

The University of British Columbia Demonstrates Continued Engagement Matters to Students.

The University of British Columbia Cloud Innovation Centre (UBC-CIC) creates a community that allows current and previous students that worked at the CIC to stay connected.

December 15, 2020 (Vancouver) -- Current and previous UBC Cloud Innovation Centre (UBC-CIC) student employees, with a passion for innovation, can now stay connected and up to date with CIC updates, challenges and events. The UBC-CIC has launched the Cloud Innovation Centre Network (CIC-NET), a platform designed to keep student alumni engaged with CIC challenges and activities after their co-op work term is over.

Before CIC-NET was created, UBC CIC co-op student alumni struggled to maintain a meaningful relationship with the CIC and the projects they worked on during their work term when trying to continue their career development. The student alumni have valuable knowledge and insight into the Challenges they've worked on, which is lost after the student's work term ends. Maintaining a relationship with the CIC after their co-op was difficult as life quickly got in the way and there were no convenient mechanisms for the alumni to implement. This created a disconnect from the student alumni that wanted to remain involved and see the Centre's progress.

During their time with the CIC, students have opportunities to work on community-driven challenges that address critical problems facing governmental organizations, including healthcare authorities, educational institutions and non-profit societies. Some challenges involve research on COVID-19, facilitating communication between healthcare providers, and embedding machine learning tools into medical imaging booking systems. The opportunity to be involved in a meaningful way in these societal issues creates a feeling of connectedness for students. They wanted a way to continue their engagement with the challenges when their work terms ends so that they have visibility into the impact their work ultimately has for the challenge sponsor, and for society.

This tool will enable UBC-CIC students to continue their involvement after the completion of their co-op by creating an easily-accessible community that provides personalized recommendations for engagement in CIC projects and activities such as new innovation projects, mentorship opportunities, and student training events. The ability to maintain a relationship with the CIC is important for students coming through the Centre as the knowledge they gained during their co-op term continues to be meaningful after they've left. They would like the ability to contribute by giving input into future product development, answering technical or support-related questions, or assisting other public sector organizations who want to implement a similar project. CIC-NET creates an opportunity for the alumni to have continued engagement with all Challenges, events, and updates. In doing so, student alumni continue to be a part of the UBC-CIC community by offering their support, knowledge and time after their work term has ended.

"Now that I have this accessible alumni community through CIC-NET, I feel more connected with the CIC and the Challenges I devoted my time to. After finishing my work term at the Centre, I wanted to continue receiving updates and contributing my knowledge to a COVID-19 project I had worked on while I was a co-op student. It was important to me to stay connected to my projects, and CIC-NET provides me with that connection," said Judy Lucas, third year student. "In previous work-learns, I felt disconnected and cut off after my contract ended, but with the CIC-NET website, I feel as though my knowledge and career development was important to my past employers. They want to see me succeed!"

The CIC-NET website provides an intuitive interface for CIC staff to enter and update resources and information for the CIC alumni. Along with CIC staff, current co-op students will have the opportunity to interact and update the platform during their work-term so they can create an environment that is optimal for student alumni, and themselves in the future. The student alumni are able to set their preferences and interests so that the events, updates, and project opportunities are curated for them. This easy interface is a quick way for users to view topics they are interested in as well as other topics or challenges. Using a matchmaking UI, students are able to make connections with challenges, sponsors, and events. This platform continues to build the relationship between the CIC and the student alumni, by engaging their passions and providing continued career development.

CIC-NET helps continue fostering the relationship built between student alumni and the Cloud Innovation Centre by providing a user-friendly tool to access Challenge updates, news about events and CIC updates. This allows the Centre to continue engaging with the knowledge, insight, and passion the student alumni have after completing their work term in an easily accessible way.

To learn more about CIC-NET, please visit <https://cic.ubc.ca/projects/>