

# LearningCITY 2019

*Confronting Calgary's High-Impact Talent Challenge*

**August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Mount Royal University

**Final Report Prepared by:**

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Institute for Innovation  
and Entrepreneurship



**Thank you to the 110 attendees from over 80 organizations who attended the LearningCITY 2019.**

Alberta Health Services	Chartered Professionals in	PCL Construction Management
Alberta Utilities Commission	Human Resources of Alberta	Pepsico Beverages Canada
ATB Financial	City of Calgary	Pinebrook Golf and Country
ATCO Gas	CN Rail	Club
BDO	Coca-Cola	Plains Midstream Canada
BeatRoute Magazine / The	Critical Mass Inc.	Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP
Calgary Journal	David Aplin Recruiting	Prospect Human Services
Benevity	Deloitte	RBC
Bison Transport Inc.	Easter Seals Alberta	RSM Canada
Bow Valley College	EatNorth	SAIT
Brookfield Residential	Enterprise Holdings	Schlumberger Canada Limited
Properties Inc.	EY	SMART Technologies
Brookline Public Relations	Fluor Canada Ltd.	Solv3D
C.H. Robinson Worldwide Inc.	FMi Logistics Inc	STARS
Calgary Airport Authority	Garmin (Dynastream	STRIDE Management
Calgary Chamber	Innovations Inc.)	Swoop Airlines
Calgary Chamber of Voluntary	Global News Calgary	The City of Calgary
Organizations/ REACH HIRE	Grant Thornton LLP	The Sedge Changemakers
Calgary Drop-in Centre	H&R Block Canada Inc.	Tourism Calgary
Calgary Herald and Calgary Sun	Harmony Logistics Inc	Trigger Marketing Agency
Calgary Parking Authority	Husky	U.S Consulate
Calgary Public Library	Ice Edge Business Solutions (by	UFA
Calgary West Central Primary	DIRTT)	United Way
Care Network	Intact Insurance	University of Calgary
Canada West Foundation	KPMG	URICA Energy Management
CCI Wireless	Landmark Cinemas Canada LP	Vecova Centre for Disability
Centre for Suicide Prevention	Linear Logistics	Services and Research
Cert Logistics	LiveWire Calgary	ViTreo Group Inc
Cervus Equipment	Matrix	Western Hockey League
CFIB - Canadian Federation of	MNP	WestJet Airlines Ltd.
Independent Business	Mount Royal University	Worthington PR & Story
	Nutrien	YMCA Calgary

September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

## **RE: LearningCITY 2019 Participants**

Thank you for participating in the LearningCITY 2019 hosted by Mount Royal University's Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Career Services and Calgary Economic Development. The fact that over 110 people attended from 88 different organizations across the high-impact talent ecosystem, reflects the shared challenge we face, whether as educators or employers, in developing high-impact talent.

The goal of LearningCITY 2019 was to capture the expertise of the high-impact talent ecosystem and explore areas where increased collaboration could accelerate the development of high-impact talent. Based on the informed conversations in the room, the innovative ideas of the panelists, and the hundreds of post-it notes recommendations from participants — three overarching areas of potential collaboration are identified in the “path forward” section of this report.

We would like to thank the working group and facilitators who contributed to the event. We'd also like to thank the speakers and panelists who contributed their expertise to this important discussion. Finally, we'd like to thank our amazing MRU student team for their support in organizing and ensuring a smooth-running event.

This attached draft report is structured as follows:

### **Executive Summary**

### **Part 1: LearningCITY 2019 Program Overview**

### **Part 2: High-Impact Talent Consolidated Themes**

### **Part 3: A Proposed Collaborative Path Forward**

### **Appendix (Additional Readings, Agenda, Raw Notes)**

Thank you again for your ongoing support and commitment to our community.



### **David J. Finch, PhD**

Program Chair

Associate Professor & Associate Director

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Mount Royal University

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

Mount Royal University (MRU), in partnership with Calgary Economic Development (CED) hosted the LearningCITY 2019, with 110 attendees from 88 different organizations participating. To provoke active discussion and constructive debate, we asked all participants to consider the following pre-reads<sup>1</sup>:

- Stanford 2025 - An exploration of undergraduate experiences in the future for consideration.
- A Dynamic Capabilities View of High-Impact Talent
- Exploring the Potential of Universal Work-Integrated Learning

The event featured panels and interactive facilitated activities that were curated around a series of themes identified by major factors, implications and strategies associated with high-impact talent.

### Situational Analysis: Factors Driving Development of High-Impact Talent in Calgary

1. **Future is Ambiguous:** Driven by technology and social changes, the future of priority knowledge and skills is ambiguous, and the learning system must be embedded with the capacity to adapt.
2. **Leverage Competitive Advantage:** Canada possess the highest level of post-secondary education (PSE) participation in the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development (OECD), offering us a structural advantage to lead change. It is essential that we build on this success and develop an integrated high-impact talent learning system that is designed to thrive amid ambiguity.
3. **Increasing Diversity:** Increasing diversity of learners' profiles, including age, does not support a one-size-fits-all education system.
4. **Institutional Barriers:** There are significant institutional barriers in higher education, government, and corporations affecting both the capacity and pace of change.
5. **Talent Development an Expense:** Employee education and training continues to be viewed as an expense, not an investment. This exposes funding for education and professional development to budgetary cycles. Partners in the high-impact talent ecosystems will need to demonstrate measurable value and pursue collaborative third-party funding.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to additional reading list for the full reference.

