



2021/2022

EPI@Centre

ANNUAL REPORT



WWW.EPICENTREUWINDSOR.CA



Land Acknowledgement

The University of Windsor sits on the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations, which includes the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie. We respect the longstanding relationships with First Nations people in this place in the 100-mile Windsor-Essex peninsula and the straits – les détroits – of Detroit.

A Message from EPICentre's Director

No one predicted that the pandemic would drag on for another year - yet it did. As we entered the second year of lockdown, the EPICentre team found more ways to pivot, and gain experience in delivering our programming virtually (and eventually through a hybrid model) to our students and entrepreneurs.

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's to be nimble and to always be prepared so that we can respond quickly to whatever challenges come our way. This is the true entrepreneurial spirit and mindset that we often share with our students and entrepreneurs.

Despite the ever-changing challenges, EPICentre had a very productive year. We were able to return to the office, although on and off to be compliant with the health and safety regulations from the province and our local health unit. Our team and members were able to see each other and reconnect in person when it was safe to do so. The "reunion" has brought back so many happy moments! Our virtual programming, including educational and venture programs, workshops, and competitions, benefitted 2,624 students and entrepreneurs!

We are glad that we are slowly easing out of the pandemic and as we navigate the new normal, we remain nimble and vigilant. With the significant improvement of virtual technology, we have been able to deliver our programming in a hybrid model and we will keep our programming relevant to meet the demands of our students and entrepreneurs in this fast-paced environment. We will continue keeping diversity and inclusion at the top of our minds to ensure our programming is accessible. No matter your entrepreneurial journey, EPICentre is here to empower and equip every person who comes to create their own future!

In closing, I'd like to thank the University of Windsor, our board of advisors, mentors, partners, sponsors, and volunteers for your continued support. We wouldn't be able to provide this level of service without you! A heartfelt thanks to our students, entrepreneurs, and community members for believing in the work we do at EPICentre and allowing us to be a part of your entrepreneurial journey. Collectively, we can all make the world a better place for us and our future generations.



Wen Teoh | Director, EPICentre

Vision

To support the transformation of people into entrepreneurial thinkers, and innovative ideas into successful economic and social enterprises through training, mentorship and networking.

Mission

- To provide experiential entrepreneurial learning opportunities that enhance University of Windsor's mission regarding education and research.
- To provide skills, tools, and network to entrepreneurs and professionals to launch and grow economic and social initiatives.

Values

- We hold ourselves accountable by performing our duties with passion and integrity.
- We embrace a diverse and fun work environment through trust and respect.
- We achieve service excellence through teamwork, empathy, and continuous improvement.
- We shape the future with constant experimentation and innovation.

A Year in Review (21/22 Highlights)

As we transitioned into the 2nd year of the pandemic, EPICentre stepped up our game to support our students and entrepreneurs through a wide range of virtual and hybrid programming. The year 2021-22 was another successful year. EPICentre hosted 81 virtual and in-person events and competitions with 2,363 participants. Additionally, EPICentre provided two micro-credentialled programs and seven startup programs, which benefited 261 participants.

Social Media Engagement

Our social media engagement has increased significantly with a total reach increase of 168% across all social media platforms from last year.



Entrepreneurship SpeakHER Series

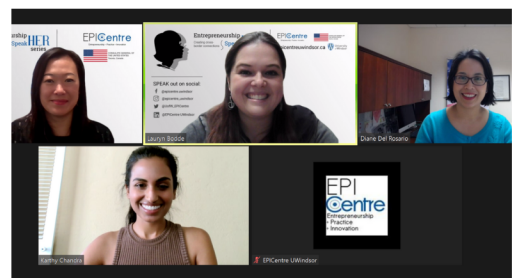
In September 2021, we were successful in receiving funding from the U.S. Consulate General Toronto to deliver US-Canada Virtual Speakers and Networking Sessions in order to:

1. Encourage young Canadian women to pursue entrepreneurship.
2. Strengthen the bilateral ties between Canada and the U.S. through entrepreneurship.

The project, branded “Entrepreneurship SpeakHER Series” was launched in January 2022 and will continue until December 2022.



Entrepreneurship SpeakHER Series 1st Virtual Session, January 2022



Entrepreneurship SpeakHER Series 3rd Virtual Session, March 2022

A Year in Review (21/22 Highlights)

Libro-EPIC Social Enterprise Program

We were pleased to share that our partnership with Libro Credit Union continued to flourish. In February 2022, four teams of changemakers participated in the Libro-EPIC Social Enterprise Program where they received funding and mentorship to help them launch and grow their social-purpose enterprises. A virtual social enterprise summit, Purpose Beyond Profit, was held via Zoom followed by an in-person social event at a local food establishment on June 3rd, 2022, to celebrate social entrepreneurship in our community and beyond.



