

## COMMUNITY & WORKPLACE PARTNERSHIPS

# YEAR IN REVIEW 2021-22

Working together with faculty, we build experiences with community and industry partners to provide students with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of course concepts, develop personal insights and gain new professional skills.



# INTRODUCTION

Over this past year, our staff team returned to the office for in-person operations at 12 Lodge St.; we rolled out institution-wide health, safety and risk management forms and processes; we were able to offer many more in-person opportunities; and we continued to be creative and flexible as hybrid and remote work and learning continued during the year. Our support to more than 2,900 students in the midst of continued challenges demonstrates the commitment of our partners and how our team has nurtured our stakeholder relationships to bring meaningful experiences to students that also benefit the community.



## STATS AT A GLANCE

2968 CWP Experiences across 63 courses:

60 Internships

1261 Community Service-Learning Experiences

1051 In-course/Program Workplace Projects and Experiences

595 Professional Inquiry Experiences

### Student Highlights

96% had a positive overall experience

94% would recommend CWP to a future student

# CWP IN THE NEWS

Check out this [article showcasing some of our successes](#) from fall term 2021.

Read about how [MBA students developed marketing strategies](#) for the co-founder of Squad Box, Laurier graduate Craig Voakes.

We are excited to share this article about a [new partnership with Empowerment Squared](#), offering virtual community-service learning placements to students in a range of disciplines.

TD Lab is a valued partner across Co-operative Education & Workplace Partnerships. Read about the [different ways TD Lab is engaging with students](#).



Meaning, Mattering and Music Making: Read here about our [Virtual Village project in partnership with Fairview Parkwood Communities](#).

Watch this [video created in partnership with our funder](#) and hear from staff, students, faculty, and residents.

# WHAT CAN A CWP COURSE LOOK LIKE?

BU459 Social Marketing & Networks - This course is a popular one with employer partners and students alike and the model was easy to transition to an adapted format when we were faced with ongoing challenges and continued remote work and learning. Students work with a local company to develop a social media marketing plan based on their needs and challenges. Students work in groups to come up with innovative solutions for their partner and present them in a formal setting. The final products are provided to the partner for their use. Partners include small- and medium-sized businesses in a range of sectors.

BU479 Hi-Tech Marketing - Partnering with Shopify, this course was offered with an industry-engaged project for the first time in Winter 2022. Students heard from a number of tech leads at the company about various sector topics and conducted a live case study in groups with



recommendations being presented to the partner at the end of the course.

FR370 Graphic Novels & Animation - Offering a community-service learning project for the first time in Fall 2021, students worked in groups to produce French Bande Desinees and accompanying activities for the partner to use. Partners included schools, Laurier Students for Literacy, and Epelle Moi.

HI323 Memories, Monuments & Museums - Students completed a weekly workplace experience with partners such as the Brant Historical Society and the Canadian Industrial Historical Centre to gain discipline-specific skills and experience such as display creation and artifact inventory, digital documentation, editing and transcribing.

HS2o8 Autism: Individual & Social Issues- Since 2019, students have completed a weekly community service-learning placement as part of this course. In the past year partnering with schools, community-based organizations (e.g. Jason's Wheelhouse), and research and advocacy groups (e.g. Autism Alliance of Canada and the Laurier Autism Research Consortium), students were able to choose from in-person, remote, virtual and hybrid opportunities.

HS4o2 Health Studies Practicum - This course offers a 70-80 hour placement where students work with professionals in the field of health care to assist with research, planning, service provision and program development. These senior students draw on and apply the skills gained through completing their degree while gaining professional experience in the workplace before graduating. We were excited to see students return to in-person placements in this course for 2021-22 but did continue to have partners offering remote options as well.

PO1o2 Politics Beyond Borders - this large (400+ students) first-year class piloted a professional inquiry model that incorporated visits with two community partners (a former MP and current professor of political science and a local community advocate working with refugee claimants) and a letter writing exercise. Students brought together the theory from the course, the information gleaned from the partners, and their passion for an issue related to international politics and drafted a letter to their local MP. A written reflective paper and tutorial discussion then helped students reflect on their learning and determine what some next steps might be for them if they wanted to continue to pursue advocacy around their issue.

PO61o Social Advocacy - students carry out an advocacy project, strategy or campaign developed in collaboration with the community partner and provide an agreed-upon deliverable and presentation to the partner at the end of course. In 2021-22, partnering with Reception House Waterloo Region, students conducted research with newcomers, landlords, Reception House staff and subject matter experts in the region related to affordable housing challenges and opportunities. Their efforts culminated in resources for landlords highlighting the opportunities for and benefits of renting to refugees and information for newcomers about accessing housing.

YC3oo - Students participate in a weekly placement, volunteering 3-4 hours/week for 10 weeks, assisting in programs with children and youth from birth to 25 years old. For 2021-22, we offered all students a remote/virtual placement opportunity to ensure a continuity of the experience when there was continued uncertainty. The opportunities included both direct contact with children and youth or indirect tasks to support programs (e.g. virtual tutoring, reading with children, conversations with newcomers, and partnering with other departments on-campus).



# WHAT FACULTY ARE SAYING

With continued challenges and uncertainty throughout 2021-22 related to the timing of our return to in-person learning, we appreciate our faculty partners worked hard to design experiences that were flexible but that also offered meaningful learning to students. We supported seven new courses in Business, French, Global Citizenship, and Political Science.