### Implications: Impacts on the Development of High-Impact Talent in Calgary

1. **The Nature of “Skills” is Transforming:** The shelf-life of task-specific skills is shortening and the foundational skills that enable an individual to adapt are increasing in value.
2. **High-Impact Talent Climbing Wall:** Academic credentials are no longer perceived as sufficient in isolation. The talent development model is transforming from a “ladder” to a “climbing wall” that encourages and supports continual exploration, experimentation and refinement. Therefore, the high-impact talent ecosystem must be designed to integrate diverse talent development pathways, including all forms of education (formal and informal) and experiences (professional, volunteer, contextual).
3. **Ecosystem Accountability:** The structural, social and economic changes in our community are not only an educational challenge, they are a community challenge. We need to collaborate as a system if we are to succeed. Thus, learning must focus on co-creation across the ecosystem including employers, professional associations, education (Kindergarten to Post-secondary), funders and accreditation. In this model, the individual learner sits at the centre of the ecosystem and is supported by a co-creation development process.
4. **Value Translation:** Individuals must be able to translate their experiences into skills and value. This includes accepting responsibility to manage the translation of their skills and knowledge to provide evidence that is relevant for their audience.
5. **Educational Transformation:** This model will have a transformative impact on education. Structural changes will include: (1) transitioning from a linear to a looped model of education; (2) transitioning from a disciplinary “major” path to a dynamic mission model; and (3) integration of experience and education.

### Strategic Priorities: Actions Required to Deliver High-Impact Talent in Calgary

1. **Community High-Impact Talent Plan:** The high-impact talent ecosystem must develop a community talent development plan that is renewed annually.
2. **Enable the Climbing Wall:** The high-impact talent ecosystem must collaborate to enable individuals to adopt a climbing wall model that encourages continual exploration, experimentation and refinement. The high-impact talent ecosystem must be designed to integrate diverse talent development pathways, including all forms of education (formal and informal) and experiences (professional, volunteer, contextual).
3. **Flexible WIL:** Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) must be flexible, scaffolded and evidence-based including program-directed WIL (e.g. internships); faculty-directed WIL (e.g. live case studies) and student-directed WIL (e.g. volunteering, part-time employment).
4. **Distributed but Coordinated Experimentation:** Experiments can be at a student, class, program or company level, but there needs to be a process to harness the learnings across the full ecosystem. Examples of small experiments with radical intent.

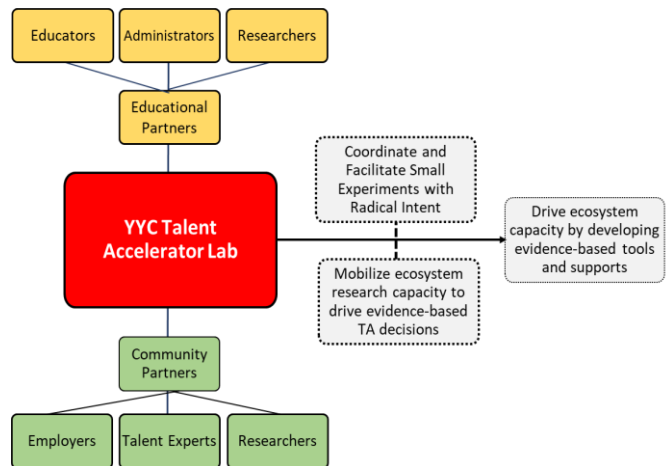
### Where from Here? A Collaborative Path Forward

1. **Operationalize the High-Impact Talent Ecosystem:** Recommend that CED establish a Talent Accelerator Steering Committee (TASC) to act as a unified high-impact ecosystem advisory board.

The Committee will be charged with developing a unified community competency framework; maximize ecosystem capacity and secure incremental funding to support operationalize community-level high-impact talent priorities.

2. **Deliver Ecosystem Priorities by Developing a *YYC Talent Accelerator Lab*:**

Based on the principles of open innovation, we recommend the development of the *YYC Talent Accelerator Lab* (TAL). The TAL will be open to participation by all partners within the high-impact talent ecosystem, at both an organizational and individual level. The TAL will be institution agnostic and its outputs will be open and shared with all partners within the ecosystem.



We recommend the TAL mandate include

(1) facilitating ecosystem high-impact talent experiments; (2) conducting high-impact talent research; and, (3) developing open high-impact talent tools. All research and supports will be open to all ecosystem partners.

3. **Centralized, Independent Funding to Ensure Open Access:** The TAL model is based on open innovation and open access by the broader high-impact talent ecosystem. To maintain the open access model, we recommend that the TASC committee be mandated to drive centralized fund capacity.

## PART 1: LEARNINGCITY 2019 PROGRAM REVIEW

High-impact talent is not defined by a simple checklist of skills. Rather, it is driven by the unique labour market dynamics of a region, sector or organization, and is anchored in an individual's capacity to effectively adapt and thrive in perpetually turbulent market conditions. Mount Royal University's *Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship* is leading a research program exploring our dynamic labour market and how this impacts the development of adaptable high-impact talent. As part of this initiative, 110 attendees from 88 different organizations (from the Calgary region) explored the daunting challenge facing our city with the objective of developing a collaborative path forward.

As part of this process, we provided *the Stanford 2025 - An exploration of undergraduate experiences in the future* for consideration. Stanford 2025 is anchored on four pillars: (a) Open Loop University; (b) Paced Education; (c) Axis Flip; (d) Purpose Learning. In addition, two working papers were prepared to provoke conversation.

- **Insight Paper 1:** [A Dynamic Capabilities View of High-Impact Talent](#)
- **Insight Paper 2:** [Exploring the Potential of Universal Work-Integrated Learning](#)

The event was centred around two panels, which contributed to table-led discussions.

### Panel 1: The Future Is Agile. Should It Be for Higher Education?

Educators, employers and policymakers are advocating for more agile and responsive learning formats in universities. At its core, this challenges the future of a traditional university degree format. In its place, many believe that agile and adaptable talent development should be rooted in a portfolio of diverse learning and experiences, including Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and micro-credentials. So, what is the future role of a university and a traditional university degree in this new learning model?

- **Pamela Brown**, Senior Human Resources Business Partner | RBC Alberta and the Territories
- **Anne Marie Dorland**, Assistant Professor, Bissett School of Business, Mount Royal University
- **Court Ellingson**, VP. Research & Strategy. Calgary Economic Development
- **Terry Sydoryk**, CEO, Chaordix Inc.

Moderated by **Ray DePaul**

### Panel 2: Hitting the Ground Running and the Role of WIL

Employers are looking for entry-level employees who can be high-impact talent and hit the ground running. Research suggests that employers are increasingly prioritizing foundational soft skills. This panel explored the opportunities and challenges that WIL may offer to systematically develop and track these essential skills during a student's postsecondary education.