Libro-EPIC Social Enterprise Final Pitch Event, June 2022

EPICentre's Startup Programs

Although all of our startup programs, the RBC EPIC Founders, EPIC Founders Accelerating 2020s, EPIC Nimble, EPIC VentureWomen, EPIC Discovery and EPIC Incubation programs were still being delivered virtually for the most part, we were able to coordinate a few in-person workshops and events for our participants to learn and to network with each other.

She Inspires Award

University of Windsor Alumni and former member of the EPIC VentureWomen Program, Jennifer Charron, Founder and President of Logic Executive Search and Workplace Solutions, established the She Inspires Award in 2021. This annual award of \$1,000 will be presented to an inspirational woman entrepreneur participating in the EPIC VentureWomen Program. We were pleased to launch the inaugural award during last year's VentureWomen final pitch competition.

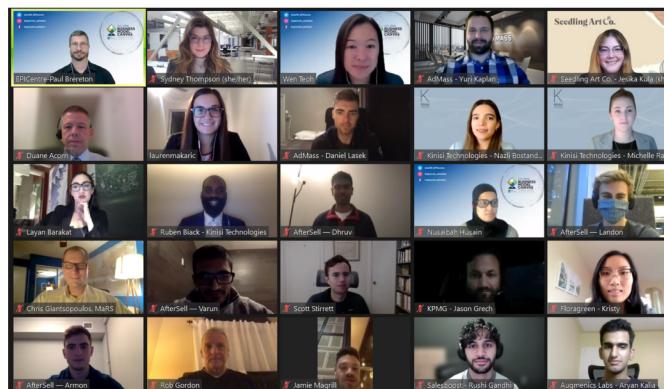


Jennifer Charron | Founder and President of Logic Executive Search and Workplace Solutions

A Year in Review (21/22 Highlights)

RBC EPIC Business Model Canvas Competition

After taking a year off from the RBC EPIC Business Model Canvas Competition in 2020 due to the pandemic, we were able to host our 5th competition virtually in November 2021. The virtual delivery mode has opened the opportunity for teams all over the nation to participate, making it a Canada-wide event.



RBC EPIC Business Model Canvas Competition Final Award Ceremony, November 2021

University of Windsor Alumni Association EPICentre Founders Award

This year, Manpreet Kaur Deol, an undergraduate student from the Faculty of Law, was the recipient of the Alumni Association EPICentre Founders Award. This \$1,000 annual scholarship is awarded to students who demonstrate good academic standing and involvement in entrepreneurial activities. Manpreet was involved in the EPIC Legal Team where she assisted startups with their legal endeavours.

Automobility Hub

We were excited to be a part of the Automobility Hub, led by Invest WindsorEssex to support innovation and entrepreneurship in the automobility sector for our region. This \$7.5 million project was funded by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario to support projects from all partners involved in the Automobility Hub. Over the next three years, EPICentre will develop and deliver programming including an advanced intellectual property strategy micro-credential program to train students and entrepreneurs working in this sector.

EPICentre's Impact 2021 - 2022

|Discover



34,990+ ^{↑18%}
social media
engagement



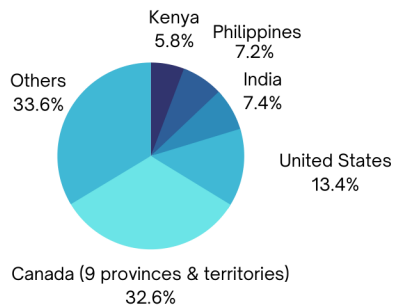
232,510+ ^{↑168%}
social media
reach



11,915+ ^{↑10%}
social media &
newsletter
subscribers



34 presentations &
networking events
1,226 total attendees



23,932+ unique website
users

|Learn



41 workshops
1,047 participants



6 competitions
90 participants



11 educational
videos produced
350+ views



2 micro-credentialled
programs
177 participants



106 speakers/experts/judges
engaged

|Start



\$92,988
direct funding
provided



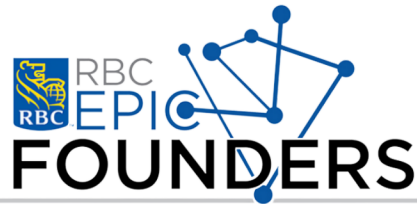
59 venture teams & startups
84 participants
• 49 students
• 35 alumni & community



310+
mentorship &
coaching hours

EPICentre Programming

RBC EPIC FOUNDERS PROGRAM



AN EPICENTRE VENTURE START PROGRAM

Funded by RBC Foundation, the RBC EPIC Founders Program is a 12-week accelerator program for startups and early-stage businesses founded by students or recent graduates of the University of Windsor or other post-secondary institutions in Ontario. This program is adequate for individuals looking to capture market and customer validation. Each participant received up to \$6,000 in stipends, access to mentors and advisors, workshops, and networking events to help them validate their business ideas and to launch the business. The program concluded with the Final Pitch Competition where participants present their business idea and what they have learned throughout the program to a panel of judges to win one of the three top prizes.