- Faculty noted that the experiences coordinated by CWP gave students new perspectives, something to bring to class discussions, and contributed to their professional skill development.
- The ongoing pandemic did pose challenges related to offering the same experience to all students, recruiting employer and community partners, and technical difficulties had to be navigated for virtual and remote engagements.
- In the midst of the pandemic, students found purpose and the CWP opportunities helped them make connections with others at a time when they were more isolated.

## Survey Highlights

16 responses (31% new | 69% returning)

100% felt EL component enhanced student learning

94% felt EL experiences aligned with course goals

94% felt EL component helped them better engage students

100% reported having a positive experience overall

100% would recommend working with CWP to colleagues

*"I believe (the EL component) brought some much needed energy, especially during the pandemic. It somehow helped ground the students and give them a sense of connection and also of being helpful for the community..."*

*"Experiential learning is such a valuable part of coursework. It allows for real world application and integration of course concepts. Thanks for all your support!"*

# WHAT PARTNERS ARE SAYING

Partner organizations have been adapting their services, programming and structures to respond to the current context. Engaging with students for many remained a key priority. We are so grateful for the way they welcome, support, engage, teach, and build the future-readiness of our Laurier students. Guest-speaking engagements, job shadows, live cases, volunteer roles, practicum placements and applied research projects are offered by more than 450 partners across our campuses.

- Partners report being able to complete projects and/or offer services they would not otherwise be able to through engaging Laurier students.
- Our students are described as professional, inquisitive, hardworking, pleasant, and responsible.
- Partners recognize that the engagement is a learning opportunity for all involved.
- Students bring energy and a fresh perspective and gain new professional contacts and marketable skills.

## Survey Highlights

100 responses (41% new/59% returning)

450+ Partner Organizations

94% had a positive overall experience with CWP

97% would offer EL opportunities in the future

95% felt partnership helped organization meet some of its needs

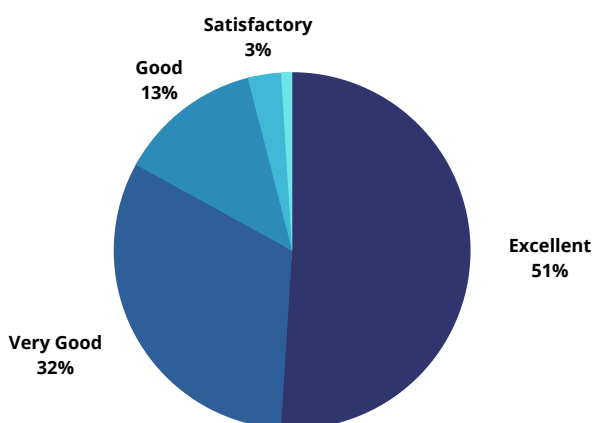
95% would recommend working with CWP at Laurier to colleagues

*"This really helped us take our public profile to a higher level. As a non-profit with only one part-time staff, this helped us accomplish things we have wanted to do for year. The student is now working with us on contract on a couple of projects."*

*"It was a pleasure to be part of the marketing class and I hope we are able to assist the students and WLU as much as the assistance we were provided with regards to our marketing etc. We would not hesitate to partner once again in the future."*

# WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING

- Respondents once again overwhelmingly noted that their real-world experiences allowed them to apply course concepts and theory to solve problems and/or contribute in a meaningful way to a partner organization.
- Research, professional writing, communication, and problem-solving were commonly reported skills that students felt they strengthened, along with collaboration and teamwork, as many worked in groups with peers or on teams in workplace and community settings.
- Students had fun, gained new perspectives, built confidence and had the opportunity to explore and prepare for careers.
- CSL students commented on how the experience increased their awareness of community or social issues, challenged their views or assumptions, and motivated them to continue volunteering.
- Placement students reported feeling well supported and welcomed by their host organizations and communities and that their experiences were rewarding.
- Students participating in a professional inquiry opportunity felt that the experiential component helped them better understand course concepts.
- Providing clear instructions and expectations will enhance the experience for students in any type of opportunity and some students in courses with an project component reported that scheduled check-in meetings with partners and/or professors throughout the course were beneficial.



## Evaluation Highlights

- 2,279 student responses
- 96% had a positive overall experience
- 92% would recommend our EL offerings to a future student
- 94% felt the experience meaningfully contributed to their learning/growth



## MORE FROM STUDENTS

*"I think this experience was a great footstep into getting involved with the community. Plus, I really enjoyed it. I was about to let fear and anxiety talk me out of this experience because I had not done such a thing before, but I am so glad I did not. It really helped enhance my first-year education experience, it was very unique."*

*"This was a fun, creative assignment that allowed me to apply my knowledge and skills that were taught in class into a real project. Having a real-world project, rather than something fictional creates more incentive and drive to complete this project and do a good job with it."*

*"Overall, I found my [placement] to be rewarding, energizing and interesting. I enjoyed the research I was able to conduct, the final product I was able to put together, and the connections I made along the way. This experience helps to set me up for success in the future and helped clarify my career goals."*



*"We do not learn from experience.  
We learn from reflecting on experience"  
- John Dewey*

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