- **David Lui**, VP, Marketing, Mark's & FGL Sports
- **Jennifer Pierce**, Senior VP, Human Resources TC Energy
- **Patti Pon**, CEO, Calgary Arts Development
- **Stephen Price**, Dean, Faculty of Health, Community & Education, Mount Royal University

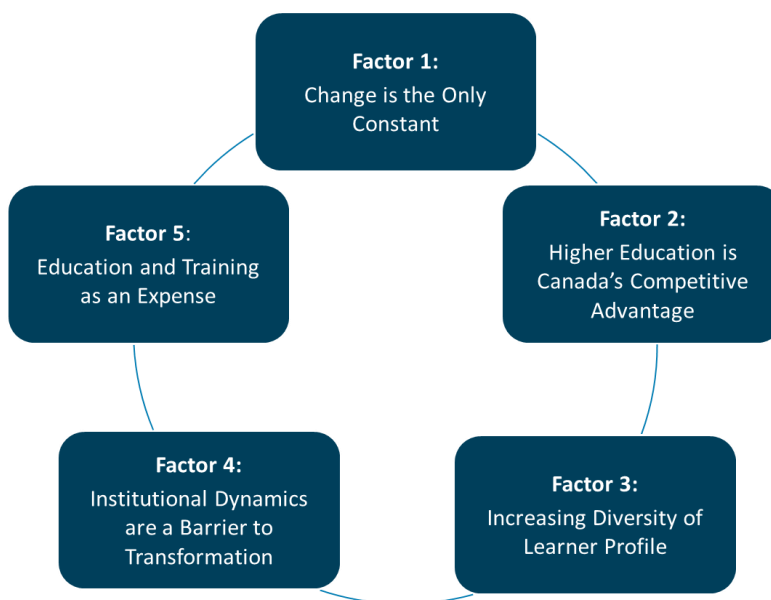
Moderated by **David J. Finch**

## PART 2: CONSOLIDATED THEMES

This section of the report synthesizes the table level themes at three-levels: (1) The Situation Analysis (“the what”); (2) The Implications (“the so what”); and (3) Strategic Priorities (“now what”). In the appendix is a summary of the raw notes. Click [HERE](#) for the full library of flip chart photos.

### “THE WHAT”

#### Situational Analysis: Factors Driving Development of High-Impact Talent in Calgary



#### Factor 1: Change is the Only Constant

- **Future is Ambiguous:** The future is and will continue to be ambiguous. This is being driven by factors such as:
  - Technology (e.g. AI, Machine learning) accelerating the pace of change
  - Lifespan / Demographic changes
  - Social change
  - Labour market disruption
- **Careers Redefined:** Many Calgarians will need to reconceptualize their perception of a “career.” A career is now is agile, not static. The foundational capacity to adapt is essential.
- **Can the System Adapt?:** Participants believed that there is not yet a deep sense of crisis, but many believed a pending skills and knowledge crisis is looming. The question posed was - Will the system adapt proactively, or does the system require a deep crisis before there is transformative action?



## Factor 2: Higher Education is our Competitive Advantage

- **Building on Success:** Canada possess the highest level of PSE participation in the OECD, offering us a structural advantage to lead change. It is essential that we build on this success and develop an integrated high-impact talent learning system that is designed to thrive amid ambiguity.

## Factor 3: Increasing Diversity of Learner Profile

- **No Longer One-Size-Fits-All:** With the expansion of higher education, the profile of students has diversified dramatically. This includes diversity of age, culture, professional backgrounds and learning goals. Higher-education and the entire high-impact talent ecosystem must adapt to reflect the unique personal learning needs of each individual. It is no longer a one-size-fits-all world.

## Factor 4: Institutional Dynamics are a Barrier to Transformation

- **Measured Institutional Culture:** The pace of societal change is in direct contradiction to the measured pace of the underlying institutions at the heart of the high-impact talent ecosystem, from education to government to large corporations. The barriers to transformation include:
  - Measured institutional culture in education, government, and large corporations.
  - The specialized disciplinary training of faculty in post-secondary is often removed from career-oriented outcomes:
    - Much of the conditioning in graduate school is not integrated with disciplinary career pathways outside of academia.
    - Embedded tenure and promotion processes historically rooted in scholarly knowledge mobilization, not community knowledge mobilization. Similarly, these processes historically amplify scholar outcomes over educational and community outcomes.
- In these public sector organizations, change tends to only occur during crisis. At the point of crisis, the change is reactive, not proactive.

## Factor 5: Education and Training as an Expense

- **Expense not Investment:** Historically, education and training has been viewed by governments and corporations as an expense, rather than an investment. This exposes funding for education and professional development to budgetary cycles.
- **Funding Innovation:** Postsecondary education will need to learn how to adapt and redefine itself with little or no incremental public funding. Rather, they will need to focus on increasing their measurable value to their funders and identify innovative approaches to attract new funding to support high-impact talent development.

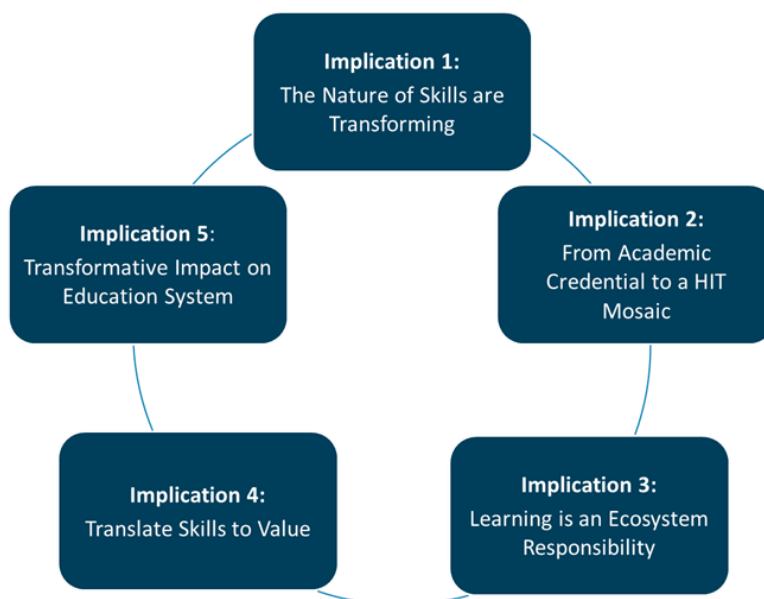
### Key Questions:

1. What are best practices of other jurisdictions that have gone through similar transformation?
2. Does it require a crisis for the high-impact talent system to respond or does it have the capacity to be proactive?
3. What are progressive measurement models that could be adopted to evaluate the systematic value of education and training to organization or community?

