCIATE PROVOST, CEE**



Waterloo receives recognition with QS Reimagine Education Awards

CEE received international recognition when awarded gold in The Power of Partnerships award category from Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Reimagine Education. The award recognizes the power of the CEE portfolio as one that ensures academic integration between student work experience and classroom learning as well as meaningful collaboration with industry partners.

Creating two-way learning opportunities for students and employers

Workplaces now include employees who span across four generations, from baby boomers to Generation Z. Students and employers need to learn from each other about many things, including how to effectively work together. CEE is working on several initiatives to build bi-directional learning in WIL.

36 MEDIA STORIES FEATURING CEE RESEARCH AND EXPERTISE

84 GLOBAL SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

#1 FOR HANDS-ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
(Maclean's Student Voices Survey 2022)

5 EPISODES OF THE WORK.LEARN.REPEAT PODCAST SHARING THOUGHT LEADERSHIP IN WIL



ADVANCE RESEARCH FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

CEE is committed to advancing research and is home to the Work-Learn Institute (WxL), the only research of its kind focused on researching the development of talent through quality WIL programs. WxL offers research-backed training, webinars, reports and consulting services, as well as thought leadership initiatives aimed at elevating the quality and effectiveness of WIL programs on a global scale. In 2023, WxL began a multi-year project with Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation (AGF) to support the enhancement of WIL at institutions in the United Arab Emirates.



The impact of remote work on workplace friendship development for co-op students

Our WxL study explored the kinds of friendships co-op students make during work terms and how they are impacted by remote work. Findings showed that working in-person or hybrid is linked to greater friendship development for co-op students. Students who developed friendships at work reported higher levels of job satisfaction and career development. This is important for employers as students who made friends at work reported feeling more committed to their organizations and more likely to return in the future.

“WxL research shows the significance of fostering informal social opportunities for co-op students at work. Students reported feeling more committed and happier at work. This sense of belonging can lead to potentially fostering creativity and increasing engagement. It’s a win-win for students and their employers.”

ANNE FANNON
DIRECTOR, WxL

Measuring the impact of WE Accelerate

With funding from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, WxL studied the impact of the Waterloo Experience (WE) Accelerate program on student skill development and employment in co-op. WE Accelerate aims to help vulnerable first-work term co-op students build skills to enhance employment in the future. The study found that WE Accelerate achieved that goal: students who participated in the program reported increased teamwork and critical thinking skills. It also helped students find jobs in their next co-op work terms.

“Researchers sometimes refer to unemployment as a scar because it leaves a lasting imprint on people as they move through the labour market. Our study showed that the WE Accelerate program is taking that unemployment scar and reducing it in half. It helped students get jobs earlier than expected, and it helped them get jobs that pay above what you would expect for their level of experience.”

DR. DAVID DREWERY
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, WXL



Co-operative Education and Internship Association (CEIA) Ralph W. Tyler Award for distinguished research.

\$10,000
IN IHUB FUNDING

for research to address barriers and enhance access to WIL opportunities for Indigenous students

Two Future-Ready Workforce Series events to share research insights with

450+
ATTENDEES

10 RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR INSIGHTS FOR IMPACT NEWSLETTER TO LEARN ABOUT WIL RESEARCH AND EVENTS.



11 ACTIVE STUDIES INCLUDING:

- › utilizing work-integrated learning experiences to understand Gen Z work values
- › the impact of remote work on professional skill development
- › WIL experiences of equity deserving groups

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at Work

CEE offers a voluntary SDGs at Work activity to students and their co-op employers. The activity supports learning more about the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how organizations and student can work towards advancing them. As part of the activity, students and employers self-report the impact of the work done during their work terms on advancing the SDGs.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

58% OF STUDENTS INDICATE THEIR WORK TERMS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON AT LEAST ONE SDG

66% OF EMPLOYERS INDICATE STUDENTS HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON AT LEAST ONE SDG DURING THEIR WORK TERM

“This kind of a program goes beyond employability and employer gains, which are the traditional measures of the success of co-op / WIL programs.”

SHABNAM IVKOVIC
DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES



FUTURE PROOF OUR STUDENTS

Through strategic initiatives, industry collaborations and the ongoing evolution of our programs, we provide students with the tools, skills and opportunities they need to navigate the complexities of the modern workforce.

