

SUCCESS STORY



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<https://northernrna.com/>

Northern RNA Inc. is a contract development manufacturing organization specializing in the manufacture of nucleic acid products that are used as raw materials in mRNA-based vaccines. They are contributing to Canada's robust vaccine strategy of in-house vaccine manufacturing, and it includes targeting the highest vaccination rate in the world and donating the surplus doses to countries in need. The Canadian community will be benefitted by having an early access to supply of safer and approved vaccines.



Cassandra in the Northern RNA Lab.

Northern RNA's unique capabilities include development, scale up, cGMP manufacturing and sterile fill and finish of nucleic acid products. This is especially important with emergence of mRNA therapeutics including the development of new vaccines and therapies, as this has created a market constraint across the globe, an access to critical raw materials, scientific and technical expertise.

Undergraduate student Cassandra Appelhof hopes to graduate in 2023 with a Bachelor of Science (Chemistry Major) from Mount Royal University, and she was just what Northern RNA needed this summer. She quickly became involved in chemistry research and development, instrument method development, and lipid synthesis projects where she is now conversant with technical information from initialization of a project. Cassandra also played an important role in generating, reviewing, and compiling

technical documentation required for the execution of a Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) project. Wow! That sounds like a packed summer, and a valuable experience.

Cassandra agrees, making note that not only did she improve her technical skills and knowledge, but she also got to work with a great team on projects that helped to create life-changing products for today's society – like vaccines. She says, “The ability to know that I am making a difference in the meaningful work Northern RNA provides truly inspires me. It is an exciting process to create such complex products from essentially nothing. The people I work with have made a huge impact on my time here. Everyone is extremely helpful, understanding, and are willing to provide advice when needed.”

Both parties are quick to acknowledge the WIL funding's “huge impact” on Cassandra's experience at Northern RNA. It enabled the work term to happen, and, as Senior Scientist Dr. Vaishalli Girdhar puts it, “The creative ideas and feedback from these young students help to improve the company's workflow processes.” Bringing energy and ideas to the table is essential to success.

For the time being, Cassandra wants to continue exploring the chemistry field, continuing to develop both technical and critical skills. She hopes to continue her education post-graduation and plans to pursue a career in which she can “continue to make a difference in today's world.” We are sure that she will!



Cassandra in the Northern RNA Lab.

WIL VOUCHER

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