## “THE SO WHAT”

### Implications: Impacts on The Development of High-Impact Talent in Calgary

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#### Implication 1: The Nature of “Skills” are Transforming

- **Skill Shelf-Life is Shortening:** The value of technical “now” skills is shortening dramatically. Relying on traditional four-year degrees for this dynamic technical training will make much of this training obsolete prior to graduation, as specific technical training can become obsolete within months. Therefore, education and training focused on the development of technical skills across all fields must adapt and be focused on short-term training and perpetual retraining.
- **Value is About Capacity to Adapt:** The high-impact talent model must recognize that “high-impact” is defined by the capacity to adapt and thrive based amid ambiguity. The goal is to transform dynamic capabilities from superficial knowledge to a competency to an embedded mindset. The “dynamic capabilities” identified include:
  - Being curious and inquisitive
  - Being an exceptional listener
  - A capacity to learn and re-learn
  - Thrives by adapting
  - Possesses a resiliency (e.g. learning to fail and iterate)
  - Possesses a creative and open growth-mindset (as opposed to a fixed-mindset)
  - Possesses a natural empathy
  - Possesses a high level of emotional intelligence

## Implication 2: Academic Credentials are no Longer Sufficient

**Academic Commoditization:** Historically, an academic credential has been a simple, yet blunt tool for employers to filter candidates. However, with almost 70% of adults attending post-secondary education, it has become a commodity.

**From Ladder to High-Impact Talent Climbing Wall:** Talent development is no longer a “ladder”; it is a “climbing wall.” The high-impact talent climbing wall is iterative and exploratory. The climbing wall must encourage and support continual exploration, experimentation and refinement. The ability for these elements to work together and scaffold is imperative. Therefore, the high-impact talent ecosystem must be designed to integrate diverse talent development pathways, including all forms of education (formal and informal) and experience (professional, volunteer, contextual) resources.

- **Educational Resources**
  - **Developing Innate Resources:** Education resources encompass both formal and informal training that contributes to the development and the enhancement of an individual’s innate intellectual and personality resources.
  - **Formal and Informal learning:** Formal education (e.g. elementary to post-secondary education and workplace professional development) is structured and framed by a defined learning objective. Formal education is delivered in both traditional and non-traditional formats, resulting in the completion of a program, and ultimately in a recognized credential. In contrast, informal learning that is self-directed, is typically not linked to a defined learning outcome and does not result in a recognized credential. This may include reading books, listening to podcasts or attending a seminar.
  - **Enhanced Scaffolding:** In the future, there must be more effective scaffolding of these credentials, so that they act as building blocks, rather than isolated events. This change will create short-term gates for students to focus on. For example, this would enable a series of short-term microcredentials to become a certificate ... that could become a diploma ... that could become a degree.
- **Experiences Resources**
  - The value of experiences in developing knowledge and skills is well recognized. Three major forms of experiences were identified.
    1. **Professional Experiences:** This includes paid work that supports the development of knowledge and skills.
    2. **Volunteer Experiences:** This includes unpaid work that supports the development of knowledge and skills.
    3. **Contextual Experiences:** This includes personal experiences, such as recreational (e.g. playing organized sport or active recreation) or leisure experiences (e.g. travel, hobbies), that contribute to the development of knowledge and skills.

### Implication 3: Learning is an Ecosystem Responsibility

- **A Community Challenge:** The structural, social and economic changes in our community is not uniquely an educational challenge, it is a community challenge that we face together and collaborate as a system if we are to succeed.
- **Not a Life Stage:** Learning can no longer be a life stage tied to a specific cohort of young adults: It is a lifestyle on lifelong learning. Therefore, education is a journey not a destination.
- **A High-Impact Talent Ecosystem:** Learning must focus on co-creation across the ecosystem. In this model, the individual learner sits in the centre of the ecosystem and is supported by a co-creation development process.
- **From Ivory Towers to Townhalls:** All educational institutions must be committed to community capacity building, transforming from Ivory Towers to Town Halls.



### Implication 4: Translate Skills to Value

- **Accountable for Value Translation:** Students need to know how to translate their experiences into skills and value. This includes accepting responsibility to manage the translation of their skills and knowledge to evidence that is relevant for their audience. Key themes that emerged include:
  - **Recognizing their Audience:** Value is audience specific. Individuals must have a clear understanding of their audience and how they perceive and define value.
  - **Understanding their Unique Value Proposition:** Individuals must invest in developing an adaptable, but valuable, unique valuation proposition.
  - **Platform for Telling Their Story:** The need for individuals to have a unified platform to provide verified evidence to their audience. This platform must incorporate formal and informal education, experiences, and link to specific competencies. It is anticipated that blockchain may play a significant role in this verification process in the future. Stanford refers to this as transitioning from a transcript to skillprint.