Top Pitch (\$3,500) Winner



Jacqueline Verellen, Verellen Music Academy

Demo (\$500) Winners



Jacqueline Verellen, Verellen Music Academy



Penny Cardelli, Snow Peak Cold Brew



7 Teams | 13 Participants



8 UWindsor students



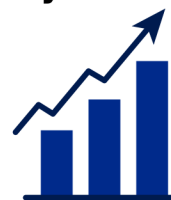
5 Other post-secondary students



Academic disciplines: Business | Computer Science | Media and Film | Mathematics | Architecture | Psychology | Engineering



Sectors: Online Platform | Food & Beverage | Education | Agri-tech | Entertainment



\$46,500

Direct funding provided

Acceptance rate: 21.2%



RBC Foundation™



EPICentre Programming



EPIC FOUNDERS ACCELERATING 2020S PROGRAM

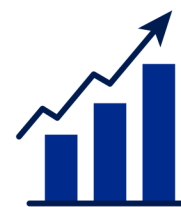
EPIC Founders Accelerating 2020s Program is a 4-month accelerator program specifically designed for early-stage startups. Utilizing Lean Startup Methodology, startups learn how to conduct customer discovery and develop a minimum viable product (MVP) to test their early-stage product/service. Each participant received mentorship, training, and up to \$2,500 in funding to support their venture.

The program concluded with the Final Pitch Competition where participants presented their business idea and how they validated their ideas through Lean Startup Methodology to a panel of judges to win the Top Pitch award.

Top Pitch (\$3,500) Winner



Kaitlyn Sheehan, Arena Mom Inc.



\$9,075

Direct funding provided



4 Teams | 4 Participants

Acceptance rate: 28.5%



Academic disciplines: Business | Computer Science | Nursing



Sectors: Health & Fitness | Transportation & Logistics | Lifestyle Products | Software



Federal Economic Development
Agency for Southern Ontario

Agence fédérale de développement
économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario



EPICentre Programming

Venture Women

EPIC VENTUREWOMEN PROGRAM

The EPIC VentureWomen Program, funded by the Government of Ontario, in collaboration with Invest WindsorEssex and RISE, is a 4-month accelerator program for women entrepreneurs located in the Windsor-Essex region. Participants have access to dynamic expert mentors and advisors, exclusive and tailored workshops, special events, and funding to help them expand their network and take their business idea to the next level. The program concluded with the Final Pitch Competition where participants presented their business ideas to a panel of judges to win the Top Pitch, She Inspires, and People's Choice awards.

Top Pitch (\$3,000) Winner



Andrea Descargar, Ecovana

She Inspires (\$1,000) Winner



Andrea Descargar, Ecovana

People's Choice (\$1,000) Winner



Alex Wilder, FoS Shoppe



VentureWomen Final Pitch Night, December 2021

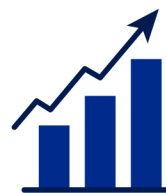


6 Teams | 7 Participants



Sectors: Education | Food & Beverage | Clothing & Apparel | Personal Care

Acceptance rate: 31.5%



\$18,934

Direct funding
provided



SHIBLEY RIGHTON LLP
Barristers and Solicitors



University
of Windsor

EPICentre Programming



EPIC NIMBLE PROGRAM

The EPIC Nimble Program was launched to support existing small businesses adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program provides funding, mentorship, and resources to help existing traditional small businesses find new ways to reach customers or to create new revenue streams to achieve sustainability and stay competitive in this fast-changing marketplace.