Highlights in 2023 include:

- › Launching a new brand and website for [Centre for Career Development \(CCD\)](#), formerly the Centre for Career Action, based on student input.
- › Offering [new work-integrated learning \(WIL\) opportunities](#) for graduate students, in collaboration with Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (GSPA), including an enhanced co-op model and WIL pilot course. The [Grad WIL pilot project](#) supported more than 300 students through co-op, internships, research and courses. The [reimagined graduate preparedness course](#) included insights from industry partners, an important collaboration to benefit students and employers.
- › Piloting a new student-support mode in the Faculty of Health that improved the employment rate by three percentage points. The pilot included a continuous support model and helped shorten the time to employment for first-work-term students.
- › Continuing improvements to our programming and processes to enhance the experience of our students included adding requirements for job location and salary in job postings and increasing options for 12-16 month co-op work terms.

653
STUDENTS COMPLETED WE ACCELERATE

1,200+
EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR TALENT HIRING IN 2023

8.4/10 CO-OP STUDENT RATING OF THEIR OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH WORK EXPERIENCE

92% OF STUDENTS FEEL PREPARED to use their skills in the workplace after completing PD course

LAUNCHED NEW CCD BRAND AND WEBSITE

25,201 ENGAGEMENTS WITH CCD (appointments, workshops and events)

99%
EMPLOYMENT RATE IN GRAD WIL CO-OP ENHANCEMENT PILOT

413
EDGE MILESTONES ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

1,682+ CO-OP WORK TERMS FUNDED through Student Work Placement Program (SWPP)

International

By developing deeper global citizenship characteristics in our students we are working to enhance their experiences and impact on a global scale. In 2023, this included refreshed co-op readiness training for students working abroad and piloting a job search club for international students (through the Centre for Career Development). CEE acquired over \$600,000 in funding for students to participate in innovative international co-op/WIL opportunities.

Research from CEWIL Canada demonstrates Waterloo's leadership in facilitating international experiences for students:

- › Waterloo facilitates 44% of all reported international co-op work terms (not including the United States).
- › 86% of all reported co-op work terms in the United States are from the University of Waterloo.
- › 66% of all reported non-Canadian co-op work terms are through the University of Waterloo.

(source: CEWIL Canada reporting, 2016-2022)

24,800
CO-OP WORK TERMS (employed students)

#2 IN CANADA FOR GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT RATE (QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2022)

“The work at my co-op job really excited me and I was quite proud of what I accomplished there. I’m a huge advocate for the University of Waterloo’s co-op program. So, I really appreciate them reassuring me that I was doing this co-op program right, since I have felt it has had a huge impact on me.”

JESSICA BOHM,
CO-OP STUDENT OF THE YEAR,
FACULTY OF MATHEMATICS



Celebrating the 2023 Co-op Students of the Year

In 2023, the University of Waterloo Co-op Students of the Year made significant impacts including designing a new food security program, conducting groundbreaking research on particle acceleration and creating a quality-of-life tool for at-risk patients.





FUTURE PROOF OUR STUDENTS

Keeping it in the UWaterloo family – giving back to help others

Both Ruhuni de Alwis (BMath '89) and Barry Matsui (BMath '89) are Waterloo alumni, co-op employers and valued donors. Ruhuni and her family support Waterloo students by engaging in career workshops and participating as Challenge Champions in CEE's Giving Tuesday campaign.



"We both just felt that we would like to give back to something so foundational to us and that has given us our family. Many students, like our sons, start university on third base. In life, giving back is a way to support students who aren't on third base, yet."

RUHUNI DE ALWIS

"Co-op for Community is such a great idea. It's an investment in the education of students where we all benefit. It's not just an investment in the student, it's an investment in the community."

MARY-ELLEN CULLEN (BA '78)



Mary-Ellen Cullen and Steve Menich help fund the Co-op for Community program to fund student work terms at local non-profit organizations. As challenge champions, they helped support our Giving Tuesday campaign.

Supporting our students

Many of our employers are inspired to become University of Waterloo donors, demonstrating their commitment to supporting Waterloo talent. All CEE donations directly support students at various points in their co-op and work-integrated learning journey. Here are some examples of the impact donors are making:

STUDENT WELLNESS:

181

CLIENTS MET WITH EMBEDDED CO-OP COUNSELLORS IN 2023



CHANGEMAKERS IN CO-OP:

THE STEELE FAMILY FOUNDATION FUNDS IN-PERSON CO-OP WORK EXPERIENCES FOR STUDENTS TO WORK AT NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ABROAD



CORPORATE SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS:

CO-OP EMPLOYER BOMBARDIER RECREATIONAL PRODUCTS (BRP)