### Implication 5: Transformative Impact on Higher Education

- The identified implications will have multi-level systematic impacts on education systems from kindergarten to graduate school. The proposed Stanford model provides a sense of the radical disruption facing education in the future. Examples identified at the LearningCITY 2019 include:
  - **Looped Education:** Redefining the staged-linear model of education to one that is far more fluid; Stanford defined this as the loop model.
  - **Dynamic Mission not Majors:** Redefining education from a one-size-fits-all, to a personalized model that is co-created. This refocuses individuals and institutions from delivering

- commoditized majors to dynamic personalized educational missions (missions that will evolve over a lifetime, based on personal values and the broader societal dynamics).
- **Meta-skills Outcomes:** Building on the “mission not major” theme, the current education model is anchored in learning outcomes associated with task-specific or disciplinary expertise. The development of meta-skills will emerge as the dominant learning outcomes in programs, with shorter-term task-specific and disciplinary skills, where knowledge becomes incremental.
  - **Integration not Separation:** Competency development will require the intentional integration of education and experiences. Early small-scale models of this integration exist today in different forms of experiential education, including co-op. The scaling of this integrated framework to incorporate two million undergraduate students in Canada has systemic and transformative implications on the entire high-impact talent ecosystem.
  - **Redefining Educator Competencies:** This will lead to a redefining of the core competencies of educators in this high-impact talent ecosystem. For centuries, disciplinary expertise has been the foundational competency of postsecondary educators. Limited value was assigned to educational expertise, access to community networks, and evidence of integrating disciplinary knowledge with community priorities. Though disciplinary knowledge and skills will continue to be critical, the ability to bridge this competency to community needs will become essential.

#### Key Questions:

1. How do we effectively assess and measure the learning outcomes associated with dynamic capabilities?
2. What is the role of K-12 in the high-impact talent ecosystem?
3. What jurisdictions, sectors, disciplines or professional fields have successfully adopted a high-impact talent climbing wall model of talent development?
4. Is there a precedent for educational institutions shifting from a disciplinary “major” focus to a focus on dynamic personal “missions”?
5. How do we create more interdisciplinary opportunities for students?
6. What other jurisdictions have successfully developed a holistic high-impact talent ecosystem model to talent development?
7. What jurisdictions, sectors, disciplines or professional fields are leaders in translating education and experiences to market value?
8. What disciplines today provide guidance on ensuring faculty possess a balance of both disciplinary training and expertise, along with industry or sectoral experiences, to mentor and coach students in aligning education and experiences to employer and societal value?

## “THE NOW WHAT”

### “Strategic Priorities: Actions Required to Deliver High-Impact Talent in Calgary”



#### Strategy 1: Unified High-Impact Talent Development Plan

- **Develop a Community Wide High-Impact Talent Development Plan:** The disruption is here and is impacting the entire community and ecosystem from employers to educators to policymakers. The ecosystem must collaborate to develop and deliver a high-impact development plan.

#### Strategy 2: Enable High-Impact Talent Climbing Wall

- **Adapt the System:** The high-impact talent climbing wall model recognizes that talent development is no longer a ladder. The climbing wall is dynamic, iterative and exploratory. The climbing wall model encourages and supports continual exploration, experimentation and refinement. Therefore, the high-impact talent ecosystem must be designed to integrate diverse talent development pathways, including all forms of education (formal and informal) and experiences (professional, volunteer, contextual).

#### Strategy 3: Integrating Education and Experience

- **Scaffolding:** WIL needs to be scaffolded from PSE first year to graduation.
- **WIL Must be Flexible:** Focus on the outcome, not the mechanism. Mechanisms can include:
  - Co-op and Internship
  - Community/ volunteer
  - Summer/ Part-time
  - Entrepreneurial streams
  - Domestic/ International
  - Embedded in class
  - Embedded in community-engaged research
  - Flexible across disciplines

#### Strategy 4: Small Experiments with Radical Intent

- **Distributed but Coordinated Experimentation:** Experiments can be undertaken at a student, class, program, or company level, but there needs to be a process to effectively harness the learnings and across the full ecosystem. Examples of small experiments with radical intent, identified by LearningCITY 2019 participants include:
  - Developing a YYC high-impact talent Competency Framework to guide investment priorities across the high-impact talent ecosystem.
  - Developing a high-impact talent ecosystem open hub for knowledge creation, mobilization and supports.
  - Developing common open tools and supports to accelerate mentoring and professional development across the ecosystem. Audiences for these tools include learners, employers, educators and funders (e.g. parents).

#### Key Questions:

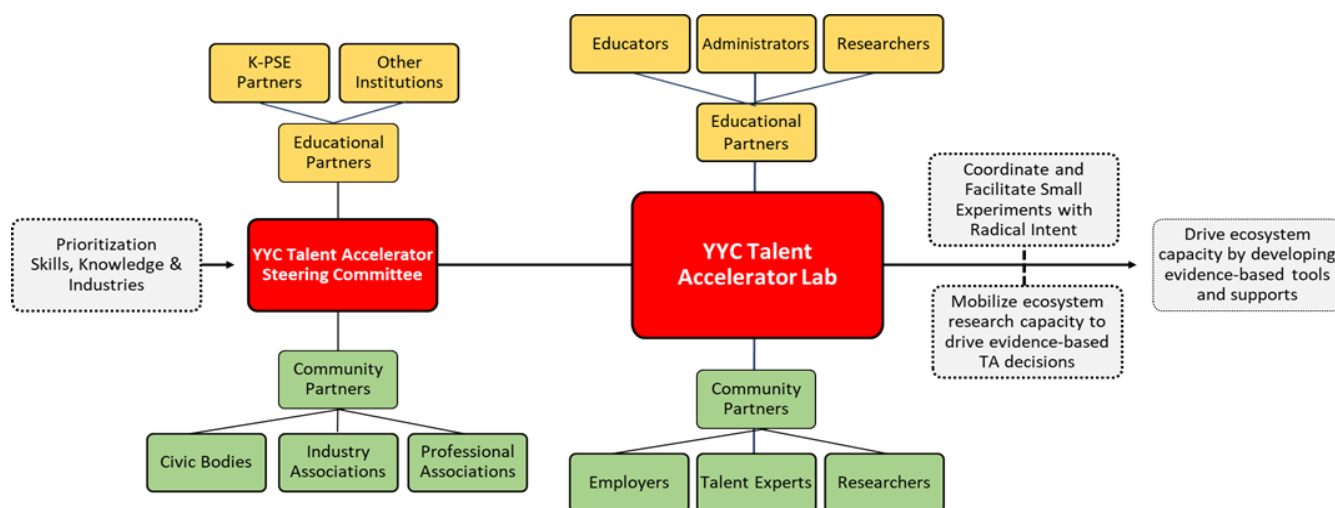
1. Is “WIL” the correct term? Is it really about “Community-Driven Learning” or “Community-Engaged Learning”?
2. What jurisdictions have developed a comprehensive “community-specific” high-impact talent development plan?
3. What other jurisdictions have developed a competency framework? How does a “community” competency framework, integrate with a “sectoral” competency framework?
4. How do we incorporate efficient and meaningful reflection into student-directed WIL?
5. In a student-directed WIL model, how do we validate that the experience serves both the student and the community?
6. How does the high-impact talent ecosystem recognize the importance of volunteering to support competency development, without it simply transitioning into an unpaid internship model?

