

SUCCESS STORY



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As a business student at the University of Alberta, Spencer Lindahl was keen to find a work opportunity that would use and grow his skills while also offering a deeper sense of meaning. When he learned about the opportunity to work with KASTx Ventures (KASTx), a small biotech-focused advisory and venture capital firm, he felt like he had found a perfect fit.

“When I saw the opportunity to intern for a venture capital firm in an exciting industry like life sciences, I was immediately interested,” Spencer said. “It seemed like an opportunity where I could learn a lot, and conduct work that left me feeling like I was working on something with a greater purpose.”

KASTx’s portfolio consists of companies working to improve societal outcomes in health, technology, and environmental sustainability sectors. The company’s experienced team works closely with company founders to grow their ventures, often based on their own world-leading scientific research. As a small company that has experienced considerable growth since its incorporation in 2020, the opportunity to bring on student interns through BioAlberta’s WIL program significantly increases team capacities. For Chief Operations Officer Christian Idicula, having Spencer on his team provided a helpful way forward in areas in the company that had otherwise stalled without his support.



Spencer Lindahl

“Whether we are doing work on a portfolio company or evaluating our pipeline, there is no shortage of analysis and writing to do,” he said. “Spencer’s background in finance has helped us with everything from funding applications for portfolio companies to pipeline company evaluations, with a lot of the work focused on quickly understanding new companies and industries, probing the information, questioning, and providing a point-of-view.”

Most notably, Spencer worked on an important project that built out a process for evaluating the numerous new ventures in the company's pipeline. This work, Spencer said, gave him a clear line of sight to the potential influence of the work he was doing.

"The most exciting part of working at KASTx Ventures has been working with an extremely passionate team," he said. "We can all see the potential our day-to-day work has to impact global health outcomes. It's been so fulfilling and exciting to work for a company that allows everything I do to have that potential."

The inspiration Spencer felt in his work went both ways, according to Christian, who spoke to the fresh and innovative perspectives students offer to teams and processes that are vital to growing companies.

"We are often weighed down by our own processes and ways of working, which can lead to organizational blindness to alternative solutions," he said, "or they take up so much of our time that we never look at the other ways of getting work done faster, smarter, cheaper. In a business that's all about innovation, having our student interns be innovative and push us to work faster, smarter, cheaper is essential."

As a business student, Spencer spoke to the unique opportunity he was given to work with biotech and life sciences start-ups, a sector he otherwise wouldn't have gained much exposure to. Offering diverse experience to students looking to grow their skills, he said, is one of the ways BioAlberta's WIL funding has served his future career goals through business school and beyond.

"I am grateful BioAlberta allows companies like KASTx Ventures to bring in interns like myself, this wouldn't have been possible without them," he said. "The WIL program and funding has provided me with a learning opportunity that could not have been replicated in my classes."

WIL VOUCHER

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