DONATED \$20,000

to establish engineering capstone awards



\$25,000 FROM CO-OP EMPLOYER BALYASNY ASSET MANAGEMENT (BAM)

to support women in computer science

WE ACCELERATE:

\$12,000

ANNUAL DONATION FROM THE DIXON FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT STUDENTS IN WE ACCELERATE PROGRAM



CO-OP FOR COMMUNITY:

\$62,000

RAISED FROM 208 DONORS IN CEE'S MOST SUCCESSFUL GIVING TUESDAY CAMPAIGN



230 FULLY-FUNDED WORK TERMS

thanks to Co-op for Community and Giving Tuesday funds

RECIPIENT OF

THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARD FROM UNITED WAY WATERLOO REGION





FUTURE PROOF OUR EMPLOYERS

Through a range of tailored consultations, personalized insights, research collaborations and informative webinars, CEE empowers employers to optimize their workforce.

In 2023, we brought back options for employers to conduct in-person interviews and information sessions to help build their brand on campus and connect with students. Based on feedback from employers, we provided new flexible options for employers to hire students for 12-16 month co-op work terms. We also helped our co-op employers to access funding initiatives, like the Student Work Placement Program (SWPP), to fund co-op student hires.

We value partnerships with our employers and industry partners. We continue to bring industry partners into our course development process to ensure students are developing the skills they need. We also hosted our inaugural Employer Impact Conference to share insights about emerging talent.



#2 IN CANADA
for employer-student connections
(QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2022)

ENGAGED WITH **34** PROJECT PARTNERS THROUGH WE ACCELERATE providing opportunities to work with students beyond the traditional co-op model

459
ATTENDEES
AT FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE SERIES WEBINARS

LEVERAGED MORE THAN **\$25M** IN FUNDING through the Student Work Placement Program (SWPP) since 2018

1,133
NEW SUBSCRIBERS to the Insights for Impact newsletters

450+ REGISTRATIONS for sessions on co-op fundamentals

COLLABORATED MOST FREQUENTLY WITH 12 OF 17 SWPP DELIVERY PARTNERS (we work with all)

EMPLOYER IMPACT CONFERENCE

"I know the quality of the talent and the program. Waterloo co-ops are our main source of hiring here. We come back every single term and we're always impressed by the ideas and talent they bring."

EMPLOYER IMPACT CONFERENCE ATTENDEE

Staying ahead of evolving talent - CEE hosts inaugural Employer Impact Conference


The half-day online conference was focused on The Talent Evolution and attracted hundreds of employer attendees. Industry experts, CEE staff and students presented in sessions to share their insights on engaging with emerging talent.

"Sixty-five years ago, Waterloo began its journey to establish ourselves as leaders in co-operative education and work-integrated learning. Today, we continue to provide our employers and partners with thought leadership and the inspiration they need to build a sustainable talent strategy."

DR. NORAH MCRAE
ASSOCIATE PROVOST, CEE

564
ATTENDEES
at inaugural Employer Impact Conference

93%
OF EMPLOYERS RATE WATERLOO STUDENTS FROM VERY GOOD TO OUTSTANDING

95%
OVERALL EMPLOYER SATISFACTION with CEE service and support 

8,000+
ACTIVE EMPLOYERS

Employer Impact Awards recognize top employers utilizing Waterloo co-op students to drive digital transformation, sustainability and inclusivity

CEE celebrates the 2022 Employer Impact Award recipients:

- > Impact in Innovation - Dundas Life
- > Impact in Sustainability - Liberty
- > Impact in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion - Loopio
- > Impact in International Experience - Bosch
- > Impact on Student Experience - Geotab
- > Impact in Research - Ceragen



University of Waterloo co-op students working at Ceragen lab



FUTURE PROOF OURSELVES

In CEE, we aim to cultivate a culture of engagement, transparency and excellence. This commitment extends to workforce planning and the implementation of best practices that prioritize equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism in all aspects of our operations.

By fostering an environment that values diverse perspectives, we empower our team members to contribute their unique talents and insights towards our shared mission of supporting students and shaping the future of work. In 2023, we published our commitment to service on the Associate Provost website and surveyed staff to focus on continuous improvements.