### PART 3: A PROPOSED COLLABORATIVE PATH FORWARD

Based on synthesizing the Situational Analysis (“the what”); Implications (“so what”) and Strategic Priorities (“now what”) from the LearningCITY 2019, we developed a proposed path forward for Calgary high-impact talent ecosystem collaboration. The goal of this “straw model” is designed to maximize the capacity of the entire high-impact talent ecosystem, by recognizing and leveraging the significant amount of important work underway within the ecosystem. These current initiatives include CED’s Talent Accelerator, the Chamber of Commerce’s GenYYC and other important initiatives underway within both the post-secondary and private sectors. However, the ultimate goal of this straw model is to continue the momentum and discussion about ongoing coordination and collaboration to accelerate the development of high-impact talent in our community.

#### Where from Here?

The conceptual straw model below, reflects the two proposed core recommendations of this report: (1) establishing a unified community-level *Competency Framework*; and (2) establishing a unified and open *Talent Accelerator Lab*.



#### Recommendation 1: Define Unified High-Impact Talent Competency Framework

Calgary Economic Development established a goal of developing Canada’s largest Talent Accelerator to support reskilling, upskilling and employment-ready new graduates. Key goals of this Calgary Talent Accelerator include:

1. Supporting the expansion of WIL opportunities
2. Pilot and scale nimble, short-form programs (three- to six-month certificates) that address immediate business needs.
3. Ensure program access to diverse communities
4. Facilitating networking and recruitment of new graduates

Based on the outcomes of the LearningCITY 2019, we recommend that CED develop a Talent Accelerator Steering Committee (TASC), incorporating educational and community partners from across the high-



impact talent ecosystem, to become a unified ecosystem advisory body. This Steering Committee, guided by the priorities defined in *Calgary in the New Economy Plan*, will be mandated with the following:

1. **Develop a Unified Competency Framework:** The TASC committee will develop a unified high-impact talent competency framework, including reskilling, upskilling and competency prioritization. This framework will inform ecosystem partners of community-level priorities to support organizational or system level decision making. This competency framework will be updated annually to reflect the dynamic nature of high-impact talent.
2. **Maximize Ecosystem Capacity:** The TASC committee will facilitate the alignment of activities across the regional high-impact talent ecosystem to maximize ecosystem capacity and minimize duplication.
3. **Secure High-Impact Talent Funding:** The TASC committee will be mandated to lead securing incremental funding to operationalize community-level high-impact talent priorities.

### Recommendation 2: Deliver Ecosystem Priorities by Developing a YYC Talent Accelerator Lab

Based on the principles of open innovation, we recommend the development of the *YYC Talent Accelerator Lab* (TAL). The TAL will be open to participation by all partners within the high-impact talent ecosystem, at both an organizational and individual level. The TAL will be institution agnostic and its outputs will be open and shared with all partners within the high-impact talent ecosystem. Based on this model, we recommend the TAL mandate include:

1. **Facilitating High-Impact Talent Experiments:** The TAL must prioritize, coordinate and facilitate small high-impact talent experiments (or pilots) with radical intent. The design and execution of these experiments will be open and shared by the entire ecosystem. The goal will be to drive capacity by leveraging this form of open and shared innovation.
2. **Facilitating High-Impact Talent Research:** The TAL must mobilize ecosystem research capacity to drive evidence-based decisions by members of the ecosystem. The research will be coordinated through the TAL to maximize coordination and minimize duplication; however, the delivery of this research will be distributed across members of the ecosystem. All research results will be open and shared by ecosystem members.
3. **Developing Open High-Impact Talent Tools:** Based on the outcomes of high-impact talent Experiments and high-impact talent Research, the TAL will be mandated to develop open tools and supports for the full high-impact talent ecosystem to leverage. These tools and supports will be developed and made available under a Creative Commons license. Refer to the two open high-impact talent tools examples below:

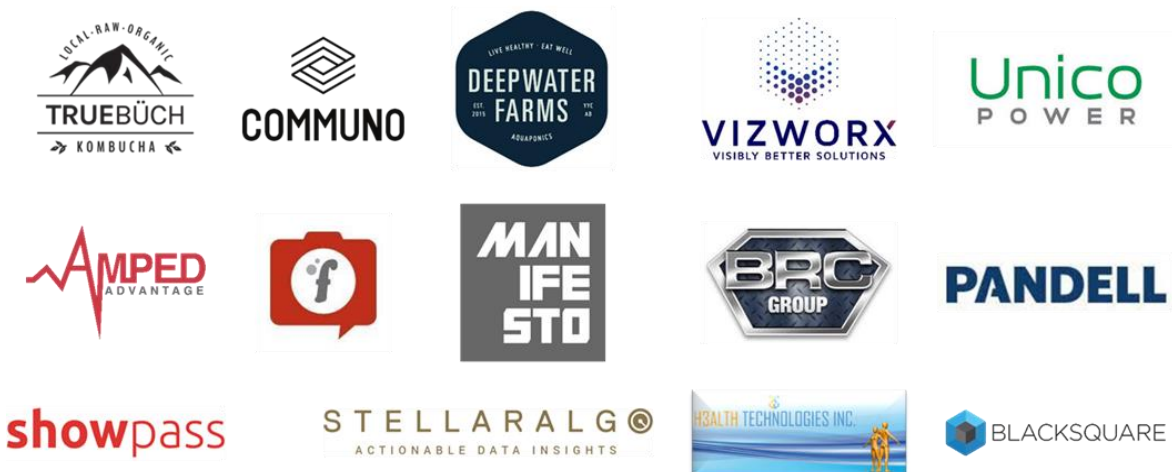
- **Example 1: The Designing YOU Series**

Mount Royal University's Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship In conjunction with MRU Career Services developed a free open-access *Designing YOU* series, including 12 eBooks, written 20 co-authors to support young adults in planning their personal and professional development. The book series is supported by a searchable database of 150 career mission maps and 14 podcasts. The series is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) and can be customized and white labeled by any institution or educator. The *Designing YOU* series also includes a series of teaching supports and student exercises.



