

Columbia College

Student Success through Community Connections

Since 1936, Columbia College has helped students find their voice and confidence by supporting them as they explore the ideas and tools that will help shape their future. As a not-for-profit registered charity, all revenues and resources are invested back into student programs. That means programming decisions are made by educators: the members of the College community. This unique structure enabled the College to pilot and launch a completely new approach to student employment: the Community Connections Program.

“I’m pleased to say we’ve now placed over 50 students into successful paid employment opportunities with local non-profit organizations.” shares Mark Friesen, Executive Director of the Institute for Equity and Advancement at the College. “Students benefit from paid work experience with our local non-profit partners on a part time basis while they study.”

Thanks to landmark funding of \$330,000 through the TD Ready Commitment Program received earlier this year, the Institute at the College can expand and enhance this program as well as the Co-LAB. Through targeted programming specifically to youth with refugee backgrounds, the College and TD Bank Group will enable meaningful relationships between participants and community members in the Metro Vancouver Region. In addition, local non-profits and community partners will benefit from additional support implementing community impact projects.

The unique program was launched in 2021 in the midst of the COVID crisis. Local non-profit organizations were struggling, and many students were losing their jobs or were challenged to find engaging and supportive employment. Through the community connections program, Columbia College covers the employment costs for part-time work placements in the local community. Students benefit from employability skills, new relationships, and career advancement, while community organizations benefit from additional staff members to support their mission at no additional cost.

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TD TD READY COMMITMENT

FIND YOUR VOICE

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