Indigenous Relations

CEE has made a commitment to Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation. We have fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indigenous perspectives within CEE through a series of impactful initiatives and engagements including:

- › Launched CEE Indigenization committee with 15 staff members.
- › Hosted sweetgrass braiding sessions at WACE and other events.
- › Welcomed Elders to share their wisdom.
- › Facilitated important discussions on reconciliation, Indigenous inclusion and the importance of connecting with Indigenous WIL practitioners nationally.
- › Secured \$10,000 in iHub funding for research.

36 INFOSHARE SESSIONS supporting interdepartmental communication and professional development

100s OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES for staff across CEE

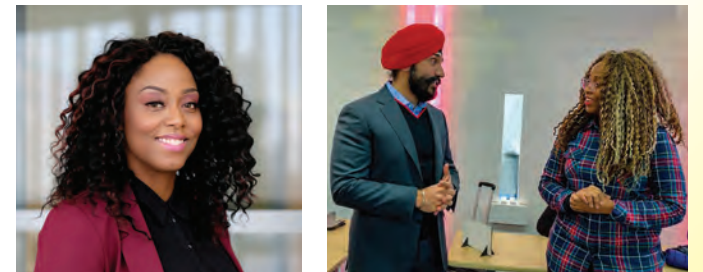
NEW LIBRARY SPACE in the Tatham Centre about the history of co-op and WIL



Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-racism

We have partnered with the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism (EDI-R) to implement initiatives across CEE. Although there is more work to do, accomplishments in 2023 include:

- › Hosted CEE's first Black History Month panel event with 300+ attendees.
- › Created an Employer Toolkit to increase industry partner knowledge of EDI-R in the workplace.
- › Launched Inclusion Champions with 14 active staff members.
- › Offered training opportunities in partnership with EDI-R office.
- › Increased knowledge and capacity building with teams to have conversations with employers around inclusive recruitment and work environments.



"We still have a long way to go to truly reach equitable diversity. I think the more we can offer networking opportunities to Black students, provide more mentorship within the Black community, and really pool together to support Black-owned businesses, the closer we can get."

SHAUNA-KAY JONES, MOTIFY

In conversation with Shauna-Kay Jones: Black entrepreneur finding solutions for education

Shauna-Kay Jones (BA '12) is the founder of the technology company Motify, which provides tools for students on the autism spectrum. She was one of the panelists on CEE's inaugural Black History Month panel discussion: Elevating Black excellence in the Workplace.



24 WELLNESS EVENTS FOR STAFF

3 GREEN TEAMS across CEE units to promote sustainability

1,532 average monthly views of weekly internal email newsletter to CEE staff

STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS AND FUTURE MILESTONES



2023 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- › Continued to embed the Future-Ready Talent Framework (FRTF) and SDGs into student programming to increase student and employer awareness and measure, monitor and report impact.
- › Launched Graduate WIL pilots including the WIL 601 pre-experience course co-created with CCD and industry.
- › Offered flexible options for 12-16 month co-op work terms.
- › Published HEQCO-funded WE Accelerate outcomes report on the positive impact of the program.
- › Launched CEE staff Inclusion Champions and Indigenization committees and increased participation in actions supporting the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism and the Office of Indigenous Relations.
- › Expanded understanding of and support for equity deserving students including named awards for underrepresented students from employers and alumni.
- › Hosted WACE world conference in Waterloo.
- › Hosted inaugural online Employer Impact Conference.
- › Launched new Centre for WIL website.
- › Launched new Centre for Career Development brand and website (formerly Centre for Career Action).
- › Pilot with GreenHouse Changemakers Labs to engage midlife evolver audience in WIL.

2024 AND BEYOND

- › Expanding our project-based WIL experiences pilot with first year, graduate, adult, and intergenerational learners.
- › Operationalizing Graduate WIL from pilot programs to ongoing offerings.
- › Developing innovative programming for students including new student support model.
- › Launching additional skills areas as part of WE Accelerate including a new core stream on creating online accessible environments.
- › Developing software solutions to provide a more personalized and customized experience for students and to identify more job opportunities including an AI project with Microsoft.
- › Partnering with Norway AI.
- › Sharing research results with employers.
- › Beginning second phase of WxL study on Equity Deserving Groups (EDGs) with students as researchers.
- › Continuing pilot of programming for early career learners in partnership with WATSPEED.
- › Increasing the number of donor-funded co-op positions in the charitable sector.
- › Establishing a “Friends of Co-op” giving circle for employers who donate 1% of co-op salaries back to the University in support of students.
- › Integrating education modules and activities about the ethical use of AI into PD courses.
- › Strengthening alignment with faculty partners to help students connect academic learning with the world of work.

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