- **Example 2: YYC Live Study Library**

Mount Royal University’s [Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#), in partnership with Alberta Economic Development and Trade, is developing a series of open access regional case studies that can be used in a variety of disciplines. The case study process identified 150 candidate companies. This was short-listed to 50 candidates across a broad range of sectors. The final list includes 20 company case studies that can be used in fields ranging from marketing to psychology to computer science and sport & recreation. During this evaluation process, a key criterion was identifying firms whose management team wanted to engage directly with learners in a “live” case format. The case studies are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) and can be customized by any educator. Each case study will include a series of teaching supports and student exercises.



### **Recommendation 3: Centralized, Independent Funding to Ensure Open Access**

The TAL model is based on open innovation and open access by the broader high-impact talent ecosystem. A risk exists that ecosystem members may secure funding from third-party sources that do not support providing open access to findings or intellectual property. As a result, the open TAL model, could simply migrate back to the inefficient, fragmented and closed ecosystem of today. To maintain the open access model, we recommend that the TASC committee be mandated to drive centralized fund capacity.

### **Final Thoughts – It's Our Choice**

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The world is moving rapidly and is more unpredictable than ever. This ambiguity demands a level of agility, both as organizations and as individuals. The single dominant theme across 47 flip charts was “more collaboration.” But collaboration can often be difficult, especially across such diverse partners from policymakers to educators to employers. Therefore, the greatest challenge for most of us is not external, rather it is internal to the practices and cultures of our own mindsets, practices and organizations. Collaboration, compromise, and consensus are rarely easy, and sharing is even more difficult. Yet, as a city, we are at an important crossroads, where we can focus on the benefits and needs of ourselves and our organization, or we can step back and evaluate the broader needs of the greater Calgary community and find the areas of shared value. If we do, we believe many will conclude, as a city, we will always be far stronger together.

## APPENDIX

## ADDITIONAL READING

- Dornan, A., Finch, D. Levallet, N., Raby, S., Ross, S. & Swiston, A.. (2019). Innovation in Work-integrated Learning: Exploring the Potential of Universal Work-Integrated Learning. *Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship Working Paper*. Retrieved from
- Finch, D. & Levallet, N. (2019). A Dynamic Capabilities View of High-Impact Talent Development. Excerpt from A dynamic capabilities view of talent acquisition: Resource verification and risk management. Included in: *A Dynamic Look at Organizational Behavior Topics*. Edward Elgar Publishing: Cheltenham. U.K. [Forthcoming October 2019].
- Mitchell, C., Ray, R. & van Ark, B. (2019). C-Suite Challenge™ 2019: The Future-Read Organization. *New York: Conference Board of Canada*. Retrieved from <https://www.conference-board.org/publications/publicationdetail.cfm?publicationid=7691>
- Sattler, P. (2011). *Work-Integrated learning in Ontario's postsecondary sector*. Toronto: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario.'
- Stirling, A., Kerr, G. Banwell, J. MacPherson, E. & Heron, A. (2016). A Practical Guide to Work-integrated Learning. High-education Quality Council of Ontario. Retrieved from [http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/HEQCO\\_WIL\\_Guide\\_ENG\\_ACC.pdf](http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/HEQCO_WIL_Guide_ENG_ACC.pdf)

## LEARNINGCITY 2019 AGENDA

Time	Item	Responsible
8:00am	Registration and Light Refreshments	
8:30am	Welcome to the LearningCITY 2019	<b>Lesley Brown</b> , Provost and Vice-President, Academic
8:45am	The YYC High-Impact Talent Challenge and the Future of Undergraduate Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Insight Paper 1:</b> <a href="#">A Dynamic Capabilities View of High-Impact Talent</a></li> <li>● <b>Insight Paper 2:</b> <a href="#">Exploring the Potential of Universal WIL</a></li> </ul>	<b>David J. Finch</b> , Associate Professor, Bisset School of Business, Associate Director, Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Mount Royal University
9:15am	<b>Panel 1: The Future is Agile. How Should Higher Education Adapt?</b> Educators, employers and policymakers are advocating for more agile and responsive learning formats in universities. At its core, this challenges the future of a traditional university degree format. In its place, many believe that agile and adaptable talent development should be rooted in a portfolio of diverse learning and experiences, including WIL and micro-credentials. So, what is the future role of a university and a traditional university degree in this new learning model?	<b>Pamela Brown</b> , Senior Human Resources Business Partner   RBC Alberta and the Territories <b>Anne Marie Dorland</b> , Assistant Professor, Bissett School of Business, Mount Royal University <b>Court Ellingson</b> , VP. Research & Strategy. Calgary Economic Development <b>Terry Sydoryk</b> , CEO, Chaordix Inc. <b>Moderator:</b> Ray DePaul
<b>10:00am</b>	<b>Group Discussion</b>	<b>Table facilitated discussions</b>
10:30am	Sharing Discussions/ Networking	
10:50am	<b>Panel 2: Hitting the Ground Running and the role of WIL</b> Employers are looking for entry-level employees who can high-impact talent the ground running. Research suggests that they are increasingly prioritizing foundational soft skills, including communications, organizational, critical thinking and interpersonal skills over task or discipline specific skills and knowledge. This panel will explore the opportunities and challenges that WIL may offer to systematically develop and track these essential skills during a student's postsecondary education.	<b>David Lui</b> , VP, Marketing, Mark's & FGL Sports <b>Jennifer Pierce</b> , Senior VP, Human Resources TC Energy <b>Patti Pon</b> , CEO, Calgary Arts Development <b>Stephen Price</b> , Dean, Faculty of Health, Community & Education, Mount Royal University <b>Moderator:</b> David J. Finch
<b>11:35am</b>	<b>Group Discussion</b>	<b>Table facilitated discussions</b>
12:05pm	Networking	Group sharing discussions
12:05pm	Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where do we go from here?</li> </ul>	Ray DePaul David J. Finch
12:30pm	Formal Meeting Adjourn	

