

SUCCESS STORY



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Blue Sky Analytical Labs is a Lethbridge-based start-up in its second year of operation and has quickly become known as a one-stop shop for cannabis testing. Blue Sky strives to provide fast, reliable and local laboratory services, with a “wide inventory open to unique requests,” including cannabis, environmental and agricultural applications.

When the volume of work increased dramatically, being able to access BioAlberta WIL funding helped Blue Sky to hire student Austin Bovaird. Austin is completing his Bachelor of Science in Neurophysiology and Behavioural Psychology, and he found the “intricate and advanced” lab procedures a good fit. As a lab tech, he was helping the lab manager measure environmental samples and complete water testing procedures. This was a unique experience for an undergraduate student, as many lab tech jobs require advanced degree completion or additional certifications.

In addition to working as a lab tech, Austin was exposed to the administrative and entrepreneurial side of the lab, researching machinery and helping to refine Blue Sky’s business plan. President and CEO Ross Tisdale has expressed how “tremendously helpful” it is to have additional hands in the lab because it frees him up to work on tasks under the CEO umbrella instead of spending his own time in the lab. “We are so grateful for the funding,” says Ross. “Being a start-up in our second year of operation, the funds make a big impact. The ability to hire talented and eager-to-learn students is incredibly helpful to us. The WIL funding is invaluable.”

Austin notes that working at Blue Sky Analytical Labs has been a “unique experience” at this point in his career; it’s a “great opportunity that wouldn’t be available to me without WIL funding.” As he looks towards the MCAT and application to medical school,



Austin Bovaird

Austin is thankful for the training he received at Blue Sky. “[My experience at Blue Sky] inspired me to diversify my skillset. Now I am stronger in both my analytical chemistry and my administration skills, and I had a first-hand look at entrepreneurship, too.”

Blue Sky’s partnership with the University of Lethbridge is unique, and Ross makes note that “the University of Lethbridge has been very supportive” of their start-up. The University of Lethbridge’s support has been integral to Blue Sky’s success.

We can’t wait to see what’s next for Austin and Blue Sky!

WIL VOUCHER

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