

SUCCESS STORY



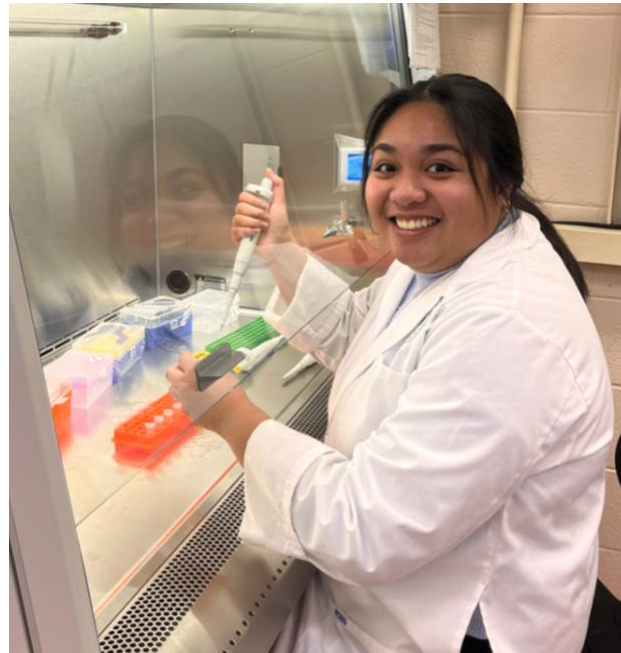
<http://www.bioalberta.com/>



<https://raftbrewlabs.ca>

Raft Brew Labs is a Calgary-based lab that offers cutting-edge quality management and analyses for craft beverage companies. Their experience and focus on analysis are unique to Canada and its brewing industries. They work exclusively with independent producers to reduce their barriers to compete with monopolies and decentralize manufacturing.

'Beverage analysis' is a niche industry, and it presents unique opportunities. Covid-19 considerably limited Martha Nerier's lab experience in her second year of studies, so the now fourth-year University of Calgary Biological Sciences student took the initiative to find opportunities that would put her in a lab for hands-on, experiential learning. Raft provided a unique opportunity to be in a lab setting while being in a Canadian niche market working in quality assurance and quality control.



Martha Nerier at Raft Brew Labs

BioAlberta WIL funding helped to make Martha's Junior Lab Technician position a competitive one and helped Raft to offer an internship that lasted outside of the company's busy season. Christine Dawson, Molecular Biologist at Raft, is quick to say that WIL funding reduces some of the financial stress associated with hiring. Martha agrees, saying that a paid internship allows her to release some of the worries about financing her education and instead "focus on the work at hand," learning not only lab skills, but also "skills in teamwork and professionalism that will help with [her] future career."

As part of her position, Martha has been running microbiological and chemical analysis tests on different beer and beverage samples from a variety of breweries. Christine points out that "Martha has been an essential member of the lab team to ensure we can analyze all the samples we receive in a week. She manages a variety of analyses and tasks on a weekly basis, producing valuable data for our clients and assisting on research projects. Her attention to detail during data analyses has helped us refine our procedures to increase the quality of our results."

When we asked what inspires Martha, she said, “The work broadens my horizons and gives insight as to what working with a science degree is like and what I can do with it after finishing university. Some of the most exciting parts of working have been going to different breweries around Calgary and seeing firsthand how these places make craft beers and being able to expand my knowledge and my network.”

Christine reminds us that hiring a student is an important part of the talent development process, and WIL funding in part allows Raft “to prepare a student for a job with Raft, or another organization in science, once they graduate. The students bring unique perspectives and diversity which strengthens our team.” Hiring a student also comes with the hope and aim that the student chooses to remain in Alberta and work in the life sciences after graduation.



Martha Nerier with samples for analysis

Beyond the science

Raft Brew Labs is leading a national coalition of businesses to create compassionate and evidence-based responses to the drug poisoning crisis that welcome all neighbours into their communities. As a result of their efforts, staff at Raft have conducted over a thousand overdose response trainings and engaged with harm reduction advocacy that builds greater inclusivity into the business community. Learn more here: <https://raftbrewlabs.ca/policies-governance/>.

WIL VOUCHER

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