1:30pm	Networking	We encourage you to stay and connect to discuss the outcomes of the LearningCITY 2019 with your colleagues
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## 2019 MRU LearningCITY 2019 Organizing Committee

First Name	Last Name	Department
Raj	Bhatti	Supply Chain
Colleen	Bradley	Career Services
Brad	Clark	Broadcast Media Studies
Ken	Cummins	Science & Technology
Anupam	Das	Economics
Ray	DePaul	Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
David	Finch	Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Brian	Fleming	Supply Chain
Ben	Kunz	InfoDesign
David	Legg	HPED
Allison	Mackenzie	Public Relations
Gwen	O'Sullivan	Science & Technology
Janice	Paskey	Journalism
Joe	Pavelka	EcoTourism
Catherine	Pearl	Social Innovation
Simon	Raby	Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Cathy	Roy-Heaton	Finance
Wanda	Smith	Career Services
James	Stauch	Social Innovation
Kelly	Sundberg	Justice Studies
Alexandra	Swiston	Institute for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Tim	Taylor	Science & Technology
Michael	Uzoka	Science & Technology

## FLIP CHART THEME CLUSTERS

Click Below for the full library of flip chart photos: [Full Notes Photos](#)

### Evolving Dynamic Skills

- Focus on skills do not grade
- Relevant skills time is shortening
- Meta-skills are as relevant as technical skills in the workplace.
- Create opportunities for failure and iteration. Encourage prototyping.
- Employees need to be resilient
- Employees need to be creative and innovative
- Employees need an open mindset
- Employees must be adaptable
- Employees need empathy and emotional intelligence
- Employees need to be curious
- Employees must be able to listen
- Students need to engage beyond the classroom
- Skills vs. Knowledge balance.
- Foundational vs. “now” skills.
- Growth mindset
- Need to be inclusive and accommodating
- Learning how to learn

### Skill Translation

- Education is a journey not a destination
- Students need to know their customers
- Students need to understand the link between education and skills
- Link experiential learning to skills
- Students need a high-impact talent portfolio to tell their story and know the value of what they are learning.
- Evidence – what you’ve done and why.

### Systems Issues

- It’s a shared responsibility
- Community needs to be involved in curriculum development
- We need processes for interaction across ecosystem.
- What is the role of K-12?
- The ecosystem needs to include everyone, including parents
- The future is ambiguous. The ecosystem needs to value pivots.
- Small experiments with radical intent.
- The individuals in the system need to buy in.
- The challenge to the validity of a university degree as a foundational credential.
- Co-creation
- The entrance requirement for education needs to be refined to look at the 360-degree person.

### Impact on Roles

- What is impact on role of faculty?
- What is the role of student?
- How can systems be adapted to support and empower these new roles?
- Community-Driven Learning Vs. Community-Engaged Learning
- Universities have to support diversity
- Employers have to “rethink” hiring process.
- Redefine a “course outline”. Courses can have learning outcomes, but students should be owners of what they want to learn from that course.
- Aligning sector value chains
- Students need to reconceptualize their perception of a “career”. A career in agile, not static.
- This is important when defining competencies
- Once size does not fit all
- How do we translate classroom education to employability metrics



**Student Empowerment**

- Students need to be empowered
- Students need to have a purpose
- Students need to understand the importance of a unique value proposition
- What if students could design their own degree?
- Students won't be empowered unless they value it.

**Process Issues**

- From Ivory Tower to Town Hall
- Educational institutions should be viewed as community capacity building.
- A process to support ecosystem collaboration is critical
- Explore social innovation literature for collaboration
- There needs to be a coherent unified strategy that guides intentionality
- New roles need to be developed to curate student support and coaching
- How do we measure breadth and depth?
- Faculty need to be empowered to engage community
- Experimentation > Research > Personal Development > Assessment > Adaptability > Interdisciplinary
- Hack-a-thons. Define a problem. Solve it.
- Embed perpetual mentoring into the education process. It does not have to be centralized.
  - Faculty
  - Peer
  - Industry
  - Family

**Integration**

- Transform from discipline to inquiry-based learning.
- Increased resources to broker community-engagement
- Business needs to support upskilling

**Policies**

- Policies need to articulate value of meta-skills as learning outcomes.
- Need to establish a common competency framework

**Leadership**

- Change needs leadership from the top
- We need to empower disruptors
- How do we OWN the PSE disruption, rather than become victims of it?

**WIL**

- WIL needs to be scaffolded
- WIL needs to be flexible. Focus on the outcome, not the mechanism.
  - Breadth vs. Depth
- How do we incorporate efficient and meaningful reflection into a UWIL model?
- The classroom is the commodity. WIL is the differentiator.
- Needs to be integrated from beginning to end.
- International experiences
- WIL should be flexible and across disciplines.
- Professional and volunteer work should be recognized.
- Cannot "force" unpaid internships.

**Scholarship**

- Model provides an opportunity to enhance community engaged scholarship as part of WIL

**Value**

- Micro-credentials
- Skillprints not transcripts
- Need to persuade and educate students to focus on skills, not traditional academic measures.
- Measure activity or impact?

**Purpose**

- Focus on purpose-based learning
- Transform from life stage to life long
- Need students to map interests to skills to learning pathways
- Scaffold credentials
- Intentionality
- Certification > Diploma > Degree

**Competency Framework**

- Develop a community-wide foundational competency framework.
- Empower experiments and reporting outcomes

**Mentoring**

- Faculty need mentoring and coaching to transition to community engagement.

**Change**

- Experiment but have a pathway to scale
- Needs cross-institutional commitment
- We need to map the whole system.

**City Problems become Academic Problems**

- It's a shared responsibility
- Community needs to be involved in curriculum development
- We need processes for interaction across ecosystem.
- Centralized WIL support system. Case studies. Live client projects. Shared learning.

**The Climbing Wall**

- Education is a climbing wall, not a ladder

**Thank You for Attending  
LearningCITY 2019.**

**We hope to see you in 2020.**



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