

SUCCESS STORY



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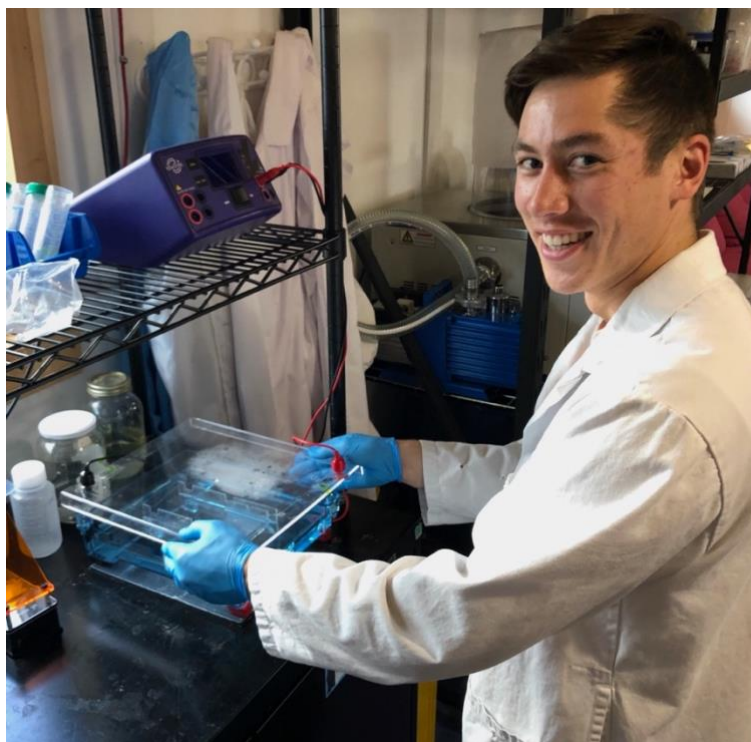


<https://amino.bio>

Amino Labs is a Lethbridge-based company creating safe, fun, engaging, and accessible biotechnology education. While biotechnology education companies do exist elsewhere, Amino Labs is set apart by their new generation of technology and experiences that bring biotechnology education to a *non-expert audience*. Amino Labs aspires to catalyze the next generation of bio-innovators that will help solve some of the world's biggest challenges and create exciting life sciences companies. They continue to make teaching biotechnology beginner-friendly, affordable, fun and student-led.

University of Lethbridge Biochemistry student Tim Uchikura first saw his academic coursework applied to real-world problems during his third year of undergraduate studies. An advanced biotechnology assignment got him excited about these real-world applications, but he found it difficult to explain the concepts to his friends and family who had little or no experience with biotechnology. This encouraged him to find work in a lab where he could learn more about biotechnology, refine his laboratory skills and become a better communicator. Upon learning about Amino Labs, Tim was "immediately captivated by their goal to make biotechnology more accessible to entrepreneurs, artists, and anyone who wanted to learn." Tim's internship at Amino Labs offered the opportunity to work in a lab *and* learn about communication, sales, manufacturing, mentoring, patents, supply chains, and all aspects of running a small business.

Tim's first project at Amino Labs was working on an E. coli engineering kit and he remained heavily involved in the manufacturing process of other kits. Tim notes, "The most exciting part of my internship was when I produced three new colors by combining color



Tim Uchikura working at Amino Labs

pigment genes in bacteria. It was my first big contribution to the company through research and development.” Tim will continue his work with Amino Labs for the next term as he completes this project.

Julie Legault, CEO and Founder of Amino Labs, is very complimentary of Tim’s work, enthusiastically saying, “Tim has been essential in creating new learning experiences and in completing other existing projects' commercialization processes. Not only is he an up-and-coming scientist with the potential to go far, but Tim always contributes to a positive and inclusive work environment. Working with Tim is always a pleasure.” Tim’s work ethic and growth at Amino Labs was also clear in his additional responsibilities. Tim was asked to mentor two other students and their projects. This was a great experience for him, as he learned valuable leadership lessons and was inspired by the students’ creativity and their ambitious goals. Positions like this are not easy to come by, and smaller companies struggle to provide them. Legault makes it clear: “Without WIL funding, Amino Labs would not have been able to offer these R&D positions to students, including Tim.”

Tim has fantastic aspirations for his future. He wants to go to graduate school and continue to refine his skills. He is hungry to learn more. His internship at Amino Labs showed him the long process of turning an idea into a product. He feels “more prepared” for his future career and his experience in a successful start-up will inform his own choices as an entrepreneur.

Amino Labs continues to innovate by creating new learning experiences for their customers. As Amino Labs has already laid its technology foundation, their student researchers are able to undertake challenging yet accessible projects that become an important part of their product offering. Legault wants to impress upon us all that “anytime science advances faster than our ability to understand it, it produces fear, suspicion, uncertainty and legislation.” She believes it is of the utmost importance that Alberta and Canada make biotechnology education a priority.

If you or an educator you know is interested in learning more about Amino Labs’ hands-on biotechnology kits, software, hardware and learning resources please visit their [website](#) or contact julie@amino.bio.

Become a Virtual Bioengineer! Try Amino Lab’s Canvas Kit simulator [HERE](#).

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