3 Small Businesses Supported



Sectors: Wellness | Tourism | Digital Media



\$4,479

Direct funding provided



\$14,829

Total project cost

Acceptance rate: 13.6%



Federal Economic Development
Agency for Southern Ontario

Agence fédérale de développement
économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario

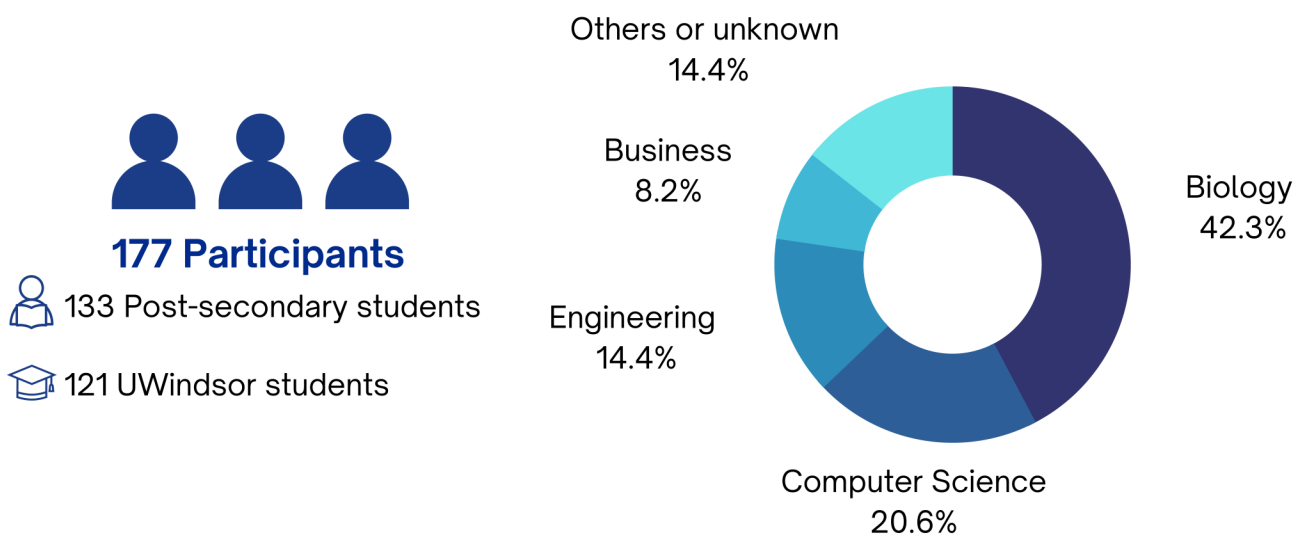


EPICentre Programming



NEXTGEN CTO PROGRAM

The NextGen CTO Program provides foundations of intellectual property (IP) and intellectual property strategy training to future CTOs (Chief Technology/Technical Officers). Throughout the five-week program, participants learn key skills, competencies, and know-how through a combination of online learning modules provided by the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), quizzes, and weekly virtual workshops and discussions. Participants receive a certificate of completion and micro-credential badge upon completion of the program. This program was run twice this year, in the Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 semesters.



Federal Economic Development
Agency for Southern Ontario

Agence fédérale de développement
économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario



Centre for International
Governance Innovation

EPICentre Programming



EPIC DISCOVERY PROGRAM

The EPIC Discovery Program helps students and recent graduates from any faculty looking to validate their early-stage ideas. Participants have the opportunity to work with experienced mentors, have exclusive access to online digital tools and resources, and be connected to our community of entrepreneurs and business owners. The program offers a flexible structure that caters to participants' varying needs.



26 Teams | 32 Participants



9 Alumni



21 Students



2 Community



Academic disciplines:

|Business

|Kinesiology

|Engineering

|Drama

|Political Science

|Film

|Neuroscience

|Psychology

|Computer Science

|Biology

|Physics

EPICentre Programming




EPIC INCUBATION PROGRAM

The EPIC Incubation Program supports startups that have achieved initial traction and are ready to scale their businesses. The program provides members with access to mentors and advisors, co-working space, exclusive funding opportunities, and other resources to help them launch and grow their ventures. The program offers an adaptable structure that caters to participants' shifting needs.



9 Startups that employ 48 employees

 2 Alumni founders

 2 Student founders

 5 Industry founders



Sectors:

|Healthcare

|Tourism

|Online Platform

|Software

|Advanced Manufacturing

|E-Commerce

|Lifestyle

EPICentre Programming



Libro-EPIC
SOCIAL IMPACT
INITIATIVE

LIBRO-EPIC SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

Funded by Libro Credit Union, the Libro-EPIC Social Enterprise Program is a 4-month program that supports social-minded entrepreneurs through specialized coaching, network boosting, tailored workshops, and funding. The program culminated on the Final Pitch Day where participants pitched to a panel of judges to win additional cash prizes.

1st Prize (\$5,000) Winner

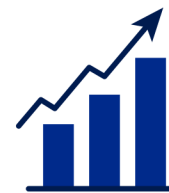


Ecovana

2nd Prize (\$1,000) Winner



Right Hear Audio



\$14,000

Direct funding
provided



4 Teams | 7 Social Entrepreneurs

Acceptance rate: 44.4%

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



EPICentre Programming

RBC EPIC BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS COMPETITION



The RBC Business Model Canvas Competition invites student entrepreneurs from any post-secondary institution in Canada to demonstrate their understanding of business model validation through their own entrepreneurial experience. The competition was held virtually this year. As a result, many teams from as far as British Columbia were able to participate. Over \$20,000 in cash and in-kind prizes were awarded to semi-finalists and winners of the competition.

1st Prize (\$10,000) Winner



AfterSell, University of Waterloo

2nd Prize (\$2,500) Winner



Decap, McGill University and University of British Columbia

Postmedia People's Choice (\$2,000 in-kind advertising) Winner



Decap, McGill University and University of British Columbia

KPMG Financial Competency (\$750) Winner



Seedling Art Co., Simon Fraser University



49 Teams Competed

18 Post-secondary Institutions

Provinces: Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia,
Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador



EPICentre Programming

Entrepreneurship
Creating cross-
border connections { **SpeakHER**
series

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SPEAKER SERIES

Funded by the U.S. Consulate General Toronto, the Entrepreneurship SpeakHER Series is a virtual speaker and networking series that aims to empower post-secondary students, especially women, to consider entrepreneurship as a potential career path. The first season of the series took place from January to April 2022 and consisted of four virtual webinars featuring American woman entrepreneurs from different industry sectors. To end the series, we hosted a virtual networking event on Remo which brought together female founders, students and community members from both sides of the border. We were excited to partner with Portland State University's Center for Entrepreneurship in the virtual networking event.



5 Virtual sessions



200+ Video Views



126 Attendees



12 Speakers and female entrepreneurs engaged

385+ Active social media engagement



104 Self-identified as women



53 Students



35 Alumni



38 Others (community)

Testimonial from an attendee on Felicia Maxwell's session: "Felicia was phenomenal. Her story was very relatable and captivating. She spoke true words of strength and passion and I found her very motivating."

Words of Wisdom from one of the speakers, Valerie Obenchain: "Don't let anybody tell you your dream is too big. Know your market, your strong points, and where you need help."



CONSULATE GENERAL OF
THE UNITED STATES
Toronto, Canada



PSU CENTER
for
ENTREPRENEURSHIP



EPICentre Programming



Libro-EPI
SOCIAL IMPACT
INITIATIVE

LIBRO-EPIC SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SUMMIT

The 5th Social Enterprise Summit, powered by Libro Credit Union, focused on the theme “Purpose Beyond Profit”. The hybrid event consisted of a virtual session in the morning with speakers and panelists discussing how they tackled issues such as education, sustainable housing, and food security with creative solutions. We then concluded the day with an in-person social event at a local eatery. Attendees continued the conversations about social entrepreneurship and participated in an interactive letter writing activity to show their appreciation to various province-wide Social Enterprises.



120 Attendees



6 Speakers and Panelists



13,000+ Social
Media Reach

950+ Social Media
Engagement

“An entity focused on social or environmental outcomes must work to make it sustainable enough so revenues can be focused on achieving a bigger impact, ” said Keynote Speaker Hakeem Subair, CEO of 1 Million Teachers.

“Everything that we touch anywhere in the world needs to have sustainability right at the core of it. At the epicenter of it all, if you will, ” said Keynote Speaker Gurbeen Bhasin, Founder and Executive Director of Aangen.



EPICentre Programming



EPICentre LAW

EPICentre continued our collaboration with Prof. Myra Tawfik, Don Rodzik Family Chair in Law and Entrepreneurship and Distinguished Professor of Law through her EPICentre Practicum course. The virtual work environment has presented an opportunity for us to experiment with a different project. Through Slack, we created a Virtual Legal Assistant Channel for law students enrolled in Prof. Tawfik's class to interact with our entrepreneurs. Basic legal matters, including business and intellectual property laws, were discussed and shared on the channel benefitting both law students and EPICentre entrepreneurs. The EPICentre Practicum students delivered three workshops for EPICentre entrepreneurs in the Winter 2022 semester on copyright law, trademark law, and non-disclosure agreements. In addition, under the supervision of Professor Tawfik, a tax law project through Pro Bono Students Canada provided tax law information to EPICentre entrepreneurs.



30 Entrepreneurs



59 Attendees



3 Virtual workshops



16 Law students

(Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 semesters)



9 Discussion topics:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Business name registration | Social enterprise vs. Not-for-profit |
| Business structures | Non-disclosure agreements (NDA) |
| IP Strategy | Privacy policy for business |
| Copyright | Employment Standards Act |
| Patents | |

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